IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
EL PASO DIVISION

LEAGUE OF UNITED LATIN AMERICAN CITIZENS, *et al.*, *Plaintiffs,* V. GREG ABBOTT, *et al.*, *Defendants.*	Case No. 3:21-cv-00259 [Lead Case]

STATE DEFENDANTS' RESPONSE TO
PLAINTIFF-INTERVENORS AND TEXAS NAACP'S PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Plaintiffs in the present case—as Democrats—have expressly admitted their strategy to allege racism, regardless of the underlying facts:

> The VRA is being chipped away, and the only thing left for us now is Section 2. And we're not going to win under Section2 unless we show that this act by the State of Texas if it does it . . . **but if we don't say that this is racial, if we don't indicate that, we're not going to get to Section 2 and we can't win.**

Rep. Al Green, Ex. B at 36–37.

Just weeks ago at trial, Dr. Sean Trende capably explained the virtues of Texas's 2021 congressional map, which maximized Republican strongholds rather than Republican opportunity. But with a slim Republican House majority at risk in the 2026 midterms, President Trump publicly called on Texas to draw a map that maximized Republican opportunity. The Texas Legislature passed a 2025 congressional map on precisely partisan lines.

Plaintiffs' expert, Dr. Moon Duchin, argued Texas's failure to maximize partisan opportunity in 2021 was evidence of racial discrimination—after all, she argued, why would a map that was partisan rather than racial leave partisan opportunity on the table? The Court will perhaps be unsurprised to learn that although the 2025 Map addresses Dr. Duchin's concern, she nevertheless concludes the new map must be racist, too.

Plaintiffs' facility with racial accusations, regardless of the merits, is perhaps best demonstrated by the diametrically opposed attacks on the 2025 Map (and its Republican supporters) lodged by Senate Democrats. Senator Miles, of the 2025 redistricting committee, stated on the Senate floor that Senator King *must have looked at racial data* when drawing map (it was "impossible" to have drawn maps race blind), which made the Texas Republicans clearly discriminatory. Senator Miles, Ex. A at 31. Senator Eckhardt, on the other hand, stated just as clearly that the Texas Republicans *failed to look at racial data*, which made the Texas Republicans clearly discriminatory. Ex. AL at 66–67.

Plaintiffs and Texas Democrats utilized the same tactic throughout the 2021 process, as well. For example, in the previous decade's redistricting, Democrats seized on a statement made

by a representative (the Opiela "nudge factor" e-mail) to taint every vote of every Republican as evidence of a racial intent. In 2021, there simply was no such statement, yet Plaintiffs' expert Dr. Kousser opined the lack of overt racial statements in the record was even *stronger* evidence of racism in 2021. Tr. 5/27/2025 PM 132:15–134:19.[1]

Plaintiffs and their Democratic allies came into the 2021 redistricting process ready to allege discrimination from the starting gun. Senator Powell hired a redistricting attorney to represent her in January of 2021, before census data was even expected, and then attempted to introduce race into the 2021 map-drawing process by presenting racially-shaded maps to Senator Huffman when she knew litigation was possible. Powell Depo., pp. 94:13–95:5, 95:23–96:6. Rep. Anchía took it one step further: he retained a redistricting attorney before any maps were drawn, as well, but then had that attorney assist in drawing up MALC's demonstrative maps. Tr. 6/05/2025 AM 28:7–16, 66:11–67:19. MALC drew these maps primarily using race, which precluded their lawful adoption. *Id*. Knowing Texas could not lawfully adopt MALC's racial maps, Anchía then forced a vote on them as amendments to the 2021 map. *Id*. Once his amendments failed—as he knew they had to—Anchía then presented the failure of his amendments as evidence of discrimination. *Id*.

The complete reversals of the Plaintiffs' positions between this year's trial and the upcoming hearing demonstrates Plaintiffs' rigged game. At trial, Dr. Matt Barreto testified that it was completely impossible to separate racial data from partisan data, so closely are they intertwined. Tr. 5/30/25 AM 163:13-23. Two months later in his new reports, however—and now realizing that the failure to disaggregate race from partisanship fails to meet Plaintiffs' burden—Barreto claims to have discovered the key to disaggregation: a method he has never used before and about which he refused to supply meaningful information. He once again manages to find racial discrimination.

[1] All Plaintiffs take this approach: heads, we win; tails, you lose. Intervenors, for example, had also previously argued that there was a "mountain" of evidence that maps were not drawn blind to race (ECF 1111 at 3), but that if they had indeed been drawn blind to race, that itself was an admission of guilt by the state (*Id*.).

Tellingly, Texas Democrats initially criticized the 2025 redistricting effort as a partisan power grab.[2] After breaking quorum and meeting with prominent party leaders, Democrats abruptly shifted to allegations of racial discrimination. *See* Ex. P; *see generally* Ex. Q.; Ex. AJ (as of August 3, Eric Holder—chair of the National Democratic Redistricting Committee—made no racial allegations but argued political power). Of course, some legislators were ahead of the curve, with Rep. Joe Rosenthal, for example, decrying the new 2025 Map as racially motivated before there was even a map to criticize. *See* Rep. Joe Rosenthal, Ex. C at 14.

The political pressure placed on the Texas Republicans was universally understood. Prior to the Department of Justice (DOJ) letter relied on by the Plaintiffs, President Trump had already publicly demanded in June that the Texas Legislature draw a new Congressional map that would produce 4-5 more Republicans in Congress. *See*, e.g., Ex. AC. Moreover, everyone recognized why the President had made the demand: maintaining Republican control of the House for the second half of his presidential term. Ex. S; Ex. T; Ex. AC. With 2026 elections coming, President Trump's legislative agenda relied on a slim and endangered majority; any loss of Republican Representatives in the House could prevent any movement forward on his policies—and almost certainly result in a slew of resource-draining impeachment attempts. Ex. AB – ABC News Report. And Democratic states had already been gerrymandered for years to provide a partisan advantage to the Democrats in Congress.

[2] *E.g.*, H.J. of Tex. 89th Lege., 2nd C.S. at 66 (Aug. 20, 2025) (Rep. C. Morales citing political gain as motive); H.J. of Tex. 89th Lege., 2nd C.S. at 78 (Aug. 20, 2025), (Rep. Ramos Rodriguez stating Rep. Hunter "admitted openly" that the new map was about a "Republican performance increase"); S. J. of Tex. 89th Lege., 2nd C.S. at 64 (Aug. 22, 2025) (Sen. Royce West: "Let's call this redistricting what it is: a naked, partisan, political power grab."); Ex. AG at 72–73 (Rep. Sylvia Garcia: "Remember that you are here because Donald Trump wants to remain in power. . . .That Big Ugly bill passed by just one vote and that was his signature agenda. So he knows he has got to find seats somewhere to offset their losses.").

Coming out of the 2024 election, for example, California Democrats held 83% of their delegation's seats despite receiving only 61% of the statewide vote. Ex. D, Eric McGhee.[3] Illinois Democrats have similarly gerrymandered for years, holding 82% of the congressional seats (14 of 17), but with only 56% of the statewide vote. Ex. F, Govtrack.us.; Ex. G Politico Election Results. Similar gerrymandered districts also existed in New York and Maryland. Ex. H (Independent Voter News, "The 10 Worst Gerrymandered States in the Country").

In response to President Trump's demand to Texas in June, Democratic states, including California, planned to retaliate by redistricting their maps to further increase their already outsized partisan advantage. Ex. I (Explainer (Harvard Univ.), "Understanding the mid-decade redistricting push in Texas")); Ex. J (Jessie Bedayn, pbs.org newshour); *see* Ex. N.

> In June, President Trump floated the idea of a mid-decade redistricting in Texas. The governor of Texas, Greg Abbott, has called a special session in Texas where they are redrawing the congressional district maps. The very plainly stated goal is to try to add five Republican congressional seats that will be won in the 2026 congressional election. The thinking is that the midterm election nationwide is going to be very competitive. For Republicans to hold onto a majority in the House of Representatives, every seat they can win will be valuable. And, so, adding five seats in Texas may prove to be the margin of victory to maintain a majority in the House.

Ex. I.[4] Dr. Schneer, the article's author, concludes that the true motivation for the Trump administration and the state of Texas to move forward with redistricting is "blatantly and unambiguously political." *Id.*

[3] Note that this Democrat-favored outcome was done with a supposedly independent commission. In reality, Democrats sent undisclosed party operatives to testify before the commission, calling themselves "community" representatives. Ex. E (ProPublica, "How Democrats Fooled California's Redistricting Commission").

[4] Dr. Benjamin Schneer, Assoc. Professor of Public Policy, at the Harvard Kennedy School. His research is in American politics and focuses primarily on political representation: how citizens express their preferences, how government responds to them, and what may shape and distort these processes. His background and experience are set out on Ex. K. (https://www.hks.harvard.edu/faculty/benjamin-schneer).

The initial political pressure to redistrict for increased partisan opportunity was intense, coming from a very public, presidential ask. When Democrat states began announcing efforts to cancel out Texas's attempt to gain five seats, regardless of whether Texas passed a new map, Texas Republican lawmakers were left with little political choice. *See* Ex. J;[5] *see also* Ex. V, Ex. Y, Ex. Z.

Recognizing this pressure, over 50 Democratic legislators fled the state to break quorum. Ex. U. Ironically, they fled to the Democratic states with some of the most gerrymandered districts in the country. *See* Ex. T, Ex. W. While breaking quorum, they met with Democrat party potentates to discuss how to delay, if not defeat, the new 2025 effort for redistricting. Ex. L; *see also* Ex. M; Ex. X.

Despite the delay caused by the Democratic quorum-breakers, Texas Governor Greg Abbott called a second special session wherein the Texas Legislature, on party lines, passed a new congressional map that raised the number of predicted Republican congressional districts from 25 to 30. Ex. R; Ex. AA.

II. STANDARDS

A. Preliminary Injunction

Preliminary injunctions are extraordinary equitable relief that are not awarded as of right. *Starbucks Corp. v. McKinney*, 602 U.S. 339, 345–46 (2024); *see also Benisek v. Lamone*, 585 U.S. 155, 158 (2018) (applying this standard in a redistricting case). A court will grant a preliminary injunction if a plaintiff shows: (1) a substantial likelihood of success on the merits of the case; (2) irreparable injury to the movant if the preliminary injunction is denied; (3) the threatened injury to the movant outweighs the injury to the other party under the preliminary injunction; and (4) the injunction is not adverse to the public interest. *Bluefield Water Ass'n, Inc. v. City of Starkville, Miss.*, 588 F.3d 250, 252–53 (5th Cir. 2009) (citing *Lake Charles Diesel, Inc. v. Gen. Motors Corp.*, 328 F.3d 192, 195–96 (5th Cir. 2003)).

[5] This was especially true of Governor Newsom's announcement that California would move forward with its own redistricting to add five more Democratic seats. *See id.*

B. Presumption of Good Faith

When bringing intentional discrimination claims against a legislature, it is "plaintiffs' burden to overcome the presumption of legislative good faith and show that the Legislature acted with invidious intent." *Abbott v. Perez*, 585 U.S. 579, 605 (2018). Such intent is not mere being awareness of consequences; instead, it requires a legislature to have passed a law "because of,' not merely 'in spite of,' its adverse effects upon an identifiable group." *Pers. Adm'r of Mass. v. Feeney*, 442 U.S. 256, 279 (1979).

Racial gerrymandering claims further require Plaintiffs to show race was "'the predominant factor motivating' the redistricting process and 'subordinat[ing] traditional race-neutral districting principles, including but not limited to compactness, contiguity, and respect for political subdivisions or communities defined by actual shared interests[.]'" *Harding v. Cty. of Dallas*, 948 F.3d 302, 313 (5th Cir. 2020) (quoting *Miller v. Johnson*, 515 U.S. 900, 911 (1995)). It is not sufficient to show a correlative relationship between party affiliation and race. *See Brnovich v. Democratic Nat'l Comm.*, 594 U.S. 647, 689 (2021). Rather, it is a plaintiff's burden to disentangle race and partisanship. *Alexander v. S.C. State Conf. of the NAACP*, 602 U.S. 1, 6 (2024). Plaintiffs have not done so here.

Plaintiffs cite circumstantial evidence that does not meet the heavy burden of proving intentional discrimination.

C. Racial Gerrymandering/*Arlington Heights*

A claim of racial gerrymandering requires Plaintiffs to show "that race was the predominant factor motivating the legislature's [redistricting] decision[s]." *Miller v. Johnson*, 515 U.S. 900, 916 (1995). "To satisfy this burden, the plaintiff must prove that the legislature subordinated traditional race-neutral districting principles . . . to racial considerations." *Bethune-Hill v. Virginia State Bd. of Elections*, 580 U.S. 178, 187 (2017) (quotation omitted). Conversely, "[w]here . . . race-neutral considerations are the basis for redistricting legislation . . . a State can 'defeat a claim that a district has been gerrymandered on racial lines.'" *Miller*, 515 U.S. at 916 (quoting *Shaw*, 515 U.S., at 647).

NAACP uses the *Arlington Heights* framework for its claims. Under that precedent, five "non-exhaustive factors" guide courts in determining whether a particular decision was made with a discriminatory intent: (1) the discriminatory impact of the official action; (2) the historical background of the decision; (3) the specific sequence of events leading up to the challenged action; (4) substantive and procedural departures from the normal-decision making process; and (5) contemporaneous viewpoints expressed by the decisionmakers. *Fusilier v. Landry*, 963 F.3d 447, 463 (5th Cir. 2020). These are examined below.

III. ARGUMENT AND AUTHORITIES

A. C2333 Does Not Violate Section 2 of the VRA (Intervenor Claim)

Plaintiff-Intervenors ("Intervenors") stand alone among Plaintiffs in seeking provisional relief on a results claim under VRA Section 2. Dkt 1154, Supp. Compl. at 11. But at the August 27th status conference, counsel for Intervenors announced that they would not seek provisional relief on their Section 2 claim. *See* Ex. AK. Their inexplicable assertion of a Section 2 claim in contradiction to that representation is hard to understand, and the position should be deemed waived. In all events, Intervenors' perfunctory argument shows no prospect of success on the merits.

1. Intervenors Lack Article III and Statutory Standing

As a threshold matter, Intervenors have not established standing to bring a Section 2 claim. Because they present a Section 2 claim not raised by other parties and seek relief other parties have not sought, they cannot rely on other Plaintiffs' standing for their Section 2 contentions. *TransUnion LLC v. Ramirez*, 594 U.S. 413, 431 (2021) ("plaintiffs must demonstrate standing for each claim that they press and for each form of relief that they seek"); *Town of Chester, N.Y. v. Laroe Ests., Inc.*, 581 U.S. 433, 439 (2017) ("an intervenor . . . must demonstrate Article III standing when it seeks additional relief beyond that which the plaintiff requests"). "At the preliminary injunction stage, . . . the plaintiff must make a 'clear showing' that she is 'likely' to establish each element of standing." *Murthy v. Missouri*, 603 U.S. 43, 58 (2024) (citation omitted). To meet that burden, Intervenors must show a likelihood of proving that they "suffered a concrete and

particularized injury that is fairly traceable to the challenged conduct, and is likely to be redressed by a favorable judicial decision." *Carney v. Adams*, 592 U.S. 53, 58 (2020) (citation omitted). Where challengers' allegation of harm "is the dilution of their votes, that inquiry is district specific." *Gill v. Whitford*, 585 U.S. 48, 66 (2018). Accordingly, Section 2 plaintiffs must show residency "in a district where their vote has been cracked or packed." *Harding v. Cnty. of Dallas*, 948 F.3d 302, 307 (5th Cir. 2020); *see* ECF 592 pp. 9–11, 26–27.

Intervenors, however, have not met this standard. While the two remaining congressional Intervenors (Crockett and Green) have alleged they reside, respectively, in CD30 and CD9, ECF 1154 ¶¶ 6–7, 32, they presented no evidence on this point and thus cannot satisfy the preliminary injunction standard. *See Murthy*, 603 U.S. at 58. Even if they had presented such evidence, their claims and potential relief would be confined to just *two* districts (CD30 and CD9). *See Gill*, 585 U.S. at 66 ("the remedy that is proper and sufficient lies in the revision of the boundaries of the individual's own district"). Yet their preliminary injunction brief appears to challenge the entire 2025 congressional plan. *See* ECF 1143 p. 10 ("Plan C2333 employs the paradigmatic vote dilution techniques of cracking and packing"). The two Intervenors have no prospect of establishing standing to challenge 38 districts.

Relatedly, Intervenors have not shown that they have statutory standing to bring Section 2 claims on behalf of "minority" voters. *See, e.g.*, ECF 1143 p. 2. While the Fifth Circuit recognizes a statutory right of action for voters to bring dilution claims under Section 2, *Robinson v. Ardoin*, 86 F.4th 574 (5th Cir. 2023), courts have consistently deemed that right of action (assuming any exists) available only to voters who belong to the group allegedly suffering vote dilution.[6] *Roberts v. Wamser*, 883 F.2d 617, 622–23 (8th Cir. 1989); *Oh v. Philadelphia Cnty. Bd. of Elections*, 2008 WL 4787583, at *7 (E.D. Pa. Oct. 31, 2008); *White-Battle v. Democratic Party of Va.*, 323 F. Supp. 2d 696, 703 (E.D. Va. 2004), *aff'd*, 134 F. App'x 641 (4th Cir. 2005); *Conway Sch. Dist. v. Wilhoit*, 854 F. Supp.

[6] The circuits are split on whether any right of action exists for anyone. *Arkansas State Conf. NAACP v. Arkansas Bd. of Apportionment*, 86 F.4th 1204 (8th Cir. 2023); *Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians v. Howe*, 137 F.4th 710 (8th Cir. 2025).

1430, 1433 (E.D. Ark. 1994); *City of Baker Sch. Bd. v. City of Baker*, 2007 WL 9702694, at *2 (M.D. La. Jan. 12, 2007); *Vaughan v. Lewisville Indep. Sch. Dist.*, 475 F. Supp. 3d 589, 595 (E.D. Tex. 2020). Intervenors appear to identify as Black or African-American.[7] ECF 1154 ¶¶ 6–7. At best, they will have standing to bring a single-race Section 2 claim alleging burdens on the rights of Black voters. *See Petteway v. Galveston County*, 111 F.4th 596 (5th Cir. 2024). They have no prospect of establishing standing to assert the rights of "Hispanic voters" or "minority voters." ECF 1143 at 10.

When their claims are properly framed against their districts of residence—and setting aside that they provided no evidence of their districts of residence—Intervenors are unlikely to establish injury in fact (and thus cannot show Article III standing). CD33 is a Hispanic-plurality district that is likely to elect the "Minority Preferred Candidate" by wide margins. ECF 1149.1 ¶24, and incorporated Exhibit V (showing 100% success rate and average vote share of 70%). CD18 is a majority-Black district that is also likely to elect the "Minority Preferred Candidate" by wide margins. *See id.* (also a 100% success rate). Intervenors cannot show "an individual and personal injury of the kind required for Article III standing," *Gill*, 585 U.S. at 68, when their own Black communities will likely have a certainty of electoral success in their own districts. The Section 2 claim fails on this basis alone.

2. Intervenors' Section 2 Claim Fails on the Merits

Intervenors' showing fails equally on the merits. Intervenors do not specify which districts they allege violate the VRA. *Id.*; see also Dkt. 1143 at 9–11. Nor do they offer much else in support of their VRA claim.

For a Section 2 results claim to succeed, (1) "the minority group must be able to demonstrate that it is sufficiently large and geographically compact to constitute a majority in a single-member district," (2) "the minority group must be able to show that it is politically

[7] To be precise, Congressmember Crockett clearly alleges she is African-American; Congressmember Green's allegations are ambiguous but suggest he identifies as African-American as well.

cohesive," and (3) "the minority must be able to demonstrate that the white majority votes sufficiently as a bloc to enable it . . . usually to defeat the minority's preferred candidate." *Thornburg v. Gingles*, 478 U.S. 30, 50–51 (1986). "If a plaintiff makes that showing, it must then go on to prove that, under the totality of the circumstances, the district lines dilute the votes of the members of the minority group." *Abbott v. Perez*, 585 U.S. 579, 614 (2018). Intervenors do nothing to meet these burdens. Section 2 "does not assume" the predicates of a claim; "plaintiffs must prove" them. *Growe v. Emison*, 507 U.S. 25, 42 (1993).

a. Intervenors are Unlikely to Satisfy the First *Gingles* Precondition

The first precondition is unlikely to be satisfied. The precondition "requires the possibility of creating more than the existing number of reasonably compact districts with a sufficiently large minority population to elect candidates of its choice." *Johnson v. De Grandy*, 512 U.S. 997, 1008 (1994). This "specifically contemplates the creation of hypothetical districts." *Magnolia Bar Ass'n, Inc. v. Lee*, 994 F.2d 1143, 1151 (5th Cir. 1993). Intervenors are not up to that task. They summarily announce that "African American and Latino populations in the relevant areas are sufficiently large and geographically compact to constitute majorities in reasonably configured districts." ECF 1143 p. 10. But they are not entitled to combine "African American and Latino populations" to make this showing, *Petteway*, 111 F.4th at 603, and simply announcing what Intervenors imagine to be true does not establish that more than the existing number of reasonably configured majority-Black districts can be created, *see Growe*, 507 U.S. at 42. Without an illustrative plan, the Court cannot evaluate whether new districts would be reasonably configured, *see League of United Latin Am. Citizens v. Perry*, 548 U.S. 399, 433 (2006); *Allen v. Milligan*, 599 U.S. 1, 20–21 (2023), or an improvement on minority opportunity, *Johnson*, 512 U.S. at 1015 (finding it insufficient for challenger to show "that lines could have been drawn elsewhere, nothing more"). Notably, the 2025 plan increases majority-minority districts by comparison to the 2021 plan, so it is far from obvious that even *more* could be reasonably created. And Intervenors have not shown that this could occur without crossing the "line . . . Between [racial] consciousness and predominance." *Milligan*, 599 U.S. at 33.

Similarly, Intervenors assert "these minority communities" vote cohesively and that bloc-voting prevents them from electing "the minority's preferred candidate" with neither a scintilla of evidence that these conditions are met nor a shred of clarity as to which minority populations Intervenors seek to protect.

b. Intervenors are also Unlikely to Satisfy the Second and Third *Gingles* Preconditions

The second and third conditions are also not established. It is far from clear that the Latino vote is "politically cohesive." *Milligan*, 599 U.S. at 18; *see* ECF 1149-24 pp. 8–9 (Hispanic support for Democratic candidates as low as 50%). More fundamentally, Intervenors are unlikely to establish that the white vote can operate "as a bloc to enable" that group "to defeat the minority's preferred candidate." *Milligan*, 599 U.S. at 18. As noted, CD18 is a majority-Black district, so Intervenors "face[] an obvious, difficult burden in proving" that a district in which the Black group can prevail simply by turning out is dilutive. *Salas v. Sw. Texas Jr. Coll. Dist.*, 964 F.2d 1542, 1555 (5th Cir. 1992). Moreover, the evidence available for both CD18 and CD33 indicates that Black and Hispanic groups *will* elect their candidates of choice—without much trouble. ECF 1149.1 ¶24, and incorporated exhibit V. Although CD33 is not a majority-Black district, it need not be to satisfy Section 2. *See Cooper v. Harris*, 581 U.S. 285, 305 (2017) (explaining that Section 2 can be "*satisfied by*" districts that are not majority-minority districts). Because the *Gingles* preconditions are not satisfied, "there neither has been a wrong nor can be a remedy," *Growe*, 507 U.S. at 41, let alone the exceptional remedy of a preliminary injunction.

c. Intervenors have Failed to Carry their Burden under the Totality of the Circumstance

All of that is amply sufficient to doom the Section 2 basis of Intervenors' motion. But it bears noting, in addition, that dilution under the totality of circumstances remains their burden to prove. *Abbott*, 585 U.S. at 614. Intervenors' treatment of the totality of circumstances, on its face, disappoints the "intensely local appraisal" and "searching practical evaluation of the 'past and present reality'" that review of a Section 2 claim demands. *Allen v. Milligan*, 599 U.S. 1, 18 (2023) (quoting *Gingles*, 478 U.S. at 79). Rather than making their own case, Plaintiffs merely cite to a finding that another court reached amid litigation over Texas's 2010 electoral maps. Dkt. 1143 at 10

(quoting *Perez v. Abbott*, 253 F. Supp. 3d 864, 958–59 (W.D. Tex. 2017)). Moreover, that citation discusses the racial demographics of the State's contemporary electoral districts and accordingly has no relevance to the current map. *Id.*

Such conclusory statements do not meet Plaintiffs' burden to establish their likelihood of success on the merits. *See Mazurek v. Armstrong*, 520 U.S. 968, 972 (1997) (stating that a preliminary injunction requires "a clear showing" of every element) (emphasis in original) (citation omitted). Proving a Section 2 claim is ordinarily a fact-intensive and data-driven ordeal that involves extensive expert testimony. But here, Plaintiffs' "conclusory allegations fail to meet the *Iqbal* pleading standards, let alone show that Plaintiff[s] [are] likely to succeed on the merits." *Coleman v. Bank of New York Mellon*, No. 3:12-CV-04783-M-BH, 2013 WL 1187158, at *7 (N.D. Tex. Mar. 4, 2013).

Satisfying Gingles' three factors is a threshold requirement to proving a section 2 violation. *Milligan*, 599 U.S. at 18. Since Plaintiffs cannot even satisfy the *Gingles* preconditions, they are not entitled to preliminary relief on the basis of their Section 2 claim. The Court need not consider the Intervenors' limited offerings on the totality of the circumstances.

B. Plaintiffs' Claimed Evidence is Insufficient

1. Plaintiffs Misunderstand *Petteway*

No letter from the U.S. Department of Justice constitutes the position of the State of Texas, as evidenced by Texas's letter in response. Ex. AF. More importantly, the DOJ letter was in direct contradiction of the testimony from every trial witness from the Texas Legislature regarding the 2021 redistricting process, as well as numerous legal experts testifying to the Legislature in 2025. See Ex. C at 17 ("[V]oting rights experts who testified at our first hearing in Austin last week thoroughly debunked the DOJ's position."). Democratic Rep. Senfronia Thompson, on July 26, 2025, was even more straightforward: "There's no way in hell that a racist map is going to come out of the Texas Senate. And I resent that the United States Justice Department would send a bogus letter down here to the state of Texas accusing the people in this state of doing such." Ex. AG at 16.

Senator Alvarado has admitted that the Dhillon DOJ letter calling for redistricting is, as the State of Texas contends, simply wrong on the law and incorrect when claiming the map enacted in 2021 was unconstitutional. Ex. AH at 22; *see also* Ex. AH at 56, testimony of Michigan law professor Ellen Katz (stating the claims made in the DOJ letter were "simply wrong."). Not only does the DOJ not speak for Texas, it was a party opponent in the 2021 redistricting case. Once the Governor places an item before the Legislature for a special session, the Legislature must then take up the issue. But then it "determines the how and the why of all items on the call." Ex. AI at 5. Senator King opined that "I believe really the letter has no impact and is really superfluous to the Committee's actions." *Id.* at 5-6.

As shown above, Texas legislators did not find the Dhillon DOJ letter legally correct, much less compelling. Even Plaintiffs admit the DOJ could cite no evidence that Texas' 2021 congressional map was racially gerrymandered. However, the letter acted as an allegation that Texas had acted under jurisprudence that had since changed; that, at least, was true. The President's demand for more districts to help with his agenda, combined with the public letter to Governor Abbott, placed a great deal of political pressure on the Governor to call for redistricting in a special session, which he did.

By doing so, he did not endorse the faulty legal reasoning of the DOJ. Plaintiffs cite to a statement from Governor Abbott to Fox 4 Dallas-Fort Worth,[8] but this statement does not parrot the DOJ's claim. While the DOJ claimed that coalition districts were "unconstitutional," the State of Texas never accepted that premise (just as the NAACP labelled it as "spurious"). The governor stated that coalition districts were no longer "compelled." This is entirely correct:

> The text of Section 2 [of the VRA] does not authorize coalition claims, either expressly or by implication.
>
> * * *
>
> Nowhere does Section 2 indicate that two minority groups may combine forces to pursue a vote dilution claim. On the contrary, the statute identifies the subject of a vote dilution claim as "a class," in the singular, not the plural.

[8] NAACP Mot. for Prelim. Inj. (ECF 1142) at5.

Petteway v. Galveston County, 111 F.4th 596, 604 (5th Cir. 2024) (material in brackets added). While not necessarily making a finding regarding any specific districts, the Fifth Circuit clearly stated that the VRA required neither creating nor maintaining coalition districts for their own sake.

Because the initial legal vetting of the 2021 maps was done under the law pre-*Petteway*, there was indeed a new consideration in redistricting: absent a VRA coalition district parameter, just how partisan could one draw the Texas map? This question demonstrates no racial motive in drawing an avowedly partisan map post-*Petteway*. This is true where, entirely consistent with its practices in 2021, the Legislature had outside counsel review the maps for compliance under the VRA as part of its process. Finally, regardless of what the Governor has said in any format, he neither drew the map at issue nor voted on it.

Plaintiffs either misconstrue or misuse statements from the legislators themselves. They quote Rep. Vasut's statement that redistricting was "solely to respond to the Governor's call."[9] But Rep. Vasut does not endorse any statement from the Governor or the DOJ in making his factually (and legally) correct statement. Likewise, the mere mention of *Petteway* is no endorsement of the DOJ's reasoning. The Texas Attorney General's office, and the legislators themselves, flatly rejected the DOJ's interpretation on a bipartisan basis. See Ex. O.

Senator King set forth the Senate's objectives on the floor of the Senate on August 12, 2025. First, the new map had to be legal. Second, the new map had to elect more Republicans based on political performance. Third, he wanted the new districts to be compact. Ex. AD at 10–11, (Senator King). He made clear that race was not used to draw the map, and that he did not consider race when he filed the bill. *Id.* at 9; *see also* Ex. A at 14–15. Rep. Hunter, for the Texas House, also testified that the new map was drawn to increase Republican performance. Ex. AE at 4, 14 (Rep. Todd Hunter).

Plaintiffs' repeated emphasis and insistence upon negative inferences from legislator statements threatens to repeat the error addressed in *Alexander*:

[9] Pls' Mot. (ECF 1142) at 7.

> [T]he District Court placed too much weight on the fact that several legislative staffers, including Roberts, viewed racial data at some point during the redistricting process. This acknowledgment means little on its own because we expect that "[r]edistricting legislatures will . . . almost always be aware of racial demographics." *Miller*, 515 U.S. at 916, 115 S.Ct. 2475. Here, Roberts testified without contradiction that he considered the relevant racial data only *after* he had drawn the Enacted Map and that he generated that data solely for a lawful purpose, namely, to check that the maps he produced complied with our Voting Rights Act precedent.

Alexander, 602 U.S. at 22.

Just as in 2021, the maps were drawn blind to race and then sent to attorneys to ensure that the map complied with all applicable law—including the VRA. Ex. A at 15.

2. Plaintiffs Cannot Meet Their Burden

A challenger to a congressional map has a duty to show that the State's chosen map conflicts with traditional redistricting criteria. *See Alexander*, 602 U.S. at 8 (citing *Bethune-Hill v. Virginia State Bd. of Elections*, 580 U. S. 178, 190, (2017)). This is because it is difficult for challengers to find other evidence sufficient to show that race was **the** overriding factor causing neutral considerations to be cast aside. *Id.* This showing can be made through some combination of direct and circumstantial evidence. *See Cooper v. Harris*, 581 U. S. 285, 291 (2017).

The statements cited by Plaintiffs in support of their Motion do not qualify as direct evidence, which most usually comes in the form of a relevant state actor's express acknowledgment that race played a role in the drawing of district lines. *Alexander*, 602 U.S. at 8. None of the statements show that the map at issue was drawn on the basis of race. Likewise, after the map had been passed—and after it had passed Section 2 compliance checks supplied by outside counsel—the fact that Senators and Representatives then knew about racial data related to the districts says nothing about them either knowing that data when the map was enacted or that such knowledge was used. In the face of the very strong presumption of good faith on the part of the lawmakers, Plaintiffs instead demand that every negative inference be drawn related to statements by Republican legislators. That is not the law and stands in contrast to every reasonable interpretation of what the lawmakers actually said. As shown above, the legislators were adamant that the maps

were drawn to follow the law, maximize Republican chances, and otherwise emphasize compactness. They did not consider anything from the DOJ or Governor's office as binding on them in any way. After the initial map was drawn—blind to race—it was then vetted by legal counsel to ensure that the map complied with the Constitution and Section 2 of the VRA. Plaintiffs have wholly failed to meet their burden to prove this process was somehow racially motivated. This map simply does not conflict with traditional redistricting criteria; Plaintiff cannot prevail. *See Bethune-Hill*, 580 U. S. at 190.

3. Plaintiffs' Expert Analysis Is Insufficient

As noted above, a party challenging a map's constitutionality must disentangle race and politics to prove legislative racial motive. *Alexander*, 602 U.S. at 6. Plaintiffs rely on Dr. Duchin's newest report for this proposition. This analysis, however, is flawed. First, Dr. Duchin provides the *ipse dixit* that race data could have been used "as a proxy for partisanship," but fails to show that her analysis matches the aims of the Texas Legislature in redistricting. Texas wanted four or five new Republican seats. While that change entails some risk—just one reason that the 2021 redistricting was not as aggressive—Republicans wanted districts that, on the whole, managed that risk. Dr. Duchin's conclusory insistence on the possibility of creating a more partisan map completely underestimates the complexity of drawing a partisan map. Her analysis fails to show that any of her hypothetical maps would meet the partisan goal of—as safely as possible—electing Republicans without spreading the voters so thin that the districts would veer Democratic over the next 5 years. In other words, Dr. Duchin's conclusion fails to consider durability and how well the districts are expected to perform not just regarding the Census of 2020, but through the years leading up to 2030.

Further, her conclusions are flatly contradicted by neutral analyses:

A. Ex. DD, The Texan (Brad Johnson, editor)
"[T]hose drawing the map clearly used the Trump 2024 results as the benchmark for where to set the lines." (with included map)

B. Ex. EE, The Texan (Brad Johnson, editor)

"Texas Republicans drew the new map based on 2024 Trump results, that's how they get the 5-seat pickup."

C. Ex. N. Dr. Benjamin Schneer, Assoc. Prof. of Public Policy, Harvard Kennedy School
"The way the concept of the durable majority gerrymander applies to Texas is that the map is drawn to continue to perform well for Republicans even if there are future vote swings that favor Democrats. So, for example, if in 2026 there's a swing from the 2024 election totals in Texas to, say, a 5 percentage point greater statewide vote for Democrats, Republicans will continue to hold on to maybe four or five of those new seats. The idea of durability is that it is impervious to swings against the party that drew the map."

C. **The *Arlington Heights* Factors Favor Texas**

1. Alleged Discriminatory Effect

To show a discriminatory effect in the context of an intentional violation of the Constitution or federal law, Plaintiffs must demonstrate that the enacted 2025 map "bears more heavily on one race than another." *Arlington Heights*, 429 U.S. at 266. Plaintiffs cannot let go of the age-old understanding in American politics that the Black and Hispanic electorate tends to vote Democrat, while Anglos tend to vote Republican. Recent evidence suggests this trope is deteriorating, but Plaintiffs cling to the past because it supports the conceit that any gerrymander favoring Republicans tends to lessen the voting strength of minorities relative to Anglos. The logical extension of that conceit, however, is that any gerrymander favoring Democrats lessens the relative voting strength of Anglos, whose voting rights are also protected by the Constitution—perhaps especially notable now that Anglos are no longer a majority of Texas's population. *See*, *e.g.*, *Harding v. City of Dallas*, 948 F.3d 302, 306 (5th Cir. 2020). The Supreme Court has rejected treating race and partisanship as one, and specifically held federal courts cannot police partisanship out of deference to the legislative function. *See Rucho v. Common Cause*, 588 U.S. 684, 718 (2019).

Because race and partisanship correlate, it is the duty of any claimant to disaggregate partisanship in order to show a true discriminatory effect. Plaintiffs have failed to do so.

2. Historical Context

Plaintiffs essentially repeat the claims made in the recent trial over the 2021 maps. But Plaintiffs have admitted that the Texas of the 2020s is not the Texas of the 1960s, much less the

1860s. Racial discrimination, sadly, is part of the state's history. But as even Co-Plaintiffs' expert Dr. Andrés Tijerina admitted, the discriminatory practices that once characterized Texas's treatment of its minority citizens—dispossession of lands, white primaries, restrictive racial covenants, the poll tax—"have not existed in Texas for the last 60 years." Tr. 5/27/25 AM 10:12–13:9.

Any historical evidence under this factor must be "reasonably contemporaneous" with the challenged decision in order to have any weight at all. *McCleskey v. Kemp*, 481 U.S. 279, 298 n.20 (1987). And the truth is that historical discrimination does not mean that minority Texans cannot now fully participate in the political process. Today, more than a quarter of the Texas Legislature is Hispanic. Tr. 5/27/25 AM 15:15–16:2. Linda Lewis—one of the first African American election administrators appointed in Texas—testified that Dyana Limon-Mercado, a Hispanic woman, oversees elections in Travis County. Tr. 5/29/25 AM 151:7–152:7. Texas takes pains to ensure election access—pioneering policies like no-excuse early voting that "helps all Texas voters," Tr. 6/6/25 PM 136:12–137:10, 138:22–24, translating all election materials into Spanish, id. at 145:8–10, and working directly with local election officials and members of the public with the aim that every eligible "voter is able to vote without being turned away." Tr. 6/11/25 PM 70:9–72:5. The Texas that once restricted access to the franchise on racial lines bears no resemblance to the Texas of 2025, and does not weigh against the lawfulness of Texas's 2025 electoral map

3. Sequence of Events Leading Up to 2025 Map

The sequence of events leading up to the 2025 special session and vote on the new map is discussed extensively above. Given the danger to President Trump's legislative agenda posed by 2026 elections and the historical trend of the presidential party doing poorly in non-presidential election years, there was a great deal of political pressure placed on the State of Texas to match the political gerrymandering of Democrat states. This pressure only intensified when other states, especially California, pledged to perform mid-decade redistricting to make their already one-sided congressional maps even more favorable to Democrats. At that point, there was effectively no way

for Texas Republicans to back down without an almost guaranteed cessation of the Republican majority in the House of Representatives.

None of those factors indicate race was involved, but merely reinforce the weighty partisan concerns and large stakes of the redistricting process.

4. Substantive and Procedural Departures

This factor is almost identical to the analysis of the 2021 redistricting process. The legislature was forced to call a special session by outside forces; the Democrats fled the state to prevent quorum; because the map had to be handled by special session (and because election deadlines were fast approaching), the vote had to be taken within 30 days; and Democratic lawmakers announced that they would vote against the map before they ever laid eyes on it.

First, it must be noted that there is nothing suspect about a decision to redistrict mid-decade. *See League of United Latin Am. Citizens v. Perry*, 548 U.S. 399, 408 (2006). As admitted by Plaintiffs within their Motion, Texas had done it previously. The timing, as well as the number of hearings and witnesses closely matches that previous effort. Moreover, Plaintiffs are incorrect when they dismiss all of the work that went into the 2021 congressional map.

The 2025 redistricting is based on the 2020 Census. Since 2020, the Texas Senate has held 21 regional and other public hearings, with the Texas House holding just as many. Ex. AD at 5–7 (Senator King). The information and testimony from these hearings were still available to the Legislature, and dealt with the same Census used in 2025. During the special session for redistricting in 2025, the Senate Committee held four regional public hearings via virtual testimony, a fifth hearing specifically for invited testimony at the Capitol, and then a sixth hearing at the Capitol for general public testimony. *Id.* at 5–7. These hearings included 242 witnesses in total. *Id.* Further, the Senate invited other witnesses to testify at an August 6th hearing, but only one—Gary Bledsoe, attorney for the NAACP—submitted testimony. *Id.* at 6. This is significant, as the Plaintiffs in the present lawsuit who are purportedly demanding more time: (1) prevented quorum for over 2 weeks and (2) announced they were not going to agree to any map; and (3) did not (apart from Mr. Bledsoe) offer or submit testimony on the map when given the chance.

Finally, redistricting has been addressed in special sessions of the Texas Legislature dating back to at least 1871 when the Legislature took up school districts in special session redistricting and then again in 1882, when it took up congressional redistricting in a special session. *Id.* The process in 2025 was Constitutional, was not unusual, and offered every opportunity for citizens to testify and provide concerns and information to the legislature prior to passing.

5. Contemporaneous Statements from the Decisionmakers

This factor was dealt with exhaustively above. The legislators in this case were blind to race when the map was drawn, then vetted it through legal counsel to ensure that it would comply with the law. They said repeatedly and openly that they—in response to a demand from the president—set out to draw a map that would allow 4–5 more Republican seats to assist the party in the mid-term. This is Constitutionally allowed.

What the evidence shows is that the Texas Legislature utilized a process to comply with the mandates of both the Constitution and the VRA whereby maps were drawn race blind, followed by an independent legal review of the map to determine compliance with the law prior to any vote on it. This process was developed to protect the statutory and constitutional rights of Texas voters.

Plaintiffs have failed to show that legislator statements contemporaneous with the passage of the maps are indicative of intent to racially discriminate. Instead, they rely largely upon statements after the map was passed, a letter written by a non-party, and references to *Petteway,* which Plaintiffs take to be a racist dog whistle. But they are forced to take this position, as noted by Rep. Al Green *supra* at 1, because if Texas' map is just Donald Trump getting what Donald Trump wants, then Plaintiffs lose.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, Plaintiff-Intervenors' and Texas NAACP's motions to preliminarily enjoin implementation of Plan C2333 should be DENIED.

Date: September 22, 2025

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Ryan G. Kercher

KEN PAXTON
Attorney General of Texas

BRENT WEBSTER
First Assistant Attorney General

RALPH MOLINA
Deputy First Assistant Attorney General

RYAN D. WALTERS
Deputy Attorney General for Legal Strategy

WILLIAM D. WASSDORF
Associate Deputy Attorney General for Civil Litigation
Texas Bar No. 24103022
william.wassdorf@oag.texas.gov

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
Special Litigation Division
P.O. Box 12548 (MC-009)
Austin, Texas 78711-2548
Phone: (512) 936-1700
Fax: (512) 457-4410
ryan.kercher@oag.texas.gov
kathleen.hunker@oag.texas.gov
david.bryant@oag.texas.gov
zachary.rhines@oag.texas.gov
munera.al-fuhaid@oag.texas.gov
zachary.berg@oag.texas.gov
ali.thorburn@oag.texas.gov

RYAN G. KERCHER
Chief, Special Litigation Division
Texas Bar No. 24060998

KATHLEEN T. HUNKER
Deputy Chief, Special Litigation Division
Texas Bar No. 24118415

DAVID BRYANT
Senior Special Counsel
Texas Bar No. 03281500

ZACHARY L. RHINES
Special Counsel
Texas Bar No. 24116957

MUNERA AL-FUHAID
Special Counsel
Texas Bar No. 24094501

ZACHARY W. BERG
Special Counsel
Texas Bar No. 24107706

ALI M. THORBURN
Special Counsel
Texas Bar No. 24125064

COUNSEL FOR STATE DEFENDANTS

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that on September 22, 2025, a true and accurate copy of the foregoing document was filed and served electronically (via CM/ECF).

Ryan G. Kercher
RYAN G. KERCHER
Special Counsel

State Defendants' Response to Plaintiff-Intervenors' and TXNAACP Motion for Preliminary Injunction

Exhibit A

Senate Special Committee on Congressional Redistricting, Video Recording August 21, 2025: 00:39:41-43:22.

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TRANSCRIPTION OF VIDEOTAPE

SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON REDISTRICTING

THURSDAY, AUGUST 21, 2025

****

P R O C E E D I N G S

CHAIRMAN KING: The Senate Special Committee on Congressional Redistricting will come to order. The Clerk will please call the roll.

THE CLERK: Senator King.

CHAIRMAN KING: Here.

THE CLERK: Senator Creighton.

VICE CHAIR CREIGHTON: Here.

THE CLERK: Senator Alvardo.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Here.

THE CLERK: Senator Hinojosa.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: Here.

THE CLERK: Senator Hughes.

SENATOR HUGHES: Here.

THE CLERK: Senator Miles.

SENATOR MILES: Here.

THE CLERK: Senator Parker.

SENATOR PARKER: Here.

THE CLERK: Senator Paxton.

(No audible response.)

THE CLERK: Senator Sparks.

SENATOR SPARKS: Here.

CHAIRMAN KING: Eight present, a quorum has been established.

Members, the purpose of today's hearing is to lay

out a bill. Members, as stated on the posting, we will not be taking public testimony today.

And let me pass the gavel at this time to Senator Creighton.

VICE CHAIR CREIGHTON: Okay. Thank you, Chairman.

At this time the Chair lays out House Bill 4 and recognizes Senate Sponsor Senator King to lay out the bill. Senator King.

CHAIRMAN KING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Members. I've just got a little bit I've got to go over here.

I reintroduced SB 4 on August the 15th, the first day of the special session. Our committee heard SB 4 on Sunday, August 17th, and favorably passed it out.

Now before us today is HB 4, the companion to SB 4 that passed out of the House yesterday. There are some minor differences between SB 4 and HB 4 that I will review with you shortly.

It is my understanding that the House Select Committee on Congressional Redistricting drew this revised version of the map with its outside counsel and experts.

My counsel has reviewed this as well and concluded that it complies with all applicable law.

Now, as I said, on August 15th I reintroduced Senate Bill 4, which was identical to the bill that the full

Senate passed out in the first special session.

This Committee held a hearing for public testimony on August 17th, and we heard from 42 witnesses. That means this Committee has heard testimony over this special and last special, if my math is correct, from 247 people testifying on redistricting.

At the conclusion of the August 17th hearing, this Committee favorably reported SB 4 out of committee by a vote of six ayes to three nays.

Now, where we're at this morning, on August the 18th, as I said, the House Select Committee on Congressional Redistricting introduced a substitute bill for House Bill 4 which they passed out of committee at that time.

The substitute, which is now HB 4 engrossed and before us today, affected 12 congressional districts, including CDs 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 14, 17, 18, 22, 29, 36, and 38, while maintaining the five now Republican-leaning districts, CDs nine, 28, 32, 34, and 35.

Additionally, HB 4 slightly changed CD-16 and 23 to move Fort Bliss into CD-16 and the El Paso general region.

And, again, what I'm trying to do here is compare SB 4 to the engrossed HB 4 that's before us today.

It keeps whole Navarro County which had previously been split, placing all of Navarro County into CD-6. It was

partially on CD-17.

It also moved Liberty County into CD-9 where it was previously in CD-36.

The House Committee stated their overall intent of the changes was to increase political performance in existing Republican districts from the proposed plan.

A review of the map -- again, we're talking about HB 4 engrossed. A review of the map shows that it accomplishes those goals through fairly minor changes.

Nine of the 12 districts affected are Republican performing districts -- again, this is relative to SB 4 -- six of which improved their Republican performance in the House substitute. Those are CDs two, eight, nine, 17, 22, and 38.

The remaining three Republican districts, CD-6, 14, and 36, slightly decrease Republican performance but remain 60 percent plus Trump 2024 districts.

Two out of the three Democrat-performing districts, specifically CDs seven and 29, slightly decrease in political performance for Democrats but will still strongly perform for Democrats.

The compactness also stays the same overall with some slight changes from the SB 4 map. As a reminder, both SB 4 and HB 4 have five districts that now lean Republican in political performance. Those five are CD-9, Houston; CD-

28 in the RGV; CD-32 in the Dallas region; CD-34 in costal south Texas.

At this time this morning, I would ask for your favorable consideration of House Bill 4 as engrossed. This would be the map under Plan C-2333, Charlie 2333.

I believe these changes -- I believe the changes that it makes are minor relative to SB 4, and that they are consistent with the goals that I've set forth for this legislation.

Those goals include: one, complying with applicable law; two, strengthening Republican congressional performance; and, three, maintaining compact districts.

Now, HB 4 also corrects a concern that was mentioned by witnesses from the El Paso area in one of our previous hearings and brought up by Senator Blanco about Fort Bliss.

And, again, what HB 4 engrossed does -- is moves Fort Bliss, or portions of it, the portions they were concerned about, back into CD-16, as requested by the El Paso constituents in testimony and by Senator Blanco.

And with that, Chairman, I'd be happy to take questions.

VICE CHAIR CREIGHTON: Thank you, Senator King.

Members, questions?

SENATOR ALVARADO: Yeah.

VICE CHAIR CREIGHTON: Senator Alvarado.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman King, you know, this map had some significant changes. And there was not a public hearing in the House Committee, there's not one here.

And I'm just going to focus on now what is my Congressional District 9. It has split up the east end community and has paired us with Liberty.

What we have in common with Liberty, I don't know. And I don't know how that decision was based. But it seems like -- well, no, you said it very plainly, the goal was to create more opportunity for Republican wins in these districts.

And I just -- I wish that especially my folks in the east end would have been able and come and give public testimony.

You talked about one of the goals being to keep districts compact. But if you look at CD-9, by extending all the way out to Liberty, it's not compact. Can you talk about that a little bit, CD-9?

CHAIRMAN KING: Well, as you mentioned, CD-9 moved into Liberty County. It made it a better performing Republican district, which was one of the objectives.

From a compactness perspective -- and compactness is a couple of different measurements for that. But even

looking at it visibly it, it's obviously contiguous.

It's still -- is amazingly more compact than many of the congressional districts that are on this map across the state of Texas.

I can tell you that as you mentioned, that was not in the original SB 4 configuration. But it still meets the goals that I had for the legislation, and that's why I brought HB 4 before us today.

SENATOR ALVARADO: You said one of the other goals was to create more opportunity for Republican wins, right?

CHAIRMAN KING: Yes. The intent was to improve political performance specifically for the five congressional districts I mentioned.

SENATOR ALVARADO: And who -- where did you get that idea from?

CHAIRMAN KING: Well, I think that's been discussed a great deal between all the Republicans in the Senate and in the House.

And it's been discussed by the Government. And it's been in the media. I think it's been a very prominent issue even nationally.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Well, it was discussed amongst you all. But before that who put the bug in your ear about that?

CHAIRMAN KING: I first learned about it probably

the same way you did, through the media.

SENATOR ALVARADO: And who were you -- who was quoted?

CHAIRMAN KING: Well, I heard a number of people quoted. I've heard congressional members quoted, I've heard White House officials quoted, I've heard Governor Abbott quoted.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Speaking of congressional members, did we have any testimony from Republican members of Congress?

CHAIRMAN KING: No. And I've specifically not -- I have not spoken to -- and I've said this before. I have not spoken to anyone in the White House, I haven't spoken to anyone in the Justice Department. I haven't spoken to any members of the congressional leadership.

The only two congressional members I've spoken to are ones I talk to all the time, and those just happen to be my two congressional members and good friends. And we didn't talk in detail about the map.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. Well, it seems like in the regulation session nobody was even contemplating this.

SENATOR MILES: Nor would they.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Would you agree? In the regular session.

CHAIRMAN KING: I heard discussions of it before

we adjourned, before we sine die from the regular session.

SENATOR ALVARADO: When was that?

CHAIRMAN KING: I would say -- I don't know. I think -- I really don't remember. I just remember during maybe middle of the regulation session I started hearing some discussion about it in the media and among just Republicans talking.

SENATOR ALVARADO: That's interesting because this is the first time I'm hearing you even mention that, I mean, because we've talked about it in the hearings. And I don't recall any discussion until President Trump talked about it.

And that -- I don't remember exactly the date of that, but I don't think it was during the regular session. I could be wrong. Maybe somebody can check.

Anyway, that's all I have for now. I'll save the rest -- I'll have more to say tomorrow. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN KING: Thank you.

VICE CHAIR CREIGHTON: Members, additional comments or questions? Senator Miles, you're recognized.

SENATOR MILES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me ask the obvious question, Mr. Chairman. Why are we not hearing testimony on the substitute map?

CHAIRMAN KING: Well, as I mentioned, we've already had testimony from over 200 people on redistricting. And then we had 43 people testify just the other day on

SB 4.

The -- this is the companion to SB 4. And it's been very common practice in the Senate forever that if it's a companion bill and you've already had a hearing on it and already had a lot of testimony, that you do not have to take -- or do not need to take public testimony again when you're considering the companion in the committee.

So we -- the parliamentarian has affirmed this. And, again, it's common practice we do a lot of times every session when companion bills catch up.

SENATOR MILES: Would you agree, Mr. Chairman, two things; that, one, this is not an ordinary situation that we're -- that is redistricting?

CHAIRMAN KING: I think we're -- the process we're taking for redistricting in this special session is the common practice that we have taken in every redistricting session that I've been a part of.

SENATOR MILES: Okay. Would you agree that by us voting on a committee substitute on which no testimony can be given or was given in the House, we are actually shutting out even more constituents from this process?

CHAIRMAN KING: No. Not at all. As I said, we've had over 200 people testify during the course of what, the last six weeks or so.

SENATOR MILES: But this substitute is making some

changes; is that correct?

CHAIRMAN KING: It is different than the companion SB 4.

SENATOR MILES: And would you agree with me that we're not allowing constituents to comment on the differences that you just agreed that we're making?

CHAIRMAN KING: No. I think anybody -- the public portal is still open. Anyone can still file comments about it. And they can of course reach out to us.

And we're just taking the same process that we use all the time on all different types of bills and subject matters with regard to when a companion bill catches up with the bill filed before the Senate.

SENATOR MILES: Okay. Let me move on, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Hunter insinuated that the public was lucky that hearings on these matters were held at all. I'm going to quote him. He said: "We held three public hearings. We're not required to hold those hearings."

With redistricting about -- affecting about 31 million people in this state overwhelmingly without their consent, do you agree on that statement, Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN KING: I think we held six hearings in the Senate. And with regard to the 2020 redistricting data on which this is based, I think there's been a total of 21

hearings in the Senate over the course of -- well, since 2020.

And so I think we've had a tremendous amount of input. I think we had over 3800 clicks to the online when we were doing our teleconference hearings.

And then again just for SB 4 and this special, we had 70 something people I believe register to testify. And we had I think it was 43 give us testimony on the companion to HB 4.

SENATOR MILES: So that you're -- are you saying that you agree with him or you don't agree with that statement?

CHAIRMAN KING: No. I think we've had quite a bit of testimony and --

SENATOR MILES: So you don't agree with that statement.

CHAIRMAN KING: Well, I'm not saying whether I agree with it or disagree with it. I'd have to ask you to read it to me again but -- and I didn't hear him say that.

SENATOR MILES: I'd be happy to, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN KING: Please.

SENATOR MILES: Chairman Hunter stated: "We held three public hearings. We are not required to hold those hearings."

And my question to you was with redistricting

about to affect over 31 million people statewide overwhelmingly with their consent, do you agree with that statement?

CHAIRMAN KING: I can only speak for the Senate. I believe we've had a sufficient number of hearings before the Senate.

SENATOR MILES: Sufficient answer.

Mr. Chairman, Chairman Hunter also stated on yesterday that he consulted with counsel to make sure that this new map was VRA compliant.

You also stated that you wouldn't vote on a map unless it was -- the lawyer told you it was VRA compliant; do you still stand by that statement, Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN KING: I do.

SENATOR MILES: Thank you.

And two more questions, Mr. Chairman. According to the Texas legislative counsel, as of this moment, 38.6 percent of those voting age population in District 9 is Black.

In newly created District 9, only 10.2 percent of the voting age population is Black. This is a negative change, Mr. Chairman, of 28.4 percent. Does that 28.4 percent drop in Black voting population seem race blind to you?

CHAIRMAN KING: So I haven't looked at any racial

data. The -- you mentioned citizen voting age population, or CVAP. I haven't looked at CVAP. I will tell you that CVAP is not really census data. CVAP is an annual estimate. It is very problematic in its accuracy.

But this map is based on 2020 data. And, again, I haven't looked at racial data myself.

I did ask our counsel to give HB 4 engrossed a very good scrubbing. They have reported back to me that it complies with all applicable law, which of course would include the VRA.

SENATOR MILES: So this is a House map. And you're saying that you didn't look at it, Mr. Chairman, before you brought it to us.

CHAIRMAN KING: I learned about it probably when you did on Monday, when it was presented. I learned about the changes then.

And before I took a hard look at it, I asked our counsel to scrub it and to tell me whether or not it was legally sufficient. When they did, then I tried to do a deep dive into it. And that deep dive is what I tried to relate in my opening remarks.

SENATOR MILES: Okay. So just so we're clear on something, Mr. Chairman, a 28.4 percent drop in Black population in the redo of District 9 and done -- just coincidental and that you're saying that this is not race-

based.

CHAIRMAN KING: Again, I haven't looked at any racial data. And I have tried very hard to not do anything that was race-based.

SENATOR MILES: Okay. Let's go on to District 18. According to alleged counsel again, Mr. Chairman, District 18, which hasn't had real representation for almost a year now, would go from 34 percent of voting age population being African American to 45 percent.

All of this happening while Hispanic votes age population drops 7.7 percent from 3.9 to 32 percent, and the Anglo population dropping 4.7 from 19.4 percent to 14.7 percent.

Would you agree that it's very much looks like based on the data that we are just packing African American votings into District 18, moving everyone else out?

CHAIRMAN KING: I can't respond with regard to racial data.

What I can tell you is that I'm told that -- or I'm aware that CD-18 will -- should still perform very strong as a Democrat district.

SENATOR MILES: It should, that's a correct statement, Mr. Chairman.

Senator King, my objection to this racist-rigged districting is not changed with this new map. In fact, my

opposition gets even stronger because now we're -- it's obvious that we're packing Senate District 18.

And it's obvious that these maps are actually race -- they're not race blind as you stated they are. But now there is literally zero opportunity for public to have any input in this map.

You break up communities but take no responsibility for them, as my counterpart said. And I'll be giving a no vote on this and any other committee substitute that comes before this committee, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for now.

CHAIRMAN KING: Thank you.

VICE CHAIR CREIGHTON: Thank you, Senator Miles.

Senator Alvarado, you're recognized.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you.

I -- you know, I'm just -- I can't let this go, Mr. Chairman.

You mentioned that you heard about this middle of the session. But if I recall, I think Lieutenant Governor Patrick on sine die talked about, you know, not seeing us until the next regular session.

Governor Abbott has talked about let's get this all done, we don't want to go into a special.

And the first reports of anything having to do with this redistricting efforts came on right around June

the 9th or 11th.

But you're saying that you heard some talk about this in the middle of the regular session. So that's just not jiving for me.

CHAIRMAN KING: I didn't take notes on the dates. And maybe I'm a little bit off. But I seem to remember discussions maybe even a little bit in the media, but I seem to remember discussions before the session was over.

Maybe I'm wrong. Maybe I'm thinking about the period between sine die and, you know, the first few weeks of June or something.

But for some reason I seem to recall having heard discussions, not that I generated, but I seem to have heard discussions during the regular session.

Maybe some of the other senators would remember that as well or remember differently. I don't know. I wasn't taking notes. I wasn't thinking about redistricting at the time. But I think that's when I first started hearing about it.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Well, I mean, I can't obviously speak for you. But I would strongly disagree because when you laid out the resolution for the rules, you mentioned that the only reason we were doing this, because it was asked, and you said because the Governor put it on the call for the special.

And then there was some talk, some reference to the DOJ letter. All of that happened in the special. There was no mention of any of this in the regular session.

If so, I can't imagine why the governor and lieutenant governor would be talking about not coming back for a special, let's get this all done, and then here we are.

So I just want to be clear because when we're talking about making changes to people's congressional representatives, this is a serious topic.

I'm really bothered by this new map because it's taking my home, my east end community, splitting it, and putting us with Liberty County, and not having any opportunity for the public to come and address this.

And these changes were made just in the last couple of days.

CHAIRMAN KING: I understand your point. Where I -- my home is, I think it was during the 1980 redistricting cycle in which there were a number of court cases and other changes, I think I went through three state senators without ever moving in a ten-year period. So I understand.

But that just occurs in redistricting. But --

SENATOR ALVARADO: When was that you mentioned?

CHAIRMAN KING: I think that was during the 1980s.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. But that was probably

done in a regular redistricting process, not in mid-decade.

CHAIRMAN KING: No, I -- well, I mean, it's a long time ago, I don't remember.

But I remember there were some court cases and things moved from -- so during that ten-year period, I changed senators. During that ten-year period, I changed congressional members without ever moving. I mean, that's just kind of the nature of redistricting.

And we've talked before about how many times I think we've had changes during the interim in maps. I believe -- have to go back and look at my notes, but I believe every redistricting cycles beginning 1960.

And so -- and I -- my home county is split as well. And that's just part of the -- part of trying to meet the one person, one vote population requirement as well.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Yeah. And I wrote down those years that you mentioned. There were quite a few. But that has been driven by mainly court cases, not because whoever was in the White House said they needed more congressional districts of their party. That's a big difference.

CHAIRMAN KING: Well, I know in 2003 it was -- it was because the Republicans took a majority in the House for the first time since -- well, in the legislature for the first time since 1870. And we did redistricting at that time in 2003.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Wasn't that because the courts did it and then so you wanted to come back and have the legislature do it?

CHAIRMAN KING: No. In '03, we did the legislature because you had a Republican Senate and a Democrat House, and a Republican governor. They were unable to pass a House, Senate, or congressional map.

In 2001, the redistricting board drew the House and Senate map. In the 2002 elections, again, for the first time I think since the 1870s, the Democrats lost control of redistricting.

And in 2003, in the special -- in a special session Governor Perry put congressional redistricting on the call, and we took it up.

And I think we went through three special sessions, because the Democrats left the state again then as well, and produced a congressional map.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. Well, it -- on what I'm being told and what I'm just reading back, it seemed like it was following the court case and legislature coming back --

CHAIRMAN KING: There wasn't any --

SENATOR ALVARADO: -- with the new --

CHAIRMAN KING: -- court case. We just had not done any congressional redistricting in 2001. And tried to do state Senate and House and were unable to pass a bill.

And so the redistricting board again took up House and Senate, and then we did congressional in 2003 --

SENATOR MILES: Okay.

CHAIRMAN KING: -- because we hadn't done it in 2001.

SENATOR ALVARADO: And was there -- was that -- did that come from the White House, whoever was in power, or was that something --

CHAIRMAN KING: I don't --

SENATOR ALVARADO: -- the state leadership and the legislature decided?

CHAIRMAN KING: I don't recall. I just recall it being put on the call.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. So right now as it stands, in Congress there are 25 Republicans and 13 Democrats, right?

CHAIRMAN KING: Yes. That's --

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay.

CHAIRMAN KING: -- part of the Texas delegation.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. and you said that one of the objectives was to create more Republican congressional districts. Why did you feel that was important?

CHAIRMAN KING: I always feel that's important.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. Because now it's going to -- from 30 to eight. I'm just -- you know, --

CHAIRMAN KING: I --

SENATOR ALVARADO: -- when is enough enough?

CHAIRMAN KING: Are you asking me personally? I am very proud of the work that the U.S. House has done and the President and the U.S. Senate over these past eight months now.

I was very concerned and disturbed with what was done during the Biden administration.

And I'm very concerned that if the Republicans lost the majority in the U.S. House, that the next two -- that the two years following the midterms could be very harmful to Texas and to the United States.

And so I want us to maintain a Republican majority and hopefully increase a Republican majority in the U.S. Congress. And it's my purpose for being willing to carry this map.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Well, I think all the work that the Trump administration's been doing, I think all those issues and policies and bills should stand on their own and let the American people make those decisions and not this rigged districting. Thank you.

VICE CHAIR CREIGHTON: Thank you, Senator Alvarado.

Senator Hinojosa, --

SENATOR HINOJOSA: Thank you.

VICE CHAIR CREIGHTON: -- you're recognized.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I just have simple points and questions -- points of clarification.

I know Senator Miles asked -- it wasn't clear, but the changes that were made in Senate Bill 4 by House Bill 4 in those congressional districts, those voters didn't have a chance to express their opinion after the changes were made. There was no public hearings on that point.

CHAIRMAN KING: So as far as the Senate, this is the hearing that -- the hearing that we're having today is the only hearing on HB 4 engrossed before the Senate.

However, it's the companion to SB 4, and we've had a previous public hearing with public testimony on SB 4.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: But we haven't had any on this side, on the Senate side. I know it gets overexplained.

But the point is that I'm trying to make is there was no public feedback or no public testimony on the changes that were made to those congressional districts that came across from the House on House Bill 4 as compared to Senate Bill 4.

CHAIRMAN KING: My only answer, sir, is that we're following standard Senate process in dealing with a companion bill when it catches up to the Senate bill.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: And I understand that. But, I

mean, it's just a pretty simple question. I mean, no, we didn't have any hearings pretty much on this changes made in the -- on our Senate bill from House Bill 4.

CHAIRMAN KING: I understand.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: The other one is there seems to be a contradiction between the three goals that you stated as it relates to improving Republican performance and then keeping communities of interest compact.

And the reason I say that because I look on Hidalgo County, which that's where I live in McAllen. You look at Congressional District 15 and Congressional District 28, you cut Hidalgo County in half.

Not only that, you separate Edinburg, the university, from the City of McAllen. Even DHR, doctors hospital, which has part of the hospital is in McAllen, the other half is in Edinburg, is split.

And you look at that's -- and if you look, you even split the city of Pharr in the House Bill 4. Pharr-San Juan-Alamo, which is one school district, is split in half. So how does that compare trying to keep community of interest compact?

CHAIRMAN KING: Well, first off, you know, if you look at the existing congressional map or the House and Senate map, in trying to do one person, one vote, it's inevitable that a lot of cities and counties are divided,

and school districts.

For one reason, cities and counties and school districts don't all share the same boundaries naturally.

But, you know, compactness has -- communities of interest has to do with a lot more than just geography. Communities of interest, as you mentioned, can be a city. They can be an historic neighborhood.

They can be a school district. But they can also be a water district, they can also be a water basin, they can be a transportation district, they can be an economic district of some sort. They can be any number of things that draw people together in common.

And I use my -- I guess I use my home district. My district stretches all the way from far east Tarrant County out into west Texas. And some of those counties have 4,000, one of them does, 4,000; another one has just 10,000.

And then I have Tarrant County that's a large metropolitan area. Yet they share the same transportation district, they have two water basins that -- river basins that provide the water for most of the entire area that have to work together.

They have -- they're in the same TXDOT region. I believe they're in the same DPS region. Actually, they share two TXDOT regions.

Their economic driver is the same for most of the

district, all coming out of the metroplex area.

So there's a lot of things that create communities of interest besides just the geography of a county or a city or a school district.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: Well, the -- all the factors you mentioned are being violated in the way Hidalgo County was being split.

And the communities that I know and I live in all my life, McAllen, you split it from Edinburg, you split the (indiscernible) school district, it's one school district and it's split in half.

So those are very important to our community and keeping those community of interest because congressional 15 goes all the way up to almost San Antonio.

The other one-half supposed to be Corpus Christi, Nueces County. There's another county which has been completely split.

If you look, some of the neighborhoods you have --

CHAIRMAN KING: Sorry. Which district are you going to?

SENATOR HINOJOSA: That's -- be District 34. And --

CHAIRMAN KING: Thank you. I'm up with you now.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: That district is also split and that part of the district runs all the way out to San

Antonio. And you split the Hillcrest Black historical community.

You split the Port of Corpus Christi which is an economic driver you mentioned a while ago from the university.

So it splits all this communities. They have no relationship to the way the congressional districts are drawn. They go way up north or way into rural counties that do not have committee of interest, same economic drivers, or the same historical roots.

So, I mean, those are issues that I think are very important to my congressional districts that now we have to sort of get to know a different congressional congressman and -- congress person.

I mean, I know the district as well as the one that was previously there. So those are very important factors to consider because my constituents are what I call they require a lot of help, they require a lot of assistance.

So this -- the way the map was drawn for south Texas is not very in the best interest of my community. That's my comment.

CHAIRMAN KING: I understand. Thank you.

VICE CHAIR CREIGHTON: Thank you, Senator Hinojosa.

Senator Miles, you're recognized.

SENATOR MILES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator King, did the -- we established previous conversation, previous meetings that the Republican Redistricting Committee is the one who drew our map; we established that, correct?

CHAIRMAN KING: I don't know if they had any --

SENATOR MILES: You spoke on that previously.

CHAIRMAN KING: Are you talking about SB 4 or HB 4 engrossed?

SENATOR MILES: SB 4.

CHAIRMAN KING: SB 4. Yes, we had talked about that they had -- well, so again I understand they were involved in that. I wasn't involved in that process with them. We -- I adopted and filed the House map when it became stalled in the House.

SENATOR MILES: Okay.

CHAIRMAN KING: And so I don't have all the history on how it was drafted.

SENATOR MILES: So let's check off. You established the House map and that's what you filed, correct?

CHAIRMAN KING: When the House map stalled in the House, I picked it up and filed it in the Senate --

SENATOR MILES: Okay.

CHAIRMAN KING: -- as a companion.

SENATOR MILES: And in previous conversation on SB 4, we had conversation on this daises that the Republican Redistricting Committee is the one who we're referring to draw the map, correct?

CHAIRMAN KING: Okay. It's my understanding that they were involved in the drafting of the original HB 4.

SENATOR MILES: Okay. Have you heard back from the DOB, Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN KING: No. I haven't talked to anyone with the DOJ.

SENATOR MILES: Okay. And is it -- do you understand, Mr. Chairman, that when Black folks and minorities tend to lean democratic, do you agree with me on that statement for the most part?

CHAIRMAN KING: I don't know how to answer that. I don't -- I think that I hope the people look at issues.

And I will just say that I can tell you on the map before us whether these historically will be -- have been Democrat or Republican in performance. But I don't want to speak about someone's political preference based on race.

SENATOR MILES: So you have no idea that Black and minorities tend to lean democratically.

CHAIRMAN KING: So I just want to say that I do not want to take racial data into consideration in my

promotion of this map. And what I have looked at and what I'm considering is how areas have historically voted. And I can tell you that --

SENATOR MILES: Well, --

CHAIRMAN KING: I can tell you in any one of these districts whether I think they'll perform strong or weak or split or Republican and Democrat.

SENATOR MILES: Well, if you don't want to take that position, then let me make it clear that it is impossible based on the statement that you made that you drew the map and you're proud that you've drawn the map for more Republican congressional seats is what you said to my colleague Alvarado just earlier, that you're proud of that for more Republican seats.

So knowing what I know, and knowing what's -- what is the obvious, that minorities and African American vote democratically, it's simply impossible to draw those maps race blind that you have done.

It's simply impossible knowing and making the statement that you're proud of the fact that you've drawn more Republican seats in the state of Texas, okay, with the fact knowing that African American and minorities lean democratically.

It's simply impossible, Mr. Chairman, impossible to have drawn these maps race blind. And I close.

CHAIRMAN KING: If I may respond, Chairman.

VICE CHAIR CREIGHTON: Senator King.

CHAIRMAN KING: It's actually incredibly easy to draw a map when you don't take race into consideration and when you're just trying to meet one person, one vote and look at Republican and Democrat voting patterns. It's really very easy to --

SENATOR MILES: You're looking at --

CHAIRMAN KING: -- draft a map. And, frankly, if I'd really wanted to sit down and draw one, I could have drawn one that elected more Republican seats probably.

SENATOR MILES: May I respond that?

VICE CHAIR CREIGHTON: Senator Miles.

SENATOR MILES: If I can respond to that, if you're taking voting patterns into place, then you know that minorities and African Americans vote democratic, if you're taking voting patterns into consideration.

CHAIRMAN KING: All I'm saying is you don't have to look at race to draw a legal map that meets partisan objectives.

SENATOR MILES: Well, if you say you can do that, Mr. Chairman, I find it awful funny that you didn't draw a map, you just took the House map.

CHAIRMAN KING: I took the House map because it met the objectives that --

SENATOR MILES: Which is to gain --

CHAIRMAN KING: -- I had for a map.

SENATOR MILES: Which is to gain more Republican seats, I understand, Mr. Chairman.

VICE CHAIR CREIGHTON: Members, any other questions or comments?

(No audible response.)

VICE CHAIR CREIGHTON: Okay. At this time, Members, we'll take a vote on House Bill 4. Senator Parker moves that House Bill 4 be reported favorably to the full Senate with the recommendation that it do pass and be ordered, not printed. The Clerk will call the roll.

THE CLERK: Senator Alvardo.

SENATOR ALVARADO: No.

THE CLERK: Senator Hinojosa.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: Nay.

THE CLERK: Senator Hughes.

SENATOR HUGHES: Yes.

THE CLERK: Senator Miles.

SENATOR MILES: Not no but Hell no.

THE CLERK: Senator Parker.

SENATOR PARKER: Aye.

THE CLERK: Senator Paxton.

(No audible response.)

THE CLERK: Senator Sparks.

SENATOR SPARKS: Aye.

THE CLERK: Senator Creighton.

VICE CHAIR CREIGHTON: Aye.

THE CLERK: Senator King.

CHAIRMAN KING: Aye.

THE CLERK: It's five to three, one absent.

VICE CHAIR CREIGHTON: There being five ayes, three nays, and one absent, House Bill 4 will be reported to the full Senate with a favorable recommendation.

CHAIRMAN KING: Thank you, Members. Is there --

VICE CHAIR CREIGHTON: Gavel back to you, Chairman King.

CHAIRMAN KING: All right, thank you.

Members, is there any other business to come before the Committee?

(No audible response.)

CHAIRMAN KING: Hearing none, Senator Creighton moves that the Committee stand in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Thank you, everyone.

(Adjourned.)

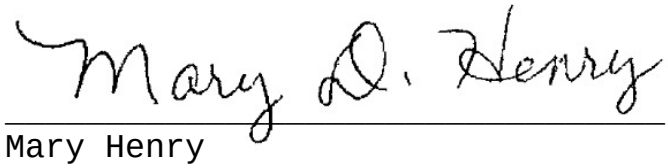
CERTIFICATION PAGE FOR AUDIO RECORDING

I, Mary Henry, certify that the foregoing is a correct transcription from the audio recording of the proceedings in the above-entitled matter.

Please take note that I was not personally present for said recording and, therefore, due to the quality of the audio provided, inaudibles may have created inaccuracies in the transcript of said recording

I further certify that I am neither counsel for, related so, not employed by any of the taking parties to the action in which this deposition was taken, and further that I am not financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO under my hand and of office on this 15th day of September, 2025.



Mary Henry
Integrity Legal Support Solutions
Firm Registration No. 528
9901 Brodie Ln.,#160-400
Austin, Texas 78748
512-320-8690
www.integritylegal.support

State Defendants' Response to Plaintiff-Intervenors' and TXNAACP Motion for Preliminary Injunction

Exhibit B

Senate Special Committee on Congressional Redistricting, Video Recording July 28th, 2025

SENATE COMMITTEE ON
CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING, SPECIAL

****

PUBLIC HEARING

July 28, 2025

****

P R O C E E D I N G S

SENATOR KING: The Senate Special Committee on Congressional Redistricting will come to order. The clerk will call the role.

THE CLERK: Senator King?

SENATOR KING: Here.

THE CLERK: Senator Creighton?

SENATOR CREIGHTON: Here.

THE CLERK: Senator Alvarado? Senator Hinojosa?

SENATOR HINOJOSA: Present.

THE CLERK: Senator Hughes? Senator Miles? Senator Parker? Senator Paxton? Senator Sparks?

SENATOR KING: There being...

THE CLERK: Three.

SENATOR KING: Four, would you show Senator Miles here, please?

THE CLERK: Yes, sir.

SENATOR KING: There being four present, a quorum will be established as the meeting progresses. No votes or actions will be taken in the absence of a quorum.

Ladies and gentlemen, I want to run through just some opening remarks that we need to cover

as on how today will work and everything, and during that time, I know we've got -- the other senators are just going to be here in just a few minutes.

As posted, we will focus on the East Texas region today, including the Harris County area. If you're interested in another part of the state, you're welcome to participate today. This is the third of our four scheduled regional hearings. Please note that the registration for this hearing has closed and the registration, this is registration to testify, will close 12 hours in advance of the upcoming hearing. The date and focus area are posted on the Committee website, but we'll include for Tuesday West Texas, including the El Paso and Panhandle region. But again, everyone is welcome today and at any of our virtual hearings regardless if your testimony focuses on East Texas region or another area of the state.

Please bear with us throughout these regional hearings as we collect public testimony via this video conference. And I know that sometimes technical difficulties can come up. We will certainly help you work through those. I do also want to point out that there are other options for members of the public to provide input if they are unable to testify today or didn't make the registration cutoff for today.

You're welcome to register for the next regional hearing and provide testimony at that time. The next hearing is still open for registration until 9:00 p.m. this evening. And if the clerk would show that Senator Hughes is present. The portal, you're also able to submit written comments at any time throughout the special session in the public input portal that can be found on the Committee website. The portal will remain available 24/7 throughout the redistricting process. Submitted comments are shared with the senators and are posted on the Committee's website for public viewing. And by the way, on the portal, you can attach any document that you might wish us to listen to, including if you wanted to provide your own proposed redistricting map. This hearing is also being live streamed and will be archived for public viewing on the Senate's website.

So why are we here today? The governor has added the subject of congressional redistricting to the special session call. We are here today in response to that charge. I cannot speak to what the outcomes will be with redistricting, but I do know that hearing from Texans is a critical part of the process. I believe these regional hearings provide meaningful opportunities for input and discussion about

communities of interest and other matters critical to the subject of redistricting.

I want to thank everyone here today for your participation. Please note that since we are on a video conference, we are unable to hear in-person testimony today as stated in the posting for this hearing. There will be opportunity for in-person testimony in the future if and when a bill, a map in this case, is heard and there are always the opportunity to submit written comments through the online portal.

Now, as for logistics, I would like to give everyone a brief preview of the process for today's video conference testimony. Everyone that registered to testify and has signed onto the video conference link should be in the Zoom waiting room. We have, what, 110, approximately 110 people registered to testify in today's hearing. You cannot view the hearing from the waiting room, so you should view the live stream available on the Senate website via the link that is visible in the waiting room, so you will know when you have been called to testify.

For those in the waiting room, please make sure your screen name matches the name you used to register. If you need to step away from the hearing

for any reason, you may leave the waiting room and rejoin when you're able, as long of course as the hearing is still ongoing. When your name is called and it is your turn to testify, turn on your video, but keep yourself muted until I recognize you to speak. So what will happen as you're in the Zoom waiting room, I'll call the next four or five people a panel to speak, and then we'll take you one at a time. And when you're called on the panel, you should go ahead and turn your video on, the little button on your screen. And then when I call your name at that time, please turn off your mute so that we can hear you testify.

It's important to remember that when you are called on to testify, you should mute or close your livestream player. If you leave the livestream going, there will be an echo heard, and you've probably heard this before on a radio talk show or something where someone's being interviewed and they've got the radio on in the background and you hear the double echo, hear the voice there. So when you're called to testify, make sure you turn off the livestream or mute it so that we're -- you're not hearing yourself in the background.

Once recognized, you may unmute your microphone. Your audio and your video will be heard

and seen by both the Committee members and the public. Once I call your name, you will have an opportunity to provide your testimony to the Committee. I will have you state your name and whether you are testifying on behalf of any organization. So everyone has an opportunity to participate. I ask that witnesses, and again, we have over a hundred registered for today, that they limit their testimony to two minutes. And although I don't want to cut anyone off, we must be mindful of those witnesses that are still waiting. So please try to be concise so we can hear from everyone efficiently. Now, the senators will have opportunity to ask you questions and any of their questions will certainly not count against your allotted time. When you're finished with your testimony, you'll be released from the video conference and can watch the rest of the hearing on the livestream.

Also note, it's very important, also note if you're having technical difficulties with your video or audio, Committee staff will move you back into the waiting room and give you an opportunity to troubleshoot the issue, and we can call you back in the room with the next round of witnesses. If you need technical assistance, you can contact Zoom customer support. Please visit Zoom.us/join, J-O-I-N. Say that

again. Zoom.us/join or call Zoom customer service at 1-800-799-9666, 1-800-799-9666. You can also call our Committee office at (512) 463-0030, (512) 463-0030 if you're having any issues and we'll try to help you through those.

Clerk would also please show that Senator Paxton is present.

We have some housekeeping measures, but I'd like to -- I know a couple are particularly important to Senator Alvarado, so I think we'll hold off on those until we get everyone here. And, Members, are there any comments or any -- Senator Hinojosa?

SENATOR HINOJOSA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And just a comment in that as we move forward and continue having these hearings, at some point I would hope we would have a redistricting map so we can really zero in on the interest and the objections that our constituents out in the -- and the citizens of Texas may have, because sometimes there may be a sense we don't have a map before us that we're sort of groping in the dark and trying to swing in the dark which is not I know the purpose of this Committee. So I would appreciate that as soon as we have a map available to please make it available not only to us, but to the general public. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR KING: Senator, your comments are very well taken. I have not seen any map myself. Traditionally, during congressional redistricting the congressional delegations will submit their proposed maps, Republican and Democrat. I'm not in the process of drawing a map myself, at least not at this time, but as soon as anyone submits a map for consideration, it'll be made available to the entire Committee, and I certainly do expect one will pop up before too long.

So, Members, any other comments or questions? If not the Chair now opens for public testimony. As a reminder, public testimony --

SENATOR MILES: Mr. Chairman?

SENATOR KING: Oh, Senator Miles.

SENATOR MILES: I thought your comments were about your rules. Are we not going to be able to make any remarks or any opening remarks?

SENATOR KING: On anything you would like, sir.

SENATOR MILES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to make some opening remarks.

SENATOR KING: Certainly.

SENATOR MILES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Today's hearing is focused on East Texas, Harris County, and surrounding areas. Harris County

and Fort Bend Counties are where my Senate district is. Senate 13 contains all of CD 18, a good part of CD 9 and a part of CD 29. That is three out of the four name districts in the DOG -- in the DOJ hit list letter. These districts are also some of the largest majority minority opportunity districts in the state, Mr. Chairman. According to the Texas Legislative Council, as of 2021, over 70 percent of voting age population is in CD 9 is black and brown residents. CD 18 is over 70 percent. CD 29 is over 80 percent, Mr. Chairman.

This is not a coincidence, as I've said before. This is redistricting is nothing but an attempt to dilute and suppress voting black power and brown power of people in this state. It has been instituted simply to satisfy a racist agenda of the current president, Mr. Chairman, Members. Mr. Chairman, I would like to also comment on this video conference format that you spoke of. As far as I know, we have had about 80 people signed up to testify. Mr. Chairman, would you be surprised if I told you that during the in-person hearings in Houston at the University of Houston Saturday, they received around a thousand witness registrations, Mr. Chairman? Over a thousand.

Houstonians packed the University of Houston Auditorium and Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church, where I go to church. After that because Houston Committee, the Houston -- the House Committee Republicans would not hear all the witness registered to testify. Many people showed up and showed out to tell the legislature that they neither want nor this redistricting or asked for it. They did so defining their communities and did so basically blind because we haven't even seen proposed maps as Senator Hinojosa has said.

Assuming a thousand people did indeed registered to testify, that would be a little more than 12 times the registration that we have received for video conferences on our testimony. As I like to say in the chamber, if we can measure it, we can fix it, Mr. Chairman. Well, the numbers are clear. The digital divide is real and you receive more engagement with in-person testimony, Mr. Chairman. I believe we're doing the constituents a disservice with our current testimony format.

Finally, my motion for Ms. Dillon is still tabled. I understand that you wrote a letter asking for Ms. Dillon to appear. We have not heard a response from it. You know, if Ms. Dillon wrote the

DOJ letter to kick off this redistricting issue, it's Ms. Dillon that gave us this August 7th deadline as well. If Ms. Dillon believes we should dilute to suppress black and brown voices in CD 9, 18, and 29 and would like to threaten our legislative process, then she should come here and look us in the eye and answer any questions we may have, Mr. Chairman.

Committee Members, I said this the very first hearing, and I will say it again loud and clear. This is not redistricting, this is rig-districting. It is an absolute farce and disrespectful and to every black and brown citizen in this state, Mr. Chairman, and I'm not going to move from that position.

SENATOR KING: Thank you, Senator.

Will the clerk show that Senator Alvarado is present?

May I respond? Not in contradiction. I just wanted to respond. It's a good time to do some of the housekeeping and this follows up on what you've said a little bit.

I did want to say that with regard to our attendance on Friday, which was our first hearing, we had 778 people click in and watch online. Now obviously, some of those could have double clicked, left and come back in. We don't know those numbers,

but we know that 778 watched the livestream online hearing Friday. That day we had 112 register to testify, and 48 testified on Friday. The -- typically as you know, we have a lot of people when we have public hearings, they sign up on the kiosk, but not all stay to testify. A lot of them just registered on the kiosk to show that they were here to testify. But those, that delta between the 48 that testified and the 112 that registered to testify on Friday, we sent each one of them an individual email at the end of the day, and we got back a lot of really nice responses. Thank you for following back up and thank you for this service, things of that nature.

On Saturday, we had 527 people click on to the online stream service. So we had 527 viewers. Now, again, there may have been some that signed on for a while, left and came back, so they might be double counted, but we know that during the course of the hearing, 527 people clicked in, or if there were 570 that clicked on to watch -- 527, I'm sorry. On Saturday we had 80 witnesses registered to testify, 34 stayed on to testify. We, again, followed up with personalized emails to those as well.

I recognize that that the video conferencing is a different approach than what the

House is doing. They are going to Harris County and to DFW. And I understand that there's two ways to look at this, but I also think that not everybody lives in DFW, certainly not just in Arlington where they're at today, and not everybody lives in Houston. And we're able to reach out all over the state and give people from Amarillo to Beaumont, El Paso to Lufkin the opportunity to participate that would not have driven to DFW or to Houston or to wherever we went to.

And so I think we also had some people in their testimony thank us that they came to the House last week and were not able to testify, and so they were glad that they were able to testify with us. I remember someone else from South Texas said thank you for letting me participate in this way.

So I understand exactly the discussion between field hearings and regional hearings like we're having and -- but I do think we're offering a service that a lot of Texans are taking advantage of. So I under -- but I promise you that as soon as we have a map to consider, there will be public hearings here in the Capitol and we'll have as many of those as is necessary to do the Committee's work.

With regard to the subpoena, I did receive a letter from Senator Alvarado, I believe

specifically formally requesting that we subpoena the author of the DOJ letter. I don't object to doing that. We just sent the invitation Friday. Today is just Monday. Our rules do specifically say that we cannot subpoena during the regional hearing process, but that will be over tomorrow. So what I would suggest is if we and I -- and Senator Miles, I understand you signed that letter and so did Senator Hinojosa as well, the letter requesting a subpoena. So what I would suggest is Wednesday, if we have not heard back from the DOJ, that at that time we can have a formal meeting on the floor upon adjournment. And those are public meetings. It just -- we don't have to come to a Committee room and we can -- if someone wants to make a motion, it does take a two-thirds vote to issue a subpoena. In the meantime -- and I'll take up that motion. In the meantime, I'm going to ask Leg. Counsel to do some research because I'm told -- I haven't checked myself, but I'm told that there is some case law out there that says that a state legislative body cannot subpoena a federal officer because we only have the authority to subpoena those under our jurisdiction and they're not under our jurisdiction. I haven't read that case myself.

I also presume we don't have the

authority to compel someone from out of the state to attend. So I'll have that researched and we can take up that motion Wednesday, but I'm kind of fully expecting that we'll hear from the DOJ before then. I know that the email was received late Friday. You requested it, the invitation on Thursday. I sent it on Friday and I know it was received because late Friday we got one of those little -- I'm sorry you requested it Friday. We sent it Friday, and I got one of those email auto responses saying it had been received.

I'll also say, I guess it's public because it was on Twitter, that the author of that DOJ letter tweeted that she was spreading her husband's ashes over the weekend. So I think, you know, we need to give her a little slack on responding. So if we haven't by Wednesday, then we can certainly take up that motion, but I'm going to do the research before then.

SENATOR MILES: Is that it, Mr. Chairman?

SENATOR KING: Yes. Go ahead. I'm sorry. I think I got everything.

SENATOR MILES: Mr. Chairman, I thank you for that follow up. But I have to say, you know, watching and testifying are two different things, and I think the delta of 120 testifying compared to a

thousand testifying is a big delta, Mr. Chairman. Okay. Watching and testifying are two different things.

And I also would like to ask, Mr. Chairman, when we have the maps, is it your intent to do regional public hearings or just here at the Capitol?

SENATOR KING: To my knowledge, the Senate has never done field hearings when considering when a -- when there's a map before the Committee. I'm subject to being shown I'm wrong on that, but to my knowledge, we've never done that.

SENATOR MILES: Okay. The Senate has never.

SENATOR KING: The Senate --

SENATOR MILES: The House has --

SENATOR KING: The House is -- the House either.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: I think, Mr. Chairman, if I may?

SENATOR KING: Yes, sir.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: And it may not have been during without a map, but we in the past have had regional hearings. I remember being part of a Redistrict Committee. We had hearings down in the

River Valley, and quite frankly, I can't quite remember the exact date, but I do remember having to travel to other regions of the state. And I cannot tell you whether we had a map before us or not, but I'm sure we -- but I do remember the trips.

SENATOR KING: I know the Senate did field hearings in 2019 or 2020 in preparation for the 2021 session. And then of course, that all kind of got shut down for 2021 because of COVID.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: Correct.

SENATOR KING: And I think that's when they first went to virtual, the House and the Senate. I know the House, but as far as I know when we've actually had a map before us, we haven't done them -- done them -- we haven't actually done --

SENATOR HINOJOSA: Actually Senator Duncan I think was Chair at that time of the Redistricting Committee, if I recall.

SENATOR KING: Would have been the cycle before.

SENATOR MILES: So, Mr. Chairman, would the hearings be just like we're doing the video conferences, but regional or are we just going to have one big hearing?

SENATOR KING: Well, they would be dealt

with as any other bill is.

SENATOR MILES: Sir?

SENATOR KING: They would be dealt with in the same manner that any bill before any Committee is in terms of posting, and then we would have a hearing in the Committee room which would be open to the public and we would have witnesses and testimony in the normal course of business that we do for any bill, but they would be in the Capital.

SENATOR MILES: But that's going to be a lot of people, Mr. Chairman, a lot of people.

SENATOR KING: I would not be surprised.

SENATOR MILES: And yeah.

SENATOR KING: We always --

SENATOR MILES: I can belabor the issue, but I'm not, Mr. Chairman. You know, we've never had virtual, all virtual hearings either. But this is the first.

SENATOR KING: I think we did in 2021 during COVID.

SENATOR MILES: During COVID, with the exception of COVID. You're absolutely --

SENATOR KING: That was --

SENATOR MILES: -- correct, sir. Yes, you're absolutely correct. With the exception of

COVID.

Okay. We -- more to come, we look forward to getting those maps and, Mr. Chairman, I just think it's necessary that, you know, we get a -- everybody gets a chance to testify on something as important as this because, I mean, this is democracy and everybody should have a part in it.

And I respect you and I appreciate you, but things just aren't going right, Mr. Chairman. I'm sorry. Thank you.

SENATOR KING: Thank you, Senator.

Senator Alvarado?

SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I can't emphasize enough what my colleague, Senator Miles, is saying because we witnessed it. Look, the numbers don't lie. This virtual testimony, it's just not working.

SENATOR MILES: It's not.

SENATOR ALVARADO: If you look at how many people, and you gave the numbers, how many people have registered, how many people stay on versus what's happened in person, in fact, Saturday when we both left here, we went to Houston and there were still a couple of hundred people waiting to testify. So people are

showing up to the regional hearings and they're staying. They're waiting to testify. I'm not sure what kind of a turnout will happen in Arlington, but my guess is that people will show up and will stay. So again, the numbers speak for themselves on that.

Secondly, I want to just have some follow up questions about the DOJ letter for just a couple of points for clarification. After our first meeting on Friday, did you or your staff have contact with the DOJ prior to emailing the letter of invitation?

SENATOR KING: No.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay.

SENATOR KING: I haven't had any contact with that office.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. So then it seems like your response has been consistent. You said before your only interaction with the DOJ was but when you reviewed the letter dated, their July 7th letter and then the letter of invitation that was emailed to the Assistant Attorney General on Friday; is that correct?

SENATOR KING: That's correct.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. So those would be the two. And I think you said that you have not received any response from the Assistant Attorney

General's office?

SENATOR KING: So we -- of course we recessed our hearing and I went back to the office, wrote up a letter right then. Sometime after 5:00 p.m. I got one of those automatic responses from the --

SENATOR ALVARADO: And that's been it?

SENATOR KING: -- from their office saying it had been received.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. And that's been it?

SENATOR KING: That was Friday evening, and of course today's just Monday.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. And then we did some research and under our Senate rules and state law, issuing a subpoena that's been considered a procedural matter, not a non-procedural or subsequent matter, it's clear that if the Committee chooses to do so, we could issue a subpoena to the Assistant Attorney General Dillon during today's regional hearing or tomorrow. But I think you said that we're going to do that on Wednesday; is that right?

SENATOR KING: So my understanding --

SENATOR ALVARADO: Did I hear that correctly?

SENATOR KING: My understanding of the

Senate resolution we passed, it specifically says that we cannot issue subpoenas during regional hearings, but -- and I'm still not clear on if we can issue a subpoena to a federal officer. However, I will ask Leg. Counsel to research that for us all and I will also take up a motion Wednesday from the Committee to issue a subpoena if anyone cares to bring that. And you obviously do. Hopefully before then, we will have heard and have already begun to make arrangements for someone from the DOJ to come and testify.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. And again, I just, you know, keep bringing this up because the reason that we're here is because of this letter and they've given some pretty quick deadlines. I think it's August the 7th that they have --

SENATOR KING: Which I'm not sure what that is a deadline to.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Well, I just think if they're giving us some pretty tight deadlines, it's okay for us to give them a tight deadline to respond to us.

SENATOR KING: I don't disagree. I think -- and that's why I said Wednesday will take a -- be happy to entertain a motion. I'll be -- but always need to bear in mind as well, the governor could have

put congressional redistricting on the call regardless of whether he received that letter.

SENATOR ALVARADO: I don't think that would've happened. I don't think he was going to put this on the call until he got that letter and until Trump called him. That's what sparked all of this. That's why we're here, because none of this was ever discussed during the regular session. And as I said on Saturday, usually in Special sessions you take up things that -- bills that needed to be tweaked or something like the Central Texas floods that happened. But nobody was talking about redistricting in the Special session. The only thing we were talking about kind of on the sidelines was the court case in El Paso.

SENATOR KING: Well, I'm not at all disagreeing with you that that's the norm, but I will say the map that we're -- that's in place today for the congressional members was passed in a Special session in 2021 and then reaffirmed in 2023 during the regular. And then we -- on occasions during the prior decade due to court orders or the governor, then Perry, just on his own initiative, putting it on the call, have dealt with redistricting.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. Well, and since I brought up El Paso, we've referenced the court case

in El Paso several times, whether on the floor or here. Is it leadership's intention to push members to move forward with withdrawing the map in the next couple of weeks? Then it would be beneficial for all the Committee members to be knowledgeable about the claims raised in the ongoing litigation and the State's position on the 2021 map and what the expert witnesses said. Would you be willing to ask the Attorney General's office to provide us with full transcripts from the trial and have them to be part of the legislative record?

SENATOR KING: Yeah, we can certainly ask those -- them to make them available. Probably drop them into our Dropbox if they do that. I can tell you that I've called the Attorney General's office and asked them to come and just brief me, and they've done that. And then I've read quite a few of the documents myself, not all of them, by any measure, and I also read the Attorney General's response to the DOJ letter at issue and the Court's response to the motion by the plaintiffs to reopen testimony because of that letter. And I'm sure that if you individually wanted to ask the Attorney General's office, they'd come to your office and brief you up on it as well.

But we'll ask them to pick out the

pertinent documents that'll give a good overview and get those to us, and they're all public record, and we'll be happy to make sure they get dropped into the Committee, into your Dropbox, the Committee Dropbox.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you. I would appreciate that. I think it's important for us to see that because attorneys, state officials, people were under oath and talked a lot about how the maps in 2021 were racially blind, VRA compliant, constitutional. And I'm just curious if -- were people lying back then, or are they -- I mean, even the man that drew the map, Mr. Adam Kincaid testified to that. And so was he committing perjury? Was he doing something else? I think it's important that we have that, so I appreciate your reply. Thank you.

SENATOR KING: Happy to do that.

SENATOR MILES: One last thing. You know, it bothers me that we continue to treat this mid-decade redistricting like any normal redistricting because it is not a normal redistricting. But yet we insist on --this body insist on treating it as if it is a regular redistricting cycle. This is not a regular redistricting cycle. So why are we treating this as if it is? I mean, we've -- we -- this is a mid-decade redistricting called by the President of the United

States for personal reasons, but yet we want to conform it into one of our regular decade redistricting. It's a round peg trying to go into a square hole. So why do we have to go by the guidelines of our regular redistricting process?

The President's office isn't, our governor's office isn't, our Lieutenant Governor's office isn't.

SENATOR KING: So what I'm trying to do --

SENATOR MILES: And, Mr. Chairman, I'm going to say this before you say that. I have the utmost, once again, the utmost respect for you and my colleagues, but this is an arrogant process. This is a blatant, arrogant, conceited process that's just being shoved down the throats of our -- of the citizens of Texas, particularly the African American and brown who is going to hurt the most. By no means am I calling any of my colleagues arrogant and cocky, but this process is, Mr. Chairman, this process is. And it's going to hurt my community. It's going to hurt Senator Alvarado's community, and it just seems like nobody cares. It's like we don't exist in this state. And many a times I've said to you, my colleagues, the strength of Texas is in its diversity. We cannot live

up to our full capacity until we embrace our diversity. It's getting ridiculous, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR KING: Senator, thank you for your comments, and I take them in the -- with the intent that they were offered.

SENATOR MILES: Please do, sir. Thank you.

SENATOR KING: And what I'll do, what my commitment is that we'll -- I'll do my best to make sure that we operate the Committee in full accordance with the rules of the Senate and with the rules of the Senate resolution we passed on Monday. And I will do my best to try to keep it as open and transparent as possible. So if y'all have any more requests for information, let me know and I'll do my very best to accommodate those.

Again, for right now, we're just in an information gathering stage. We're here in -- because the governor, we're in response to the charge, the governor placing this on the call. And we have one more information hearing tomorrow. After that, as I mentioned, we can have a discussion Wednesday if someone wants to offer a motion for a subpoena. In the meantime, I'll ask for Leg. Counsel to research that question of subpoenaing a federal officer.

And with your help I'd like to go ahead and open us up for the witnesses. I know we have a few standing by, including a couple of congressional members. We have about 50 people in the waiting room, so is -- are there any more comments --

SENATOR ALVARADO: Mr. --

SENATOR KING: Yes, Senator Alvarado?

SENATOR ALVARADO: I do have a suggestion. Since we have Senator Hughes on the Committee and he as Chair of State Affairs, they did issue a subpoena to the CEO of BlackRock who lived out of state in New York, so maybe he can lend his expertise in helping us to get that subpoena if the issue is subpoenaing somebody that is out of state. Just a suggestion since he has experience doing that --

SENATOR KING: I've already planned on consulting him --

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay.

SENATOR KING: -- about this. And I do need to make sure that there's not something unique in the fact that it's a federal officer. But again, we will have a -- we will have a hearing on this Wednesday right after we recess for the day and by then hopefully we have all the answers and we may well find that we've already received a response to our invitation and

worked out a date for someone from DOJ to come testify.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you.

SENATOR KING: Thank you.

That said, anybody else? All right.

Senator Hughes, did you --

SEN. HUGHES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And you have all this under control. You -- of course, you're proceeding appropriately. I would only to give a little context to our colleague, Senator Alvarado.

The Committee on State Affairs authorized by a two-thirds vote authorized the Chair to issue subpoenas to a number of financial firms, BlackRock, I believe BlackRock, State Street, also ISS and Glass Lewis, ISS a proxy advisory firm was back in 2022. Armed with that, we contacted those entities, told them what we wanted, and they agreed to comply without the necessity of issuing the subpoena. So we never tested that issue.

We also, in that case though, each of those firms have people in Texas. So our backup was even if we couldn't get to the boys in New York, they had folks in Texas we could spend if we had to. So just for context, everything you said is true, but we never got to the point of having to enforce that subpoena against an out of state person. We hope we

have that authority, but again, we never tested that. So -- and of course I going to assist the Chair and the Committee moving forward, but I want to make sure we were clear on that what happened with State of Affairs historically.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR KING: Okay. Thank you.

Anybody else?

Yeah. Staff's telling me I need to clarify that what I meant by hearing on Wednesday is we would have a formal meeting of the Committee upon the end of that day's business.

SENATOR MILES: Mr. Chairman?

SENATOR KING: Yes, Senator Miles?

SENATOR MILES: Respectfully, we have our congressional people waiting.

SENATOR KING: I was just fixing to call them up.

SENATOR MILES: Okay. Thank you.

SENATOR KING: All right.

SENATOR MILES: Just want to make sure we give them due respect.

SENATOR KING: And I'm going to call them up one at a time and I'm going to call the Honorable Al

Green first. Not giving him preference over Congresswoman Fletcher, but his name is just first up on the list. So -- and he is the senior member.

Congressman, are you with us? Congressman, are you able to hear us? And could you speak so we can -- you need to unmute your screen.

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: I'm unmuted, I think.

SENATOR KING: There you are. Okay. Great. Thank you for being here with us today. We can see your -- see you and we're eager to hear what you have to say. Please proceed. And just for our record, just so it's on the archived tape, if you would please state your name and who you're representing today.

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: I'm Congressman Al Green and I represent the 9th Congressional District of Texas. But I think I represent people across the length and breadth of the state because the issue impacts people across the length and breadth of the state. And if I may say so, I take no great delight in saying what I'm about to say.

Let me start by thanking the Committee. I thank the senators. I thank you, Mr. Chairman, the Vice Chair. And I want to associate myself with the remarks of Senator Miles and Senator Alvarado. They

took up quite a bit of what I would need to say and don't have time to say. There's not enough time to explicate so I will abbreviate.

This is wrong. It is wrong for us to conclude that we can eliminate four districts with minority representation simply at the behest of a president who wants to stay in office. This is unconstitutional. It is, in my opinion, what Senator Miles said. This is a racist act. This is not something that you should do. The Justice Department is asking the state of Texas to commit a racist act.

I have no problem saying the word racism, just as I have no problem saying antisemitism. If we were about to eliminate four districts that were electing Jewish members of Congress, we'd say it's antisemitic, and I would be one of the people out front saying it. So I'm out front now saying that this, this act is wrong, and it is a racist act, and it's something that we should not allow to occur.

Now, most of the conversation is about maps. I would hope that the Committee of the -- would consider not taking any action at all. Maybe the people in the state of Texas are not wanting to see redistricting right now, mid-decade, and to see what's about to happen. It's sort of like having a basketball

game and at halftime you have one team that has the power to say, look, it looks like we may run into some difficulties in the second half. Let's take three of their players and let's put them off the field and we'll take three more players and put them on our team. So we'll play them, they'll have two and we'll have eight. I mean, this is what we are doing. We're taking from the minority communities, and we are going to now give it to a broader community so that it can continue to maintain power. Yes, it's a power grab, but it's a racist power grab.

I do thank you. I don't want to exceed the time. If I'm asked a question, I'll be more than proud to answer. And I thank you again, no delight in saying what I say, but sometimes you have to speak truth to power and truth about power. This is about President Trump and what he wants for Texas. Let's do what is best for the Texas Texans. I thank you.

SENATOR KING: Thank you, sir.

Members, any questions for the congressman?

SENATOR MILES: I have quite a few, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR KING: Senator Miles?

SENATOR MILES: I have quite a few, Mr.

Chairman.

Congressman Green, let me first, thank you for taking time to testify today. You know, I've known you for a long time and you've been a great representative to your community and in Washington DC. And I know how much you care about your constituents. I just have five questions that I want to get through at what this rigged redistricting will mean for our community, Mr. Congressman Green.

Congressman Green, how long have you been representing Congressional District 9?

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Since 2005.

SENATOR MILES: 2005. So you've been through how many 10-year redistricting cycles?

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Well, the truth is this I have been in court litigating more than the -- pardon me, at least half of the time that I've been in Congress. I arrived in 2005. I was elected in '04 and shortly thereafter became a part of litigation. I'm currently a part of the litigation taking place in El Paso, Texas. And yes, I have been there. And yes, I know that the testimony from the State has been that this is a colorblind map. And I understand that if you say it's colorblind, then you ought to defend colorblind. You should not allow the president to say

you should do something that obviously ignores this and would in fact be unconstitutional if you did it. But the president doesn't care about it being unconstitutional if you will implement it, because it'll take years before it will get to a final judgment in court. And by this time the president will either be out of office or he'll be holding over under some sort of martial law.

SENATOR MILES: And, Congressman, you said you've been most of your time in court including in Laredo, El Paso. How -- what was the outcomes of those other trials that you've been in besides -- except for the -- this latest one?

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Well, we've had some positive outcomes but it was when Section 2 and Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, when they had more strength than they have now. The Voting Rights Act is being chipped away, and the only thing left for us now is Section 2. And we are not going to win under Section 2 unless we show that this act by the state of Texas. If it doesn't, and I pray that it won't, I take no delight in saying what I say, but if we don't say that this is racial, if we don't indicate that, we are not going to get to Section 2 and we can't win. And people are very smart. They understand that if they say that

this is just politics, this is partisan politics, or this is a power grab, they understand now that the law has devolved to the point where you can say that, and then I've got to prove, no, that's not what your intent was. And that is almost impossible. So let's not have the state of Texas do what the president is asking, and that is something that's unconstitutional.

SENATOR MILES: Thank you for outlining that, Mr. Congressman. Mr. Congressman, can you tell me a little bit about your community?

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Yes, Senator. I have a very diverse community. Everybody likes to say theirs is the most diverse when in fact my --

SENATOR MILES: Including me.

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Well, my community -- and the ballot is printed in four languages, English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Chinese. In my community we have what's called an international district, and that is a district wherein we have literally all sorts of cultures that come together and people come together and we have created what I call a symbiosis. We're doing more together than we could ever do separate and apart from each other. And this symbiosis is something that you talked about, Senator Miles, and this is what we need in the state of Texas,

appreciating what each can bring to the table and allowing that to cause us to do together what we could never do separate and apart from each other.

But aside from the symbiosis and aside from the international district, we have the largest medical center in the world in the 9th Congressional District. It's a great economic engine for the 9th Congressional District. And my regret is going to be that it'll be drawn in such a way that the people that I represent who need the benefits of that medical center, the medical center that we have brought dollars into to help the people of Texas and anyone else who comes into the medical center, it could be drawn away such that the projects that we have and the things that we are doing with the medical center, we may no longer be able to do.

Aside from those things, I would add that this district has what I call character, and it is the character of constituents who understand that it is necessary to work together. Sunnyside, which is a neighborhood that is inhabited by people who have been there for a long time, an old neighborhood. People who understand the importance of voting, understand the importance of protecting their neighborhood from many of the things that are encroaching that would make it

not as livable as they want it to be. But we have Sunnyside. It's a crazy --

SENATOR MILES: Where I was born and raised, as you know.

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Yes, sir.

And then we have South Park. South Park Village. South Park in that area where we have people who are youngsters, a lot of them up and coming young people but also another very much older and stable community. And then of course we have the communities out in the Fort Bend area and over also into the Brazoria County area. So we cover three different counties, but we've been able to bring people together in all of these counties. I meet with the people in these counties regularly. I don't depend on being able to raise $5 million to win an election, and too many people do. They say they won, but they bought the election. When you can outspend your opponent 10 times, 10 to 1, have you really won by virtue of what you are going to do or by virtue of your being able to drown out the audience or the voice of your opponent. I win my election because I use my feet. I use my voice and I'm in those neighborhoods and people know it. And this is government of the people, by the people, for the people, not government of the money, by

the money, for the powerful.

SENATOR MILES: You said that very well, sir. You know, Congressman Green, we heard from a Republican resident of Nacogdoches that he was dissatisfied with his congressional district because it's just crossed so many counties. He said he appreciated his representative, but his East Texas community had nothing in common with Round Rock outside of Austin. Congressman, do you believe that your district should remain the way it is because it has unique and common needs? And if you do, could you expound on that?

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Well, thank you. I am in litigation and we were trying as best as we could to improve upon the district with that litigation. And there were some things that were carved out of the district that we thought should have been left in, but we appreciate what we have and we don't want to go from a district where we were trying to improve it to a district that cannot be improved by virtue of what may take place with redistricting that's being offered up.

Eliminating four congressional seats where people are electing persons of color, which means that if I want the public to understand this, if this happens, that

means you're going to have four less seats with people of color, and you're likely to have more districts with persons who are Anglo, fewer people who are of color, fewer African Americans, fewer Latinos. You're not going to have that.

But with reference to your question, when districts are compact, you do have the opportunity to traverse the districts and to visit with your colleagues. And I mean, colleagues, senators, state senators and representatives, understand what's needed so that you can bring home those community dollars. We have something called community project funding, and I've worked with the senators, I've worked with the county commissioners, and we do this together. It's not a congressional effort. It's an effort of elected officials that have harmonized. And that harmony is something that I think we should appreciate, celebrate, and continue to cause to manifest itself in the 9th Congressional District and in the 29th. I don't mean to in any way say what I'm saying to the exclusion of the 29th, because I worked closely with Congresswoman Garcia and I have worked very closely with the Congresswoman Jackson Lee, very closely with Garcia. And when Sylvester Turner was there for a brief period of time, he and I were working closely together.

So you've got all of this harmony and we have the president coming in to do what he can it seems to create disharmony among people who are working together. I would hope that we would not let the President of the United States decide that he will pick the representatives for the people in the state of Texas.

SENATOR MILES: So if I'm hearing you right, Congressman, you're saying that the breakup of your district would be detrimental to the community as a whole?

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: It would, to the community as a whole, the district as a whole, but also to the adjacent districts because we work together. We work with Congresswoman Garcia. She and I serve on the same committee together in Congress, that is financial services. We work with the 18th Congressional District. But they've been without representation for too long now.

SENATOR MILES: Yeah.

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: And if the 18th Congressional District had been properly represented in Congress, when we had the vote on what's called the Big beautiful Bill it would not have passed with those votes because the bill passed with one vote and the

18th Congressional District, I am absolutely, totally and completely sure that it -- the representative would have spoken for the people of the 18th who are not enthralled with what happened with that piece of legislation, which is going to hurt Medicaid, which means you're going to hurt Medicare. If we all -- if we live long enough, we will all need Medicaid because your long-term healthcare once you're hospitalized, comes from Medicaid. And we want to protect it, and we want to protect social security. So we understand what we have in common, and we work for a common cause standing on common ground.

SENATOR MILES: So, Congressman, our community in your district is not special just because of the communities. It's really special because of the diversity; is that correct?

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Absolutely. Totally. Yes.

SENATOR MILES: And if you could estimate, what would you estimate the racial makeup of Senate District 9 basically be is? Congressional 9. I'm sorry. If you had to, if you had to estimate what's the breakdown?

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: The ethnic group that would have the greatest number would be the Latino

community, followed by the African-American community, followed by the Anglo community, followed by the Asian community. The mixture has blended well together. We work together, we celebrate together. We celebrate the New year at least one or two months sometimes, depending on how the lunar New Year falls. So all of these are things that have made the district more colorful and made it much more attractive to visitors coming to Houston, Texas. The international district draws people from across the globe. I'm very proud to represent it.

SENATOR MILES: And the neighborhood of Sharpstown, it's in your district, right, Congressman?

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Yes. The sliver of it is in -

SENATOR MILES: Yeah.

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Yeah. But yes.

SENATOR MILES: And do you know how many languages are spoken at Sharpstown High School?

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Well, Sharpstown High School, Alief, I had a little portion of Alief too. I can't give you the exact number.

SENATOR MILES: There are 22 different languages spoken at a high school in your district, Congressman, 22 different languages at one high --

public high school.

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Well --

SENATOR MILES: At Sharpstown High. It is also in my district.

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Yes, sir. And if I may add this, Senator, with your permission. Over 120 languages, I believe in the district itself. We have a polyglot community. We recognize the importance of culture in the community. You know, we live in a country where you can have unity without uniformity. We don't all have to be alike. We don't have to look alike. We don't all have to speak the same language all the time. We can have unity notwithstanding this without that kind of uniformity. So if the president is trying to achieve uniformity across the length and breadth of the country, Texas is not a good place to start because Texas is a very diverse state with a minority population that exceeds what we used to call the majority population. It's just a fact. And with these facts will come some additional responsibilities, and that is to have minority voices.

Minority voices are important. They give people who think that they are not being properly represented the opportunity to see representation that comes from the community that people have known and

respected. I just think that this whole plan, scheme, plot that the president has put together is to disrupt and to cause disharmony and is going to be unconstitutional, but it'll be more than two years. He'll be out of office before it will be proven to be such, because they're asking that we deal with four communities that have -- four districts that have elected people of color. And removing those four people is going to make a difference.

SENATOR MILES: And, Congressman, correct me if I'm wrong, but Congressional District 9 also produces one of the largest block, blocks of democratic votes in the state of Texas, as well as one of the largest blocks of democratic votes in the country; is that correct?

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Correct. It has traditionally supported the Democratic candidate for president, the Democratic candidates for state senators, I mean United States Senators and other statewide offices. Yes, it is a strongly drafted and constructed democratic district. I would hope that we would not deny Democrats to have an opportunity to have a voice. I respect the Republicans and the voice that they have. I trust that Democrats will have an opportunity to have our voices continue to be respected

in the Congress of the United States of America.

SENATOR MILES: So, Congressman, let me be respectful to my colleagues and to Congresswoman Lizzie Fletcher with one last question. So it kind of looks like the only concrete piece of information about this redistricting is that President Trump publicly said he wants five new seats out of Texas. And after that, the DOJ letter was drafted that flatly attacked majority minority congressional districts. Would you agree with that, Mr. Congressman?

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: I absolutely agree with it. And, Senator, I think it's important for this to be said. You and I have not had a discussion about this.

SENATOR MILES: No, we have not.

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: The questions are all questions that I'm hearing for the very first time today. No prior discussions. So we come to the table with clean hands and a strong voice merely asking for justice. This is an injustice if we proceed as the president has asked, and it would be an injustice perpetrated upon people who have demonstrated that they love this country just as much as anybody else does. They may have values that are different, but that's across the state, across the country. Let the voices

of all be heard and let us not decide that in the middle of a decade, we can change the rules so that a president can maintain his power in office.

SENATOR MILES: You know, Mr. Congressman, I asked my colleagues on the Senate floor, did they think that was just a coincidence that they're coming after the district they're coming after. Do you think it's a coincidence, Congressman Green?

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Well, it is no secret that the president and I have had national news -- made national news in terms of our disagreements. And I've had at least one person to tell me that if the president doesn't get five, there's at least one that he's coming after. So I hear these things and I notice, and I cannot ignore the relationship between myself and the president, but I think that it's bigger than me. I think that he does want to get more districts, and I think that while I may be one of the many that he might take, there's an effort to do more than to harm just the 9th District, which would do more than to harm just one constituency. There are many constituents that would be harmed.

And, by the way, it's about the people that we serve, not about the people that we ourselves who rep -- are going to Congress, represented in

Congress. We are representatives of the people. This is a democracy, but it is a democracy that is within a republic. And the republic aspect of this means that the people select the candidates of their choice. And the people of the 9th, the 18th, the 33rd and the 29th have elected people of their choice and they just happen to be people of color. There are many districts where Anglos are in the majority and they elect the people of their choice, and they happen to be Anglos. And there's no big deal made of it. No big deal if Anglos elect an Anglo person. But if we minorities select a minority person, somehow the Justice Department believes that you can change that and you can do something unconstitutional. And that is decide that you're going to violate Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act and discriminate against minorities simply because they are a majority in a district.

SENATOR MILES: Congressman, I've always appreciated your leadership. I want to say thank you. As I say to our constituents all the time, we must keep our faith and keep our fight. Thank you, Congressman Green.

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR MILES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR KING: Thank you, Members. Any other questions, Senator? Okay.

Congressman, thank you for being here with us today.

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR KING: The Chair calls Congresswoman Lizzie Fletcher. Congresswoman, if -- are you -- if you would push unmute on the screen and try to speak. See if we can get you up there. There you are. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE FLETCHER: Yes. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

Good afternoon to the Committee. I am Congresswoman Lizzie Fletcher, and I have the honor and privilege of representing the people of Texas's 7th Congressional District, which is made up of diverse and vibrant neighborhoods in Houston from Main Street and Midtown Southwest and Harris and Fort Bend counties. And Congressional District 7 is a majority minority district where black, Hispanic, Asian American, and other minority citizens have successfully elected their candidate of choice since the district was configured in 2021, and I'm proud to be that candidate.

It's important for you to know that all

but 1 of the 13 congressional districts in Texas represented by a Democrat has a majority minority population, and that in all 13 districts, it is minority voters who elect their candidate of choice. Those 13 districts are the only districts where minority voters who make up more than 60 percent of the population of our state consistently and reliably elect their candidates of choice to dismantle. Any of these 13 districts currently represented by Democrats would be intentionally diluting the voting strength of minority communities. You cannot do it without harming Texans, and you shouldn't. It's against the law, and it's against the fundamental organizing principle of a democratic society, that all citizens, not just the privileged few, have the right and have the ability to have a say in our government.

Configuring a new map where District 7 is converted to a district where white voters elect a Republican is an intentional assault on minority Texans. We have a long and shameful history of discrimination when it comes to voting in our beloved state. From poll taxes to whites only primaries, Texas has discriminated against voters of color for generations. But you have the power to reject that, to reject the pressure from President Trump and National

Republican operatives urging you to offset their electoral losses elsewhere by redrawing the map in Texas to discriminate against minority communities, to put Texans first, not surrender them. And I urge you to do so, to end this process and focus on the real and urgent needs of our fellow Texans and our great state. Thank you.

SENATOR KING: Thank you.

Members, any questions?

SENATOR ALVARADO: Sure.

SENATOR KING: Senator Alvarado?

SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Congresswoman Fletcher, it's good to see you. I -- well, I can't see her actually.

REPRESENTATIVE FLETCHER: Thank you, Senator. I'm glad to be with you. Thank you.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you. Can you tell me a little bit about your district? Because I think it's important -- you said some words that are very important. You were the candidate of choice for that district. Can you tell me about the makeup of your district?

REPRESENTATIVE FLETCHER: That's right. Absolutely. And I think there is a little competition

among members of Congress. I heard Congressman Green testifying that he thinks he has the most diverse district. I think of course the 7th Congressional District may be the most diverse district, not only in Texas, but in the country. The racial and ethnic breakdown is split among several groups. It is about 33 percent Latino. It's about 26 percent Anglo, 22 percent African-American, 21 percent Asian American. And it encompasses so many diverse and vibrant parts of the greater Houston area, starting, as I said, in the middle of town right off of Main Street and running West. And so we have the historic heart of the LGBTQ community in the Montrose neighborhood. Of course we -- I share a boundary with Congressman Green, and so the international district and Asia town on Bellaire Boulevard is part of this district as well as the heart of the Jewish community in Meyerland, we have a huge number. A big South Asian population as you get into Fort Bend County.

But throughout the district, there are minority communities that come together and elect their candidate of choice. And what that means is that while no one group has the majority in this coalition district, the choice of these voters is to -- I mean, has only been so far a Democratic candidate because

this district has been configured this way since 2021. And I've had the privilege of representing it since that time. It was differently configured prior to the last redistricting, and I had the privilege of serving two terms in that configuration as well.

But what we know about this community is that, you know, anticipating some of the questions, there are 140 languages spoken in Houston. In our community in particular, we welcome so many people from not only across the country but around the world. The 7th Congressional District has more than twice the average of foreign-born residents as the state of Texas, nearly 40 percent of the people in this district. It's home to the Gulfton neighborhood, which is kind of the Ellis Island of Texas. And I have spent the last several years just working closely with people in that community on the kinds of needs that folks have relating to immigration matters. We have had the privilege of helping resettle refugees from Afghanistan and working with our community organizations that are really focused on refugee resettlement and welcoming people to our great state. And I do think it's important this district and the Houston community in general is so welcoming.

You know, we all had to take Texas

history in seventh grade, right? And learn about gone to Texas and people wanting to come to Texas, and there's no better representation of a welcoming community where people want to be than Texas's 7th Congressional District. And there are just so many different people who live and work in this community and who have made it just an absolutely thriving dynamic place. And I'm so proud to have the privilege of representing them.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Well, I knew your district was diverse. I did not realize to the extent, and that's quite a breakdown that you just gave, and again, it -- I think the important words to recognize here are candidate of choice. It's just like when many of us were involved in creating the 29th Congressional District, we created that as a Latino opportunity district, and as it turns out, the voters chose a non-Latino to represent them. And that was the candidate of choice, and that was a man by the name of Jean Green, who I later went to work for.

And so trusting the voters to elect their candidate of choice is so important. And just your district is a very good example of that. Thank you for your testimony.

REPRESENTATIVE FLETCHER: Well, thank

you, Senator Alvarado. And if I might add, I do think it's really important that's what we focus on. This is about the voters, not the members. It's not about any one particular member of Congress. But I do want to note, as I said in my testimony, that all 13 of these districts, whoever is sitting in that seat, is the elected representative and candidate of choice of minority communities. And it's an incredible privilege for me, and it's my job to make sure that I'm speaking for everyone across this incredibly diverse and dynamic district, because this is about them. This is about the voters and not the elected officials, and it's important that the voters get to pick their representatives rather than the other way around.

SENATOR KING: Senator Miles?

SENATOR MILES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Fletcher, I want to also thank you for testifying today. And I also want you to know that you've also been -- the citizens of Congressional District 7 chose properly in choosing you because you're a great -- you're a great leader in your community. I've watched your work. I've also worked with you in our district because we share some of the same parts, Congressman Fletcher. And I want you to know, you know, that we're in this fight together, and

you've done a great job and your district is just as -- makes up for the Diversity District of Senate District 13, and you do a great job in representing the people of 7, did a great job in choosing you as the candidate. Thank you, Congressman Fletcher, and thank you for testifying today.

REPRESENTATIVE FLETCHER: Thank you so much, Senator Miles.

SENATOR KING: Senator Hinojosa?

SENATOR HINOJOSA: Just a quick question to follow up on Senator Miles and Alvarado. I guess, your congressional district is a majority minority?

REPRESENTATIVE FLETCHER: That's correct.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: And you're not a minority, are you?

REPRESENTATIVE FLETCHER: I am not.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: You are Anglo White?

REPRESENTATIVE FLETCHER: Anglo. Yes, sir.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: And that's why it's so important what -- where you have the candidate of choice and that's who the voters wanted and they elected you as congressperson.

REPRESENTATIVE FLETCHER: Well, thank you. I'm proud to be the candidate of choice of the

incredible people of the 7th Congressional District and have had the opportunity to represent many parts of the district now almost eight years. I'm in my fourth term. But certainly I was new to Fort Bend County after the last redistricting, and what I've found is this is the most dynamic and wonderful district. And there's just an incredible opportunity to work together to bring people together and that is very true to Houston and to the community that I have the privilege of representing. So I'm honored and proud to be their candidate of choice and to work with my colleagues across the congressional delegation and across our community. And I think what Senator Miles noted is very important too, that we work together and we build relationships for the long term. And so I have had the opportunity to work with Senator Miles and to work with -- by state representatives of course in the House, other state senators certainly, and our local elected officials for the benefit of everyone across our community, including the commissioners in Harris and Fort Bend County.

And I do think it's important that we have a community of interest and that we are all working together effectively to deliver real results for the people that we all have the privilege of

representing.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: Thank you for your testimony.

REPRESENTATIVE FLETCHER: Thank you so much.

SENATOR KING: Thank you. Members, any other questions?

Congresswoman, thank you for being here with us today, and I know you had to wait a little while to get online because we had some things to talk about. So thank you for waiting.

REPRESENTATIVE FLETCHER: I appreciate it. Thank you so much, Senator King. Thank you all.

SENATOR KING: I am going to now call our first panel of witnesses.

Oh, the clerk will also show that Senator Parker's with us.

And again, as I call the first panel if you will -- right. As I call your name you'll be moved from the waiting room into the Zoom. At that time, please keep your audio muted. Please turn your video on if I call your name. [Audio distortion] testify, at that time, turn your audio, make it -- turn the mute off so that we can hear you.

So the first would be Terri Webster,

Kevin Chance, Meg Barnes, Lynita Robinson, and Judson Robinson. Let me say those again. Terri Webster, Kevin Chance, Meg Barnes, Lynita Robinson, and Judson Robinson.

And, Mr. Robinson, I see that you're already in the Zoom. If you would turn your mute off and introduce yourself. I think we've got two witnesses on. So again, if you're one of the names I just called, please have your video on but stay muted. And, Mr. Robinson, if you would go ahead and introduce yourself. And if you're -- tell us your name and if you're representing any organization, if you would do that as well. And sir, you'll need to unmute.

JUDSON ROBINSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR KING: There you go. Welcome.

JUDSON ROBINSON: Judson Robinson, president of the Houston Area Urban League. Good afternoon.

SENATOR KING: Please begin your testimony and please try to keep it to two minutes.

JUDSON ROBINSON: I'll try.

Panel, good afternoon. As mentioned, my name is Judson Robinson, president of the Houston Urban League, 1 of 90 affiliates throughout the country

servicing about 10,000 people annually. We're here to help folks in the areas of education, housing, workforce, entrepreneurship, health matters, and to be a voice for those who don't always have access to the opportunities that others may have access to. And so we have been very instrumental in working with our partners, our elected officials, those who represent us and help to speak on behalf of those that we work for. So I'm very thankful that we have the lines that we do, and we work with the legislators that we currently work with because the work is so vitally important and because we're able to do the work, we're able to touch about 10,000 people a year.

Let me jump to -- in the interest of time the fact that there are three things I really want to make mention of today. First, the fact that trying to redraw lines in 30 days is next to impossible. Trying to do it where it's fairly done where it's not a rush to judgment, to where we have enough opportunity for the public to give their side, to review the maps, that's going to be vitally important to us. Knowing exactly what we currently have in terms of our representation and what we stand to lose is going to be something that is kind of ambiguous and without even having a map to look at, it makes it very difficult for

us to have any confidence going into this process.

The first access to congressional representation for black voters and other voters of color, we don't think that should be weakened with any new lines being drawn based on contradictory positions of the Texas legislature and the fact that race of voters has played a role in the 2021 Congressional map development. Secondly, the Texas legislature should rely on Texans every 10 years to research all the criteria necessary to conduct accurate and fair congressional redistricting. That should be done by us for us. Third, attempting as mentioned before, to complete any mid-decade congressional redistricting during a such a legislative 30 day session increases the risk of a rush and non-transparent process, thus limiting meaningful public participation.

Therefore, we urge legislature to not draw lines in any way that further harm black Texans and voters of color and risk further damage to those communities. We need to make sure that we have what we have. We know what we know, and the unknown in times such as these is not something we would welcome. I would encourage you to support the lines that we currently have as drawn.

SENATOR KING: Thank you, sir.

Members, any questions for the witness? Senator Miles?

SENATOR MILES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Judson, Brother Robinson, I want to thank you for coming out and testifying, taking time out of your day to testify, not just for yourself, not just for your community, not just for your legacy, but also on behalf of the Houston Area Urban League. You've done a great -- you've led for some time now and done a great job as you did a great job as a city councilman. I'm sitting here with a former city councilman Carol Alvarado, as you know. And we just want to thank you for taking time out and testifying on this very important matter. You understand what's going on. I'm sure your members understand what's going on. So I would ask you that you make sure and reach out to them and let them know what's happening as you always do. And in the legacy of your father, in the legacy of your father, the first African-American city councilman in the city of Houston, stand up and we're going to keep our faith and we're going to keep our fight, brother. Thank you.

JUDSON ROBINSON: Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR KING: Members, any other questions?

SENATOR ALVARADO: Yes, sir.

SENATOR KING: Senator Alvarado?

SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Judson, thank you for joining us. I know you were also at the hearing on Saturday, so thank you for showing up there, and I know that was -- it was quite a crowd. I'm sure you were in the audience for a while.

You brought up a good point about trying to get all of this done in 30 days and it being impossible. I talked about that a little bit at maybe it was the first hearing or on the floor, but usually -- and you've been through this many a times because of your -- the political family you come from and being on the city council that it takes months to get through the redistricting process. Would you agree with that?

JUDSON ROBINSON: I do. And I think it's important, Senator, to -- you know, this is really important. This is -- this is helping to shape the future of communities for years to come. And making sure that you do this fairly, that you are right, that you have all the data, that is very analytical and it's accurate. It's just important. You know, I think

working with people that you have a relationship with, you mentioned, you know, the history of our family's involvement in politics in Houston, and I've built, you know, tremendous relationships. Those relationships help us at the Urban League serve over 10,000 people a year. We help them get jobs. We help them buy homes. We help them find affordable healthcare. We help them do many, many things that had it not been for the relationships that we have, we would be in lesser of a position to be as effective as we have been. And I think at the end of the day, that's what we all want.

We all want to see communities that are self-sufficient that are producing at their highest levels. The programs that I have simply assist and help and make sure that no one misses the opportunity to have that opportunity presented and afford it to them. And so, you know, when I can pick up the phone and call someone who understands what it's like to come from the Fifth Ward, or the Third Ward, or from Sunnyside, that they understand what it takes to find a job in a job desert, where they're trying to find healthy access to food and there's nowhere to shop, that's something that you have to almost experience to appreciate the magnitude of the devastation and the challenge that it creates for people especially people

who live in these neighborhoods to really live with every day.

So, you know, I'm thankful that people like yourself and Senator Miles who, you know, I know personally and I know where he is, where he comes from, and how he got to where he is and the hard work that it took. And I remember you as a young worker in Congressman Green's office and how hard he worked to do the work that he did, and how he set a real example for, you know, what leadership looks like regardless of your race. But it's an outlier. Doesn't always happen that way, but I think the staff around him help to keep him grounded about, you know, what people that in the community that he represented really needed.

And so, I thank you for that and I thank all of you for your expertise. And I just hope that you will, as I mentioned at the last hearing, you know, bring not only your view, but try to see the view of others and to bring their lens to the table as well. It's very important as elected official that you're able to do that and that you are your own master. You know, there's been rumor a lot of this come from Washington DC and, you know, not even rumor, but it's, you know, persons at the Department of Justice that make recommendation that have all of us down scrambling

now. You know, so it's important stuff as I said earlier in my comments, and I just hope that we all take this opportunity to really kind of think about the magnitude of our actions and the long-range effects that'll have on the communities in which we live working for them.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you for showing up Saturday and for being with us today.

JUDSON ROBINSON: My pleasure.

SENATOR KING: Thank you.

Members, any other questions? All right. Thank you for being here today.

Chair calls Kevin Chance. Kevin Chance. Sir, if you'll --

KEVIN CHANCE: Okay.

SENATOR KING: There you go.

KEVIN CHANCE: Sorry.

SENATOR KING: Great. Welcome. If you would, please state your name. If you're representing any organization, please let us know that, and then I was a little bit loose with the last witness. Please do your best to keep your testimony to two minutes.

KEVIN CHANCE: I will.

Good afternoon. My name is Kevin Chance and I'm testifying for myself. And I'm angry. I'm

angry because I have to tell you, the Senate Redistricting Committee that Donald Trump is not your constituent. He didn't vote for you. You don't answer to him, but you should answer to your constituents. Donald Trump isn't Greg Abbott's constituent. Greg Abbott should listen to his Texas constituents, not billionaires in Pennsylvania and not Donald Trump. Stop bowing to a bully. Do your job, not Trump's bidding. Again, he's not your constituent.

We shouldn't even be here. You should be discussing flood mitigation and flood warning systems so Texas doesn't have to again deal with a heartbreaking catastrophe like happened in Kerr and Hunt Counties as well as others. You should be discussing common sense legislation concerning hemp products and not gutting an industry that generates 5.5 billion in annual revenue. Hemp supports over 53,000 jobs in Texas and helps tens of thousands of veterans deal with PTSD, anxiety and depression.

These are just two examples of what you could be spending your time on. But no, you have to bow to the bully and try to kill the votes a billion of people of color. That is racism. Trump ordered you to focus on four minority districts. That is racism. You can say all you want, that you follow the Voting Rights

Act, but the state of Texas has been sued in every decade for 50 years over gerrymandering. Why not for once do the right thing? Listen to your constituents.

I've heard testimony across both House and Senate hearings over the past few days, and I was in Houston. From observation only, I would say it had been overwhelmingly against redistricting. I would've testified in Houston Saturday but for the House time limit of five hours for testimony, hundreds were left waiting to testify.

So in closing, do the right thing. Listen to your constituents. Stop this nonsense now. Vote no on moving forward with redistricting. Thank you.

SENATOR KING: Thank you. Members, any questions?

SENATOR MILES: Just one state, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR KING: Senator Miles?

SENATOR MILES: Mr. Chance?

KEVIN CHANCE: Yeah.

SENATOR MILES: Thanks for keeping it plain and making it plain, sir. Thank you for making it plain.

KEVIN CHANCE: You're welcome.

SENATOR KING: And, sir, also I'm sorry you were not able to testify in Houston, but we're glad you're able to be with us today.

KEVIN CHANCE: Yes, and I appreciate the opportunity. I will submit comments to the House.

SENATOR KING: Thank you.

Chair calls Terri Webster.

TERRI WEBSTER: Hello, this is Terri Webster.

SENATOR KING: Hi. Welcome. If you would please state your name and if you're representing an organization, please let us know that and please do your best to keep your testimony to two minutes.

TERRI WEBSTER: Absolutely. My name is Terri Webster and I am here representing myself as a resident of Fort Bend County, Congressional District 22. However, I also lead the Indivisible Organization for Fort Bend County.

My -- I am having a huge issue with this redistricting for several reasons. One, I question why it is necessary when we are in the middle of the redistricting time. It's just been four or five years since the last maps were released. Two, the fact that we don't have any maps to even review prior to us having public hearings. So it's really difficult to

speak to the validity of maps that we have not yet had the opportunity to review. The other is currently my congressman, Troy Nehls, has not made any attempt to meet with his constituents within Fort Bend County or Congressional District 22. And I believe that that's a direct result of how this district has been gerrymandered.

Fort Bend County is the most diverse county within the state of Texas and growing. Yet because of how the district is set up running from Wharton to Brazoria to Matagorda County, which are primarily white areas, we are not able to really represent or elect the representative that would best represent the majority of this district. If that -- if these maps or if the proposal goes through to solidify the Republican's presence in the United States Congress, it will be years. And I believe that we have the right to select our elected officials, not our elected officials selecting us.

And I will close by saying there's a lot of conversation at the state level and the national level about DEI and people of color having to prove their merit. I would say that what is happening today and what you all are considering doing is not of merit. You are stealing votes from the constituents in the

state of Texas and you didn't earn it. Thank you.

SENATOR KING: Thank you.

Members, any questions?

Well, thank you for being with us today. You did a great job keeping it within the two minutes as well. Thank you.

TERRI WEBSTER: Thank you. Take care. Bye.

SENATOR KING: Chair calls Meg Barnes.

Ms. Barnes, if you'll just push --

MEG BARNES: There we go.

SENATOR KING: There we go. Great. Welcome.

MEG BARNES: I believe I'm unmuted. Thank you.

SENATOR KING: You are. And if -- welcome and if you would, please state your name and if you're representing any organization, let us know that and please try to keep your testimony for two -- to two minutes.

MEG BARNES: Thank you very much.

My name is Meg Barnes. I live in Northside Houston. I'm in the 29th Congressional District, which has been very well represented by Sylvia Garcia since 2018. I wanted to let you know, I

did try to attend the hearing in Houston on Saturday, and I was one of the many, many people that were not able to testify at that time. But at the time that we filled out the testimony forms, there was a box we were instructed to check the box neutral by the chairman, Mr. -- anyway, I can't remember his -- anyway, the chairman informed us to check the box neutral, and that was because we weren't debating any kind of actual bill with an up or down vote, so neutral would be the choice. So after that, I figured out what's going to happen here.

So what's going to happen is that you're going to put all those -- all of our data in through Trump's bigly AI, and it's going to have to be put through AI to come up with whatever mystery map you come up with, because no human will want to put their name to it. And once you get this thing bigly and ugly enough, then what you're going to do is you're going to shove it down our throats. What you're going to just tally all of those neutrals and then say, well, everybody's okay with this.

SENATOR KING: Well, thank you and again, I apologize that you are not able to testify on Saturday at the House hearing in Houston, but we're certainly glad you're able to talk to us today. And

I -- just to verify, you're not representing any organization today, just yourself?

MEG BARNES: No, sir.

SENATOR KING: Thank you. And, members are --

MEG BARNES: Just me and el Distrito Veintinueve.

SENATOR KING: Okay. Thank you.

Members, any questions for the witness?

Well, thank you very much for being here today.

Chair calls Lynita Robinson.

LYNITA ROBINSON: Good afternoon, Honorable Chairs and Committee Members. My name is Lynita Robinson. I am a community health worker, a seventh generation Texan, and the granddaughter of a hundred-year-old black nurse who lived through Jim Crow, the poll tax, and generations of voter suppression here in Texas. I am representing Pure Justice where we advocate for criminal justice reform. We also advocate for social justice and we advocate for racial justice.

Today we are witnessing a new version of that suppression, one that directly targets the political power of black and Latino communities. In

2021, Texas passed congressional maps under Senate Bill 6, which are still being challenged in federal court for violating Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. That section prohibits racial discrimination in voting, and yet these maps were drawn in ways that intentionally diluted the strength of black and Latino voters despite our community's driving almost all of Texas's recent population growth.

Now in 2025, we are being baited, except those gerrymandered 2021 maps still under legal scrutiny or except new unseen maps that would break up longstanding black and Latino districts designated, designed to hand Donald Trump five more Republican seats. This is not fair representation. This is a power grab. There is no sense -- new census data. There's no court order requiring this redistricting Yet, the efforts target districts like Houston's 9th, 18th, and 29th where our communities have fought for decades to be heard. As a community health worker, I see these decisions affect more than ballots. They shape our lives. Our communities already face higher rates of chronic illness, fewer hospitals and greater barriers to care. These conditions are not accidental. They are a result of policy, and policy is shaped by those who hold power.

Redistricting diminishes our voice. It is not just unethical. It is discriminatory and unlawful under the Voting Rights Act. I will close with a quote, and I know I'm over a few seconds, by Fannie Lou Hamer:

Nobody's free until everybody's free.

Protect our districts, honor our legacy. Give us fair maps. Thank you.

SENATOR KING: Thank you for being here today.

Members, are there any questions? Senator Miles?

SENATOR MILES: Ms. Robinson, I want to thank you for taking time out of your schedule today and testifying as you did on Saturday. You make it plain and clear as well, ma'am, and I want to thank you as your state senator.

LYNITA ROBINSON: Thank you, sir. I appreciate that.

SENATOR KING: And, Ms. Robinson, who did you say was a hundred years old?

LYNITA ROBINSON: My grandmother, Annie Mae Jones.

SENATOR KING: That's -- that is aged. Is -- how -- is her health good?

LYNITA ROBINSON: She is in Louisville at a center. She does have dementia, but she still knows her grandbabies, so we do still get to play with her and love on her. And that was just this past June 28th.

SENATOR KING: Wow. That's remarkable. Well, thank you for being here today.

LYNITA ROBINSON: Thank you.

SENATOR KING: I'm going to call up the next panel and, Members, by the way, I know we're going to go a little bit into the evening, maybe late into the evening which is fine. But we went ahead and ordered dinner for everyone and it should be back in the back after a while. So you can slip back there and get something.

Chair calls Sheryl Williams, Brittany Payne, Tiffany Hill, Shawn Gallagher, and Michaela Williams. Let me try that again. Sheryl Williams, Brittany Payne, Tiffany Hill, Shawn Gallagher, and Michaela Williams. And of course, what you'll do having had your name called is turn your video on, but leave your voice muted and let me go ahead and call Sheryl Williams.

SHERYL WILLIAMS: Good evening.

SENATOR KING: Hello.

SHERYL WILLIAMS: Hi. I wanted to just thank first off thank Senator Miles and Senator Alvarado and Congressman Al Green for their voices in the community. I am a graduate of Jack Yates High School --

SENATOR KING: And before you begin, sorry for interrupting you. Please forgive me, but would you mind just for the record state your name and if you're representing any organization today. We'd like to have that on the record as well.

SHERYL WILLIAMS: Okay. Well, I'm Sheryl Williams. I'm representing myself. I am a Texas realtor with HomeSmart. I've been a realtor for 13 years now, and I have lived in the con congressional districts for Senator Miles, Senator Al Green, Congressman Al Green, and also I'm currently in the 18th District. So these issues really press hard on our community. And I wanted to just express my concern as a concerned citizen.

For real estate, I've seen -- I worked with many clients in our district and I wanted to let everyone know that the home, the dream for America is diminishing because many of our black and brown people are not able to afford homes because they're not affordable anymore. As I've seen, many programs are

diminishing. If we do not have a congressman in the 18th District that represents ourselves, then we won't have -- they won't know the importance of down payment assistance and the importance of needing closing costs because many of the people in our district live paycheck to paycheck. They're very hard workers, but may fall just a tad bit short to meeting all the criteria that's needed in order to own a home. That hurts our businesses, that hurts everyone in the community, and it also hurts our safety as well.

Speaking on the recent issues of homelessness, yes, it is increasing because of the fact that we had -- don't have affordable homes, housing. In the past, yes, we have had some, but now that is even diminishing. I agree with Senator Miles. That is not a normal redistricting period. I suggest and recommend that we do not have this redistricting session. It should go as planned with every ten years. I'm not sure exactly why -- well, I could speculate, but I do not know exactly the president's thoughts on why it's important to redistrict now.

SENATOR KING: If I may go ahead and stop you at that time, that two minutes is up.

And, Members, are there any questions for the witness? Senator Miles?

SENATOR MILES: Ms. Williams?

SHERYL WILLIAMS: Yes.

SENATOR MILES: JY to the day we die, right?

SHERYL WILLIAMS: That's right.

SENATOR MILES: All right then.

SHERYL WILLIAMS: No lies.

SENATOR MILES: Let me thank you for testifying today. Unfortunately, your time is out and we're going to respect the body, but we understand what you said. And I want you to know that I'm hearing you. And what I'd like for you to do is get on the phone and call three of our alumnis and let them know what's happening. Okay?

SHERYL WILLIAMS: All right. Will do.

SENATOR MILES: Keep up the good work. Thank you for testifying.

SENATOR KING: Thank you. Chair calls Brittany Payne.

BRITTANY PAYNE: Hello. Can you guys hear me?

SENATOR KING: We certainly can. Welcome. If you please state your name and if you're representing an organization, please let us know that and please try to keep your testimony to two minutes.

BRITTANY PAYNE: Thank you. So my name is Brittany Payne. I'm representing myself. I live in League City and I'm in Senate District 11. I'm a mother and I'm an -- and I'm an engineer, and I'm concerned about the reasons behind this redistricting effort.

Growing up, my father worked as a city planner and described it as the most boring job in the world. But from him, I learned the importance of maps and how they can present data, how they can hide it, how they can be manipulated and skewed. In 9th grade, I first learned the term gerrymandering in a human geography class. My background appreciation for maps made this issue stick out to me, and the bewilderment and disgust that I felt that such a thing was ever allowed was at least partially comforted after learning it was illegal in theory at least. Now I'm an adult, I'm a voter, and I'm just as bewildered and disgusted now that Texas politicians are still trying to gerrymander solely because outside forces tell them to. This redistricting effort reeks of barely disguised racial gerrymandering with the intent to disenfranchise voters even more than the 2021 redistricting, which is still under pending litigation did.

Sixty percent of Texas' population is

people of color. More voting districts should be drawn for them, not less, not to mention this redistricting effort is incredibly rushed. How do we know that these maps have been reviewed properly to ensure they're at legal and fair if the legislature is not taking time to do so? If Texas is truly intent on redistricting then needs to be postponed until the pending litigation is complete. The maps need to be made available to the public and an independent Redistricting Committee needs to be established to ensure fair districts for all voters. Thank you.

SENATOR KING: All right. Thank you. You said you're from District 11?

BRITTANY PAYNE: Yes, that's correct.

SENATOR KING: May I ask what part of District 11?

BRITTANY PAYNE: I know it's under Senator Middleton in League City.

SENATOR KING: Okay. I'm sorry. Okay. You're in League City. All right.

BRITTANY PAYNE: Yes.

SENATOR KING: Thank you.

Members, any questions?

SENATOR MILES: Yeah, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR KING: Senator Miles?

SENATOR MILES: Ma'am, you should let your senator know how you feel about this redistricting and this whole proposal. He needs to know that he's got constituents in his district that feel like you do.

BRITTANY PAYNE: And I promise I have been writing letters calling him, so hopefully he listens.

SENATOR MILES: Okay. Thank you, ma'am. Thank you for keeping it plain.

SENATOR KING: Thank you, Members. Any other questions?

Thank you, ma'am for being here with us today.

Chair calls Tiffany Hill.

TIFFANY HILL: Good afternoon --

SENATOR KING: Good afternoon.

TIFFANY HILL: -- Members and the Chair. Can y'all hear me?

SENATOR KING: We sure can. If you'd please state your name and if you're representing an organization, please let us know that as well.

TIFFANY HILL: Yes, sir. My name is Tiffany Hill. I am here on behalf of myself as a concerned citizen of Harris County here in Houston, Texas.

So I was at the hearing on Saturday. Unfortunately, I did not get to testify, was not expecting it to go as long as it did. I did try -- I had another meeting and I did try to hurry to come back. And I did come back, but apparently I missed my turn. However, as I sat and watched hundreds as Senator Miles stated people pouring their hearts out, it was a little disheartening because I saw many of the Republican counterparts there, some on their phones, some talking to other representatives, and not listening to the constituents pouring out their hearts of their disapproval and their dismay about this mid-decade redistricting.

SENATOR KING: Ma'am, I'm sorry. You froze. What we're going to do is wait just a few minutes and we'll -- when we're going to call you back, try it again. Let me go ahead and call up the next panel. Well, wait a minute. We've got you back. Okay. Can you still hear me, ma'am?

TIFFANY HILL: Looks like when -- I can hear you. Am I -- looks like I was muted.

SENATOR KING: All right. Sure. You -- we've got you back. Why don't we go ahead and try it again? We've got about a minute left.

TIFFANY HILL: Okay. So as I was saying

is I didn't have to voice -- I had a written letter, but I had so many of my fellow Houstonians out here saying everything that I wanted to say, that I'm not neutral on the redistricting, that I am vehemently against this. And what I do call on y'all as the Senate is to please reach out to your House of Representatives counterparts and let them know this is just unjust. This is morally wrong. We should not have politics played with our lives. People's lives are at risk. I'm in CD 18 where I'm coming up on a year without a representative, and that's just not right. There have been over 130 lives that have lost -- that have been lost due to the flood. Instead of focusing energy on things that need to be done, we're focusing on something political. And I just don't want to go over that. I just called to let you all know to please talk to your counterpart, your House counterpart representatives, and please let them know not to move forward with redistricting. Thank you for your time.

SENATOR KING: Well, thank you. And again, I'm sorry you were not able to testify on -- in Houston, but we're glad you're here with us today.

Members, any questions? Hearing none, thank you again for being here.

Chair will go ahead and call the next panel now. Deddrick Wilmer, Gwenn Burud, Lauri Ruiz, Lisa Brenskelle, probably butchered that name, Brenskelle, Rodney LaBruce. Let me try that again. Deddrick Wilmer, Gwenn Burud, Lauri Ruiz, Lisa Brenskelle, and Rodney LaBruce.

Ms. Wilmer, let me go -- or I'm sorry, Mr. Wilmer, Deddrick Wilmer, if you want to go ahead and testify.

DEDDRICK WILMER: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Texas Senate Committee. My name is Deddrick T. Wilmer. I'm a resident of Harris County, a father, a community leader, and I serve as Director and Board Secretary of Harris County Municipal Utility District 248, and also a candidate for the Congress Texas 9th Congressional District.

I speak today, not just as a candidate, but as someone who believes in redistricting must reflect the truth, not fear. Texas has changed, the people have changed, and our maps must catch up. For too long, redistricting in our state, especially in Houston, has been used to empower voters, but to protect its political incumbents. Even worse, some established politicians and urban districts have used the fear of racism as a shield, including any change to

district lines as an attempt to suppress black and brown voices when in reality it's about preserving their own seats, respectfully, Senator Miles.

Let's be clear. I say this loud and clear. True representation isn't defined by skin color. It's defined by service, respectfully, Senator Alvarado. If your only argument is to keep a district frozen in place is fear, then you have to stop serving the people and start serving the people yourself. Look at Katy and Cy-Fair Independent School Districts. If a congressional district was drawn around those two communities today, voter data shows that 44 percent would be Democrat, 39 percent would be Republican, and 17 percent would be independents. But guess what? The racial makeup combines a black and Hispanic of 34 percent and 24 percent white. That is not racial monolithic or politically one-sided community. It is reflection of modern Texas.

The reality is many minorities, working families and new voters have moved beyond the urban core. Yet our maps and the narratives used to defend them haven't moved with them as well. Yes, Sunnyside deserves better. Salt Park can do better, and Texas is too good to always settle. But let me say this clearly, change is always good. Texas deserves

districts drawn for fairness, not fear for the people, not politics. I urge this Committee to do what's right, not for a party or for an incumbent, but for the people of Texas. I will work with Houston and Texas delegation regardless of caucus or party. We are Texas. We deserve -- we are America. Thank you for your time and your responsibility to get this process right.

SENATOR KING: Thank you.

Members, any questions? Thank you for being here today. Chair calls Gwenn Burud.

GWENN BURUD: Hi, very close, Senator. Gwenn Burud.

SENATOR KING: Well, I apologize.

GWENN BURUD: No, you were very close, so --

SENATOR KING: Thank you.

GWENN BURUD: Thank you for that.

SENATOR KING: Thanks for being here. Please state your name and let us know if you're representing any organization.

GWENN BURUD: Absolutely. So, good afternoon, Senators. My name is Gwenn Burud. I'm the executive director with Texans Defending Democracy, who I am representing today. We're a nonpartisan nonprofit

providing clear, accessible information on policies that impact everyday Texans.

So we're here today to oppose redrawing congressional lines. It's a blatant power grab that reeks of desperation. Instead of treating this like a political game, let's treat this like what it -- like a job interview, shall we? Representation is a job and candidates should have to earn it by presenting real policy, clear vision, and solutions that serve all Texans. They shouldn't win by default just because the maps were manipulated to cling to power.

Sneaking in a mid-census redistricting with these tactics is not only unfair, it's undemocratic. Districts are redrawn every ten years after the census to reflect population changes. Doing it now without the current data is a manipulation of the system that does not represent the real people and real communities. In other words, you're rigging the rules in the middle of the game. Texans need their leaders to focus on real issues like strengthening public infrastructure, preparing for the next natural disaster, and lowering costs to support working families. Instead, we're watching this legislative majority spend their time dismantling the voting power of Texan -- of Texans, especially communities of color

through an unnecessary mid-decade redistricting strategy.

These political maneuvers come at the expense of the very priorities Texans sent you here to address. At the end of the day, you have to ask yourselves, does diluting the voices of your fellow Texans serve the greater good or is it just for political survival? The answer is clear, and we believe you already know it. This sets a dangerous precedent. Democracy belongs to we the people, and should never be sacrificed for its own -- for your own partisan gain. So reject this plan and prove to Texans that you still believe in fair representation. Thank you.

SENATOR KING: Thank you.

Members, any questions? Hearing none, thank you again for being here today.

GWENN BURUD: Thank you.

SENATOR KING: And, Members, just want to let you know that the El Paso trial transcript is now in your Committee Dropbox. You bet. It was just easy. I just had to ask.

Chair calls Lauri Ruiz. Lauri?

LAURI RUIZ: Yes. Good afternoon. Can you hear me?

SENATOR KING: I sure can. If you'd just please state your name and if you're representing an organization, let us know that and please proceed with your testimony.

LAURI RUIZ: Thank you. My name is Lauri Ruiz and I live in Houston, Texas. I'm speaking for myself. Thank you for holding these hearings regarding proposed redistricting.

I, in turn, sincerely hope you will not only listen to the citizens speaking out on this issue, but will follow the will of the voters and reject consideration of redrawing congressional district maps. As you know, the current redistricting maps are not due for reconsideration until after the 2030 census. We have procedures for a reason, one of which is to preserve the integrity of the representation process. The current proposal to with -- to redraw maps is an affront to that integrity. The proposal to redraw these maps now does nothing to ensure that all voices in our democracy are heard, but is meant solely to disenfranchise minority voices and all democratic voices. I strongly oppose the consideration of redistricting during this legislative session.

Additionally, I note that these hearings are being held without the release of any proposed

redistricting maps. This lacks transparency -- this lack of transparency is disingenuous at best. The topic of redistricting should be dropped from the legislative session.

Finally, as I've been sitting in this hearing and in the waiting room, I do have an additional suggestion as to the procedure for these hearings which specifically invite the public to testify. This Committee spent the first 47 minutes in discussion which could have easily been conducted toward the ends of the hearings -- end of the hearing, I feel that it shows a lack of respect for the time of the voters who signed up to testify. I would expect a, you know, a normal delay of a few minutes when coming to testify, but not for the amount of time that it took today. The first constituent testified 84 minutes into this hearing. Please consider restructuring future hearings so that constituents speak first or near the time of the scheduled hearing. We're taking time away from our jobs and lives to participate in this democratic process. Thank you.

SENATOR KING: Thank you. And I apologize you had to wait. These hearings could well go on until late this evening.

And, Members, any questions? Hearing

none, thank you again for being here today.

LAURI RUIZ: Thank you.

SENATOR KING: Chair calls Lisa Brenskelle.

LISA BRENSKELLE: It's actually Brenskelle.

SENATOR KING: Well, I almost went that direction. I apologize.

LISA BRENSKELLE: That's okay. Nobody ever gets it right. You're in the majority. So I have to apologize. My camera is not working, so I'm going to be a disembodied voice.

SENATOR KING: Well, the name looks great on the screen.

LISA BRENSKELLE: So it's Lisa Brenskelle from Houston, and I do not represent any particular organization. I just want to make a few points about this redistricting process.

Firstly, there is really no valid reason to redraw maps, and they have new census data. The maps drawn in 2021 after the 2020 census are still being challenged in court. We should not be redrawing maps just weeks after the conclusion of a trial over Texas current maps when concerns over those maps are still pending. We shouldn't create new maps. We

should ensure that the 2021 maps comply with the Voting Rights Act, right.

Secondly, the poorly reasoned Department of Justice letter directly contradicts legislator's testimony in that recent trial of the contested maps. In the trial, representatives for the state argued repeatedly that a race blind process was used to draw the boundaries of the existing districts. The State's quick acquiescence to the DOJ letter contradicts their testimony, and frankly, it makes it appear that they were lying in court.

Thirdly, the districts mentioned in the DOJ letter appear to target non-white legislators or non-white majority districts. This leads me to believe that this is an attempt at racial vote dilution, which is prohibited by the Voting Rights Act. Let me remind you, voters must have:

An equal opportunity to participate in the political processes and to elect candidates of their choice, unquote.

And finally, fair maps maintain community so that voters with common concerns and interests have a representative who can respond to those concerns and interests. This should be the primary concern in drawing of voting maps. Fairness. I don't have any

confidence that the current rushed and non-transparent redistricting process is being carried out on that basis to be fair to all voters in the state. Thank you for listening to my comments.

SENATOR KING: Thank you.

And, Members, any questions?

Hearing none, thank you again for being here.

Chair calls Rodney LaBruce.

RODNEY LABRUCE: Good afternoon. Thank you for allowing me this time. My name is Rodney LaBruce and I'm not representing any specific organization, just myself and my family of four.

I'm a lifelong resident of Congressional District 30. I'm a husband, a father, a pastor for over 15 years now, and I'm also a proud candidate for the United States House of Representatives here in my district. I love my country. I love my state and I also love my district. I've actually dedicated my life to faith, family, and service as well. And I'm not here today to talk about just politics. I'm here to talk about principle because while fairness is important, I know that word kind of gets lost in translation. What is fair to some may not be necessarily fair to others.

So instead, I want to talk about something that I think we all can kind of understand which is fear. The fear of unintended consequences, fear of waking up one day and realizing that we made a mistake that we can't simply undo. Those are fears I think that we should be really thinking about right now before moving on with this plan. You're not just drawing lines for our neighborhoods. You're redrawing the lines around yours as well. In an effort to gain ground in these Democratic areas, you're actually weakening your own Republican base. And that means for you tighter races, that means riskier primaries. That means ultimately less room for error.

You may survive this for now, but you'll be walking a much, much thinner line going forward. And if the political wind shift just even slightly, then your seat may be the one that flips. So let me be clear. People are paying attention. Voters who've never voted before are now knocking on doors. Folks who've never donated to any campaign, they're giving what they can now, and young people who've never voted, they're registering in record numbers.

Now, this isn't just about maps. This is about voices. And when people feel like their voices are being silenced, they don't stay home. They get to

work. And that's what I see a lot of people --

SENATOR KING: Thank you very much and for being here.

Members, any questions? Hearing none I'm going to go ahead and call the next panel. Chair calls Jackie Mayhorn, Chloe Wilkinson, Grace Dong, Niloufar Hafizi, Dianne Lyles. Let me go through those again. Jackie Mayhorn -- is she one we had trouble --

THE CLERK: She had trouble connecting --

SENATOR KING: Okay. Great. That's good to know. Thank you. Chloe Wilkinson, Grace Dong, Niloufar Hafizi, Dianne Lyles.

And Ms. Mayhorn, let's have you go first please and welcome back. Ma'am, if you would just push unmute. We've got your video and there you are. And, ma'am, if you would, I think if you could turn off your livestream or mute it, that way we won't hear it in the background. And you can go ahead and proceed.

Okay. Ms. Lyles, if you could turn off your -- I believe you must have -- be unmuted at this point and we want to try to go ahead and get Ms. Mayhorn back up. Ms. Mayhorn, we do have your video, but you appear to not be unmuted. We can't -- well, actually you are unmuted, but your audio is not coming through.

I'm going to go ahead for a moment and go to Ms. Lyles and see if that doesn't resolve itself. Ms. Lyles, would you want to go ahead and testify, please?

Ms. Mayhorn, will you unmute?

JACKIE MAYHORN: Yes.

SENATOR KING: Okay. We're going to move you back into the waiting room. I'm so sorry you're having trouble.

SENATOR MILES: Ms. Mayhorn, take your mute off, ma'am.

SENATOR KING: All right. Back to the panel. Try another -- try again here. Let's try Chloe Wilkinson.

Ms. Wilkinson, are you with us?

CHLOE WILKINSON: I am. Can you hear me?

SENATOR KING: We sure can. Thank you. If you would, just please state your name for the record and if you're representing any organization and welcome.

CHLOE WILKINSON: Absolutely. My name is Chloe Wilkinson. I am the Secretary for Texas Young Democrats, and I'm just here today to speak on behalf of redistricting because I think it will disproportionately affect young people.

As we know, Gen A, Gen Alpha, over 50 percent of these generations identify as an ethnic or racial minority. We do know that the DOJ has asked to target four majority minority districts. Three where they're represented by a black member of Congress and one where they are represented by a Latino member of Congress. It is very important for us as TYD members that these districts where young people's voices are especially well heard are not taken away from them.

We already know that disenfranchisement among young people is a core problem in Texas politics. We know that turnout is especially low among young people in a state where a majority of our voting population does not vote already. So once again, we're asking you not to redistrict at all, and if you are going to redistrict to not target any districts that are already majority minority districts because these are where young people's voices are especially vulnerable to these sort of redistricting efforts.

And with that, I'd be happy to answer any questions. Thank you so much.

SENATOR KING: Thank you.

Members, any questions?

Hearing none, thank you for being here today.

Chair calls Jackie Mayhorn. Let's try Ms. Mayhorn again. At this point, Ms. Mayhorn, please unmute.

JACKIE MAYHORN: I'm here.

SENATOR KING: Hey, that's great. Thank you. So I'm so sorry you've had trouble with this, but we're glad you're here. And if you would, just for the record, state your name and if you're representing any organization and then proceed with your testimony.

JACKIE MAYHORN: Okay. Good evening. My name is Jackie Mayhorn, representing myself.

I have it -- it's a lot of organizations I wish I could speak for, but we'll talk later. But I've had a hard time trying to get into the Senate hearing and then also in Houston. I mean, are y'all considering -- I'm totally disabled. My husband's disabled and we were supposed to be able to not just do the hearing in person, but also online. I had signed up for everything, but anyway, I just have a little time.

I'm Jackie Mayhorn, a non-white community leader from Texas Senate District 18 -- I mean, Senate District 6 and 13, Congressional District 18, where I fought for our neighborhoods through floods and voter drives. I'm here today to denounce this uncomfortable

mid-decade redistricting, a shameful scheme driven by the White House led by a convicted felon throwing a tantrum to silence black, Latinos, Asian, indigenous voices, and also disabled voices like mine.

In 2021, Texas ignored that 95 percent of our 4 million new residents were non-white, where Latinos warranting two new districts. Instead, you added three majority white districts prioritizing white voters in a state where 66 percent of us aren't white. Now in 2025, a flimsy DOJ letter contradicting Texas's claim of race blind maps is a pretext to rig maps for partisans game splitting Congressional District 18 to dilute our voices. As a mother, I fear for our children's future. These maps tell my kids that race makes their voices worthless. Our diverse communities have united for justice, yet this district erases us, implying only white Texans count.

Elected officials, are you so easily swayed by this White House pressure that you betray our trust? We voted for you and stand with integrity, to stand with integrity, not to enable a childish power grab. I demand you reject the discriminatory force for us and hold transparent hearings to draw maps that honor Texas's diversity. Our children deserves a democracy where every voice matters, not one

manipulated for control. Thank you. Honor our trust and fight for Texas's future. Thank you, Jackie Mayhorn.

SENATOR KING: Thank you, ma'am, for being here today.

Members, any questions? Senator Miles.

SENATOR MILES: Ms. Mayhorn, this is State Senator Borris Miles. I want to thank you for your tenacity today and last week. I'm sorry you couldn't get into the University of Houston. I also want to thank you for always keeping it plain and telling it like it is and being a community leader. You know, I often say you can be a community leader without a title, and if you're not one of those people, I don't know who is. Thank you for all that you do for the community. Thank you for testifying. Hope your health gets better as well as your husband's. I look forward to seeing you when I get home. We're going to keep our faith and we're going to keep our fight, and together we'll win, Ms. Mayhorn. Thank you.

JACKIE MAYHORN: Thank you.

SENATOR KING: And thank you, Ms. Mayhorn. May I ask why you were not able -- were you not able to attend on Saturday in Houston? Was it not set up where someone with disabilities could attend or

was it just too big of a crowd?

JACKIE MAYHORN: No, not too big of a crowd. I mean, I signed up virtually first of all, and then I was told that you had to be there in person. So my husband has brain cancer, and I have to make sure that somebody's here with him at all times and everything just didn't work out. But, you know, I had prepared, I've been talking to my state reps, you know, State Representative Thompson, you know, everybody just to try to prepare to make sure our voices are heard. But yeah, well, yeah, I'm disabled, but there's nothing wrong with my mind. I'm going to talk and we're not going to go away, just go away in the middle of the night because somebody's trying to do this for us. I want to speak up for the disabled people. No, I couldn't get there. My -- and my husband, he can't walk. And I am just -- I've been sick for three years. But I will -- I had to say something.

SENATOR KING: Well, we're glad you here to --

JACKIE MAYHORN: I have to say something because I cannot just be silent. I go vote. I do everything that I'm supposed to do, and this is ridiculous.

SENATOR KING: Well, we're very thankful

that you were able to be here today, and brain cancer's a terrible thing, and I know that's a lot to deal with. And with that, thank you again for being here.

SENATOR MILES: Ms. Mayhorn, keep your faith. Keep your faith. Keep your faith. Okay?

SENATOR KING: Thank you, ma'am.

Chair calls -- oh, I'm sorry. Senator Alvarado?

SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Mayhorn, thank you for joining us for your passion and for all that you do in the community. Senator Miles, she's not my constituent, but I kind of feel like she is because she often texts me. In fact, she texts me this morning and I did respond. So you have a lot of friends out there that are rooting for you, Ms. Mayhorn. Thank you for taking the time.

JACKIE MAYHORN: But I live in your Senate District, Senator.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Oh, you just claimed her. But Borris --

JACKIE MAYHORN: But the community center, Launch Point CDC, where my husband runs, and we've been feeding people since 2017 for Harvey trying to get housing, just everything, that's in Senate

District 13.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay.

JACKIE MAYHORN: So we got --

SENATOR ALVARADO: So we share --

JACKIE MAYHORN: Tony Thompson as a -- as our state rep. Then we got Omar Wall, then we have Commissioner Garcia and Commissioner Ellis. So I'm like, you know, I try to hold everybody accountable.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you.

JACKIE MAYHORN: Because I live --

SENATOR ALVARADO: We're glad to all share you. Yes. We're glad to all share you.

JACKIE MAYHORN: Yes. You got me. Y'all got me. Thank you.

SENATOR KING: Thank you. Chair calls Grace Dong.

GRACE DONG: Can you guys hear me?

SENATOR KING: Yes, we certainly can. Please tell us your name and if you're representing any organization, and please try to hold your testimony to two minutes.

GRACE DONG: Okay. My name is Grace Dong and I'm here representing myself today. I am a rising senior from Jordan High School in Katy, and I'm represented by the United States Congressional District

22.

I'm here as a student and future voter who is concerned by the priorities of our legislature during the Special session. Just a few years ago, Republicans responded to accusations of racial gerrymandering from minority voters by asserting that the maps of 2021 were created race blind and that there was no need for redraws. Now, when accusations come from the DOJ with redistricting likely to crack districts with heavy minority populations, Texas Republicans have suddenly decided that there are in fact issues with racial representation and current maps with Governor Abbott himself acknowledging the potential that districts were actually drawn on strict racial lines. Looking at the majority minority districts targeted by the DOJ, the issue of racial discrimination in voting seems to only become an issue when black and brown voters hold legislative power.

Furthermore, the goal of redistricting as noted by President Trump to pick up five seats for Republicans would skew accurate representation in Congress. If this happens, Texas Republicans would make up around 80 percent of the total Texas delegation, despite the fact that nearly half of Texan voters at 42 percent voted Democrat in the 2024

presidential race.

Regardless of your personal party alignments, going through with a partisan redistricting would create a Congress that doesn't fairly represent the wants of all Texans. Ultimately, I wish for the Texas legislature to focus on supporting Texans instead of partisan concerns. In the wake of historic flooding in Hill County, I believe that this Special session as a whole should focus on providing flood relief and support for future infrastructure projects. And if nothing else, I urge for the pressing needs of Texans to be brought to the table before redistricting is to ensure the swift passage and signage of flood relief legislation. Thank you.

SENATOR KING: Thank you for your testimony.

Members, any questions?

Hearing none, Chair calls Diana -- I'm sorry, Dianne Lyles. Ms. Lyles, if you'll just unmute.

DIANNE LYLES: Hello?

SENATOR KING: There you are.

DIANNE LYLES: Can you hear me?

SENATOR KING: We certainly can. If you'd please just tell us your name and if you're representing any organization, please let us know that

for the record as well.

DIANNE LYLES: My name is Dianne Lyles and I'm currently not representing any organization, although I do work with several organizations in the community. I'm a vote -- deputy voter registrar, and I register constituents all over most of the congressional districts that we're addressing today. And I worked with constituents and signed up constituents to register to vote in many of these areas.

And as we know, we have a strong legacy of many people in Senate District 18, which -- I'm sorry, Congressional District 18, which was the former Sheila Jackson Lee, which I work closely with as well. We -- these are rich communities of people, and right now what's happening is that this government, this administration, from the Federal administration as well as the Texas administration, is permanently trying to silence the voices of over 800,000 people in these districts. Black and brown people to be specific, packing them into new districts, which does not represent them, does not care about their wellbeing as black and brown citizens.

You're moving people out of the areas where they are used to be -- having a voice and

representing and having representation to meet their needs, robbing them of the opportunities to thrive in their communities. Republicans claim to be Christians, but this behavior and all the recent behavior of this administration in Washington DC and the Texas government does not show the character of being a Christian when you rob poor people to give to the rich gods. It's not Christlike, it's voter suppression, and we want it to stop. It's unfair and unconstitutional and illegal. And I was gerrymandered out into the new district of central -- Congressional District 38 back in 2021. And this district does not represent my ethnic background at all. It's all Republican. And again, that's what's trying to be done with the four districts that are being gerrymandered or attempting to be gerrymandered this time. They're going to be all pushed into Republican Congressional representation, which we know does not represent the majority of black and brown people and constituents.

Please do not do this. It's not fair. It is unconstitutional and it's voter suppression. Thank you.

SENATOR KING: Thank you.

Members, any questions?

Thank you for being here, ma'am.

DIANNE LYLES: Thank you.

SENATOR KING: Chair calls Niloufar Hafizi.

NILOUFAR HAFIZI: Hello. Good evening, Sir Chairman and Committee Members. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name's Niloufar Hafizi, and I'm testifying on behalf of myself and Engage Action, a C-4 organization committed to building civic power and strengthening a pluralistic democracy.

I was born and raised in Houston and I'm currently a Fort Bend County voter in Congressional District 22, one of the districts that has been gerrymandered to include different parts of different counties that don't hold together communities of interest. I'm here to ask this Committee to not consider redistricting at this mid-year point. This Committee has some members who are voting on maps in 2021 and 2023 when our current maps were affirmed. At that time, everyone knew that 95 percent of Texas population growth was driven by people of color, growth that had us increase our Congressional representation by two seats.

At that time, everyone knew that the current maps that the DOJ letter was about failed to adequately represent communities of color because at

that time, maps that could have done a better job representing Texas overall, were offered and rejected by both the House and Senate Committees considering congressional districts at the time. At this point, no new census data or any other reason to consider new maps is available.

Instead, redrawing the maps now is going to be an expensive process that will disrupt how our elections work next year and create voter confusion. Currently, redrawing the maps means also adjusting voting precincts in the Congressional districts that will be affected, thus pushing many voters into new voter precincts if this process goes through. We don't have an estimate of how much this will cost overall because we don't have any maps to look at right now as these hearings are being conducted.

While I appreciate the opportunity for the public to come and offer their opinion, especially since I was also one of the members of the public there on Saturday who didn't get a chance to speak, I would rather that this process not be necessary at all. Before it's too late, I urge this Committee to not go through with redrawing maps, and if you will, ask that the process be open and transparent and give the public time to consider what maps are actually being proposed.

Thank you.

SENATOR KING: Thank you. And again, I'm sorry you were not able to testify in person on Saturday in Houston, but we're so glad you're here.

Members, any questions?

Thank you again for your testimony.

I'm going to go ahead and call the next panel, and then I'm going to pass the chair to Vice Chair Creighton for a few minutes. Michaela Williams, George Patrin, Savant Moore, Mary Herrington, Brianna Ashworth. Michaela Williams, George Patrin, Savant Moore, Mary Herrington, and Brianna Ashworth.

SENATOR CREIGHTON: Okay. The Chair's intention is to begin with Michaela Williams.

Savant Moore, please unmute and you may begin.

SAVANT MOORE: Good evening. My name is Savant Moore. I represent myself today. I'm speaking on behalf of every working man in Texas. I'm out here working to provide for my family. I am pulled over safely, hazard lights on, but I can't forget about my Texas family. I have to speak on this issue. Let me be clear about the role of the Texas Senate.

You are not just lawmakers, you are gatekeepers. You pass the state budget, approve new

laws, confirm appointments, and redraw the maps to decide who gets represented and who gets erased. And right now, the people in House District 142, Senate 13 and Congressional District 18 are watching to see if the Senate will protect us or push us aside. I thank God for Senator Borris Miles who has always stood up for our community. He has a proven resume of fighting for us. We can depend on him. My prayer is that his colleagues, regardless of party will join him and say, not now to redrawing maps that weaken our voice instead of dividing us. Let's unite around the real issues facing Texas families. Disaster management, flood mitigation, increase Texas public education funding by $1,300. That's what the people need. That's what the people elected you to do.

Chairman, you and I are both fathers. We're both Christians. Will you make Texas a place where both our children could thrive or only yours? I hope the answer is both. Leave CD 18, CD 9, CD 29, and CD 33 alone at this time. And to my Republican friends, I hope you know this truth. If you move one voter from one congressional district, you affect every single district in Texas. That is a point of reference for those who understand Robert's rules, as his body does. When you ship one piece, the whole structure

moves. That's not strategy, that's instability. And Texans deserve better.

Do not let political games, racist games, destroy decades of progress. Protect our legacy, protect our power, and most importantly, protect our right to choose leaders who actually look like us, live among us and fight for us. Because if you choose silence, the history will remember that too. Thank you. God bless you and God bless Texas.

SENATOR CREIGHTON: Thank you for your testimony.

SENATOR MILES: Do I go now?

SENATOR CREIGHTON: Senator Miles.

SENATOR MILES: Thank you.

Brother Moore, let me thank you for taking time off your business to call in and keep it plain. I appreciate those kind words that you gave me. But you're on the path, my brother. You're on the path to be a leader in your community. You don't have a title yet but you'll -- yours is to come. Just keep the hard work, keep the faith, keep the fight, and keep what's important in front of you which is our people, and serving the people that you are going to represent at some point in time.

I want you to get off the -- when you get

off of work today, I want you to call about ten people in your generation and tell them how serious this is, brother, and hip them to what's going on. Okay? In the meantime, you keep your faith, keep your fight, and thanks for calling in, and thank you for those kind words.

SAVANT MOORE: Yes, sir.

SENATOR CREIGHTON: Members, any other questions? Okay. We will proceed back to Michaela Williams.

If you can unmute and proceed with your testimony, please.

MICHAELA WILLIAMS: Hi, my name is Michaela Williams. I am representing Datum Creo, a youth led organization that combines politics in media, critical evidence and sort of side of the situation. So I'll be having a more emotional appeal.

Texas, a state that has prided itself on its rugged individualism, now turns itself into a slave for the Trump machine. This isn't merely about redistricting. We are witnessing the deliberate dismantling of democracy, not in the name of the people, but instead in fear of them. In fear that Texas will turn blue, in fear that we will hold the Republican party accountable for stripping away

healthcare from the poor and from the starving of the opposed amongst its citizens by getting rid of things like food stamps, all the means made by this party to keep its citizens weak of the state, and by extension, the citizens of this country, because people who are emaciated, people who have death knocking on their front door because they cannot afford adequate healthcare are people who cannot rise up.

Also, I find it ironic that this party of Christian values bends willingly to a false God that stands in the White House. Also, the fact that ignores Isaiah Chapter 10, Verse 1, which is:

Woe to those who make unjust laws and to those who issue oppressive decrees.

And the woe will be to you if you were to go through with this action because God is no full history, has no blind witness. It has not been kind to cowards. It has not been kind to the greedy, and most importantly, it has not been kind to racists. However, this issue extends beyond party lines. Instead, it is about the soul of our nations in the parameters of the Constitution, because there is no sudden leap into fascism. There's one step and then there is another. And if we were to gerrymander these four districts that we are talking about here today, it would be one giant

leap.

You will not -- if you go through this, you will not be remembered as heroes. Instead you'll be remembered as the one -- as the ones who sold your soul for a seat and traded your people for maps. So all in all, in conclusion, may God have mercy on your soul because the people will not and history won't either. Thank you very much.

SENATOR CREIGHTON: Appreciate your testimony.

Members, questions? Senator Miles.

SENATOR MILES: Michaela, how old are you?

MICHAELA WILLIAMS: I'm 17 years old. I'm a rising senior.

SENATOR MILES: You're 17? Did you say? 17?

MICHAELA WILLIAMS: Yes, sir.

SENATOR MILES: And where do you go to school?

MICHAELA WILLIAMS: Yes, sir. I'm 17 years old. I go to school in Waller, Texas. That's District 18.

SENATOR MILES: Senate District 18? I mean, Congressional District 18?

MICHAELA WILLIAMS: Yes, I'm represented by Senator Lois Kolkhorst.

SENATOR MILES: Okay. Well, you should call Lois and tell her exactly how you feel. Okay. And I want to thank you for calling in today and giving us your view on this. And you are exactly right and you've got a bright future ahead of you. But I really think you should call Senator Kolkhorst and let her know how you feel about it since you live in, you're up and coming in her district. Thank you very much. Keep the faith and keep the fight, love.

MICHAEL WILLIAMS: Thank you so much.

SENATOR CREIGHTON: Members, any other questions? Thank you for your testimony.

George Patrin, we'll go with you next. You may begin. Please unmute, sir.

GEORGE PATRIN: Okay. I thought that the controller was going to unmute us. Can you hear me now?

SENATOR CREIGHTON: Yes. Very well.

GEORGE PATRIN: All right. Thank you. I appeared on a Friday, but I was cut off by the media problems and I was not given time to reclaim my time, so I'm glad that I'm able to do that today.

Again, I'm Colonel retired Dr. George

Patrin. I was a pediatrician with the Army for 23 plus years. I live in San Antonio. I represent myself and my family members, my wife Pamela, and my mother-in-law, Donna.

I had mentioned on Friday that I've been an independent voter all of my life. I vote for the best candidate depending on the issues. I do not like to be -- have to be cornered to be Democrat or Republican. I vote for the best. I -- for a long time not been able to vote for any Republicans because the current Republicans do not share my values and it's perhaps serendipitous that I was knocked off from giving my conclusion on Friday.

So the point I wanted to make and I really appreciate being able to hear all my fellow citizens speak up. And in particular, there's a handful of Latino women who are Republicans who said they wanted it redistricted now because they were not happy with the Democrat representation they had. I just wanted to point out that I'm Anglo along with Kevin Chance, who spoke earlier, and in the -- what we call the white privilege group, I don't have any representation either here in San Antonio with the redistricting which was gerrymandered. I don't believe it was race blind. I had Kevin Doggett and my family

taken away from us, and since then we have had none of our representatives ever answer our concerns, whether it be by emails, phone calls, or otherwise. So there are those of us who are also feel like we're being discriminated against, and I am with my Latino, African American, Asian, and other minority folks to say I'm with you and I'm tired of not being heard.

And so this redistricting should not happen unless it's done to get rid of gerrymandering. If you'll speak up and stop gerrymandering, if the governor will tell the White House we're not doing this. It's not necessary, it's not needed. And please Committee you need to speak up and say we're not considering this. End your day tomorrow and stop this process. Thank you.

SENATOR CREIGHTON: Thank you, sir, for your testimony. At this time, we'll proceed with Mary Herrington.

Please unmute and you may begin your testimony, Ms. Herrington,

MARY HERRINGTON: Can you hear me?

SENATOR CREIGHTON: Very well, thank you. You may proceed.

MARY HERRINGTON: Okay. Oseh Shalom, and hello, my name is Mary Carol Herrington. I'm age 66

plus. I am First Nation and American Israeli, a proud owner of the Bryan's County Texas Cattle Ranch Leap of Faith. I'm not in your top one percent. I'm what's called well-educated and land poor.

We are here to tell you no, to tell Donald Trump no. We just completed an El Paso trial in which GOP state reps testified the maps were race blind. Yet the DOJ is introducing and interjecting race as a legal argument to justify targeting for districts which is illegal. Race is not a legal argument. It was race blind if we are to believe what the GOP said. Stop the gerrymandering now. Be the proud independent Texans I know each of you can be.

I debated whether I should say this, but I'm going to say it anyway because I'm a straightforward plain talking person. Grow some huevos with spicy chorizo. Tell Trump no. I am willing to be lead plaintiff in a class action suit against Trump and Abbots redistricting at the risk of being once again disappeared. Not a threat, but a promise. Tell Trump no. Tell DC Texas handles its own business. Say no. And for God's sakes, hold the special election for Turner Sage, which you deliberately have not done. Again, tell Trump no and that we redraw after the next decennial census and let those be fair, not

gerrymandered.

Am I happy with the present maps? No. Were they gerrymandered? Oh, heck yeah. I have had the privilege of working for non-profits, journal -- Houston Chronicle, been an investigative reporter, retired several times, retired PIO city of Houston, written legislation for two different states. I pay attention to what's said and what's not said.

Honorable Alvarado, you want to look at T-O-U-H-Y Rex for the subpoena of federal documents and testimony. Again, T-O-U-H-Y Rex.

SENATOR CREIGHTON: Thank you for your testimony.

Members, any questions? At this time, the Chair will call Brianna Ashworth.

And, Ms. Ashworth, if you'll unmute. It looks like you already have and you may proceed.

BRIANNA ASHWORTH: Yes.

SENATOR CREIGHTON: We can hear you just fine.

BRIANNA ASHWORTH: Hi, my name is Brianna Ashworth and I am representing myself. I would like to thank the Committee for giving me this opportunity to speak. As a 24-year-old Texan living in the outskirts of Houston, I was raised to be proud of our state.

Texans look after each other. Since getting into politics, I've realized that's not true. It is the power hungry politicians versus us.

I can list a hundred reasons why you shouldn't redistrict us again, but I won't waste my time. I can sit here and tell you how our state would be nothing without minorities, but why waste your time again and talk about why we're actually doing this. It's for power.

You didn't call us here over a DOJ letter that looks like a fifth grader wrote it. You are afraid to lose your empire. You are scared of what Trump will do if you fail. You do not stand for Texans, nor do you speak for us. You silence our voices because it's easier to cheat and gerrymandered than it is to play fair.

I'm part of District 22 of Fort Bend County and was not one of the redistricts highlighted, but I have been redistrict and now I'm in the same zone as people two hours away from me. We cannot hold town hall meetings because of this and because my representative, Troy Nehls, refuses to do a town hall meeting since he's been in Congress in 2021.

I cannot speak for the Houston districts because I do not overpower voices of minorities, but I

can tell you what amazing community they are. Our great city of Houston always looks after for each other. H-Town until I drowned is our saying when Harvey flooded us. When the state froze over and our senator abandoned us, it was our community that persevered. Every time we get a national disaster, we hear the same thing over and over again, and here we are, another disaster flood, and we are wasting our time on redistricting instead of helping flood victims. I'm not here to try to convince you to vote in favor of Texans. I'm here to warn you that we are watching and we are tired of being silenced. Thank you.

SENATOR CREIGHTON: Thank you for your testimony.

Members, any questions? If not, then the chair will call at this time, Stephanie Wilkins. We're going to proceed with several more on this panel. In addition to Stephanie Wilkins, the Chair calls Tim Dowling, Patricia Garris, Charlene Shafer, Andrew Forsythe, and we'll begin with Stephanie Wilkins.

Mr. Dowling, we'll go ahead and call you for your testimony. If you'll unmute, and, Ms. Wilkins, you'll be next after Mr. Dowling.

STEPHANIE WILKINS: Okay. I'm ready whenever you are. Mr. Dowling, can you unmute for us

please? There you go.

TIM DOWLING: Yes, sir.

SENATOR CREIGHTON: We can hear you now.

TIM DOWLING: All right.

Good afternoon, Senators. My name is Tim Dowley. I'm testifying on my own behalf. Before retirement, I practiced law in Texas for 42 years. Testified at least 7 times in 2021 before the legislature about redistricting. You blew it then when you were required to act. Blow -- don't blow it now when you are not required to act.

Why are the majority of Americans so deeply cynical about politics? This redistricting is a stunt. It's nothing more than an over-the-top grab for more power. Democracy be damned as despicable illustration of why they are. Leave the lines low. Let the courts do their job and tell you if the current lines were legal or not. Only if they were illegal should you change them. After all, you told everyone that the lines were drawn race blind. Reject the DOJ's claim that you lied. Your district now will start an arms race. Blue and red state line redrawing will cancel out. It will all be a colossal waste of time in Texas and across the country.

Please follow President Lincoln's advice

and listen to the better angels of your nation, and reject the illegal and immoral demand of the current president who called our valiant veterans losers and suckers, pardon people who violently attacked police officers defending our democracy and who wished well Epstein's recruiter after she was indicted. The president who's among his most famous words unfortunately were not something doble and uplifting like Lincoln's, but instead you can grab him by the pussy. Very sad. That is the kind of man who is demanding that you redistrict Texas mid-decade.

Exercise the fierce independence Texans are proudly known for. Have the moral courage to reject his radical demand that you subserviently debase yourselves for him by mid-district redistricting. Redistricting now would be illegal and a moral waste of time. Don't redistrict unless the courts tell you you must. There is no need to do what he is selfishly demanding that you do. Don't do it. Please also consider my written comments that explain why the DOJ's letter is very plainly, legally meritless, so it cannot be used as a fig leave to justify radical mid-decade redistricting. Thank you for your time and for permitting virtual testimony.

SENATOR CREIGHTON: Members, any

questions?

Ms. Wilkins, if you'll proceed, Stephanie Wilkins.

STEPHANIE WILKINS: Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Reverend Dr. Stephanie Wilkins. I work with a lot of different groups and organizations throughout the Committee, but I am representing myself. I am a member of District 18 and I want to thank also those who have spoken before me.

I really could just say ditto, but I just want to make sure that my voice is a matter of public record. So I have witnessed something. I was also there, Houston, at the U of H and I witnessed something I have prayed for, and that was unity. That was unity in our understanding that this should not even be occurring, that we should not even be having these meetings and these hearings because there's no map.

We see very clearly that this is a stacking of the debt. This is fixing the fight, and it is based on desperation and it is born of fear. It is born of greed, and it is born of racism. I am a person of faith, so I do want to share something that I live by, which is Micah 6 and 8:

He has told you immortal what is good and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice

and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God.

And there is nothing just about it. This is unjust. It is unjust. It is based again on fear. So I am asking the Committee to please speak truth to power. You are elected officials. You put your hand on that Bible and you swore that you would uphold the laws of the state and the Constitution, so help you God. So asking you to do just that, see and serve all the people.

One thing that occurred also during that hearing -- and I got frustrated when I realized that we were convening for no reason, that there was a lot of time, energy, effort, probably money, everything spent, and people are still saying don't do this. Please, please, please do what you were elected to do. Do not bow down to your governor or your president. You have to see all the people and serve all of the people.

SENATOR CREIGHTON: Thank you for your testimony --

STEPHANIE WILKINS: Thank you.

SENATOR CREIGHTON: -- very much.

Members, Any questions? Okay. We'll proceed with Charlene Shafer.

CHARLENE SHAFER: Good afternoon. My name is Charlene Shafer. I live in Cypress

Congressional District 38. I'm testifying for myself.

One -- Congressional District 38 is one of the new majority white districts created during the 2021 redistricting despite the census data showing that the population growth has primarily been people of color. The census reports that whites are 45 percent of the population, but control 70 percent of the congressional districts. It should not be a surprise that the current maps are still being reviewed by federal court. All the districts targeted for redistricting are majority people of color districts. Texas has intentionally discriminated against voters of color for the past 50 years. This bogus redistricting attempt causes discrimination on top of discrimination.

Texas has a multitude of problems that require legislative focus. The main one for this session is the devastating flood and the multitude of deaths that happened along the Guadalupe River. Lawmakers have continuously ignored this area. HEB managed to get to the flood torn area a full three days before FEMA showed up. We must not allow this to be swept under the carpet again by our leaders on the state and federal levels who continue to fail us.

Instead of focusing on the problems of Texas, Greg Abbott and Donald Trump have decided it's

time to redistrict Texas in an attempt to maintain and increase power for an incompetent administration, an administration who not only was slow to respond to the devastating flood in the Guadalupe, but they're using federal funds to build detention centers for migrants with the hurricane season just beginning.

What has happened to the Texas spirit of independence, where are the people who demand states' rights, and where are these proposed maps? This is another blatant attempt to silence more voters, especially people of color. Texas must solve our state's problems rather than silencing the voters of Texas to satisfy Washington DC. The legislature needs to refuse to conduct redistricting mid-decade and concentrate on the issues that matter to Texans. Thank you.

SENATOR CREIGHTON: Thank you very much for your testimony.

Members, any questions? Thank you very much. We'll proceed with Patricia Garris.

PATRICIA GARRIS: Hello?

SENATOR CREIGHTON: Ms. Garris, you may begin. Just tell us your name and if you represent any organizations other than yourself, and we appreciate your testimony today.

PATRICIA GARRIS: My name is Patricia Garris, and I represent myself.

The year is 2040. Five of Texas's largest employers have departed the state. Chevron moved its -- moved to its California headquarters and the NRG consolidated back to New Jersey. Tesla went bankrupt leaving over 10,000 Texans without jobs and Austin home values in free fall. No one would buy the toxic product. Public school funding is starved and employers conduct expensive remedial training for new hires. Job creation is at its lowest since 2019. Loan repayment schedules and the Republican decision to increase tuition for undocumented students produce fewer college graduates every year. Texas is known as a talent wasteland. The medical center moved to Minnesota although 35 percent of Texans are uninsured. After the government declared research frivolous and healthcare optional, the University of Texas Medical School closed. No one is applying. More employees won't move to Texas fearing their wives or partners will die during pregnancy or childbirth, or that their children will suffer an uncontrolled infectious disease. The population has declined to 29 million after 35 years of Republican rule. With 10 percent homeowner insurance deductibles, carriers moving out of

the state and the fair plan insolvent, home ownership has declined.

In 2030, Hurricane Wesley destroyed NASA's headquarters, most of the crops, left a million -- 11 million Texans without power, and over 3,000 dead. There were limited and late weather serving warnings. The state faces $725 billion in damages without federal grants or loans to help. With FEMA eliminated, Texans foraged for food and water with resources delayed or denied. Its reminiscent of Gaza in 2025.

Looking back, the Republicans' hunger for power didn't know when to stop. Their insatiable appetite devoured the future of every Texan --

SENATOR CREIGHTON: Thank you.

PATRICIA GARRIS: -- not just the ignored and --

SENATOR CREIGHTON: Thank you for your testimony. We'll have to -- we'll have to stay on time, Ms. Garris, but with your testimony wrapped up --

PATRICIA GARRIS: Thank you.

SENATOR CREIGHTON: -- I'll recognize -- the Chair will recognize Senator Miles with a question.

SENATOR MILES: Ms. Garris, I want to thank you for always keeping it plain and telling it

like it is. I want to thank you for calling in today and testifying here today. And I want to thank you for all that you've ever done for me in my life. Thank you, Ms. Garris. Thank you. Together we'll keep the faith and keep the fight.

PATRICIA GARRIS: Yes, indeed. And thank you, Senator Miles.

SENATOR CREIGHTON: Okay. Members, with no further questions, the Chair will take the opportunity to make an announcement. We have about 20 people left in the waiting room, Members. For those of you in the waiting room and those of you also watching on the livestream, if you are registered to testify, this would be the time to log into Zoom and to be ready to be called by the Chair to testify soon so that your voice is heard and your testimony is registered in the Committee record.

We will now call a new panel and the chair will begin with Susanna Carranza, Jesus Zamora, Rosa Hopkins, Erica Lee Carter, Hayden Cohen. So we'll begin with Jesus Zamora.

Please unmute and if you will begin your testimony, Mr. Zamora.

JESUS ZAMORA: Hello. Thank you so much. Good afternoon, Chair and Members of the Committee. My

name is Jesus Zamora and I'm representing Mi Familia Volta as a field director.

I'm a lifelong resident of Houston and a proud young Latino. I'm here because I care deeply about the future of my community. I grew up in Southwest Houston Alief, which has over 80 languages that are spoken from Mandarin, Arabic, Vietnamese, and Spanish. We have the Alief Neighborhood Center where the community comes together to address specific issues or goals. Alief ISD ranks among the most ethnically and linguistically diverse districts in Texas. The issues that my community faces are unique to them. That's why fair representation matters, because when communities like this are split up or packed into a single district, their voices are diluted and the issues they care about are easier to ignore.

That's why I'm concerned about any effort to redraw district lines before the official census timeline is complete. We are in the middle of hurricane season here in Texas, and we should be focused on flood prevention. Houston is one of the most diverse cities in the country, and Latinos make up a significant growing part of its population. Premature redistricting puts us at a risk of being divided, our neighborhoods carved up in ways that make

it harder for us to be heard through our vote and are -- hold our elected officials accountable. Redistricting is supposed to be based on accurate and complete data, not at the demand of Donald Trump.

It's the foundation for fair and free democracy for any voter from any party when it's done early because we have the full picture of our population growth and the demographic shifts. It risks silencing the very communities that have been systematically ignored and underrepresented historically. When our democracy is manipulated for the sake of power hungry, every Texan loses today and in the future, but we do matter. We're not just the future of Texas. We're the present. Honor our democracy and the values of freedom and fairness. Our future is on the line. Stand against this rigged process today to ensure Texans have a democracy tomorrow. Thank you for your time.

SENATOR CREIGHTON: Appreciate your testimony.

Members, any questions? Senator Alvarado.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to say I appreciate all the work that Mi Familia does in our community. Keep

staying engaged and involved. Thank you.

SENATOR CREIGHTON: Members, with no further questions, we'll move to Susana Carranza. Please unmute and begin your testimony.

SUSANA CARRANZA: Hi, my name is Dr. Susana Carranza. I'm representing myself and I live in Congressional District 37, Texas Senate District 14, and I oppose the current attempt to redistrict Texas mid-census.

I said this during my testimony at the House, but it bears repeating. Of the 18 items in the Special session agenda, you chose to prioritize the topic that does not help Texas at all. What Texans need right now is legislation focused on disaster relief and prevention. It really adds insult to injury that the call came as an imposition from the White House and the DOG -- DOJ as an attempt to further disenfranchised communities of color. It's a blatant attack on Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act.

If you're so determined to talk about redistricting, I urge you to leave our current maps alone, but focus on improving the process ahead of the 2030 census. For instance, you could advance SJR 3, the Senate Joint Resolution that proposes an amendment to establish an independent redistricting, the

redistricting commission.

You know what kind of map that might be useful for Texans right now? We could really use an updated flood map and strong rules to stop developing in flood zones or a map of areas that need warning systems for disasters like sirens. But I digress. What matters most is that virtually nobody in Texas, nobody, wants redistricting right now, and you are proceeding with that anyway when you could easily have chosen not to. Why? It is not acceptable that we have not even seen your proposed maps. It's unacceptable that the districts called by DOJ are minority districts, that you break up racial gerrymandering and is not acceptable that Senate -- that House District 18 is a target while it's not even being represented.

SENATOR CREIGHTON: Thank you --

SUSANA CARRANZA: I urge to stop this.

SENATOR CREIGHTON: -- for your testimony, Dr. Carranza.

Members, any questions? With no questions, we'll proceed with Ms. Erica Lee Carter.

Congresswoman, are you ready?

REPRESENTATIVE LEE CARTER: Yes, I'm ready.

SENATOR CREIGHTON: Yes, we can hear you.

Welcome. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE LEE CARTER: Thank you. Thank you. Good afternoon to this Committee, Chair and in his absence Vice Chair, especially to Senator -- my Senator Borris Miles, SD 13 and Senator Alvarado, SD 6 from Harris County. I'm here on behalf of myself and on behalf of the Lee family and on behalf of my former constituents of the 18th Congressional District.

There is something missing from this fight and unfortunately it is my mother, the Honorable Sheila Jackson Lee, who served almost 29 years. And every time there was redistricting, she stood up, spoke out to ensure that the voices of the 18th Congressional District and her constituents, their voices were heard, that they could retain the right to elect a member of their choice, that the lines would comply with the Voting Rights Act as it stood at the time. She raised money, she participated in many lawsuits that would go on for years out of her funds that she could secure and convene to speak up for those who couldn't secure funds and attorneys to ensure that these lines reflected the rich diversity of her district, the values of her district, and those across this great state. And she did it year after year.

So I speak on behalf of my father, Dr.

Owen Lee, who fought side by side with her for those same values for justice, freedom, opportunity, and equality, which is what the people of Texas want. I took Texas history and what we learned the most is Texas is about freedom. It is about our own rights without interference from outsiders, which included the former six flags that flew that we so proudly say we got rid of most of them except our own state flag and includes being here without interference from Washington. I would hear that time and time again from our state leaders and some of you in this body.

And now what I see is a clear example of yielding to outsiders who want to tell you all what to do during this Special session. I think it's untenable and unacceptable.

And so as I close, I close with three numbers. The first is 22, 22 years ago in 2003, some valiant senators fled and broke quorum. My mother's district was again up for discussion, seemingly one of the favorite districts to try to redrew -- draw and regroup on the lines, and they were standing up for people who cannot stand up for themselves. And I thank them and I hope we -- that we don't get to this point. I hope that this is disregarded and thrown out because I've seen no map. I would love to comment on a map,

but I've seen no clear map for this hearing today.

Then four years ago was the launch of my mother's last redistricting fight when you threw her in with Congressman Al Green unnecessarily, clearly at a point to target black members of Congress, pitting them within the same district, intentionally cutting out my mother's home where I grew up from her own district. It is cruel to do this to the voters, to confuse and to cause chaos, to disrupt and to deter. There are parents mourning the loss of their children by the Guadalupe River. There are families and lost parents and grandparents, and yet we have to sit here and discuss simple lines on a map that we have not seen because of some voice from Washington.

And lastly, I end with the number that means the most to my family is 18. The 18th District that started with Barbara Jordan. He came out of your body. Mickey Leland, who also came out of your body. Craig Washington, who also came out of your body. And I would think in honor of them and what they have given to our state, we should and could do better as Texans. And so that's all I ask, that we, and including you, these great senators today, do better for Texas. Thank you.

SENATOR CREIGHTON: Thank you for your

testimony. Senator Miles with a question.

SENATOR MILES: Congressman Lee Carter, Congressman Lee Carter, let me thank you for your testimony today. And I simply have one question, one simple question. I don't think anybody would know better the answer to this question. If your mom were alive today, what would she think of the process in this whole redistricting process ordered by the President of the United States?

REPRESENTATIVE LEE CARTER: She would think as a member of the Judiciary Committee a shameful day for democracy, for our constitution, for our rule of law. It is already said every ten years, you have already done it. Those lines have already been voted. There are members that have been elected and this mid-census redrawing is unnecessary and out of order. And she used to always get called out of order for speaking past, but she was always speaking for her constituents and her voters and her people. So thank you.

SENATOR MILES: I thank you and you would make your mom very proud. Thank you. Keep the faith. Keep the faith.

SENATOR CREIGHTON: Senator Alvarado.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Congresswoman, I'm glad that you are here representing folks in the 18th Congressional District because they have had no voice and no vote in Washington, and that's something else that infuriates many of us. So your testimony today in this process certainly lifting the voices of the historical 18th Congressional District. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE LEE CARTER: Thank you, Senator. But I'm so proud of them for showing up on this virtual and in person. They'll be heard one way or the other.

SENATOR CREIGHTON: Members, any other questions?

Thank you very much for your testimony today.

The Chair will call Rosa Hopkins.

SENATOR KING: Ms. Hopkins, if you would please unmute. Could you try speaking? You're still muted. Ms. Hopkins, we'll come back to you in just a minute.

ROSA HOPKINS: Oh, I got it. I got it.

SENATOR KING: Oh, okay. Great.

ROSA HOPKINS: Okay. My name's Rosa Hopkins and I'm in Congress -- US Congressional District 25.

Donald Trump, who has been found liable for sexual abuse and is a convicted felon, remember that, has directed Texas Governor Abbott to complete a mid-decade redistricting, been ordered to avoid five more -- in order to add five more seats to the -- in the [audio distortion] calling that he knows the House would at least slip due to the failing -- get executive order --

SENATOR KING: Ms. Hopkins, if I -- Ms. Hopkins, if I may, I know you're in your car.

ROSA HOPKINS: Hello?

SENATOR KING: And I know you're in your car and we're delighted you're here.

ROSA HOPKINS: Yes.

SENATOR KING: But since you're on a phone, if you'll turn off the video. I think it may -- your voice is cutting out a little bit. We want to make sure we hear everything, and I think that'll open up some bandwidth for you if you turn off the video. There you go.

ROSA HOPKINS: Hold on a second.

SENATOR KING: Although I wanted to make sure, are you actually driving or are you riding? Just checking.

ROSA HOPKINS: I'm riding. I wouldn't be

driving.

SENATOR KING: Just checking. Just checking. Go ahead. Let's let you start over.

ROSA HOPKINS: Okay. Some likely reasons Trump is calling for redistricting are that he knows the house would otherwise flip due to the failing poll numbers, litigated executive orders, Republican passage of the transfer of wealth from the poor to the rich billionaires acr, and cruel and failing policies. Cruel policies include the opening of detention centers that I call concentration camps that are treating immigrants that have been hunted by ICE and treated as subhuman, often without constitutional due process protections.

Trump is also currently in trouble with voters due to promising them that he would release the Epstein files and then claiming there are no Epstein files to release, and then contradicting himself by stating that the Democrats added fake information to the Epstein files that he says don't exist. Additionally, Trump has downplayed his relationship with Jeffrey Epstein claiming he has not -- he was not a fan and that they had a falling out years ago. Despite this evidence suggests Trump was close friends with Epstein for many years before Jeffrey Epstein was

convicted of child prostitution.

These failures have resulted in Trump along with Republicans being afraid to lose the House. The current Republican Congress has ceded much of its power to convicted felon and has failed to -- to convicted felon Trump and has failed to check executive powers. Trump is afraid that a Democratic Congress will fulfill its constitutional duty of checking executive prowess through its oversight authority.

Currently, there are redistricting cases pending in court in which Republicans claim race was not a factor in creating the districts after the 2020 census. In contradiction, Trump's Department of Justice is claiming that districts are racially gerrymandered as an excuse to further his demand for redistricting. Republicans are expediting 30 days. In 30 days only, Trump's convict -- uncalled for redistricting directive in an emergency legislative session when they should be focused on measures for preventing limiting the loss of life due to disasters such as the recent floods for many children perished unnecessarily.

The Texas House and Senate redistricting commissions are holding hearings without having maps visible for the public.

SENATOR KING: Ma'am, I'll have to stop you there. Your time's up, but thank you for being here.

Members, any questions?

Chair calls Hayden Cohen.

HAYDEN COHEN: All righty. Good evening, Members.

SENATOR KING: Good evening.

HAYDEN COHEN: My name is Hayden. Can you hear me?

SENATOR KING: Yes, ma'am. Sure can. Please proceed.

HAYDEN COHEN: My name is Hayden. I'm speaking on behalf of Students Engaged in Advancing Texas. I'm a 21-year-old student in Congressional District 7, and I urge you to not redistrict mid-century. There's no new census data to guide how we should be drawing boundary lines so literally no reason why we should be having this conversation.

Despite the declaration, you as a Committee have the power to stop this. You can just not move forward on any map that's proposed, that is your ability in the body so please stand up for us. An overwhelming majority of people who have testified in both the House and Senate have been against this

redistricting. People in your Senate districts do not want this. We shouldn't have Democratic and Republican congressional districts. That's not democracy. If you're a Republican candidate who needs the lines redrawn to win your seat, do better as a candidate. Redrawing the lines to get rid of Democratic congressional seats is cheating the system because the Trump administration and the Governor don't have faith that a Republican can win over constituents in that district.

To be clear, these Democrats that you want to redrawn in the Republican districts will make it harder for Republican Congress elected officials to keep their seat. These Democrats aren't going anywhere. You can't just erase them. Voters should get to choose, not be chosen. It's as simple as that. Thank you.

SENATOR KING: Thank you.

Members, any questions?

Thank you for being here. I'm going to call the next panel now. Rachel Hinojosa, Chelsea Lindquist, Marvalette Hunter, Michelle Ebrahimi, Arthur Fleming. Let me try that again. Rachel Hinojosa, Chelsea Lindquist, Marvalette Hunter, Michelle Ebrahimi, and Arthur Fleming.

MICHELLE EBRAHIMI: All right. Good afternoon, everybody. My name is Michelle Ebrahimi. I am a nurse in District 9 testifying for myself on -- in opposition to the legislature's ridiculous attempt to redistrict our congressional districts mid-census.

I want to emphasize clearly that no one from Texas asked for this. So much for State's rights. This brazen move by the Governor, the DOJ, and the President to increase Republican representation in the US House by taking it away from communities of color is shameful. It is a blatant racial discrimination and a misplaced priority at a time when we should be focusing on flood relief efforts. It's giving desperation.

We are barely two months into hurricane season, but you choose to prioritize saving your seats and stealing even more seats to silence voters on the orders of a low IQ convicted felon and failed businessman from New York City of all places. This is proof that the ruling party does not care about protecting little girls, not from flood waters, not from pedophiles. The only map we should be talking about right now is the treasure map that leads to the Epstein files. And the only way we will get to that is by voting out the pedophiles in government and those who continue to protect them.

Manipulating maps to artificially distort political power undermines the principle of a representative government. The government should represent a fair cross section of society, and partisan manipulation makes that impossible unless y'all want to be known as like the pedo party from now on.

So go ahead and redraw your little maps based on old data. Why not draw five districts in the shape of the president's name since he apparently owns Texas now and loves to put his name on everything. But beware the domino effect from other states because while you're trying to steal five seats in Texas, you'll be lucky if your party can keep five seats total once California has their say. Thank you for taking the time to listen to me today.

SENATOR KING: Members, any questions?

Thank you for being here.

Chair calls Chelsea Lindquist.

CHELSEA LINDQUIST: Hi, can you hear me?

SENATOR KING: We can. Please proceed.

CHELSEA LINDQUIST: Hi, thanks so much for this opportunity to testify before you today. I'm a resident of State District 13 represented by Senator Miles at Texas House District --

SENATOR KING: Ma'am, if you wouldn't

mind, ma'am, I'm sorry to interrupt you, but just for our record, would you mind stating your name and if you're representing any organization, please just let us know.

CHELSEA LINDQUIST: Of course. Thank you. My name is Chelsea Lindquist. I am representing myself and my husband today.

So I am a resident of Texas State District 13 represented by Senator Miles and a Texas House District 131, represented by Representative Allen, Alma Allen. I'm a wife, a mother of two young boys and a preschool teacher.

I'm a fourth generation Texan and an native Houstonian of nearly 41 years. My husband is a fifth generation Houstonian, and we very strongly oppose any redistricting in and around our city, as well as anywhere in the great state of Texas in a way that may favor the Republican party. Every Texan, regardless of where they live deserves to have their voice heard. It is the one job of our representatives to serve us. It is our right as citizens of this republic to elect officials who reflect our ideals, share our morals, and represent our ideologies. If the current representatives cannot align themselves with the needs and desires of the public for which they serve, they --

then those elected officials need to remove themselves from the occupation of public service and not redraw district lines making it so that the public cannot exercise their right to vote them out.

We, the people give them the power, not the other way around. If the Republicans choose to move forward with their plans to gerrymander districts who have likely already been gerrymandered, then they should prepare themselves for a fight. Residents of this state will not stand for this. It is unethical and it is un-American.

SENATOR KING: Thank you.

Members, any questions? Senator Miles?

SENATOR MILES: Yes. Ms. Lindquist, I want to thank you for testifying today and taking time out of your schedule to let your thoughts be heard. And like I've told everyone else, we're going to keep our faith and we're going to keep the fight. Thank you for showing up here.

CHELSEA LINDQUIST: Thank you so much. It's my pleasure. Thank you.

SENATOR KING: Thank you.

Chair calls Marvalette Hunter.

MARVALETTE HUNTER: Yes. Thank you. Good afternoon. My name is Marvalette Hunter. I'm a

wife, a mother, and an entrepreneur, and a proud Texan running for the United States Congress in Texas's 38th District.

I have spent my life in public service working for the city and the people who call this great state home. I had the honor of serving as the chief of staff to the late Congressman Sylvester Turner, and during his two terms as mayor for the City of Houston. I've sat in some rooms where the stakes were really high, where the pressure was real and where decisions carried weight. And I've seen what it means to lead with integrity, to put people first and to govern with a steady hand, and I've also seen what happens when that kind of leadership is replaced with gamesmanship and deflection. And so let's be honest about what this is.

This redistricting effort is not about fairness. It's not about transparency. It's not about serving Texans. It's a political power grab rushed into motion while our communities are still trying to recover from tragedy. Texans are grieving right now. The floods in the hill country took lives and washed away homes and exposed how under-prepared we are for a changing climate. And yet, in the face of that devastation, this administration didn't lead with

compassion. It led with calculation. Instead of focusing on recovery, the Governor buried flood relief under a redistricting scheme designed to shrink representation for communities of color and entrench power for those already holding it.

That's not just disappointing, it's deliberate. And this is not a correction to a flawed map. This is an attempt to remove as many as five Congressional seats currently held by Democrats. Seats that reflect the voices of black, Latino, and Asian Texans. Texas is a majority minority state, yet somehow 66 percent of our Congressional seats are controlled by one party, not because that party earned those votes, but because they manipulated district lines to make sure they never had to.

When disaster strikes again, and sadly it will, the same Texans whose votes were diluted will be the ones hit hardest and heard last. This isn't leadership, it's exploitation, and Texans deserve better. We are not powerless. We still have our voices and we have our votes. The courts are watching, the country is watching, and so are the communities who know that their future is being debated behind closed doors. This is about more than politics, it's about people and principles, and there's only one question

left. Will you stand up for the people of Texas or will you take a knee to Donald Trump? Thank you so much for the time.

SENATOR KING: Thank you for your testimony.

Members, any questions? Hearing none, Chair calls Arthur Fleming. Mr. Fleming, if you would unmute. Mr. Fleming, we'll go ahead and call you back up later. I'm going to go ahead and call the next panel. Chair calls May Nguyen, Kristie King, Kristiann Rushton, Janice Poscovsky, and Muneeb Aslam. Try that again. May Nguyen, Kristie King, Kristiann Rushin, Janice Poscovsky, and Muneeb Aslam.

May Nguyen, are you ready to go ahead and testify?

MAY NGUYEN: Hello. Yes. Thank you very much for this opportunity. My name is May Nguyen. I am testifying on behalf of myself. I live in US House District 29. Thank you for the virtual opportunity to voice my concern as a Texan.

I implore the State to not redraw nearly a handful of districts which are all held by black or Latino legislators. It's a blatantly racist political maneuver to attempt to maintain Republican control of the US House of Representatives ahead of the 2026

midterm elections. If anything, the population growth in Texas is due to communities of color. These communities should have more representation in elected officials, not less. The Special session should be used to address the hill country flooding disaster and help the local community rebuild. Instead, the party that's been in control of this state for over 30 years is caving to pressure from the President of the United States who is fearful his party will lose control of the House in the next midterm elections.

The President's afraid that Americans will hold House members responsible for passing tax cuts for billionaires while cutting SNAP benefits, Medicaid and Medicare. Redistricting already took place after the last census. Several Democratic seats in Houston were explicitly drawn to allow communities of color to elect a candidate of their preference by ensuring they constitute a majority in a congressional district in accordance with the Voting Rights Act. The current maps were voted on by Republicans in 2021. What has changed in the last four years that have made these maps illegal now?

You all are accountable to Texans. State leadership has historically needed federal review of voting practices, stop gerrymandering. Districts

elected employees should not be able to pick their voters. Voters should be able to elect their representatives. Thank you for your time and consideration.

SENATOR KING: Thank you.

Members, any questions? Hearing none, before I call the next witness, I want to say we have ten people left in the Zoom waiting room. If you're watching the livestream and are registered to testify, please go ahead and log into the Zoom. So if you are watching the livestream and are registered to testify, please go ahead and log into the Zoom.

With that, Chair calls Kristie King.

KRISTIE KING: Good afternoon. Thank you so much for the opportunity to be able to speak. Thank you all also for sitting on the day as to receive us in our comments.

SENATOR KING: And, ma'am, before you start, so glad you're here, but would you -- just for our records, please state your name and if you're representing any organization, please let us know that as well.

KRISTIE KING: Yes, sir. My name is Kristie King. I am representing myself in my own individual capacity. I am not representing an

organization.

SENATOR KING: Go ahead and proceed with your testimony.

KRISTIE KING: Yes, sir.

So, again, thank you for allowing us to speak today on record against the reconsideration of maps that we have not seen especially with proposals that would delay fair districting until 2037.

I stand here because we need integrity, we need accountability, and I strongly oppose this redistricting effort during this legislative session. The lack of transparency surrounding the process is disingenuous and dangerous to our democracy. In Houston, there are few opportunities for voters to speak and even fewer chances for our communities to truly be heard. And that's not how democracy is supposed to work. And for generations, black, Latino and marginalized communities in Texas have seen their voices muted and taken for granted through currently these redistricting schemes that have divided our neighborhoods and stripped away power. Just from living and knowing about reconstruction to Jim Crow, my grandparents, and my parents, today's gerrymandering tactics, they deny us our constitutional right. So with Texas being the most diverse state in the nation,

yet the maps we see and the ones still being drawn in secret, it does not honor that diversity. They're designed to keep power in the hands of a few while truly erasing the strength of the very people who built this state.

So it is my hope that we do not stand quietly while our future, our schools, and our children's understanding of democracy are shaped by backroom deals. This is truly a call to action for each of you to be able to demand that transparency, that fairness and maps that truly see and serve every community. Anything less than that is not democracy, it's disenfranchisement. And I hope that we will continue to fight it with everything we have. Please, no voice erase, no maps in secret. Texas belongs to all of us. Thank you for your time.

SENATOR KING: Thank you for being here as well. Thank you for your testimony.

Members, any questions?

SENATOR MILES: Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR KING: Senator Miles?

SENATOR MILES: Ms. King, I want to thank you for testifying today and keeping it plain and telling like it is. You made it very clear and you spoke very well and I want to thank you for testifying.

Thank you.

KRISTIE KING: Thank you, Senator Miles. God bless.

SENATOR KING: Thank you.

Chair calls Kristiann Rushton.

KRISTIANN RUSHTON: Hello. Can you guys hear me?

SENATOR KING: Yes, ma'am. We can. If you would just state your name and let us know if you're representing any organization and then please begin your testimony.

KRISTIANN RUSHTON: Thank you. My name is Kristiann Rushton and I represent myself. I'm a native Texan and resident of Houston for the last 18 years as an engineer.

I strongly oppose redistricting efforts and ask the Texas Senate to focus on flood relief and infrastructure first, as that should be the most priority of your activities. Prioritizing redistricting is an insult to the friends, family, and fellow community affected by this recent storm which spread an impact over this entire state.

Redistricting mid-census cycle is wrong and unconstitutional as it is discrimination against all my fellow citizens that our minority populations.

I live in Texas, Senate District 15 and US Congressional District 7 since 2021 and lived in Texas 146, 13, and US 18 for 14 years prior. I am here in an attempt to represent those like-minded, but my testimony does nothing to equate to what is being said in the neighborhoods surrounding my home. The primary driver for these efforts is the request of President Trump to support his desire to change additional districts to Republican control and suppress the impact of the vote of many of my fellow Houstonians.

Just a reminder, this request comes from an administration which failed to send FEMA search and rescue resources for approximately 72 hours after the flood. They are not -- Texans are not the priority for them then, nor are they the priority now. Texans are your constituents. Selfish discrimination is their sole purpose, but that doesn't hurt only minority Texans. It hurts all Texans. The greatest technology innovations come from diversity of thought in the boardroom or lab. And I believe the greatest progress in society comes from similar differential perspectives being in a room together in the legislature. Texas has a strong history of not bow -- not bowing to federal mandates.

I ask you to stand up to the Justice

Department and to stand up for all Texans by not discriminating against the minorities of this great state. These efforts hurt each and every Texan. Do not allow it to happen.

SENATOR KING: Thank you.

Members, any questions?

Thank you for being here tonight.

Chair calls Janice Poscovsky.

JANICE POSCOVSKY: Thank you. My name is Janice Poscovsky representing myself. I'm a citizen of the United States and have lived in Texas for over 60 years. I speak today as a concerned Texan advocating for fair representation.

Much of what I have to say has already been said, but I want my protest to be on record. The proposed mid-decade redistricting plan currently under consideration is not about updating maps in response to population changes, which would've been addressed after the 2020 census had this body not then gerrymandered the maps to gain more seats at that time.

This is rather a blatant attempt to gerrymander districts so that the number of Republican held seats exceeds the actual number of Republican voters in Texas. Let's call it what it is, a political power grab disguised as a procedural necessity, and the

process has been just as troubling as the plan itself. The decision to throw in redistricting legislation during this Special session when flood disaster relief should be your main focus is manipulative. Texans deserve better than being used as pawns in a scheme to force Democrats to remain in session and lend legitimacy to this redistricting process.

Flood preparedness, prevention, response and relief are matters of public safety. They should never be used as leverage to coerce participation in a plan designed to suppress voters and skew representation. Don't use the families who are mourning the deaths of their loved ones to push through gerrymandered maps that silence millions of Texans, especially in communities of color.

Let's be clear. Non-white Texans have driven nearly all the state's population growth over the last decade, and yet this plan minimizes their political influence through packing and cracking tactics undermining their right to fair and equal representation. Redistricting should serve the people, not entrench power. When our democracy is manipulated behind closed doors and veiled in legislative bait and switch, trust is broken.

It's also telling that not one of the

multitude of speakers before me have been in favor of this redistricting scheme. Let that sink in. This plan isn't just unfair, it's unjust. And I urge this Committee to reject it in favor of transparent and constitutionally sound district maps drawn after the next census, maps that reflect the true diversity and will of the people of Texas. And if you are not willing to do that, and if you are not willing to wait, then do what's right and do what's fair. Thank you.

SENATOR KING: Members, any questions?

Thank you for being here tonight.

Chair calls Muneeb Aslam.

MUNEEB ASLAM: Good afternoon, Chair and Members of the Committee. My name is Muneeb Aslam, and I'm representing myself. I'm a proud Texan who grew up in McKinney, Texas and I'm here to strongly oppose this mid-decade redistricting.

Let's be clear, this is a power grab to dilute the power of minority communities. Communities of color have driven Texas's growth and success, yet our political power is always under attack. Districts like Texas 9 and Texas 33 weren't drawn by accident. They reflect a diversity of our state and now they're being targeted not to uphold the Constitution, but to protect a partisan majority all the way in DC.

The hypocrisy is what upsets me. The party of small government is now taking its cues directly from the executive branch. Just recently President Trump said Texas will be the biggest one, just a simple redrawing, we pick up five seats, and that's a direct quote. And that is not democracy. That is plain corruption.

The State has claimed that these maps were drawn racially blind, colorblind, and now insists that race is the very reason to redraw them. You cannot have it both ways. As someone who has worked to engage young Texans in bipartisan civic life, it is really disheartening to see our leaders prioritizing political gain over public needs. We do not need gerrymander districts. We need investment in our communities. Texas ranks 43rd in childhood wellbeing. We are the state with the second highest GDP and nearly one in five of our children live in poverty. Over 1.6 million Texas kids are food insecure. And this is a Special session priority for what reason?

I hope that you listen to our voices, that you take our communities into consideration, and I hope each of you finds the courage to stand up for what is right and what you know is right. Thank you.

SENATOR KING: Thank you.

Members, any questions? Hearing none, Chair calls Arthur Fleming. Oh, I'm sorry. This will be a new panel. My apologies. I'm going to call up this panel Arthur Fleming, Aida Pita, Konstantinos Vogiatzis, Kellye McGarry, Arnetta Murray. Try that again. Arthur Fleming, Aida Pita, Konstantinos Vogiatzis, Kellye McGarry, and Arnetta Murray.

Ms. Pita, if you would, if you could silence your streaming, and then if you wish to unmute and go ahead and testify. Please tell us your name and if you represent any organization. Okay. While we're waiting on Ms. Pita, let's go to Arnetta Murray.

AIDA PITA: Can you hear me?

SENATOR KING: Yes, ma'am. Would you -- and you are? I think we've got two people at once here.

Ms. Pita, if I could ask you to stand by for just a minute, and we're going to go ahead and go with Arnetta.

AIDA PITA: I'm here. Sorry. Can you hear me?

ARNETTA MURRAY: I can be quiet. That's okay.

SENATOR KING: Okay. All right. If everyone would turn on their mute except for Ms.

Murray, and Ms. Murray, if you would, go ahead. Ms. Murray, I think you're muted if you would unmute.

ARNETTA MURRAY: Okay. I'm unmuted. Can you hear me now?

SENATOR KING: Yes, ma'am. Go ahead.

ARNETTA MURRAY: Good. First of all, my name is Councilman Annetta Murray for Iowa Colony. I just wanted to say, first of all thank you to Senator Miles. Thank you, Chairman. Thank you, Senator Alvarado for staying for 24 hours. And then I want to thank Bryan Hughes for that prayer that he gave me when Senator -- I'm sorry, Congressman Sylvester Turner died. Thank you.

Everybody said everything. I'm not going to repeat it because time is of the essence, and I know that as an educator, as a councilwoman, I'm here on behalf of myself and then I have elderly parents that live in South Park along with their friends.

And I just want to say, do what's right. I'm not going to say things over and over again. You know this is right, wrong. You know that what Trump is asking our governor to do is not right. At the end of the day, this is particularly for Governor Abbott. If he wants to be the governor of Trump, he needs to resign and not be the governor of Texas because he's

not representing us. And now because of what he's doing, I now do believe that he does not like black and brown people and it really hurts and it's unbelievable. I yield my time, and thank you for this moment.

SENATOR KING: Well, thank you for your testimony.

Members, any questions?

Thank you for being here tonight.

ARNETTA MURRAY: Thank you. Bye-bye. Oh, I'm sorry.

SENATOR KING: That's all right. Thank you very much.

Let's go to Ms. Pita, Aida Pita. Just give her a second. Ms. Pita, if you're still with us, please unmute. All right. We'll come back to you. Well, there you are. You -- we can see you on the video. Try -- Ms. Pita, would you begin to speak? I think your -- let's see if your audio's working. Okay. Ms. Pita, if you would turn off your livestream and just listen to the Zoom audio. Just give her a second. She's trying to do it. All right. Ms. Pita, if you'll just stand by, we'll come right back to you.

Go to Konstantinos Vogiatzis.

KONSTANTINOS VOGIATZIS: Close enough. Pretty good actually.

SENATOR KING: Well, thank you. I worked at it.

KONSTANTINOS VOGIATZIS: Good evening. My name is Konstantino Vogiatzis. I'm a CPA, a first generation homeowner and a proud resident of Brazoria County falling within Texas's 22nd Congressional District. I'm not here on behalf of any organization. Thank you for letting me speak.

So as others have said in their testimonies, Texans see this mid-decade redistricting exactly for what it is, a partisan power grab happening in broad daylight. Your party knows its policies are deeply unpopular. You're not delivering for Texans, so instead you're rigging the game. I want the focus of my testimony on how what you're doing shows Texans just how out of touch the priorities of the legislature are with the crises the working-class Texans are facing.

I'm sick and tired of having to beg our elected officials to give a damn and see that we are living through one of the worst affordability crises and generations. Housing costs and insurance costs are crushing us and insurers are leaving the state entirely, leaving us with even less competition.

I am a first time homeowner struggling to stay afloat. Just look at what's happening around us

also. We're in the middle of hurricane season and climate disasters keep coming. Just the last five years, Texas was hit by 68 separate multi-billion dollar natural disasters, hurricanes, floods, winter storms, you name it. Our communities in Brazoria County worry each time we watch the news in case the next major storm is announced. This legislature should be focusing on strengthening our grid, shoring up our flood infrastructure, and preparing for the next hurricane especially when the leader of your party is talking about phasing out FEMA after this year's hurricane season.

But I don't see Special sessions being called to bolster disaster preparedness or to help build after floods. I don't see the legislature tackling the skyrocketing home insurance premiums that force Texans into state run insurance pools as the last resort. Instead, I see that this body is moving heaven and earth to scheme up new election maps to entrench one party's power. It's the wrong focus at the wrong time. Regular Texans are wondering why are homeowners fighting --

SENATOR KING: Sir, I'm going to need to stop you there.

KONSTANTINOS VOGIATZIS: -- hard for us

as they're fighting to serve their friends' jobs in Washington.

SENATOR KING: Thank you.

Members, any questions? Thank you for being with us here tonight.

Chair calls Arthur Fleming. Mr. Fleming, if you'll unmute and try to speak, I think we'll be able to hear you. While we wait on Mr. Fleming, let's go back to Ms. Pita. Try again.

AIDA PITA: Can you hear me?

SENATOR KING: We certainly can. Thank you so much.

AIDA PITA: Good afternoon. Thank you for having me. My name is Aida Pita. I live in Katy, Texas, and I don't know where -- how are we doing this? We are districting. It's not even four years since 2021 on SD 4 that we redistrict. And in October 15th, 2021, the bill was passed signed by the governor in October 2020 -- in October 25th, 2021.

So here we go again. There's no maps, there's no census. Supposedly the redistricting is for the -- after the census when people grow, when the states are -- when the states has more people. And now, here we go again. Can somebody tell me what's happening? We don't have maps. We don't have a

census. And I don't know what's going to happen. We have had floods, we're in crisis. That's all I can say. So please both know because this is just outrageous. Thank you.

SENATOR KING: Thank you.

Members, any questions?

Thank you for being here tonight.

Let's try Kellye McGarry.

ARTHUR FLEMING: Can you hear me now?

SENATOR KING: Oh, Mr. Fleming, is that you on the telephone?

ARTHUR FLEMING: Yeah. Hi. Yeah. Can you hear me now?

SENATOR KING: We sure can. Welcome and please begin your testimony.

ARTHUR FLEMING: Okay. Good afternoon. Arthur Fleming, NAACP Dallas.

Jesus is back and he is black. I serve a compassionate black Jesus, not the white heartless Jesus guiding you all at this moment. What would Jesus do with Snap, healthcare? Would he sacrifice it for a tax cut for the rich?

Question, why are you doing this illegal and unethical act? By doing this, you are in bed with the president and the pedophiles. The gerrymandering

is about supporting a president who don't want to be impeached. By doing this act, State of Texas, Republicans in particular, are getting in bed with pedophiles. Instead of stealing my vote in District 30, why don't you address the pedophile white supremacists in the state of Texas.

Going forward, you'll be known as the Grand Old Pedophile Party. Thank you.

SENATOR KING: Just to clarify. You said NAACP. Are you representing them formally tonight or are you just stating that you're a member?

ARTHUR FLEMING: No. I represent myself. I'm past President Emeritus.

SENATOR KING: Past President Emeritus. Okay. Thank you.

ARTHUR FLEMING: Yeah.

SENATOR KING: Members, any questions --

ARTHUR FLEMING: And myself.

SENATOR KING: Members, any questions for the witness? Hearing none, thank you for being here. Chair calls Kellye McGarry.

KELLYE MCGARRY: I am here on audio.

SENATOR KING: Yes, we can hear you. Please proceed with your testimony.

KELLYE MCGARRY: Thank you, sir.

Because we're in Texas, I'll use the analogy of football. Kind of seems like we're moving the goal post here at halftime, and just because you can do it doesn't mean you should. If the refs made bad calls, they'd lose their jobs. Meanwhile, it's the fans and the players who can't win.

On behalf of the countless families and fellow Texans who are caught in the crossfire of so much uncertainty and unrest that needlessly impacts their safety, security, and wellbeing now and forever, I am here to say I am so fortunate to be joining you from the comfort and convenience of my residents in Dallas, Texas. I would like to use my remaining time to sit in silence and reflect on the many individuals of this state, this country, and abroad who are unable to represent themselves, but who will be so directly and indirectly impacted more so than I as a result of these egregious last minute calculated legislative decisions that have killed the dreams and hopes of so, so many.

I will await your response as to when my time is up so that we can reflect on the many people that your decisions will impact.

SENATOR KING: Thank you for your testimony.

Members, are there any questions? Hearing none, thank you for being here tonight.

Call the next panel. Chair calls Salena Braye, Shannon Williams, Luz Sanchez, Kyra Dang, Makayla Ponce.

Salena Braye, would you like to go ahead and testify?

SALENA BRAYE: Yes. Can y'all hear and see me?

SENATOR KING: We can hear you. Let's try that again.

SALENA BRAYE: Okay. Let me see.

SENATOR KING: Yeah, there we go. Well, you're there. There's your name.

SALENA BRAYE: Am I back?

SENATOR KING: We can hear you. Go ahead and just state your name please and if you're representing an organization, please tell us that organization and then please try to keep your testimony to two minutes.

SALENA BRAYE: My name is Salena Braye [audio distortion].

SENATOR KING: Ma'am, I think if you'll turn off --

SALENA BRAYE: Thank you for your time.

I --

SENATOR KING: You're cutting out a lot and so let me suggest if you'll turn off your video and just go with your audio. That should open up a lot of bandwidth for you.

SALENA BRAYE: I think so. I think I might have fixed the issue.

SENATOR KING: Yep.

SALENA BRAYE: But I will turn my video off. Okay. Unless I reappeared. I'll just leave it on. Okay.

Senators, thank y'all for your time. I'm representing the Pure Justice Action Fund, a member based 501(c)(4) organization based in Harris County working for criminal, racial, and economic justice transformation to ultimately end mass incarceration. Prioritized justice involved community members and society margins and many of our members reside in Congressional Districts 9, 18 and 29. I come as our policy organizer to reflect the concerns of multi-generational, multicultural and multiracial members.

People, especially constituents of the 18th Congressional District from Aker Homes to Sunnyside are extremely concerned about this redistricting process, how it is targeting historically

black and increasingly Latino areas, how opaque it seems to be, how unnecessary it feels, how this could possibly be a priority while Texans faced actual urgent challenges. Community members are anxious about dealing with new, unfair and complicated maps, and potentially having representation erased completely.

This blatant, top-down power consolidation attempt is unconscionable in an area of Texas that greatly relies on federal funding to keep Texans alive when other government actors will not step up. Several of our members and I were at the Texas House Redistricting Committee hearing at the University of Houston on Saturday, and [audio distortion] so many people not to testify. From capacity issues inside and outside of the hearing room, to running out of testimony forms to the complete lack of overflow space, there was a lot going on.

Yes, this process is happening very fast, but such chaotic organization for a testimony opportunity as critical as this was a severe misstep. Not to mention, as others have stated, that individuals from the 18th Congressional District have been nearing almost a year without representation as several have bills and other policies have been passed without their congressional input.

Finally, as a young black woman from Alabama, young enough to both learn about the voting rights struggles of the 60s in history class, and experience the Democratic implications of the Shelby Beholder decision in real time, as I myself have grown up as a voter, I must remind you that even if you do not care or listen to our demands, we will always remember these racist attempts to silence our voices and break our souls. We will not stand for them. We will never forget them, and they will never work. You should not redraw our districts. And no matter what, you will not rewrite this narrative. Thank, y'all.

SENATOR KING: Thank you. And I'm sorry you had didn't have a good experience at the Houston hearing, but we're glad you're here with us tonight.

Members, any questions for the witness? Senator Miles?

SENATOR MILES: Yeah, Salena, I want to thank you for your testimony today and your leadership in Harris -- Houston, Harris County that you've exhibited over the years. Thank you.

SALENA BRAYE: Thank you.

SENATOR KING: Chair calls Shannon Williams.

Ms. Williams, if you would please just --

SHANNON WILLIAMS: Can you hear me?

SENATOR KING: Oh, we've got you there. Thank you.

SHANNON WILLIAMS: Yay. Thank you. Hi.

SENATOR KING: If you would --

SHANNON WILLIAMS: This is an interesting thing. I know why I would not be a representative, so power to those of you who like doing this.

Thank you for this hearing today. I have issues with the districts redrawing simply --

SENATOR KING: Before you go any further, would you --

SHANNON WILLIAMS: Oh, yeah, yeah. Yes. Shannon Williams. I'm Shannon Williams and I am for myself.

SENATOR KING: All right. Thank you. Please proceed.

SHANNON WILLIAMS: All right. I have issues with the districts because they're political power play, and I address this mainly to the Republicans King and Creighton, and I'm not sure who all is there. But then I also have a message for Miles on that.

Both China and Russia have the structures for representative government, but they use ploys to

limit what voices can be represented. In this way, much less than half of their population have a voice. Don't let that happen here, please. Republicans, don't try to take over.

If we are to redistrict, it should be to ensure that every district has a lively political discussion during these times. We should debate the merits of surrounding our children with arts and education and entitlements versus ensuring that adults work hard and are fiscally responsible and protected from unwanted elements. These need to be balanced discussions. The Chinese and Russian models do not provide balance, and we should not emulate them.

So I urge you to consider that the communistic and oligarchic regimes of China and Russia are founded on representative government structures and procedures just like ours, and they do exactly the same thing that you're doing. The only difference is in the representatives within their representative government, so their people are not as free or as represented we are, and that's based on the decisions made by their representatives. These countries can never foster democracy as their political foundation. They cannot foster free market capitalism as their economic foundation.

Both democracy and capitalism require self-organizing, confident, entitled populations --

SENATOR KING: Ma'am, if I may --

SHANNON WILLIAMS: -- that remember --

SENATOR KING: I have to -- need to stop you at that time, but thank you so much for your testimony.

Members, are there any questions? Hearing none. Thank you for being here tonight.

Chair calls Luz Sanchez. Ms. Sanchez?

LUZ SANCHEZ: Hi, can you hear me?

SENATOR KING: We sure can. Thank you.

LUZ SANCHEZ: Hi, my name is Luz Sanchez. I'm representing myself, my family, and my friends. My background is in agriculture, biology, and psychology. I work in healthcare specifically in quality and patient safety. So let me say that if healthcare was characterized by the lack of innovation, the scarcity of diversity, and an absence of open-mindedness the way that the MAGA administration is highly lacking in, then our medical providers would be stuck still prescribing mercury and arsenic as medication. We have gone through great lengths of innovation because of our diversity, because of the innovation, and so I really plead right now for you to reject this redistricting

because yes, I agree with Senator Miles. We absolutely need to offer field hearings across Texas with the proposed maps.

Now, even if this has not been done in the past, because let us be honest, this redistricting is being forced mid-decade only because Trump has asked Republicans to jump, and Republicans have largely responded with how high your majesty. And honestly it's outrageous.

Now, are you familiar with the traditional story, A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens? In this story, Ebenezer Scrooge, he's a penny pincher, miserable, cold hearted old man. He goes through an out-of-body experience where he sees scenes from his earlier life reminding him of his greed, his hatred for generosity, and he sees the future. He actually sees himself how his hatred, his inaction, has even allowed the expedited death of those around him. I want to invite every single one of you people listening in this room and outside of this room that is in favor of going through and pushing this unpopular gerrymandering to take a hard look at yourself and self-reflect honestly and truly, sincerely self-reflect in the same way that you forced through the unpopular bills such as defunding our schools, refusing to add

right to abortion for rape, incest, or fatal fetal abnormalities, or even in the passing of the immigration enforcement bill that mandates cooperation of sheriffs.

If you voted for this, I invite you to look hard. Why are you driven by money? Why are you driven by power and greed? Why are you aligning yourself with Trump? Out of all of the people to align yourself with, why are you choosing this path of destruction? Look at the trajectory of the future and truly sincerely ask yourself --

SENATOR KING: Thank you, Ms. Sanchez. I'm going to have to stop you at that point, but we thank you for your testimony.

Members, any questions? Seeing none, Chair calls Kyra Dang.

KYRA DANG: Hello, can you hear me?

SENATOR KING: We sure can. Please tell us your name and if you're representing any organization and begin your testimony.

KYRA DANG: Hello, my name is Kyra Dang, and I'm representing myself as a constituent from Congressional District 7. I am a 16-year-old Vietnamese American high school student from Fort Bend County. And I worry that one day I or constituents of

other diverse counties like mine could be represented by someone who doesn't reflect or care about the places they call home.

This is my first time testifying and I may not be able to vote yet, but I'm here because I care deeply about my community and the future you're shaping for me and my generation. We've established that Fort Bend is one of the most diverse counties in the country. My school is full of students from all kinds of racial and cultural backgrounds, black, Latino, Asian, white. We share classrooms, neighborhoods, and values. Any redistricting process should protect this kind of unity, not risk weakening it in future maps.

Even if my area isn't directly being targeted, I'm worried that the new maps will split diverse communities apart just to protect political power.

I know sometimes people avoid the word gerrymandering, but what else do you call it when communities like mine are split or ignored for political gain? Because that's what it feels like and it's why I'm here today. I appreciate that the Committee addressed the timing of the proposed maps, but I still want to emphasize how hard it is for young

people and community members to give meaningful feedback without seeing what's being proposed.

I'm asking you to protect Fort Bend's diverse neighborhoods and reject any maps that silence voters of color. Please don't divide us across districts that don't represent who we are. Keep our communities whole and thank you for listening to a young person like me because we're watching, we care. And even if we're old -- not old enough to vote, we'll remember who stood for us.

SENATOR KING: Thank you for your testimony. May I ask, how did you learn about the hearing tonight?

KYRA DANG: I learned about this hearing through this organization called Students Engaged in Advancing Texas. Hayden Cohen, who testified earlier, is the state policy coordinator and she sent a message to the entire organization.

SENATOR KING: Okay. Great. Well, you did a good job testifying. I was just curious.

Members, any questions?

SENATOR MILES: Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR KING: Senator Miles?

SENATOR MILES: Yeah, ma'am, you've -- young lady, you've done a great job of testifying and I

want to let you know if you stay like you are, you're going to have a bright future ahead of you. Thank you for testifying this evening.

KYRA DANG: Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR KING: Thank you.

Chair calls Makayla Ponce.

MAKAYLA PONCE: Hi, y'all. Can y'all hear me?

SENATOR KING: We sure can.

MAKAYLA PONCE: Great. Thank you so much.

Hello, Special Committee members. My name is Makayla Ponce, a constituent of Senate District 14 in Austin, Texas, representing only myself. Thank you for holding these Special sessions to hear the public's testimonies on this important issue and it's truly appreciated.

I'm here today to appeal to the Committee members and lawmakers sense of fairness, equality, and care for their fellow Texans. Like many of us here, I suspect I believe in a benevolent and fair God who sees our continued efforts to be better and kinder than we were yesterday and to be fair and just to our fellow community members. With these redistricting efforts called for in this Special session, I see a wonderful

opportunity for this kind of consideration.

Unfortunately, previous redistricting efforts, as you'll know, such as those from 2011 and even as recently as 2021, have created greater unfairness and silencing of many historically disenfranchised communities in Texas, especially black, Hispanic, and Asian communities among many others. My hope is that this session's efforts are not in furthering that discrimination and coldness towards our fellow Texans, but instead for righting some of our past wrongs and creating a more fair and open process for public input with the goal of creating a more just map that supports every Texan's voice.

And I say all of this too in light of the recent tragic floods that struck Kerr County and surrounding county's residents. I appreciate that many of this session's efforts have pivoted towards funding for infrastructure and management to mitigate another tragedy of this scale. With that being said, I truly hope that our lawmakers wouldn't take precious time and energy away from such issues to further their own prominence and so greater division within the state.

It may be naive, but I'd like to believe that at the end of the line, every one of us wants to be able to look back on our decisions and sincerely

feel that we acted with love and consideration of our neighbors. Thank you all so much for your time today. It's really appreciated.

SENATOR KING: Thank you for your testimony and for your graciousness in the way you said it.

Members, any questions for the witness? Hearing none, let me call up our last panel. Chair calls Bridget -- and by the way, we have 109 registrants to testify tomorrow with about two hours left until the deadline to register. Last panel is Bridget Thomas, Ruei Tuo, Chris Pino, and Abigail Kehr. Nobody's showing -- coming up. Try that again. Bridget Thomas, Ruei Tuo, Chris Pino, and Abigail Kehr. And I believe Mr. Chris Pino is up if you'd like to go ahead and unmute and testify.

CHRIS PINO: Sure thing. Thank you so much to the members of the Special Committee for giving me the opportunity to speak today. My name is Chris Pino. I am a proud resident of Fort Bend County, living in CD 22. I'm 25 years old and despite my age I have been very intimately involved throughout the community over the last 10 years.

My experience -- my experiences range from working in county government to running political

campaigns to working in the nonprofit sector, and I like to think that I have my ear pretty close to the ground because of that, because that my work is so grounded in service. And something that I have heard, I currently -- I should add I currently work for Baker Wrigley, the largest community development nonprofit here in the state of Texas, running a program that helps everyday people get involved in the political process, completely non-partisan. The last year alone, we've registered thousands of students to vote and helped tens of thousands, if not more people show up and get to the polls.

So I like to think that I have my ear pretty close to the ground in a nonpartisan fashion, and something that I have heard across all ideologies is a, number one, is a dedicated interest in what is happening right now in regards to redistricting. And number two, a pretty clear opposition to this mid-decade redistricting attempt. I am a little bit baffled that I find myself speaking in support of a status quo, because the current maps water down representation in a lot of ways that I think are detrimental to our democratic republic. But I have a hard time being more specific in my opposition because we've never -- we haven't seen a map. Right.

And I think that that's one of the biggest parts of the problem here. We don't know what we're getting into. All we know is that y'all want to do this and that maybe there are some folks out of the state who are interested in doing that. But I think that this --

SENATOR KING: Sir, I need to stop you at this time, but just to confirm you are not testifying on behalf of any organization tonight; is that correct?

CHRIS PINO: No, I am here in my personal capacity.

SENATOR KING: All right. Thank you.

And, Members, any questions? Hearing none. Thank you for being with us tonight. Chair calls Bridget Thomas. Ms. Thomas, are --

BRIDGET THOMAS: Yes.

SENATOR KING: Great. If you'll please tell us your name and if you're representing any organization. We'd like to have that for the record and then proceed with your testimony.

BRIDGET THOMAS: Sure. My name is Bridget Thomas and I am a proud Houstonian and I am representing myself. I am unequivocable in opposition to this Special session that has been called by Governor Greg Abbott, an action that disproportionately

impacts black and brown communities across our state.

Let's call this what it is. It's a theft of power, a theft of representation, a theft of the right to be seen, heard, and valued as equal citizens in this democracy. What's happening today is not new. It's just dressed up differently. Throughout this nation's history, those in power have found creative ways to steal and suppress then wrap that theft in the language of law, order, and patriotism.

We stole this land from indigenous people and called it discovery. We stole African-American men and women, broke apart families, raped their women and enslaved them for generations. And now in 2025, Texas school books have the audacity to claim they were simply seeking job opportunities. When black Americans demanded civil rights, they were met with fire hoses, dogs and bullets. And when the physical chains were finally broken, a new system of Jim Crow and mass incarceration was built to continue the oppression. Different packaging, same goal.

And now here we are again today, watching those in power try to redraw maps in a different way to different franchise voters of color --

SENATOR KING: Ma'am, if I may --

BRIDGET THOMAS: -- ensuring that voices

remain unheard. I am opposed to it, please make that known.

SENATOR KING: Thank you.

Members, any questions? Senator Miles?

SENATOR MILES: Usual que -- usual statement. Thank you, Bridget, for testifying today and making it plain. Thank you, ma'am.

BRIDGET THOMAS: You're welcome.

SENATOR KING: Chair calls Ruei Tuo.

RUEI TUO: I'm here. Can you hear me?

SENATOR KING: I sure can. Please tell us your name and if you're representing an organization, we'd like that for the record. And then please try to hold your testimony to two minutes.

RUEI TUO: Of course. My name's Ruei Tuo and I'm here representing myself.

I feel it is my responsibility as a citizen of this great democracy to speak up against injustice and to speak up for the people this midterm, mid-decade redistricting. I don't even know where to start. Like first of all, where are the maps for me to comment on? I mean, I would love to give you the specifics and work with you and to make sure the maps are free and fair, but there's not even a map for me to look at. And what's the rush? Why are you rushing it?

Why don't you wait until you have all the maps and proper documents and go through the proper process and procedures? And that's follow the rule of law instead of rushing it in an attempt to power grab. And it's -- it just not right.

I mean, you know, the -- that's how you start the divisiveness when people feel the system has been unjust, the system has been unfair, and then people won't take it that much longer. You -- it's just wrong. And I wish that we can -- I mean, it's a democracy. We all have different opinions. Absolutely. That's the beauty of being a democracy. But to act like you own it, that kind of audacity. I hope when, you know, whoever is enabling this kind of power grab can start thinking how they're going to answer to their creators when it's their time to meet him or her.

Please, my position is against this mid-decade because it's wrong, it's unconstitutional, it's unjust, and it's just not the American way. Thank you very much, and you have a good day.

SENATOR KING: Thank you.

Members, any questions? Hearing none. The chair calls Abigail Kehr.

ABIGAIL KEHR: Good evening. Can you

hear me, please?

SENATOR KING: We certainly can. If you'd please state your name and let us know if you're representing any organization and then proceed with your testimony.

ABIGAIL KEHR: Thank you. My name is Abigail Kehr, K-E-H-R. I am representing myself and my family. I am a resident of Texas House District 148, Texas Senate 115 and US House District 118, which means that I am one of the thousands of people that have been left without representation due to the governor's failure to call an election for our district despite there being plenty of time.

I am not at all interested in my right to have representation being further infringed upon by a ridiculous grab at extra power by redistricting. Redistricting by the way to the purpose of targeting minority groups is for breakup is -- by the way, that's extremely racist. And this is actually illegal according to the Texas constitution, which I hope you have read because of the position that you are in. This is not something that should be happening right now anyways.

I was a census taker for the last census, and I can tell you that there have been changes in

these areas since the last census has been done. It is ridiculous and immoral to try to do this with outdated maps. If you are trying to do this now, it is very, very clear that it is for a racist power grab and this needs to not be done. And this also should not be done without actually having a map to do anything with.

When I tried to testify the other day at the House hearing, I was not able to because it was so extremely disorganized and began late. I had to leave to go be with my child. And also at that one, it was made clear that we could only register a position of neutral, which to my understanding was due to the fact that there were not maps.

Please focus on taking care of Texans, not on new ways to disenfranchise them.

SENATOR KING: Thank you for your testimony. And may I ask, which hearing were you unable to testify at?

ABIGAIL KEHR: The Houston one on Saturday.

SENATOR KING: Okay. Thank you.

ABIGAIL KEHR: That was the -- that was the House hearing.

SENATOR KING: Right. Well, thank you. We're glad you're able to be with us today.

Members, are there any questions? Hearing none, thank you very much.

Members, we have no other witnesses who have registered that are in the waiting room. And so with that, public testimony is now closed. Is there any other business to come before the Committee tonight? Senator Miles?

SENATOR MILES: Mr. Chairman, how many testimonies did we have today?

SENATOR KING: Do you know the count? Looks like 54.

SENATOR MILES: Fifty-four, and if my recollection is correct and my math is correct, there was one in support of this and 53 against it; is that correct?

SENATOR KING: I didn't keep a count, but I take your word.

SENATOR MILES: That's what I counted. And one other thing, Mr. Chairman, do you -- I'm sure by now you've heard that in North Texas there were 400 capacity in the building and another 400 outside of the building to testify.

SENATOR KING: I had not heard the numbers.

SENATOR MILES: Yes, sir. There were

400 inside capacity and there was another 400 outside waiting to testify today. Just wanted to let you know, sir.

SENATOR KING: I am advised.

Senator Alvarado?

SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Before we end today, I wanted to read some quotes that I think are important for the public to hear from my former colleague in the House and desk mate, a former Republican representative, Burt Solomons, who chaired the Redistricting Committee in 2011. I was on that Committee and we were desk mates, so it made for some very lively conversation between the two of us. The essay was published in the New York Times last week and is entitled, When I led Texas's Redistricting, there were lines we wouldn't cross. Trump just sailed past them. I think some of you have a copy of that in its entirety.

Representative Solomons warns of the erosion of public trust that will be de-legitimizing our institutions and undermine the public's confidence in government. And here's one of the quotes:

What Mr. Trump wants my former colleagues to do -- that would be us -- redistricting now, years

ahead of the usual one per decade timeframe would erode the public's already flagging trust in government. The legislature shouldn't stand up -- should stand up against it. The president should stay out of it.

He warns us of authoritarian overreach by the federal government. He says:

As a former Texas lawmaker and a current constituent, I urge them to reject this clear partisan manipulation, one that smacks of authoritarian overreach.

He emphasizes the danger. This is from a conservative and constitutionalist perspective:

If this happens, it would be a blatant power grab, threatening our system of representative government. It would inject more partisanship into our already polarized politics, disregard the will of many Texas voters, and override the autonomy of a sovereign state contrary to the wisdom of the Constitution's framers, and redrawing districts mid-decade is rare, and for good reason. It shouldn't ever happen at a President's whim.

He warns of the impact that this will have on minorities across our state. And I quote Mr. Solomons:

He's pushing Texas Republicans to use a

special legislative session to redraw districts in a way that could effectively disenfranchise thousands of people who don't always vote for Republicans, particularly those in historically majority minority communities, an apparent bid to rig the 2026 midterm elections long before the votes are cast.

Lastly, he ends with an important quote that I would like us to all contemplate as we conclude our hearing:

Texas's elected officials can place party loyalty above Texas voters or do the right thing. It is their choice. They don't have to be complicit. We should not be complicit.

Members, we all have our differences and have passion debates over policy, whether it's in Committee or on the floor. But this is not that. as my former desk mate said, even when we were playing hardball, there were rules and laws that were respected, norms that were upheld and lines that weren't crossed. Thank you.

And special thank you to my former desk mate, Representative Bert Solomons. Thank you.

SENATOR KING: Thank you. If I -- and thank you. I'd already read that article. I recall in 2003 when we did a non-census year congressional

redistricting in Special session, I'll need to go back and check, but I believe then Representative that wrote the article I believe that he voted for that even though it was done in a non-census year. I'll have to go back and check on. That's why I was so surprised to see the article when I read it. Members, is there any other business before the Committee?

There being no further business, this Senate Special Committee on Congressional Redistricting will stand in recess, subject to the call of the Chair. Thank you, everyone.

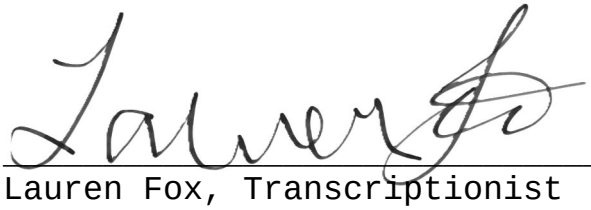
(End of proceedings.)

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Lauren Fox, certify that the foregoing is a correct transcription from the audio recording provided to me in connection with the above-entitled matter.

I further certify that I am neither attorney or counsel for, nor related to or employed by any of the parties to the action in which this transcription is taken, and further that I am not a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, or financially interested in the action.

Certified to by me this 16th day of September 2025.



Lauren Fox, Transcriptionist
Integrity Legal Support Solutions
Firm Registration No. 528
9901 Brodie Ln.,#160-400
Austin, Texas 78748
(512)-320-8690
www.integritylegal.support

State Defendants' Response to Plaintiff-Intervenors' and TXNAACP Motion for Preliminary Injunction

Exhibit C

House Committee on Congressional Redistricting, Video Recording July 28th, 2025

THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING, SELECT

89TH LEGISLATURE

****

PUBLIC HEARING

July 28, 2025

5:00 p.m.

Arlington, Texas

****

P R O C E E D I N G S

REP. VASUT: The House Select Committee on Congressional Redistricting will come to order. The Clerk will call the roll.

THE CLERK: Chair Vasut?

REP. VASUT: Here.

THE CLERK: Vice Chair Rosenthal?

REP. ROSENTHAL: Here.

THE CLERK: Representative Garcia?

Representative Geren?

REP. GEREN: Here.

THE CLERK: Representative Gervin-Hawkins?

Representative Guerra?

Representative Guillen?

REP. GUILLEN: Here.

THE CLERK: Representative Hefner?

REP. HEFNER: Here.

THE CLERK: Representative Hickland?

REP. HICKLAND: Here.

THE CLERK: Representative Hunter?

REP. HUNTER: Here.

THE CLERK: Representative Manuel?

Representative McQueeney?

REP. MCQUEENEY: Here.

THE CLERK: Representative Metcalf?
REP. METCALF: Here.
THE CLERK: Representative Moody?
REP. MOODY: Here.
THE CLERK: Representative Pierson?
REP. PIERSON: Here.
THE CLERK: Representative Spiller?
REP. SPILLER: Here.
THE CLERK: Representative Tepper?
REP. TEPPER: Here.
THE CLERK: Dean Thompson?
REP. THOMPSON: Here.
THE CLERK: Representative Turner?
REP. TURNER: Here.
THE CLERK: Representative Wilson?
Representative Wu?
REP. WU: Here.
REP. VASUT: Quorum present?
THE CLERK: Yes.
REP. VASUT: Quorum is present. The Chair will recognize on the dais with us as well, and forgive me, members, I want to make sure I get everybody. Representative Collier. Representative Garcia Hernandez. Representative Plesa. Representative Rose. Representative Garcia.

Representative Meza. And Representative Bhojani. All right. Did I miss anybody that's up here on the dais? And in the audience, we have Representative Bowers. So, okay.

I've been told I need to eat the microphone, so let me adjust that briefly momentarily. Before we begin here and I go through the opening remarks, the Chair is, of course, pleased to welcome our guests attending today's hearing. I want to remind the audience that the House rules prohibit signs, placards, and verbal expressions of support or disapproval during the hearing. So if you have a sign, if you would lower it down. I'm not going to ask you to remove it from the room, but please do not raise it, under the House rules. So, if you'll please lower your signs.

Okay. Now, the audience will come to order. I do want to reiterate this. This -- this -- this committee is going to be governed by the House rules and must be governed by the House rules. We don't have power to suspend them. So, everyone in here is a guest in that sense. I do not want to ask anyone to leave. So please lower your signs. The Chair -- thank you. Please lower your signs, sir. We follow the rules. We're going to follow the rules.

[Shouting from the gallery]

REP. VASUT: Come to order. Come to order. All right. Come to order. All right. Sir, if you don't remove the sign, I'm going to have to ask you to leave. I do not want to do that. But we have -- the rules are going to be followed, as far as I am concerned, at all times. All right.

Now, I want us to get through these opening remarks swiftly so that we can get to your testimony here today. That's why we're here. I understand that there may be some outside. And so, if you're outside, I want to remind you that you can watch today's hearing online at capitol.texas.gov. There's an audio and video stream online. If you'll be watching that and we call your name, we'll give you time to make sure you can make your way into the room. When we have people come up here in a little while, when you're done testifying, if you would be so kind as to leave the room so that somebody outside can come and have that seat. We want to make sure that we're giving everybody the opportunity to come in here that wants to be here.

So, the purpose of today's hearing, of course, is to have a public hearing on proposed revisions of congressional redistricting. Before we

take that up or discuss a plan amongst ourselves, we want to hear from the public about what revisions should occur, if any. That's the purpose of today's hearing. As set out in the notice, we will take public testimony regarding a Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan, pursuant to the Governor's July 9, 2025 proclamation calling a special session of the 89th Legislature. This hearing will focus on those counties of the State lying wholly or partly within congressional districts 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 12, 13, 19, 24, 25, 26, 30, 32, and 33 for the 119th Congress. But the committee will hear testimony about any region of the state. So if you're here and you want to testify about any region of the state, you're more than welcome to.

Today's hearing will feature in-person public testimony. For everyone in the audience, thank you for being here today. In order to testify, you must register. There's a registration table right outside those doors at the back, and fill out one of those green forms and sign it and turn it in. We'd be happy to have you. If you have any questions or encounter any difficulties, please confer with our committee staff. I know we have two right outside there. They'd be happy to answer any questions that you have. We're going to be closing registration for

in-person testimony today at 6:30 p.m. I'll give -- I'll try to give about a 15-minute reminder of that well in advance so that you know.

For everyone wishing to testify as set out in the notice, testimony will be limited to two minutes per witness. We'll have a timer up here at the dais, and there is a timer, I believe, right there. And so the witnesses are going to come up and testify at either one of these podiums when you're called. You'll just be paying attention to that right there. You'll get a warning, I believe, at 15 seconds with a yellow light, and then we'll do red, and then we'll ask you to complete your testimony. Of course, you may receive some questions from the members on the dais. That's not a general invitation to testify open-ended, right? But they may have specific questions for you, and you're welcome to answer those if you so wish.

The reason that we have this two-minute timer is we want to be fair to everybody, and we don't want to -- we want to make sure that we hear from as many people as possible today. So in order to ensure a balance of public testimony across three public hearings -- we've already had one in Austin and one in Houston -- public testimony today is going to be limited to five hours. Now, we have a rough time that

we're trying to get out of here around 10:30 or 11:00 because they need to prepare this room in the morning for, I believe, another event. But we're going to stay here until we finish that five hours of testimony, but I want to give you that up front. So we're going to try to move expeditiously here.

This time, though, today, at this hearing, is not the only time that you have to make your voice heard. There are several other ways that you can provide feedback to the committee. I want to make sure that you know all of them and that you're free to exercise any or all of them at any time. First, if you have more to say than time allows, or if we unfortunately don't reach you today, as the hearing notice mentioned, we welcome you to submit a written copy of your testimony to the committee. This written testimony will be provided to all the members of this committee, so they're all going to hear it if you run out of time. So if you'll just bring that up, we'll have the time at the end, I'll announce, and you can turn that in to committee staff. We'd love to receive it.

Second, if you have any handouts with you, as the notice mentions, please bring the handouts up front before your testimony, and they'll be passed

out to the members of the committee. We ask for 22 copies, one for the record and 21 for the members of the committee.

Third, anyone is welcome to submit an electronic comment without testifying. You can do that online. There's an electronic portal linked in today's hearing notice. It can be found at comments.house.texas.gov. That's comments.house.texas.gov. Information can be uploaded to the portal for today's hearing through the end of today's hearing. You can also upload information to the portal for any future hearings that are announced, and you'll see those in notices.

The Texas Legislative Council also hosts a website for redistricting at redistricting.capitol.texas.gov. That's capitol with an O at the end, by the way. On that website, you can find information about submitting proposed maps for consideration. If you click, I believe, 2020s in the top and go down to Public Participation, there will be some information there. If you have a map that you want us to consider, I'd be happy to look at that, and you can upload that there.

Finally, every member of the public is always welcome to email, contact, or call any member of

the Legislature at any time, and we welcome you to do so. In fact, not only -- I don't have this in these notes here, but there is another committee in the Senate taking up this issue, and they're having virtual testimony. You can register, I believe, for an upcoming hearing they're going to have tomorrow, up to 12 hours before that hearing. So at the Senate website, you can find details there. So a lot of opportunities to get your feedback here.

Finally, let's talk about logistics. Normally I would -- and I think I will call up people in groups of four, but the way we're going to do this is, if the first two, first come, first served, will take these two podiums, and the next two that I call will be right behind them, we'll take your testimony that way. So it'll be from these two podiums. Normally we would have a little table with four chairs, but we couldn't fit it down there, and I wouldn't be able to see. So we're going to have these two podiums here for you to testify. And just make sure that you speak directly into that microphone. If your name is called, just be ready. If you happen to be outside and you're listening in, you hear your name called, feel free to make your way into the room. Just let the doorkeepers know that you've been called to testify,

and they'll let you in and let you come down front.

Finally, since we have no bill before us, and we will have no bill before us at this hearing, the last of our three public hearings before any bill, all testimony today will be neutral or on. You might have seen that on the form. I understand people have different views on one way or the other on this, and you're free to testify whatever you think. Feel free to say whatever you'd like to say. It's just required to be "on" for the minutes. I wanted to make sure that you knew that. Just because the form says neutral and I say that you're neutral, doesn't mean you have to be neutral.

Okay. With that, that's the opening comments that I had for our logistics for today's hearing. Before we get started, I know some members had some comments they'd like to make. I'd like to come to them one at a time.

Dean Thompson, for what purpose?

REP. THOMPSON: I'd just like to ask a question.

REP. VASUT: Gentleman yields for questions.

REP. THOMPSON: Since the people are going to be testifying neutral, that means we don't

have a map, right?

REP. VASUT: That is correct.

REP. THOMPSON: And we have not seen a map?

REP. VASUT: That is correct.

REP. THOMPSON: And we don't know what the map looks like?

REP. VASUT: That's correct. The only map referenced --

REP. THOMPSON: Thank you.

REP. VASUT: -- for purpose of this hearing is the current map.

[Clapping from the gallery]

REP. VASUT: And as the Chair has previously indicated, before any action is taken on any map, if at all, by this committee, there will be another public hearing. So thank you, Dean.

Vice Chair Rosenthal, for what purpose?

REP. ROSENTHAL: I'd like to make a statement.

REP. VASUT: Chair recognizes Vice Chair Rosenthal for --

REP. ROSENTHAL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can y'all hear me okay? All right, good. My name is Jon Rosenthal, like you can see from the

little sign, and I represent House District 135 in Northwest Houston. And I have the either fortunate or unfortunate task of being named the Vice Chair of this committee. I'm a mechanical engineer by trade, 30 years in industry, seeking practical solutions to real-world problems. And listen, this is anything but practical to me. It's -- while it's an incredible responsibility for me to serve as this Vice Chair position, I've done some big stuff in oil field work, but I have never been asked to take a responsibility like this, and I feel the gravity of it. And I'm glad that you are here today to join us in this fight, because it will be a fight. I'm here to fight. My colleagues are here to fight.

We saw the letter that the Department of Justice sent to the Governor. The districts that were specifically mentioned in that letter were District 9, 18, 29, and 33, right here. Curious to me that these are only communities of color being targeted. Mid-decade redistricting is unusual. It's unnecessary. We are required to redraw the district boundaries every ten years following the census, but that's not what this is, y'all. This process isn't -- we redraw after the census to make things fair, because as people move around, we want to make sure you're properly

represented, that everyone, you know, all these districts have the same number, and everyone has a fair chance to elect someone to choose who serves you, right? To choose your elected employees.

This right here is a racist attack on congressional districts of color. It's about taking power away from black and brown communities. It's about erasing your voices. This effort to change the districts again has nothing to do with representing people better. It's the opposite of that. It's a power grab at the expense of black and brown communities.

So, Texas is growing. Most new -- most of the new people that have come into the state in the last ten years are communities of color, and I went through all the numbers. Engineer, I do a lot of math. Between 2010 and 2020, our population grew by 3,999,994 people. Let's call it 4 million, okay? Of that growth, 187,252 were white. 557,000 [audio cut out] because we had so much population coming in, all black and brown, mind you, the two new districts were drawn what? Majority white. I live in one of them. It's crazy, y'all. And now they're going to go after more communities of color?

So just know we're here with you. I'm

acutely aware of being white. I don't know if any of you noticed. But in all seriousness, those of you that look like me, it's super important that the community see you speaking out. An injustice against any of us is an injustice against all of us. And all I'm going to say is what Desmond Tutu said. If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. So while Donald Trump and MAGA Republicans are pushing for redistricting, they have -- in doing so, they are repeatedly attacking communities of color. We on this -- the Democrats on this panel, will be fighting that with everything we have. Thank you for being here today. And Mr. Chairman, thank you for letting me speak.

REP. VASUT: Thank you, Vice Chairman.

Mr. Turner, for what purpose?

Oh, I'm sorry, before I do that, the Chair will show that Representative Barbara Gervin-Hawkins is present.

Representative Turner, for what purpose?

REP. TURNER: Mr. Chairman, a brief opening statement, if I may.

REP. VASUT: Chair recognizes Representative Turner for a brief opening statement.

REP. TURNER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to begin by welcoming you and all the members of the committee to House District 101 and the University of Texas at Arlington. And just to give you a 30-second infomercial on UT Arlington, you're right now at a designated R1 research institution, the largest university in North Texas, the second largest in the UT system, the sixth most diverse school in the United States, a designated Hispanic-serving institution, and a designated AAPI-serving institution. And we are -- those of us here in North Texas, we are proud of UT Arlington. I want to personally thank President Jennifer Cowley and her staff for making this facility and parking available to the Texas House and to the public this evening. But most of all, I want to thank the hundreds of North Texas residents, you, who are here this evening to make your voices heard on congressional redistricting.

And as Vice Chair Rosenthal stated, we are here today because President Trump has ordered Governor Abbott to redraw our state's congressional districts in the middle of the decade, with no new census data to consider. Now, the flimsy pretext for this unnecessary process is a letter from Trump's DOJ, Department of Justice, that says the Legislature needs to go out and identify majority-minority districts and

dismantle them, including Congressional District 33 right here in Tarrant and Dallas counties. The voting rights experts who testified at our first hearing in Austin last week thoroughly debunked the DOJ's position. And, of course, DOJ has not made itself available to this committee so we can understand where they're coming from.

It is essential that we hear from the Department of Justice because their position is completely at odds with the sworn testimony state Republican leaders recently gave in federal court. Their testimony was that the current map was drawn "blind to race." So, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate that you have now formally invited DOJ to receive the copy of that letter. I appreciate that in response to our requests in the first two hearings. Mr. Chairman, if I may -- that's the end of my statement.

If I may, may I ask, has the Department of Justice responded to your invitation yet?

REP. VASUT: I have not received a formal response. I received an out-of-office notification, so I know the e-mail went through.

REP. TURNER: Okay. Well, Mr. Chairman, I would hope the Department of Justice will respond in a serious manner to the Chairman of the House

Redistricting Committee promptly if -- as I say, it is essential we hear from DOJ in this process before we consider any maps. And so, if we do not hear quickly, I would hope the committee would entertain a subpoena process. My understanding is that there is a process in the District of Columbia where they can domesticate a subpoena from out of the District of Columbia. So I'd like the committee to pursue that process, if need be, to get DOJ before this committee so we can ask them questions.

REP. VASUT: Happy to take a look at that.

REP. TURNER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. VASUT: Members, any other questions?

Okay. With that, we're here to the main event for today, the public testimony. Chair's open to public testimony. I'm going to call up our first four witnesses. If you'll kind of amongst yourselves divide amongst these two microphones, I'd appreciate it. We'll get through it kind of as we go. And I see my colleague, Representative Johnson, or Congresswoman Johnson here, so glad to have you. And let's go ahead and I want to make sure I get my stopwatch going here. Okay.

Chair calls Sylvia Garcia, Julie Johnson, Casey Thomas, and Roman Palomares. Now, if those four will make their way to the two microphones. The next four after them, if you'll just kind of be ready to get up once they're done, Royce West, Elsie Cooke-Holmes, Alisa Simmons, and Jeff -- well, I'm going to come back to you, Jeff. We'll come back to Jeff in a second. Okay. But those other three, if you'll be on standby.

Okay. Chair calls Sylvia Garcia. I show you registered to testify as Sylvia Garcia, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

SYLVIA GARCIA: That's correct.

REP. VASUT: Good to have you with us again, Congresswoman. Please give us your testimony.

SYLVIA GARCIA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. As I said in Austin and Houston, we should not be here today. You should be back in Austin passing legislation to support families in the Hill Country after the devastating flooding. Instead, we are today playing political games to appease the felon in the White House and his lust for power. We are pretending that the Governor did not approve the very maps he now is insisting on changing.

So as we begin the last of the scheduled

hearings, have we really learned anything different? No. The Chair was emphatic in Austin that you all did not vote on an unconstitutional map, and that it did comply fully with the Voting Rights Act. In Houston, the Chair was equally emphatic that these hearings are about whether to redraw the lines, not how. At both hearings, we established that no maps have been released and that this panel has not seen any proposed maps. Also established was that there is no new census population to consider and that this is indeed an unusual mid-decade redrawing.

The DOJ letter targets four minority urban districts, including mine in Houston, to create five new Republican districts at the request of the felon in the White House. The deadline for draft maps per that letter is August 7th, about ten days away. My district is a target. It's a majority-minority district. At nearly 75 percent Latino, this district was created to comply with the Voting Rights Act, and any suggestion otherwise by DOJ is simply false.

We are tied by communities of interest that values faith, family, culture, language, hard work, and service. We believe in a democracy and the principle of one person, one vote. The American dream is not just a slogan for us, it's something we live

every single day. And frankly, Mr. Chairman, we would never, ever let a conman from New York tell us Texans what to do.

REP. VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

SYLVIA GARCIA: Mr. Chairman, I want to go on record as being against any changes to the maps. I realize that you're going to record me as neutral. But I fear that what will happen is that the White House will brag --

REP. VASUT: Please complete your testimony.

SYLVIA GARCIA: -- that everybody was neutral in Texas. Let's make sure that the message is clear that we could not register a "hell no."

REP. VASUT: Understood. All right. Members, any questions for that witness? I hear none.

Chair recognizes Mr. Thomas at the mic. I show you registered to testify as Casey Thomas, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

CASEY THOMAS: Yes.

REP. VASUT: Understood. Please give us your testimony.

CASEY THOMAS: Well, she's a hard act to

follow. To the House Select Committee on Redistricting, thank you Chair and Vice Chair and members of the House Select Committee on Redistricting for hosting this important in-person hearing in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex, in the House District of the Honorable Chris Turner. And yes, I was watching. That's an inside joke.

How did you get here? Nobody's supposed to be here. These are the words from a popular song from the 1990s sung by Deborah Cox. However, these are the same words that many Texans ask of themselves as it relates to this effort of mid-decade redistricting. I served as the Chair of the City of Dallas Complete Count Committee on the 2000 Census during my time on the Dallas City Council. We led the city through the process of completing the U.S. Census during the pandemic. We didn't begin our redistricting process for the City of Dallas until after we received the results from the 2020 Census, and that is traditionally when this process takes place.

In the state of Texas, the black, brown, and Asian population each individually outgrew that of the white population over the last decade. But out of the two new congressional seats awarded, they both went to white voters. Make no mistake, this is about race

and not about party. Let me say that again. This is about race and not about party. If it's not about race, why are the four congressional districts targeted by the Department of Justice letter represented by three black congressmembers and one Latino congressmember? Currently, the population of Texas is only 40 percent white, but white voters control 28 out of the 38 congressional seats, which is over 73 percent. If the current resident in the White House, that's what I call him, gets his wish, which is an additional four or five congressional seats, that would increase to 84 or 87 percent. That's modern-day apartheid.

This should not be happening in the state of Texas. We shouldn't even be having this hearing. I ask that each of you think about what's in the best interest of your constituents and the people who live in the state of Texas. How did you get here? Nobody's supposed to be here.

REP. VASUT: Please complete your testimony.

CASEY THOMAS: Thank you for your time, and may God bless you and the State of Texas.

REP. VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Representative Gervin-Hawkins, for what purpose?

REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: Mr. Thomas --

REP. VASUT: Once you're done testifying, if you'll wait, there might be a question for you. And going forward, what I'm going to do, just to be courteous, I don't want you to have to sit up there for too long. I'm just going to call you all two at a time, and once you're done, I'll call the next person for that mic and so on, that way you don't have to stand up for too long.

Ms. Gervin-Hawkins, you're recognized to question the witness.

REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: Thank you. Mr. Thomas.

CASEY THOMAS: Yes, ma'am.

REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: When we talk about the three African-American districts, they're iconic. Would you agree with that?

CASEY THOMAS: I would agree 100 percent.

REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: And when we talk about those seats, they represent who?

CASEY THOMAS: They represent -- those particular three seats represent the late Sylvester Turner, who held that seat. Unfortunately, the

Governor chose to wait until November, almost a year after his death, to fill that seat. Second seat, by the Honorable Al Green, who has stood in the face of terror and death threats. And the third, my brother right here, Councilman Marc Veasey. Thank you for your service and representing the Metroplex.

REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: So, Mr. Thomas, if we look at trying to destroy those districts, we're also trying to destroy iconic, historical African-American history. Would you agree with that?

CASEY THOMAS: I agree 100 percent.

REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: So when we look at the NAACP and your work and Brother Bledsoe's work, it appears that work is trying to be unraveled. Would you agree with that?

CASEY THOMAS: Absolutely. We're seeing decades, decades of progress being unraveled in approximately six months.

REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: And also, would you agree it's disrespectful to our iconic Sylvester Turner, Sheila Jackson Lee, Barbara Jordan, Mickey Leland? Would you agree with that?

CASEY THOMAS: I agree 100 percent.

REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: So my final question is this. Are we going to let this happen?

CASEY THOMAS: Absolutely not.

REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: What did Congresswoman Garcia say? Hell no. And I would say to my colleagues here on the dais, let's not let D.C. destroy Texas. And I think it's important that everybody in this room stay engaged all the way through to this process, so that my colleagues could understand this is unnecessary, it should not be occurring, and we're not going to stand by idly to let it happen. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Members, any other questions for this witness? Chair hears none.

Thank you for your testimony. The witness is excused.

Chair calls Julie Johnson. I show you registered to testify as Julie Johnson, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

JULIE JOHNSON: Yes, sir.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

JULIE JOHNSON: Thank you, Chairman Vasut, Vice Chair Rosenthal, Ms. T, the committee, so many friends. It's so good to see you all again. I have to say, Republicans in D.C. are just as crazy as

you guys, so it's good to see you here. I would like to thank the committee for hosting this field hearing in Arlington and allowing me to testify, address you today.

Everyone here already knows this, but I'll say it anyway. Texas is a large, diverse state, not just in terms of population, but also in terms of geography. We have urban, suburban, and rural communities. We have plains, hills, mountains, prairies, and the Piney Woods, the Gulf Coast, and more. Each member of this committee represents a part of Texas that is completely unique from the colleague sitting next to you, and that is the same truth for the congressional delegation as well.

In Texas 32 -- and I want to shout out all my 32 folks that are here to defend our seat. I represent an urban and suburban area in DFW with a majority-minority constituency. My constituents need a representative who will fight for affordable housing, public transportation, and economic growth across diverse neighborhoods. And these needs differ from rural districts, who priorities might include agricultural needs, water infrastructure, rural broadband, and rural hospitals.

Part of my job in Congress is to secure

funding for the district's local needs and projects. This is only achieved when my district lines provide a cohesive priorities across these communities. If the committee considers and passes a map where 32 becomes a suburban and rural district, that will no longer be possible. This would pit communities against one another, leaving many communities' needs ignored. By lumping rural and suburban and urban communities together, Texas will weaken their voices and ensure that no one receives the fair representation that they deserve.

The administration's demand to Governor Abbott to redistrict mid-decade after claiming the current map was not drawn with racial intent is disingenuous, clearly political, and outrageous. Now you are being told to target districts based on their racial composition. This is wrong, it's unconstitutional, and violates the Voting Rights Act. Texans already suffer from one of the most racially gerrymandered congressional maps in the country. After the 2020 census documented the most population growth over the last decade came from people of color, Texas chose to increase the number of majority white districts during --

REP. VASUT: Please complete your

testimony.

JULIE JOHNSON: -- the 2021 redistricting. And now, apparently it was not enough. Basically, Mr. Chairman, this process is wrong. You guys have the power to stop it. I hope you will use your power for the benefit of the people of Texas.

REP. VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Members, any questions for this witness? The Chair hears none. The witness is excused. Thank you.

On this microphone, in just a little bit, if Elsie Cooke-Holmes will come to this microphone, we'll come to you in just a little bit.

Chair calls Roman Palomares. I show you registered to testify as Roman Palomares, on behalf of LULAC, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct, sir?

ROMAN PALOMARES: That's correct.

REP. VASUT: Chair will show that Representative Manuel is present, time 5:34.

Please give us your testimony, sir.

ROMAN PALOMARES: Thank you very much. Good afternoon, Chairman Vasut and Select Committee. I represent the largest Latino organization in the United

States, LULAC, the League of United Latin American Citizens. LULAC recognizes that Latino communities have fueled the state's rapid population growth for decades. And as the Rep. Rosenthal mentioned, between 2010 and 2020, 4 million people, 2 million Hispanic Latinos, 50 percent growth. These numbers are more than statistics. They represent a mandate for equal representation and political empowerment.

LULAC strongly asserts that fair representation is not up for debate. The Voting Rights Act requires equal opportunity to elect candidates of our choice and create electoral maps that reflect true demographic shifts. Yet, certain Texas lawmakers have a history of suppressing Latino voting strength. They have repeatedly drawn boundaries which increase majority white districts. This cannot continue. It is illegal and unjust. LULAC proudly stands with coalitions of Latino, black, Asian-American organizations which have consistently led legal efforts to secure fair redistricting. This fight is not new and it is far from over.

As we approach the 2025 special session, our movement is prepared to stand resolute against any efforts to dilute the electoral power of communities of color. Texas belongs to all its residents, and so must

its -- and so must its political maps.

[Lights turned off]

REP. VASUT: The House Select Committee on Congressional Redistricting will stand at ease for one minute. Now we get to all be friends for a minute while we wait. I apologize, sir, I'm going to let you continue. We're going to reset that. Technically, I've got to wait a minute. I stopped the timer, though. If somebody could just not hit that button again, we'd greatly appreciate it. You know, mood lighting is fine, but maybe not that kind of mood lighting.

Let me ask this real quickly while we're waiting. Is Domingo Garcia, Jay Nam (phonetic) or Ben Whitman (phonetic) here? Any of those three here? If I called your name and you heard it, if you could alert a member of committee staff, we understood that you might want to testify, and we had some forms for you, but we hadn't seen you.

Okay. With that, without objection from members of the committee, the House Select Committee on Congressional Redistricting will come back to order.

The Chair will recognize Mr. Palomares to complete his testimony. I'll give you another 30 seconds, sir.

ROMAN PALOMARES: Thank you, sir. Texans deserve the chance to weigh in before final lines are drawn. A rushed, closed-door process only breeds more distress and disenfranchisement. This is unacceptable in a modern democracy. The people of Texas must not allow their voices to be stolen through partisan gerrymandering. LULAC's stance is complete opposition to any redistricting effort that undermines the will and the voice of the Latino community and any community of color. We will not allow decades of growth, civic participation, and sacrifice to be erased by political gamesmanship. Fair maps are the foundation of a functioning democracy. Thank you, sir.

REP. VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Members, any questions for this witness?

The Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony. The witness is excused.

Chair calls Elsie-Cooke Holmes. I show you registered to testify as Elsie Cooke-Holmes, on behalf of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, on a Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

ELSIE COOKE-HOLMES: Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your

testimony.

ELSIE COOKE-HOLMES: Thank you, Chairman, Vice Chair, and other members of the committee. I am a proud resident of Texas and the immediate past international president of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated. For over 100 years, members of our organization have fought for civil rights and voting rights, and I'm representing over 350,000 members, including thousands of Texans, to oppose this rushed mid-decade redistricting process that threatens to silence communities of color and risks further harm to black and brown Texans' ability to elect their preferred representatives.

Despite a 30-day special session, we're a week into it. No maps or other data have been shared with the public for meaningful consideration, review, and debate. Yet you're asking us, your constituents, to engage in a rushed, non-transparent process that could further minimize the power of black and brown Texan voters. That's not democracy, that's disenfranchisement. We know that the current maps already harm black and brown communities, issues so severe that they've gone to federal court. And this special session is doing nothing. It's only exacerbating it. It's doing nothing to fix the

injustices in Texas' congressional map.

So we encourage you, we encourage you to consider the fact that Texans deserve a congressional map that allows them the opportunity to choose their leaders. They do not deserve a map crafted behind closed doors where officials choose their constituents. So I urge this committee to halt this process until it can be carried out with transparency, fairness, and integrity. As our member, Texans' own, the late Congresswoman Barbara Jordan said, if the society today allows wrongs to go unchallenged, the impression is created that those wrongs have the approval of the majority. And I do not believe the majority of Texans are for this. We have a right to our voice in Congress. And so we demand --

REP. VASUT: Please complete your testimony.

ELSIE COOKE-HOLMES: I'm sorry?

REP. VASUT: Please complete your testimony. I'll let you get another sentence.

ELSIE COOKE-HOLMES: Okay. So we are watching, we are organized, and we are demanding better for our state and our democracy. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Thank you.

Members, any questions for this witness?

Mr. Manuel, for what purpose?

And, ma'am, my chief's going to bring you a form. If you could sign that form.

Mr. Manuel, no question? Okay.

All right. If you could sign your affirmation form.

Members, any other questions for this witness? Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony, ma'am. You are excused.

Chair is going to call Royce West. I show you registered to testify as Royce West, on behalf of yourself, on Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Senator, thank you. You're recognized. Please give us your -- is that correct, Senator? Did I get your registration correct, Senator?

ROYCE WEST: With all due respect to the Chairman and the members of this august body, I want you to look out here. This is Texas. This is Texas. This is Texas. I know that I'm in the other body. And I had some equivocation about whether or not I should come and testify. That equivocation lasted one second, because I wanted to make certain that I had the opportunity to talk to my colleagues in the House.

Each and every one of the Republicans that was here in 2021 voted for that man. You voted

for it. The Governor signed it. Yes, it's being contested in federal court right now. The Chair of the Senate Redistricting Committee testified under oath that it was race-blind. Not once, but twice. Testified in federal court. And I know I've got some lawyers up here. Under oath that it was race-blind. The Attorney General of the State of Texas, who spent much of his time during the Biden administration suing the federal government, based on laws passed in the State of Texas.

The Governor signed this particular map that we're under right now. He put in a letter to the Department of Justice, as you well know, saying that the race -- that the map was race-blind. Your Attorney General. But where is he today? Is he suing the Trump administration? No. Ask yourself why. Members, I'm not going to be long. I know that my colleagues in the Senate Democratic Caucus are supportive of the House Democratic Caucus and asking you to just consider what the Governor is asking you to do. But you don't have to vote for it. You do not have to vote for it.

You know, I'm going to say this in closing. I'm kind of an historian, and I read a lot of books. And I think about some of the lynchings that occurred, and a group of people that were standing

there during the lynching. They just stood there and did nothing. Don't be one of those members as we deal with issues of redistricting. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

[Loud clapping from gallery]

Members, any questions for this witness? Chair recognizes Mr. Moody to question the witness.

REP. MOODY: Senator, I want to - there's a lot of us up here. No, Senator, I want to thank you for being here, and I appreciate your voice in this process. I've been trying to dig into where these maps are, and I've had a number of members of Congress come before this committee and testify. I've asked several of them. This is the first time I've had a member of the Senate come over, so I'd be remiss if I didn't ask. Have you seen these maps yet? Are they available to y'all in the Senate and just maybe not to us in the House?

ROYCE WEST: No, they're not. And let me say this. The reality is, is that I've been reassured that there will be hearings once the maps come out. But check this out. Will there be regional meetings like this so everyone won't have to come to Austin to see the maps? And probably not.

REP. MOODY: Well, so let me ask you about that. I want to drill down into that. Why -- why is that? I mean, we can all stand up here and talk about what we'd like to see or not see. But without a bill in front of us, there's not something that's drawn right. A map comes in the form of a bill in the Legislature, right? It's the same in the Senate?

ROYCE WEST: That's exactly right.

REP. MOODY: I've got to check because we do things different in the House than you all do. But that's the way it works.

ROYCE WEST: Exactly.

REP. MOODY: So because we have nothing here, I don't know what these boundaries look like. I don't know what Congressman Veasey [audio cut out] about this. What is -- and I agree with you, what is the value of us seeing it, seeing the proposal, and being able to let folks, like the folks that are here tonight -- and as I walked in, hundreds more outside those doors -- comment on the actual bill? What's the difference between that and what we're doing here today?

ROYCE WEST: That's true engagement by the public in terms of looking at maps and making comments about whether or not they fully represent

communities of interest, as an example.

REP. MOODY: I appreciate that. I'm going to ask you one last question. I want to make sure the other members have an opportunity. My understanding is, pursuant to the Constitution, the Governor can put anything on the call that we are supposed to undertake --

ROYCE WEST: That's correct.

REP. MOODY: -- during a special session? You've been in the Legislature longer than me. You know how that goes. And as far as I can find, as far as I can look into the House rules, there's nothing that says we have to take up, consider, or pass anything the Governor puts on the call.

ROYCE WEST: That's exactly right.

REP. MOODY: Is there anything different -- do you all operate under any different rules in the Senate? Do you have to do what the governor says over there?

ROYCE WEST: You said rules?

REP. MOODY: Is there anything -- is there any --

ROYCE WEST: There's nothing that I --

REP. MOODY: -- anything in the Constitution --

ROYCE WEST: No --

REP. MOODY: -- or the Senate rules --

ROYCE WEST: -- not at all.

REP. MOODY: --that say that you have to do what's on the call?

ROYCE WEST: No.

REP. MOODY: Is there anything that says you even have to hold hearings on it?

ROYCE WESTS: No.

REP. MOODY: Thank you, sir.

ROYCE WEST: Let me just say this, Mr. Chairman, if I may. There are people outside that can't get in. And it's my understanding, because I've talked with the general counsel or the legislative liaison for the university, and I'm being told that they were instructed not to provide any additional space for people that couldn't come in here. I would hope -- and that it came from the committee. I would hope that you would ask UT Arlington to just open up the space across the hall. Okay? And allow people to sit in there.

[Loud clapping from gallery]

REP. VASUT: Certainly, Senator. I'd be certainly happy if UT Arlington would open up that space. Before we -- before we -- Senator, just a

couple more questions.

[Cheering and clapping from gallery]

REP. VASUT: I would remind the audience, just because it takes time. Before we go to the next few questions for you, Senator, if Alisa Simmons and Marc Veasey could be ready to go to these mics next, I'd appreciate it. Want to make sure we're efficient there.

Any other questions for the witness? Chair recognizes Mr. Turner to question the panel.

REP. TURNER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Senator West, thank you for being here tonight. I think you were in the hearing room earlier when I spoke about the Department of Justice and thanked the Chairman for sending a letter inviting the DOJ and suggested that the committee should consider a subpoena if need be, because we need to hear from the DOJ in this process. I know in the Senate, Senator King, the Chairman of your redistricting committee, sent a letter inviting the DOJ to testify, I believe, on Friday. Do you happen to know, are there plans being made for the DOJ to testify before the Senate Redistricting Committee?

ROYCE WEST: Other than knowing that a request has been made, I don't know whether or not.

They may be out of the office.

REP. TURNER: Okay. Understood. I wonder where they are. But I would hope -- I would hope, Senator, that for the House and the Senate to be able to fully understand the implications of what DOJ is asking Texas to do, that the DOJ will appear before the Senate Redistricting Committee and the House Redistricting Committee, and I hope both committees will pursue a subpoena process, if need be, to secure their testimony.

ROYCE WEST: And I'd also hope that this committee would take into consideration that the law that is being depended upon by the Department of Justice is not settled law, by the way. There are other circuits that don't follow what the Fifth Circuit has prescribed, and that they would allow the Supreme Court to at least opine on whether or not that ends up being the law of the country.

REP. TURNER: Absolutely. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Chair will show Representative Bowers and Representative Davis present on the dais.

Members, any other questions? Chair recognizes Representative Gervin-Hawkins to question the witness.

REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Senator, you've been around a long time.

ROYCE WEST: Hey, come on now.

[Talking and clapping from gallery]

REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: Senator, you know, one of the things as we go through this journey together that I think is so important, and I know you have this knowledge, what recommendation would you make to our House colleagues in terms of allowing someone to come in and destroy Texas, through racial lines, through many other lines, and then leave and go home, and we're left with the aftermath? What recommendation would you give our colleagues? Because, you know, everybody needs cover, and we know that when the man in the White House speaks, everybody does what? They jump and they listen. So, Senator, words of wisdom to my colleagues, don't let this man destroy Texas. What advice would you give them?

ROYCE WEST: My advice to my Republican colleagues is to kind of look within. Look within. We all profess to be Christians. And the analogy I gave you a few minutes ago, where black men were being lynched, there were probably Christians at those lynchings. And they engaged in that type of behavior,

knowing in their heart and their soul that it was wrong. Wrong.

So the question is, is whether or not you're going to go down that path and say, well, it's just about politics, or it's whether about making certain people in this room get an opportunity to sit at the same table that you're sitting at, have discussions, give their perspective concerning the issues, allow a vote to be taken, and let it be a reflection of the majority of your body and my body. We have a right to sit with you, if elected, duly elected by our constituents, and come up with policies that reflect the sentiment of the State. I'd ask you not to destroy what has already happened as it relates to representation by Hispanics and African-Americans, because that's what your president is asking you to do. Not your God, but your president.

REP. VASUT: Members, any other questions? Chair hears done. Thank you for your testimony, Senator. You're excused.

ROYCE WEST: Thank you.

[Loud clapping from gallery]

REP. VASUT: Now, forgive me if I read this form wrong. Is it Alisa Simmons?

ALISA SIMMONS: Alisa.

REP. VASUT: Alisa Simmons.

ALISA SIMMONS: Yes.

REP. VASUT: I show you're registered to testify on behalf of yourself on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

ALISA SIMMONS: Yes.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

ALISA SIMMONS: Thank you, sir. My name is Alisa Simmons. I'm the Tarrant County Commissioner that represents the precinct -- I represent the precinct that you are currently sitting in, meeting in. This is my precinct. Welcome to ground zero of redistricting. Tarrant County, Texas, home of the Tea Party and MAGA Republicans, MAGA Republican county judge, DA, sheriff, all of them.

I am here to urge the members of the Texas Legislature to say no to racism and the racially discriminatory redraw of congressional maps. What you've done is planned and calculated a racist attack on the fundamental voting rights of people of color. I should know. MAGA County Judge Tim O'Hare used a racist law firm and a racist map drawer to attack, pack, and crack African-American and Hispanic neighborhoods here, just like you are trying to do to

our congressional maps.

With the mid-decade redistricting of Tarrant County Commissioner's precincts, the Republicans came for me and my seat just last month. On June 3rd, my constituents lost their representation due to intentional, racial, gerrymandered MAGA politics. And what happened when my colleagues voted to redistrict? When they voted to go after my Precinct 2 seat, a damn lawsuit. So hopefully you all are prepared for that. They redrew our lines not because the population shifted, not because our communities changed, but because they wanted to silence our voices.

Like you, Texas legislative Republicans, my MAGA colleagues wanted more power than they already have. Tarrant County has been in existence since 1849 and has always been Republican-led. What more do you want? They didn't give a damn who they had to disenfranchise --

REP. VASUT: Please complete your testimony.

ALISA SIMMONS: -- to do it. Is my time up?

REP. VASUT: Please -- yeah, I'll let you complete your sentence.

ALISA SIMMONS: All right. That wasn't

fair. That wasn't democratic. It was designed to rig the game before the whistle even blew. And now Texas Republican leadership is behind closed doors, haven't seen a map or a redistricting proposal from you guys, doing the same thing. But we are here today to say no to racism and racially discriminatory redrawing of congressional maps. Thank you all.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness? Representative Manuel is recognized to question the witness.

Commissioner, Commissioner, we might -- just -- it's okay. Just remember to stay at that microphone till we -- we might have some questions for you.

Representative Manuel is recognized to question the witness.

REP. MANUEL: I had a quick question. I know you were saying that because of this, it's going to cause a lawsuit. Is your county right now flush with cash or do you all have an over surplus of cash? I'm asking for an intent. So I'm asking --

ALISA SIMMONS: No, sir, we are not flush with cash.

REP. MANUEL: Okay. So you're not. Second thing is, obviously you wouldn't know, but as of

right now, since this will possibly be going to litigation, do you know how much the county is already having to spend to try to, you know, affirm what they've already done to the seat with redistricting?

ALISA SIMMONS: Yes. We have hired the racist -- the firm that drew the racist map. We pay them to draw the racist map, $30,000. And now we've hired them to defend the damn racist map at 250,000.

REP. MANUEL: Okay. So --

ALISA SIMMONS: That's just -- that's just the beginning.

REP. MANUEL: That's just the beginning.

ALISA SIMMONS: Yes.

REP. MANUEL: So we're already well above, what, $300,000?

ALISA SIMMONS: Yes. In less than a month.

REP. MANUEL: Okay. And then how is that end up going to be paid back? I mean, I know the county is going to do it, but where is that --

ALISA SIMMONS: Their money. It's taxpayer dollars.

REP. MANUEL: So this is going to come from the taxpayers --

ALISA SIMMONS: Yes.

REP. VASUT: -- who are already disenfranchised, as well as people who are not disenfranchised.

ALISA SIMMONS: Correct.

REP. VASUT: So this is going to increase taxes in your county?

ALISA SIMMONS: It probably will.

REP. MANUEL: Okay. I just wanted to confirm that. Thank you.

ALISA SIMMONS: Thank you, sir.

REP. TURNER: Mr. Chairman.

REP. VASUT: Mr. Turner is recognized to question the witness.

REP. TURNER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Commissioner Simmons, thank you for being here, and thank you for your leadership for our county and for our precinct. You talked about the Tarrant County mid-decade redistricting. And I'd like you just to inform the committee how your Republican colleagues on the Commissioner's Court went about achieving it. Just correct me if I'm wrong, but they took heavily minority neighborhoods from Precinct 2, which you were elected to represent, and packed them into Precinct 1, which is an existing majority-minority commissioner's precinct. Is that -- do I have that basically correct?

ALISA SIMMONS: That's correct. So, Precinct 2, as politicians, you know, is a competitive district. Precinct 1 is decidedly Democratic. Precincts 3 and 4 are decidedly Republican. So, hey, if the Republicans run a good race, they maybe could have beat me, but they didn't. So it's a competitive -- it's a competitive district. And so, yes, they -- my precinct, the CVAP, voting age population, was 48.9 percent black and brown. And with redistricting, it's now 38 percent black and brown. So they decimated Precinct 2.

REP. TURNER: Okay. And basically, when they do these racial gerrymanders, like we're about to see in this congressional map, there's basically two ways to do it, right? You can crack the minority community and thereby dilute votes across several districts, and/or pack minority voters into as little geography as possible, but the net effect is the same, reducing the overall representation that minority voters have in their ability to elect the candidates of their choice.

ALISA SIMMONS: That's correct. So they took, for example, the Tarrant County portion of Grand Prairie, which was in Precinct 2, and votes decidedly Democratic. That's your district.

REP. TURNER: Yes.

ALISA SIMMONS: And took it right around Arlington and placed it in Precinct 1. So, you know, they cracked Precinct 2 very well and put them into Precinct 1.

REP. TURNER: All right. Thank you for -- thank you for walking us through that. Thank you, Commissioner.

ALISA SIMMONS: Thank you, sir.

REP. VASUT: Representative Barbara Gervin-Hawkins for what purpose?

REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: Mr. Chair, there's still requests for us to open up that room across the hall. So could we ask the whole site to have that room open? We've got a lot of elderly people there, people on walkers, wheelchairs.

REP. VASUT: Happy to make that request.

REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: Please. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Chair Rosenthal, for what purpose? Vice Chair Rosenthal.

REP. ROSENTHAL: Question for the Chairman.

REP. VASUT: Yield for question.

REP. ROSENTHAL: When you make that request, can you please remind the folks at UT

Arlington that this is a publicly-funded university?

REP. VASUT: Members -- and just so you know, I stop the timer anytime there's a question of the Chair, just so you know. Members, any other questions for this witness?

Commissioner, thank you for having us here today.

ALISA SIMMONS: Thank you, Chair.

REP. VASUT: Thank you for being here. Thank you for your testimony. You're excused.

Chair calls Marc Veasey.

Now, while I call up Mr. Veasey, Congressman, if Leon Holeman could make your way to this other microphone, we'd love to come to you next. So Leon Holeman to this microphone.

I show you registered to testify as Marc Veasey, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct, sir?

MARC VEASEY: Yes.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

MARC VEASEY: Thank you very much. Hi, my name is Marc Veasey, Congressman for the 33rd Congressional District. Born and reared in Tarrant

County with proud roots in the Lake Como and Stop 6 communities. The district that I represent is born of struggle, built by hope, and defined by diverse voices of both Tarrant and Dallas Counties. From historic African-American and Hispanic communities in southeast Fort Worth and Forest Hill, to the vibrant neighborhoods of Arlington, Grand Prairie, and North Oak Cliff, and to the diverse neighborhoods in the Valley Ranch area of Irving, this district represents the very soul of Texas. And it's been the honor of my life to serve these communities, to fight for every person, regardless of race, party or ideology. But today I come before you not as a congressman but as a witness, because the very communities that I serve and that I love are under threat.

In Texas, the right to vote, a right paid for in blood and sweat and lives, is once again under siege. Only now the weapon is not a billy club or a literacy test, but a partisan pen wielded by those who would rig the system to preserve power rather than earn it. Donald Trump is demanding loyalty maps, maps drawn not to represent but to erase, erase. And these maps would strip away the voices of black and brown Texans who built this state and fueled its growth. District 33 has a combined voting age population of over 84

percent, a minority voting age population to be specific. And it was created as part of a court-ordered map in 2011 to remedy deliberate racial gerrymandering. And since then, minority voters have consistently and reliably elected the candidate of their choice.

I have been humbled to earn that trust in every election. And yet, this district now faces a threat of being dismantled, not for fairness, not for compliance, but to serve the raw, hungry power of one man, Donald Trump.

REP. VASUT: Please complete your testimony.

MARC VEASEY: Just a few years ago, Governor Abbott and Republican lawmakers stood in the federal court and swore under oath that their map was legal because it was drawn "race blind." Now Trump is claiming that the map they drew is illegal because it was drawn with racial intent. Now those very Republican -- now those very Republican lawmakers claim that the map they drew is illegal because it was drawn with enough racial intent. So what is it? Were they lying then or are they lying now? Either way --

REP. VASUT: Please, if you could please complete your testimony.

MARC VEASEY: -- one truth is clear. They have shown that they cannot be trusted with the power to draw the lines that define our democracy. And the facts don't lie. Ninety-five percent of Texas population growth came from minority residents in Dallas and Tarrant counties. All the growth came from communities of color. And yet, out of 38 congressional districts in Texas, only 13 have consistently enabled minority voters to elect the candidate of their choice. And in all 13, they have chosen Democrats. Now 13 of those districts are in the crosshairs. And make no mistake, redrawing these lines to dilute minority power would not be a neutral act. It would be an act of intentional racial discrimination that violates the law.

REP. VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Members, any questions for this witness? Representative Gervin-Hawkins is recognized to question the witness.

REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: Congressman, will your district land on the, what I call in the bullseye, in the target?

MARC VEASEY: It was listed in the sham DOJ memo that was provided. But like everybody else, I

have not seen a map.

REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: So if indeed a map was passed, which we haven't seen, we're talking about destroying your district?

MARC VEASEY: Right.

REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: How does it feel really to be under attack like that when you've been a legislator, a congressional person for a number of years?

MARC VEASEY: It's not really about how I feel. What really bothers me is the communities that I represent. That's really what bothers me. You know, consistently in the Dallas-Fort Worth area -- and again, I'm proud to be from Fort Worth. I was born here. My grandparents came here and moved to Como with nothing. And I'm very proud to be from Fort Worth and to be from Tarrant County. I will tell you that.

But what I'll also tell you is that I've watched this area grow. I've watched areas that used to be cow pastures that were 1A and 2A schools that now have 15 high schools. And all of that growth was because of black, brown and South Asian, mainly, growth. And for them to keep drawing these seats to not reflect that growth is wrong.

REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: So, Congressman,

have you stated all the things you needed to state to this community today?

MARC VEASEY: Yes, ma'am.

REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Members, any other questions for this witness? Chair hears none. Thank you, Congressman, you're excused.

At this right microphone, if Janet Mattern could make her way down to this microphone.

REP. TURNER: Mr. Chairman?

REP. VASUT: Mr. Turner, for what purpose?

REP. TURNER: If the Chairman will yield for a question.

REP. VASUT: Chairman yields for some questions.

REP. TURNER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With respect to the overflow crowd outside, it's my understanding there's still not a TV hooked up or any audio/video to where people waiting to testify and wanting to observe the hearing can actually hear the hearing. And my concern specifically is people who are maybe registered and won't hear their name when called. And my understanding is the university has the capability of doing this if they receive the direction

from the committee to do so.

REP. VASUT: Happy to pass along that request. We will certainly do so to hook up an audio/visual there. In the meantime, I would just encourage everyone that's outside, on your cell phone, if you'll go to house.texas.gov, there's a link to audio visual there, and you'll be able to watch it on your phone. In the meantime, we will request that of the university. Thank you, Representative Turner.

REP. TURNER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. VASUT: Members, we're going to go to our next witness. I'll start the clock again.

I show you registered to testify as Leon Holeman, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct, sir?

LEON HOLEMAN: Yes, it is.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

LEON HOLEMAN: Yes. I'm glad you introduced me as Leon Holeman because I am not Anthony Davis, although I wish I was. This redistricting process is, as I should say, bigotry, racism, and fascism disguised, camouflaged, and masquerading as politics. If you read the New York Times article, "How

Texas Plans to Make Its House Districts Redder," all five districts that are slated for redistricting are primarily black and/or Latino. This is a different candy coating on the old-fashioned, chocolate-covered M&M peanut of racial supremacy. This is tantamount to Heinrich Himmler taking order from the Fuhrer. It's taking representation from the people who built this country, died for this country, and are now essential workers that keep this country alive during a pandemic and to this present day.

What the State of Texas -- what the State of Texas should be doing, should be figuring out, is why a flood warning to Kerr County a day before the flood was ignored. Why millions of dollars in SNAP benefits were stolen from the most vulnerable in the state. Why did $60 million for summer school lunches for children was vetoed, even though the State of Texas has a $21.2 billion surplus. Those of you --

[Clapping from gallery]

LEON HOLEMAN: Please, please, please, I can't get my statement in. Those of you who that support this immoral, unjust, and racist process are immoral, unjust, and racist. There is no -- there is no room for negotiating wrong or right. It's either one or the other. There's no in-between or other

calculus. If you say you have morals, a conscience, are Christian, etc., you should be against this process and that's it, that's all. What would Jesus do? Saying that you're doing the right thing, then voting the wrong way is lying, hypocrisy, and pretense. It's fakery.

REP. VASUT: Please complete your testimony.

LEON HOLEMAN: Then if one says one thing, then lines up in lockstep behind the Fuhrer, sending him ultimate -- ceding him ultimate power, rather, those who do this will be responsible for the results.

REP. VASUT: Thank you. Wait right there, Mr. Holeman. Mr. Holeman, we might -- we might have some -- I just want to make sure. Members, any questions for this witness?

LEON HOLEMAN: Sorry about that.

REP. VASUT: Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony. You're excused. Thank you, Mr. Holeman.

At this microphone behind him, if we could have John Van Compernolle come up for this one.

Chair is going to call Janet Mattern. I show you registered to testify as Janet Mattern, on

behalf of the League of Women Voters of Tarrant County, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

JANET MATTERN: Hello. Thank you for the opportunity --

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

JANET MATTERN: I'm sorry?

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

JANET MATTERN: Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Janet Mattern, President of the League of Women Voters of Tarrant County. I oppose the mid-census redistricting of congressional districts. Texans have the right to fair and equal representation achieved through a thoughtful, transparent process that allows meaningful public input. The process should establish criteria necessary to create legally-compliant district maps, protect minority voting rights, and respect county lines, city boundaries, and communities of interest.

Rushing the process can result in intentional voter disenfranchisement. Any proposal to remove minority representation from districts that have a history of electing people of color is a direct and

intentional act of voter disenfranchisement. Do not silence communities of color by preventing them from having a voice in their government. Any map created that intentionally prohibits people of color from electing a representative who looks like them violates the Voting Rights Act. Rushing the process limits public input, erodes transparency, as well as public trust.

Why are we here? Your constituents did not put redistricting on the special session agenda, did they? Redistricting should empower voters, not politicians. Reject any maps that disenfranchise voters and undermine democracy. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Members, any questions for this witness? Chair hears none. Thank you, ma'am. You're excused.

At this microphone, if we could have Chaplain Rich Stoglin come up to this microphone here. We'll come to you next, sir.

Chair calls John Van Compernolle. I show you registered to testify, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan? Is that correct?

JOHN VAN COMPERNOLLE: That's correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

JOHN VAN COMPERNOLLE: All right. For those members of the committee that know me, you know that I am the last person that will show up here and support the federal government telling Texas what to do. You know that for a fact if you know me. The next thing, I think, is to understand the essence of, the coming of age of the word gerrymandering.

In 1812, Eldridge Gerry structured a Massachusetts state senate district to ensure his election to that seat. It was in the shape of a salamander, hence gerrymander. If you look at today's congressional maps, they don't look like salamanders at all. They look like a Salvador Dali drawing.

Because the governor has put this on a special session, you have an opportunity. You have an opportunity to draw 38 boxes, each of which contains 758,000 people of any color, of any political persuasion. You should not disregard that opportunity. You should take this opportunity to draw a map that is colorblind, party blind, and simply has 38 boxes with 758,000 people in each box. Don't pay attention to the hyperbole. Don't pay attention to the nonsense. Pay attention to the opportunity that you have and grasp

it. Grasp it with every being, every part of your being. Thank you for this opp- [audio cut out].

REP. ROSENTHAL: [Inaudible].

JOHN VAN COMPERNOLLE: I am.

REP. ROSENTHAL: So, for those in the audience, we are mandated to collect communities of common interest along geographic boundaries. Is that what you're advocating for today?

JOHN VAN COMPERNOLLE: I'm advocating for fairness in drawing boundaries.

REP. ROSENTHAL: Sure. So basically --

JOHN VAN COMPERNOLLE: If you have an opportunity -- now, I understand that the Constitution says you do it with every census. If in fact these districts as they're drawn aren't -- are gerrymandered, which many people have said they are, then you have an opportunity to un-gerrymander them. Why not take advantage of that opportunity?

REP. ROSENTHAL: And it's a very good point, and I back you on that 100 percent. If we were to undertake that, do you think that that should be informed with updated data and careful consideration, plenty of thought? And then if we were to draw some new maps, roll them out and let folks like this all over the state weigh in on what those maps look like?

JOHN VAN COMPERNOLLE: No, I think --

REP. ROSENTHAL: Every affected district should have an opportunity to come speak before us. Do you think that's accurate?

JOHN VAN COMPERNOLLE: Oh, no, I think once you have -- I couldn't quite hear everything because of the applause. I think that the opportunity you have is to fix what's wrong.

REP. ROSENTHAL: I wish we would do that.

JOHN VAN COMPERNOLLE: And if you take the census data from 2020, then use that data. But fix the shape so that you have something. Let's say that we can only reach shapes of a salamander. That's a whole lot better than the dallymander that we have.

REP. ROSENTHAL: Thank you, sir.

REP. VASUT: Members, any other questions for this witness? Seeing none, thank you for your testimony. The witness is excused.

If Lauren Pena can make her way down to this microphone. Lauren Pena, this microphone here.

Chair calls Chaplain Rich Stoglin. I show you registered to testify, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct, sir?

CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: I'm here to

represent the Frederick Douglass Republicans of Tarrant County.

REP. VASUT: Let me -- do I have permission to change your --

CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: Yes, sir, you do.

REP. VASUT: -- registration to say -- and what was that again?

CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: The Frederick Douglass Republicans of Tarrant County. I'm the president.

REP. VASUT: Frederick Douglass Republicans of Tarrant County.

CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: And I am the president.

REP. VASUT: Gallery will come to order. Please give us your testimony, sir.

CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: My name is Chaplain Rich Stoglin. I'm a native Texan currently residing in Arlington, Texas, and I'm the president of the Frederick Douglass Republicans of Tarrant County. The renowned economist Dr. Thomas Sowell stated, one of the sad signs of our times is that we have demonized those who produce, subsidized those who refuse to produce, and canonized those who complain. While the founder of the Frederick Douglass Republicans of

Tarrant County, the late Honorable Reby Cary stated to black and brown Americans, be an informed, intelligent voter. Make your vote count. Remember, freedom isn't free. Someone has to pay the price.

Historically, Texas has elected 40 Democrats, one independent, one unionist, and six Republican governors. We must read and evaluate the prosperity of our great state under each party. On 4 through 6, 1867 in Houston, Texas, the Republican Party of Texas was created by 150 colored men and 20 white men. They did this in the name of justice then, and we're requesting redistricting in the name of justice now. I echo their clarion call to have Republican leadership in the great State of Texas. As a black American, Afghanistan veteran, a retired department head of the U.S. Department of Justice, I strongly support the Republican redistricting. I do not want, nor does the great State of Texas --

[Loud booing and shouting from gallery]

CHAPLIN RICH STOGLIN: -- or this magnificent nation deserve to continue --

REP. VASUT: The gentleman will yield. The gentleman will be accorded the same respect that everyone testifying receives.

[Shouting from gallery.]

REP. VASUT: We will come to order. Everyone, regardless of your belief, political persuasion, or age, or whoever you are, you are an American and you're entitled to be heard, and you will be heard in this committee. The audience will come to order. The gentleman is recognized to continue his testimony.

CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: I do not want the great State of Texas or this magnificent nation deserve to continue seeing systemic gang and street violence, a plummeting educational system, communities deteriorating, men in women's sports, etc., while Democrats sit quietly and fail to condemn or acknowledge the systemic moral decay, screaming systemic racism for anything that does not fit the narrative. These acts of evil must stop. We need Republican leadership for such a time as this. Republicans have a larger story.

Echoing the words of the American icon, Mr. Frederick Douglass, you will not be judged by the heights you have risen, but from the depths you have climbed. I am a Republican, a black dyed-in-the-wool Republican, and I never intend to belong to any other party but the party of freedom and progress, Frederick Douglass. We need and must have increased Republican

leadership in the great State of Texas to remain great. As President of the Frederick Douglass Republicans of Tarrant County, I stand behind this statement. Semper fi.

REP. VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: Any questions for me?

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

[Shouting from gallery]

CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: And Mr. Chairman?

REP. VASUT: Hold, yield. Hey, this is America. We hear from everyone whether we agree with them or not. And the audience will come to order and extend the common courtesy of hearing every witness regardless of their political persuasion.

Now, with that basis, Mr. Manuel, for what purpose?

REP. MANUEL: To ask the gentleman a question.

REP. VASUT: The gentleman yields for questions. Mr. Manuel is recognized to question the witness.

REP. MANUEL: You made a statement when

you were speaking, and I just want to kind of get the understanding of it. So you don't think that redlining in communities throughout the nation had anything to do with the decay that happened with communities as they were rising and as they were trying to form?

[Clapping in the gallery]

REP. MANUEL: If you all could not, it would -- because we need to move.

CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: Let me ask you a question, sir. The Democratic --

[Shouting from the gallery]

REP. VASUT: Hold. The gentleman will yield.

CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: The Democratic Party created --

REP. VASUT: The gentleman will yield. Gentleman, yield for one moment. Just so it's clear, questions only come from the dais. It's just in order for this process. So if the gentleman would be happy to answer Mr. Manuel's question.

CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: The Democratic Party created the redlining just like they created the Jim Crow laws. That was the Democratic Party.

[Crosstalk]

REP. MANUEL: Okay. So --

CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: And people talked about --

REP. MANUEL: No, no, no, sir.

CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: -- the litany --

REP. MANUEL: That's not what I asked you. I asked you, did you think that that redlining had anything to do with that? And also your -- your --

CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: I think redlining, yes, sir, to answer your question, had something to do with it.

REP. MANUEL: Okay. And you're also being just a little disingenuous because the parties had two different platforms at that time.

CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: No, sir.

REP. MANUEL: It was a very different party. It was a very different platform.

CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: I can hard- -- I can hardly hear what you --

REP. MANUEL: I know. If you all would -- I know some people are excited, but we really can't get to the answers --

CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: No, sir, we can't. I cannot hear you. I'm sorry.

REP. MANUEL: What I'm saying is, you're being a little disingenuous because at that time, the

party had two different platforms --

CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: At what time, sir? Which party?

REP. MANUEL: -- than what they are today.

CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: What timeline are we talking about?

REP. MANUEL: The party that you're talking about when it came to redlining, when -- whenever people say Republicans, I don't care if you're Republican, Democrat, Independent. I'm a Democrat. The point of it is, as someone who loves and adores history --

CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: So do I.

REP. MANUEL: -- the party had two different platforms. It wasn't the same platform.

CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: And I'm a historian.

REP. MANUEL: Wait one second. The party had -- the parties had two different platforms. So you're being a little disingenuous to people when you try to say that it's Democrats. Yes, it was Southern Democrats with a very different platform than what Democrats currently have today, because in 1965 there was not an LGBTQ movement, and neither Republican nor

Democrat had it. That doesn't mean that it's the same party. So we can't say that because they also had Dixiecrats. You had other Democrats. You had black Republicans. Yes, but it was a very different time. So we -- I think it's best that we don't conflate that.

CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: May I?

REP. MANUEL: No, you can't ask questions. I ask the questions.

CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: I m going to answer you. No, sir. Mr. Chair, I'm trying to answer -- I'm trying to answer your question, because --

REP. MANUEL: You answered --

[Crosstalk]

CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: -- what you said was not factually true.

REP. MANUEL: You answered the question. I asked you about redlining. You agreed with that, and I appreciate you.

REP. VASUT: The gentleman may respond to the question.

CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: Thank you. But in all fair- -- I'm trying to have a conversation, but I can hardly hear you.

[Shouting from the gallery]

CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: In 19- --

REP. VASUT: Gentleman, yield for a moment. Gentleman, yield for a moment. It's important to remain a little quiet because -- so they can hear. Right? We want them to both be able to hear each other so that they can ask the question and answer it. If the gentleman will gladly answer Mr. Manuel's questions, but the questions cannot be asked from the front mic, just so it's clear.

CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. VASUT: The gentleman is recognized to answer the question.

CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In 1965, what you're talking about, which the Voting Rights Act was passed, it was signed by Lyndon B. Johnson, but it was voted primarily by Republicans in 1965. That's a fact. That's documented.

REP. VASUT: Members, any other questions for the witness? Okay. Thank you for your testimony. The gentleman is excused.

CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: And Mr. Chair?

REP. VASUT: If Mr. John Gardner can come down. I apologize, sir. I've excused you. I apologize. But technically, since I've excused you,

the gentleman is not recognized. If Mr. John Gardner could come down --

CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: Thank you, sir.

REP. VASUT: Thank you, sir.

-- to this front mic. We're going to recognize Lauren --

[Shouting from the gallery]

REP. VASUT: No, we're not.

All right. Chair recognizes Lauren Pena. I show you registered to testify as Lauren Pena, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

LAUREN PENA: Yes, sir. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: If the gallery will come to order so that the lady can be afforded the respect due her as a testifying witness.

Please give us your testimony. Thank you.

LAUREN PENA: Hi. Thank you guys so much for letting me be here today. My name is Lauren Pena. I currently reside in one of the first housing projects ever implemented in the United States right now. All of our civil rights are being severely violated. I have reached out to every single elected official on my state, federal, and local level to try to get

assistance for elderly and disabled that are trapped on the second-, third-, and fourth-story floors that can't even leave to go get groceries because the elevator is broken and they're in wheelchairs. None of my elected officials have been willing to help me. So, yes, I am a Republican running for United States Congress, living in federal housing projects.

Now, I would like to get over here and speak about some things that I would like to improve. I think that when John had brought up that there are, you know, about 700,000 people, if they could each be in a district like that, there are about 700,000 people that are in a HUD property right now in Texas, and we have absolutely no representation. So as far as this redistricting, I have two suggestions. One, we could go and we could let there be an at-large person, someone who is receiving these benefits, that could go and possibly just serve two terms, train up the next generation so that we can keep having people that are actually in poverty having a voice in our government, or we can simply just take every major city and put a district inside the inner city, because that is the problem. We do not have representation inside the inner cities.

And I can tell you all right now that it

is not good. The conditions are not good. Your taxpayer dollars are being weaponized against me, my family, and all of the other people there. There are elderly, there are disabled, there are veterans. Their rights are being severely violated, and this is not a party thing. This should not be about who's a Republican or who's a Democrat. This is about human dignity. This is about people being harmed by these policies, and we have no representation. So I beg you guys, give my community, the poor community, people living in poverty, actual poverty, to have a voice in this nation. And thank you. I'd be happy to answer any questions.

REP. VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Members, any questions for this witness?

Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony. The witness is excused.

I forgot to give an alert earlier about the closing of registration, so I'm going to extend it another ten minutes. Registration will close at 6:40 p.m., 6:40 p.m. right out there out front. If you haven't registered to testify, we'd love for you to do that right out front.

At this time, the Chair -- if I could get

down to this microphone, and I apologize if I ever butcher your name here, but Kim Batchelor, I believe, if you'll come down here to this front microphone. Love to have you here in a second.

But I'm going to go to Mr. John Gardner. I show you registered to testify as John Gardner, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

JOHN GARDNER: That is correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony. You might want to come a little closer to that microphone. There you go. Perfect. Thank you, sir.

JOHN GARDNER: Thank you. Good evening, Chair and members of the committee. My name is John Gardner. I'm with the Transport Workers Union. We represent flight attendants, baggage handlers, ramp agents, mechanics, and other ground service employees at major airlines in the DFW Metroplex and throughout the state. I am here today not just as a union leader, but as a proud Texan and a community advocate who has been on the ground walking through these neighborhoods, and organizing workers, and standing with working families in the city of Fort Worth.

Today, I speak out against this dangerous

redistricting process that threatens to divide our communities and divide us -- deny us our voice. In 2021, redistricting was done after the 2020 census. Texas gained two million residents. Roughly 90 percent of that growth were from communities of color. Two new congressional districts were created. You would expect that the two new districts created would be representing communities of color, but instead, two majority white districts were created, even though they said that race was not a deciding factor in drawing the maps.

Why are we doing this and why now? There has not been a new census showing a change in population of the current districts that would create the need to redistrict again. President Trump told Governor Abbott, get me five new Republican seats. Then they targeted five majority black and brown districts, and their voices are being attempted to be silenced. District 18 has been without a representative since Sylvester Turner's death in March. An election should have been scheduled right away, but instead, it is not until November, and runoffs are likely with the potential of more than a year without representation.

Residents in a district should have

common interests. Rural areas had the interest in the farm bill, urban areas in mass transit and jobs. Districts need to have a representative who lives in their district, who knows their district, what their district needs. Representative Marc Veasey lives in District 33. He knows what his constituents need and he gets things done --

REP. VASUT: If the gentleman will complete his testimony.

JOHN GARDNER: -- and he has been a great advocate for workers. When a district with a community of color is gerrymandered, it often is stretched out more than 100 miles in a rural area, and urban voices are rarely heard in such a large rural district. Do not silence the voice of communities of color with unnecessary redistricting. Please vote against redistricting in the middle of a decade. So I ask you, stand with Texans, stand for fair maps, and put Texans first, not Trump politics. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Members, any questions for the --

If the gentleman will wait just a moment.

Members, any questions for this witness? Chair hears none.

Thank you for your testimony. The witness is excused.

The Chair is pleased to announce that we do have the overflow room now open across the hall with streaming video. I appreciate the University of Texas at Arlington accommodating us with that, and I appreciate if everybody -- just make sure that we maintain order here so we get through these witnesses.

I'm going to come to you in just a moment, ma'am. If I could have Jeff Archer come to this microphone over here, we're going to come to him next. Thank you very much.

Chair calls Kim Batchelor. I show you registered to testify, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct, ma'am?

KIM BATCHELOR: That is correct.

REP. VASUT: Thank you. Please give us your testimony. And you have some handouts?

KIM BATCHELOR: I do have handouts.

REP. VASUT: Representative Bhojani, could you maybe grab that from her? Thank you so much. We'll gladly pass those out for you. And we'll reset your testimony time and let you start now. Thank you, ma'am.

KIM BATCHELOR: Thank you. I'd like to thank the committee for giving me the opportunity to speak on this very important issue. I'm a native-born Texan and a Christian, and I really want to direct my remarks to Christian legislators who are inclined to support this redistricting effort. In Matthew 20 and Luke 19, Jesus said, "You know the rulers of the Gentiles are lorded over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you, but whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave, just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Jesus modeled this for us who would be disciples by taking off his tunic, wrapping a cloth around his waist, and washing people's feet.

The State of Texas gained three new seats after the last census count because of growth in the Latino-Hispanic population, but crafted two of those seats to benefit people with my skin color. To redistrict now to produce similar districts is more lording over and certainly not Christ-like. I am blessed to live in District 33 amongst a diverse group of neighbors, all of us made in the image of God. For some reason you have provided us no maps, all of us -- but I can foresee one that slices through our southern

Dallas neighborhood to create a district from Brownwood to Gun Barrel City. Or maybe the Legislature and the Governor will create a district that resembles a beast with seven heads and ten horns that combines us with Amarillo.

A word of caution. I work with some really good people in Amarillo to defeat a pit neighbor against neighbor travel ban by 20 points, so you never know what brings people together. To those who support this unjust redistricting, I call on you to instead, please remove your tunic of power, wrap a towel around your waist, and serve all the people of this state, not the power-hungry tyrant in Washington, D.C., and please reject this effort.

REP. VASUT: Thank you. Thank you for your testimony, ma'am. If you'll hold up, we might have a question for you, ma'am.

Members, any questions for the departing witness? Chair hears none. The lady is excused.

I'm going to make a brief request here. I'll pause our timer here for a moment. Is Freddie Haynes here? Did you -- Mr. Haynes, did you already register? You already registered? Do we -- do we have your permission -- hang on. I've got to be able to hear him, guys. Do we have your permission to delete

the old registration and anoint thee a new one? Okay. We're going to bring that to you. If you could fill out another one. I apologize. The Vice Chair has requested you to testify, and we want to make sure we do that, but I have honestly no idea where you are in that stack, and that would take a long time to find you. So we're going to do you a new registration.

All right. Now, Chair calls Jeff Archer. I show you registered to testify as Jeff Archer with the Texas Legislative Council. And, as always, you are neutral. Is that correct? And on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Did I get that right, Jeff?

JEFF ARCHER: That's correct.

REP. VASUT: All right. Now, members, we have brought Mr. Archer here. I believe that a member of the committee had a question. I just note for the committee that legislative council enjoys a privilege with members, so don't go into anything privileged. Representative Manuel, for what purpose?

REP. MANUEL: A few questions, please.

REP. VASUT: Please, you're recognized to question the witness.

REP. MANUEL: Thank you. Just had a few questions about the RedAppl app. What were the dates

that that app was down? There was a technical error on the computers throughout our software.

JEFF ARCHER: I'm not aware of any technical error with RedAppl that took it down. There was routine -- I say routine. There was important data center maintenance done --

REP. MANUEL: Okay.

JEFF ARCHER: -- on Sunday morning, the -- I believe that's the 28th or 9th of --

REP. MANUEL: 28th of June, I'm assuming?

JEFF ARCHER: Of June, the last Sunday in June.

REP. MANUEL: Okay. And was --

JEFF ARCHER: And it was planned.

REP. MANUEL: It was planned. Was a notice sent out about that?

JEFF ARCHER: Yes.

REP. MANUEL: Okay.

JEFF ARCHER: Every member of the Legislature and every staffer in the legislative community received notice. In addition, we notified all the registered users on RedAppl, so those private groups --

REP. MANUEL: Okay.

JEFF ARCHER: -- the sponsored groups

that use RedAppl.

REP. MANUEL: And when was that completed?

JEFF ARCHER: Probably by noon on that Sunday morning.

REP. MANUEL: Okay. Noon on that Sunday morning, okay.

JEFF ARCHER: I can give you copies of the notices.

REP. MANUEL: Yes, because my office reached out because it was removed from our computers, from my district to my capitol office. And we had to have it basically re-put back in by council. And so we were -- I'm trying to see why it was removed on that date, because when we tried to get into it, it just wouldn't show up on any of our applications. And again, I'm not trying to see you all are doing anything nefarious. I'm just wondering why --

JEFF ARCHER: Absolutely.

REP. MANUEL: -- it was removed once right before it was called by the Governor. So you said it was only from the 28th in the morning to --

JEFF ARCHER: It was the same day, all just --

REP. MANUEL: The same day.

JEFF ARCHER: -- one Sunday morning.

REP. MANUEL: And there's not a reason that it was removed from computers at two different locations?

JEFF ARCHER: That shouldn't be related.

REP. MANUEL: It happened. If you look at the ticket from my office, you'll see that --

JEFF ARCHER: Absolutely.

REP. MANUEL: -- it was removed --

JEFF ARCHER: I have not seen that.

REP. MANUEL: -- and in about an hour or so, they were called back and said it was put back on, and it was for technical reasons.

JEFF ARCHER: Yeah, and I'm not aware what that was.

REP. MANUEL: Okay. And is there a way that we can get a request of what those technical reasons were?

JEFF ARCHER: Yeah, I can look into why, what may have happened --

REP. MANUEL: And what changes were made to it?

JEFF ARCHER: Yes, right.

REP. MANUEL: Okay. That's all I really wanted to know. Thank you so much.

JEFF ARCHER: Thank you very much.

REP. VASUT: Members, any other questions of the resource witness?

REP. TURNER: Mr. Chairman?

REP. VASUT: Mr. Turner, for what purpose? Question the witness?

REP. TURNER: Question the witness.

REP. VASUT: Recognized.

REP. TURNER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Archer, thank you for being here today. If memory serves from the last redistricting in 2021, one of the functions of Leg Council is to receive the data file from the United States Census Bureau, input it into the RedAppl application that you were just discussing with Representative Manuel, so then legislators have that data, and others have that data in order to draw maps. Do I have that roughly correct?

JEFF ARCHER: That's correct. State leadership designates several recipients of the census data, including the State Demographer, I'm not sure who else, and the Legislative Council, excuse me, on behalf of the Legislature.

REP. TURNER: Okay. And Texas Legislative Council received that data from the Census Bureau in 2021; is that right?

JEFF ARCHER: Yes. As you recall, it was late. It was in early September --

REP. TURNER: Because of the pandemic.

JEFF ARCHER: -- late August.

REP. TURNER: Right, okay. Has Legislative Council received any new data from the Census Bureau since 2021?

JEFF ARCHER: We receive annual American Community Survey data.

REP. TURNER: Right, but in terms of actual, an actual census count as you would receive after the decennial census, there's been no new census conducted?

JEFF ARCHER: There's been no new census data. That -- the American Community Survey has estimates of geographic areas, but not block level.

REP. TURNER: Not block level, right. So, if the Legislature does embark on this mid-decade redistricting, as the Chair has stated, there is no map yet that we've seen. But if there was to be a map drawn, it would be based upon census data that is now five years old; is that right?

JEFF ARCHER: If it's based on census data, it would be five-year-old census data.

REP. TURNER: Is there a way to draw a

map that's not based on census data?

JEFF ARCHER: As you know, there have been advocates to use registered voters or other databases for that, so, obviously you can -- the data for electors isn't necessarily on the same schedule. There are election databases for every general election.

REP. TURNER: Sure. I understood that the Legislature could look at more recent election data as it's drawing maps. But for purposes of drawing districts that are balanced by population, the only population data the Legislature would have to work with is the 2020 census, correct?

JEFF ARCHER: That's correct.

REP. TURNER: There's no 2024 census or 2025 census to work with, right?

JEFF ARCHER: No.

REP. TURNER: Okay. Thank you very much.

REP. VASUT: Members, any other questions of this witness? Thank you, Mr. Archer. You are excused.

The time has come to close witness registration. Is there anyone else in this room wishing to testify on the revisions to the Congressional Redistricting Plan?

Ms. Rose, did you have a question of that witness?

REP. ROSE: No, I did not, but I do have --

REP. VASUT: Okay. I'm going to recognize you here in just a moment.

Anyone in this room wishing to register that hasn't? Seeing and hearing none, the witness closes -- one in the back. Ma'am, if you could come up, get a witness registration form. Anyone else? Chair hears none. Aside from the lady coming down in the black shirt, registration is closed.

All right. Ms. Rose, for what purpose?

REP. ROSE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to make sure that you added to Elsie Cooke-Holmes' registration form that she is the 27th International President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated.

REP. VASUT: I think I would technically have to have her give me permission to do so. Is she still in this room?

REP. ROSE: She is.

REP. VASUT: If you could come up to that microphone, ma'am.

REP. ROSE: Is it the 28th? 28th

National President.

REP. VASUT: Well, wait a minute. Did you tell me something wrong? All right. If she could come up to that microphone real quick, I'm happy to correct your registration.

REP. ROSE: If y'all would not have me running to these hearings and watching hearings all night long, I could probably get some --

REP. VASUT: All right.

REP. ROSE: She's here.

REP. VASUT: There we go. Ms. Cooke-Holmes, now, tell me what we need to correct on here.

REP. ROSE: She's the 28th National President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority --

REP. VASUT: She's the --

REP. ROSE: -- Incorporated.

REP. VASUT: So you're going to -- I have your permission to change your registration to say you're testifying on behalf of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and that you are the 28th --

ELSIE COOKE-HOLMES: The 28th.

REP. VASUT: 28th President?

ELSIE COOKE-HOLMES: Yes.

REP. ROSE: International.

ELSIE COOKE-HOLMES: International

President.

REP. VASUT: All right. 28th International --

ELSIE COOKE-HOLMES: I'm not sure what it has on there now. It might say -- does it say --

REP. VASUT: All right. I have written down --

ELSIE COOKE-HOLMES: I'm the Immediate Past International President and also the 28th.

REP. VASUT: All right. Easy there. We added a little bit. I went to A&M. Y'all bear with me for a second. Immediate past president?

ELSIE COOKE-HOLMES: Past International President.

REP. VASUT: Immediate Past International President -- I appreciate the crowd's participation. Y'all are doing great.

[Cheering and clapping from gallery]

REP. VASUT: All right. Now, I have this form. It says that you are the --

ELSIE COOKE-HOLMES: That will be sufficient. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: -- Immediate Past International President and the 28th International President. Is that correct?

ELSIE COOKE-HOLMES: That's correct.

REP. VASUT: All right. Your witness registration has been updated. Thank you, ma'am. Thank you, Ms. Rose.

REP. ROSE: I'm so glad to be a Delta.

REP. VASUT: All right. Okay. I always love injecting a little levity.

If I could have -- ma'am, we're going to have to -- we're going to take you in order, but we -- did you just register?

FEMALE: Yes, I just filled out the form.

REP. VASUT: Okay. We're going to take you in order in just a second.

FEMALE: Okay.

REP. VASUT: Yeah, but it may be a while. Yeah, sorry. I apologize. We're taking them in the order received.

Chair's going to call up to this microphone Richard Howe, and to this microphone Frederick Haynes. Frederick Haynes, Richard Howe. And if -- and if Maria Garza could be ready.

REP. HUNTER: Frederick, where do you want Frederick?

REP. VASUT: Frederick, if you could come down to this microphone, and Richard to that one. All

right. Okay.

I show you registered to testify as Richard Howe, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

RICHARD HOWE: Yes, that's correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony, sir.

RICHARD HOWE: Okay. My name is Richard Howe. I live in Plano, Texas. I'm a native Texan, born in San Antonio, and I'm here on behalf of myself. And I'm a very concerned Texas -- Texan. And I want to thank you for the opportunity for providing comments.

I'm currently represented in the State Legislature by Jeff Leach, State House, District 67, Angela Paxton in the State Senate, District 8, and in the U.S. House, I'm represented by Pat Fallon in Congressional District 4. I'm here to oppose this out-of-cycle redistricting push during this special session, which has been dictated by outside of Texas. Instead, I urge this Redistricting Committee to maybe take this opportunity to implement a more fair and rational redistricting policy by putting forward a joint resolution for a ballot referendum to establish an independent, nonpartisan commission to be responsible for future redistricting, which wouldn't

happen until after 2030.

We [audio cuts out] of those that are not undermines the principles of fair representation. They defy logic and geographical coherence, and they compromise the integrity of the democratic processes. Frankly, it's embarrassing. Let's stop letting the majority pick their voters and get back to voters picking their elected officials. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Members, any questions for this witness?

The Chair hears none. Thank you, sir. You're excused.

At this microphone next, if I could have Maria Garza come down to this microphone right over here, if you don't mind.

I show you registered to testify as Frederick Haynes. Now, I believe -- was doctor mentioned? You want me to update -- your witness registration form didn't say doctor. You want me to add that to it?

DR. FREDERICK HAYNES: If you'd like.

REP. VASUT: All right. I have your permission to add doctor. Okay. I show you registered to testify as Dr. Frederick Haynes, on behalf of the

Friendship West Baptist Church, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

DR. FREDERICK HAYNES: Thank you very much.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony, sir.

DR. FREDERICK HAYNES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My name is Frederick Douglass Haynes, and that name has been used earlier. I want to commend you because there are two governing principles that have informed how you have presided today. Number one, you said that we are going to follow the rules. Number two, you also mentioned that every American deserves to be heard. It is my prayer that that would govern how we respond to the wannabe king's dictate -- the wannabe king from Washington, D.C. dictating that we redistrict at this inopportune time already districts that have been well gerrymandered.

And so I'm asking, number one, that we follow the rules of justice, justice, according to Michael Eric Dyson, is what love sounds like when it speaks in public. Justice means that all of us, your number two principle, deserve to have our voices heard. With this particular dictate coming down from Washington, D.C., our voices will not be heard. I'm

asking, Mr. Chair, that indeed this committee reject what's coming from Washington, D.C. and ensure that our voices are heard. And not only that our voices are heard, but that we follow the rules of justice.

I basically say with what has been said before, most if not all on this committee have some kind of religious affiliation. According to my understanding of Christianity and most religions, there is a belief in justice. If there is a belief in justice, it especially is concerned with ensuring that the voiceless have a voice. Please do not rob the voiceless of a voice with a racist redistricting that follows the dictates of someone who wants to be the king and not the president of the United States of America.

In a few months, in a few months, many of us are going to celebrate what happened 70 years ago when Rosa Parks decided that she would stand for justice by not giving up her seat. I've always wondered about all the other folk on the bus that December 1st day. What did they do? Rosa Parks, we agree, was on the right side of history because she took a stand for what was right and just. The others were on the wrong side of history because they did not take a stand at all or they went along with what was

wrong.

I'm asking you this day, please stand with Rosa Parks in that spirit, meaning that history will record that you were on the right side of history because you stood for justice. You were on the right side of history because you followed the rules of justice. You were on the right side of history because you made sure that everybody in Texas has a voice, and not just voices of those who look like the occupant of the White House. I am begging you, please stand on the right side of history as opposed to the wrong side of history, which will hurt all of us and is against everything that is moral and everything that is just. Thank you for your time.

[Cheering and clapping from gallery]

REP. VASUT: Thank you, sir. Members, any questions for this witness? Representative Bowers is recognized to question the witness. The gallery will come to order so that the witness can answer questions. The Chair recognizes Ms. Bowers to question the witness.

REP. BOWERS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't really have a question, but I would just like to thank Dr. Frederick Douglass Haynes for his statement and remarks and let the church say amen.

REP. VASUT: Ms. Bowers?

REP. BOWERS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do have a correction that is being asked. If Roman Palomares' registration can be changed to the National President of LULAC?

REP. VASUT: If she is so present --

["He" from the gallery]

REP. VASUT: He, he. I apologize. Thank you for correcting me. If he could come down, I'd be happy to correct it. I need to have you into the microphone, though, sir, if you don't mind.

Before you do that, any other questions for the witness at the bar? Representative Barbara Gervin-Hawkins, you're recognized to question the witness.

REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: Thank you. Thank you.

Pastor? As you well know, this is a time right now, such as this, that we've got to call on our higher power. I believe that my Republican colleagues may feel threatened or have that fear of dealing with the man in the White House. What words of wisdom could you give them so that, indeed, they not do this? I'm saying just don't do it. Let's be big.

DR. FREDERICK HAYNES: Yeah.

REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: What would you give us from your wisdom, your knowledge of the Holy Spirit?

DR. FREDERICK HAYNES: Thank you so much. Thank you. I would just say to all of us, especially our Republican sisters and brothers, that there is a king of kings who gives us a moral compass, and may that moral compass make you a thermostat and not a thermometer. A thermometer basically goes along with the environment. A thermostat regulates the environment. You have the power from the king of kings to be a thermostat and not a thermometer.

REP. VASUT: Members, any other questions for this witness? Chair hears none. Thank you for your time. The gentleman's excused.

Mr. Palomares, if you'll please come up to this microphone. I think a question was raised about correcting your witness information form. I showed you registered to testify as Roman Palomares on behalf of LULAC. Was that correct, or what needed to be edited there?

ROMAN PALOMARES: I'm sorry. Could you repeat that?

REP. VASUT: I showed you registered to testify as Roman Palomares on behalf of LULAC.

ROMAN PALOMARES: Yes.

REP. VASUT: Was that correct?
ROMAN PALOMARES: That's correct.
REP. VASUT: Was there something that needed to be corrected?
ROMAN PALOMARES: No.
REP. VASUT: I want to make sure that --
ROMAN PALOMARES: I'm the national president, and I live in District 33.
REP. VASUT: That is indeed reflected on your witness affirmation form.
ROMAN PALOMARES: Very good.
REP. VASUT: Thank you, sir.
ROMAN PALOMARES: Thank you.
REP. VASUT: I'm going to -- Ms. Garza, one moment.
If I could have Laura Walters come down to this microphone. Now, Ms. Garza, I show you registered to testify as Maria Garza, on behalf of the Workers Defense Action Fund, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?
MARIA GARZA: Yes.
REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.
MARIA GARZA: Thank you. I'm an organizer with Workers Defense Action Fund. My name is

Maria de Jesus Garza. I'm also a proud wife of a U.S. Marine veteran. I'm a proud union member, and I work at Workers Defense, and we organize people, predominantly Latino folks, Latino workers and their families here in Texas.

Today, I'm testifying in response to the Legislature that's attempting to redistrict our congressional districts mid-census. I oppose this, and so does every single Dallas County person I've spoken to since the Governor decided to ask to do this. It doesn't take a demographer -- and I think someone up there said that they're an engineer -- to know that squeezing five more districts out of Texas can only be done if you drag us back into an era of racial segregation, poll tax, and adopting what would be the most racially discriminatory maps in our state has seen in ages.

There are still people missing in Kerr County. Millions of Texans are on the verge of losing their healthcare. Three days ago, we had a heat-related death here in Dallas County. Well, in Dallas County. We're not in Dallas County right now. We are -- in June, we had a postal worker die from heat-related issues. At this time, when our people are being subject to low pay, skyrocketing costs for

groceries, ridiculous electric bills, and on top of that, attacks based on the color of our skin, our parents are being hunted and deported. The last thing we need is to worry about their congressional representatives being taken away, taking away their voice, because by taking away their voice, they're taking away their humanity. Texans are dying and suffering and hurting, and now you're choosing to spend this time doing this instead of actually helping the community.

We need to do what's right for Texans. We need to stop what's happening here and actually focus on what people need. There are so many needs here in Texas, and I know that people that look like me might not have the courage to step in here and have this moment to tell you that this is not important, but I'm telling you on behalf of those people that this hearing, this moment, this work that you guys are choosing to do is not important.

REP. VASUT: Please complete your testimony.

MARIA GARZA: There are people that are dying. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

The Chair hears none. Thank you, ma'am. You are excused. We're going to take one more witness, and then we'll take a brief break, and I emphasize brief so everybody understands. Not a Texas Leg brief break, but an actual brief break.

All right. Chair calls Laura Walters. I show you registered to testify, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan? Is that correct?

LAURA WALTERS: That is correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

LAURA WALTERS: My name is the Reverend Laura Walters. I'm an ordained pastor in the Presbyterian Church. I am speaking against current redistricting. I speak today from a Christian perspective, not because Christianity should be prioritized. We are stronger with a plurality in our state, but because we do not hear enough about Jesus's command to love our neighbors and prioritize the marginalized. You see, in our faith stories, Jesus always goes to the edge of society to listen to folks. And he does not leave them there. He brings people back into community so that all voices are heard. Jesus builds up communities. He does not carve them

apart.

While we have not seen any maps making this process inherently unjust, the DOJ's letter targets districts that are historically black and brown neighborhoods, breaking apart communities, targeting black and Hispanic peoples will result in large groups of Texans being underrepresented, replaced by officials who do not know or understand the needs of their constituency. That is unjust. That is not Christian. Redistricting mid-census is unnecessary. Texans haven't asked for this. This wasn't part of the regular session. The state has claimed in court that current maps are racially neutral.

This is about power, not need, not justice, not love. This is unjust. This is not Christian. People of color make up more than 95 percent of the state's growth. Women of color represent the majority of Texas's females. Texas is home to over 4 million black residents. And yet these folks are not equitably represented in our government.

Voices are being silenced. This is unjust. This is not Christian. I'm asking you to be a little bit more like Jesus. Listen. Don't tear apart Texas communities. Work so all Texans can be heard and represented.

REP. VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Members, any questions for this witness?

The Chair hears none. Thank you, ma'am. You're excused.

At this time, we're going to take a brief break. The House Select Committee on Congressional Redistricting will stand at ease for five minutes.

[Committee Stands at Ease.]

REP. VASUT: The Select Committee on Congressional Redistricting will come back to order. I've noticed this gavel up here doesn't make quite as much noise as the one on the dais of the House. But if y'all will come back to order, if everyone can find their way to their seats. Appreciate you hanging in there with us. We had worked on a technical issue, and I think we've solved it. Come back in here.

Chair at this time is going to call up two witnesses. If you'll take separate microphones. Chair is going to call Roderick Miles, and Chair is going to call Sergio Deleon. Roderick Miles and Sergio Deleon, if you'll make your way up to separate microphones. Once you're there, we'll go ahead and get started.

Roderick Miles? All right. I show you

registered to testify as Roderick Miles, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

RODERICK MILES: That is correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

RODERICK MILES: Good evening. My name is Roderick Miles, and I have the privilege of representing the residents of Tarrant County Precinct 1 as their County Commissioner. I rise to stand in opposition to this congressional redistricting. This is not just about Republicans versus Democrats. This is about right versus wrong, about power versus principle. What we are witnessing is not simply politics. It is a deliberate effort to undermine the rights of people. That is a moral failure, my friends, and that is an ethical failure.

When government redraws lines with the intent to silence specific communities, it does more than violate laws. It violates trust. It strips people of their dignity. We tell our children that every vote matters, that every vote counts. But what does it say when those in power erase voices they do not want to hear? Proverbs 11:1 tells us that, "The Lord detests dishonest scales, but accurate weights

find favor with him." When we rig the system to benefit the powerful, we are using dishonest scales. This is not just unconstitutional, it is unjust.

We just went through this in Tarrant County. Maps were drawn in a way that made communities feel invincible. That was not representation. That was erasure. Now voters across Texas are seeing the same naked power grab, just at a larger scale. Once again, lines are being drawn not to bring people in but to push people out.

District 33 was created through a court order to repair harm done to communities of color. It was meant to ensure that we would no longer crack apart neighborhoods just because they vote differently. This mid-decade redistricting would not just reverse progress, it would deepen the harm and dishonor the courts, the people, and the principle of equal representation. It is especially shameful that this is being done during a special session meant to prepare for disasters. Let us not forget.

REP. VASUT: Please complete your testimony.

RODERICK MILES: One more sentence.

REP. VASUT: One more sentence, you bet.

RODERICK MILES: Let us not forget, it is

the very communities being targeted that suffer the [audio cuts out].

REP. VASUT: -- of this witness? Chair hears none.

Thank you. The witness is excused.

At this microphone down here, if we can next get Britni Cuington. Cuington, I apologize. If you'll come down here.

And I go back to Mr. Deleon. I show you registered to testify as Sergio Deleon, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

SERGIO DELEON: That is correct, sir.

REP. VASUT: And I have a duplicate registration from you. You registered twice. Is it okay if we delete the duplicate registration?

SERGIO DELEON: Yes, it is.

REP. VASUT: Okay. Please give us your testimony.

SERGIO DELEON: Thank you. Good evening, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. My name is Sergio Deleon, and I have the honor of representing Tarrant County, Precinct 5 as the duly-elected Justice of the Peace. I am here today to object to this mid-decade redistricting by the Texas Legislature and your

attempt to silence minority voters across the Lone Star State. I can recall a time period when Republicans in the Texas Legislature wanted nothing to do with Washington, D.C. Now -- now you are taking your cues directly from 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue rather than the people you represent.

You all are engaged in a game of Simon Says, and Simon is about to run you off the cliff. The people of Texas want their elected officials to do what is right and what is just. And this mid-decade attempt to redraw the lines in order to favor the president is just wrong. And it is an injustice to racially discriminate against Hispanic and black voters by presumably, because we haven't seen the maps, by cracking and packing and diluting minority voting strength.

Your power grab does nothing more than contribute to the distrust that people have of their government and their elected officials. They believe -- they believe no matter who is in power, their station in life does not advance, and they give up and refuse to participate in the system. The lost hope stains our democracy, and it is something that we all must work towards to avoid. I hope this moment serves as a wake-up call to everyone watching this

debacle, to re-engage and to reaffirm their commitment to citizen engagement and voting at every level of government.

Additionally, the Trump Justice Department is a farce, and they are focused on dismantling minority voting rights. The letter sent by the Trump DOJ is a fig leaf to simply rip apart Hispanic and African-American communities of interest.

REP. VASUT: Please complete your testimony.

SERGIO DELEON: These are communities with similar socioeconomics who come together in support of candidates in their choice. Republicans in this state are trying to silence the voice of minority voters, and it's not going to fly. Thank you very much for your attention today.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for the witness? Chair hears none.

Thank you for your testimony. The witness is excused.

SERGIO DELEON: Thank you.

REP. VASUT: At this microphone over here, if I could get Samuel Garcia to come down next for this one, Samuel Garcia.

Okay. Now, I said this wrong earlier. I

show you registered to testify as Britni Cuington?

BRITNI CUINGTON: Cuington.

REP. VASUT: Cuington. That's an awesome name. Britni Cuington, on behalf of the Texas AFL-CIO, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

BRITNI CUINGTON: That is correct.

REP. VASUT: All right. Please give us your testimony.

BRITNI CUINGTON: Good evening. My name is Britni Cuington. I'm an Air Force veteran, a proud union member, if it's not already obvious, a working-class organizer, and a black woman who has always called North Texas home. I currently live in Collin County, but home for me is South Dallas, not to be confused with Southern Dallas.

I didn't just serve my country. I came back home and kept serving my community. And I know firsthand, when you break up districts haphazardly, when you buy or bury urban, suburban, working class, veteran-heavy neighborhoods into mostly rural congressional maps, you're not just redrawing lines, you're erasing people. People like me. But I'm assuming that's the point. Although I live in a neighboring county, what happens to the one next door

affects us all. We work together, we worship together, our kids ride the same school buses. You can't surgically remove us from each other and then pretend like we're not connected.

Veterans, especially minority veterans, already face barriers when it comes to accessing the healthcare benefits and economic opportunities that we were told we earned. We can't afford to have our voices watered down in the districts that don't reflect our lives or our needs. We deserve more than performative representation. We deserve leaders who live among us. Leaders who show up when there's no photo op and who know our struggle because, hell, they lived it too.

Let me be clear, this isn't about left or right, it's about right and wrong. And what is happening right here is wrong. If you're going to thank us as veterans for our service, then respect the communities that we come home to. If you're going to say our skilled labor is essential, respect the access to equitable resources for those workers and their families. Keep our districts whole as much as possible, keep our voices intact, and stop playing politics with our lives. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Thank you. Members, any

questions for this witness? Chair hears none.

Thank you for your testimony. The witness is excused.

If I could get up to this microphone over here Anaiah Turner. Anaiah Turner, if you could come down to this microphone, we'll get to you in just a moment.

All right, Chair calls Samuel Garcia. I show you registered to testify, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan? Is that correct?

SAMUEL GARCIA: Yes, sir, it is.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

SAMUEL GARCIA: I drove here three hours to get here. I came from Abilene, Texas. And I'm going to -- if I'm willing to drive three hours to come here and talk, I'm going to ask you to get off your phone and listen to what I have to say. Whenever I found out, when you address somebody from the State Legislature, you're supposed to call them the Honorable this or the Honorable that. Well, the word honorable means that you bring honor. And when you're elected, you're given that title. You should earn that title. Being honorable means that you do the right thing.

Being honorable means that you will look at yourself in the mirror every day and say, why am I doing this?

You got a call from Donald Trump. He told you to go find five seats. No, he got asked, how many seats? He said five. He was asked on the news. You say we don't have any maps. Well, then how in the hell does Donald Trump know he's going to get five seats? I bet you anything there's maps that are there. Those maps are there, and they're sitting on his desk, and he's waiting for you to do it. This is ridiculous.

A man a few days ago was arrested because he spoke too long at this -- at the lectern. He spoke too long and y'all said, oh, he had to be arrested because he broke the rules. How many of you are going to get arrested for breaking the rules of mistreating the citizens of this state? You're breaking the rules. We are the citizens of this -- we're the ones. It's supposed to be bottom up, not top down.

I'm going to say this one thing to you. You know it's wrong. In your heart, you know it's wrong. And here's what I'm going to ask you. When your kids or your grandkids ask you one day, as a state representative, did you always do the right thing? You got two answers that you can choose from. You're either going to have to admit to them that, no,

sometimes I did things just for power. Sometimes I did that. Or you're going to have to lie to your kids and lie to your grandkids and tell them you did it because you believed it, because you know this is wrong. This is wrong. I grew up --

REP. VASUT: Please complete your testimony.

SAMUEL GARCIA: I'm an Aggie and I bleed Aggie maroon. And Aggies, we say -- Aggies, we don't lie, steal or cheat. And we don't tolerate those who do. But the other thing is, soy Mexicano. And my mother would look at you today, my mother would look at you today and say, si me duensa (phonetic).

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

You're fine, sir. Chair hears none. Thank you. The witness is excused.

If I could have Ebony Turner come down to this microphone. We'll come to you next.

All right. I show you registered to testify as Anaiah Turner.

ANAIAH TURNER: Anaiah.

REP. VASUT: Anaiah Turner. Thank you for that. On behalf of the Barbara Jordan Leadership Institute, on Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan.

Is that correct? Thank you. Please give us your testimony.

ANAIAH TURNER: Thank you. Good evening. My name is Anaiah Turner. I am a resident of Congressional District 18, a student at Texas Southern University, and a fellow of the Barbara Jordan Leadership Institute. I'm deeply concerned about the proposed mid-decade redistricting, especially considering CD18 will be without representation for eight to ten months, which effectively -- which is effectively taxation without representation for our community.

I believe initiating redistricting now is unnecessary. There is no compelling evidence to justify disrupting our electoral landscape further. Our focus should be on addressing immediate community needs, not unwarranted changes that compound our existing lack of representation. Texas's scale demands more than three hearings. This is racially driven, limiting discussion, risk, excluding money, Texans, especially marginalized communities. This revision leaves people out of selecting their representation. We must ensure every citizen can influence their representation and stand against undermining democratic principles and reducing public participation.

I urge you to reject mid-decade redistricting. Wait for the 2030 census and give CD18 voters a real chance to be heard and represented. Please honor Barbara Jordan's legacy and fair representation for all Texans. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Chair recognizes Vice Chair Rosenthal to question the witness.

REP. ROSENTHAL: Ms. Turner.

ANAIAH TURNER: Yes.

REP. ROSENTHAL: Thank you so much for coming today. All the way from Congressional 18. How many hours did you drive to be here today?

ANAIAH TURNER: I'm sorry?

REP. ROSENTHAL: How long did it take you to get here?

ANAIAH TURNER: Oh, it was -- well, I'm from here, so it only took me a few minutes, but it's four hours.

REP. ROSENTHAL: So let me ask you about Congressional 18. Would you say that's -- no, no, no, don't speed on the road. Congressional 18 is an historic, iconic district, would you say?

ANAIAH TURNER: Yes.

REP. ROSENTHAL: That brought us Barbara Jordan, Mickey Leland, Craig Washington, and Sylvester Turner.

ANAIAH TURNER: Yes.

REP. ROSENTHAL: So your testimony today is that you believe that 800,000 or so residents of Congressional 18 deserve a voice in their federal government?

ANAIAH TURNER: I believe they do.

REP. ROSENTHAL: Thank you ma'am.

REP. VASUT: Members, any other questions for this witness?

Seeing none, thank you for your testimony. Members -- witness is excused.

At this side over here, if I could get Ernest Lineberger to come down and be ready at that microphone.

All right, ma'am, I show you registered to testify as Ebony Turner, on behalf of the Black Mansfield Moms Group and yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

EBONY TURNER: That is correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

EBONY TURNER: Thank you. Hello. My

name is Ebony Turner. I am a resident of CDC 6, SD 22, a former candidate for House District 96 and resident of 96, and still barely a resident of Tarrant County Commissioner Precinct 2. My daughter is a presidential scholar at Texas Southern University, so my money resides in CD 18. I just heard from her. I am the founder of the 3400-member Black Mansfield Moms Group and also the Hispanic Women Network of Texas, Arlington Chapter, and a proud member of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated.

So first, I want to give my condolences and prayers to go out to the recent victims and families -- recent victims' families and survivors of the flood earlier this month, because preventing future tragedies is where our focus should be instead of on this redistricting nonsense. As an attorney, I know, and I know that you all know, illegal racial gerrymandering violates Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. As such, I oppose this mid-census redistricting plan. I oppose targeting black and brown districts to accomplish Trump's goal of gaining five new seats. I oppose racial gerrymandering and any cracking and packing that will surely be the center of this effort.

Texans do not want or need this. California and other Democratic-led states have vowed to redistrict in such a way as to neutralize any Republican seats that might be gained. So what is the point? Why set a precedent that redistricting can occur whenever any leader in power says so on a whim? Tarrant County is already spending taxpayer dollars to defend an illegal racial gerrymandering lawsuit of its County Commission of Precincts, especially mine. Any passage of illegally racially gerrymandered bills will result in the same fate at the state level.

As I close, it is you state legislators who will suffer the biggest fallout. Congressional seats might be gained, but many more of you will lose yours. So here's to hoping permanent out-of-state notifications for Abbott and any proponents of this mid-census illegal racist power grab. I oppose.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony. The witness is excused.

EBONY TURNER: Thank you.

REP. VASUT: At this microphone, if I could have next come down Amanda McLaughlin. Amanda McLaughlin.

All right. I show you registered to testify as Ernest Lineberger, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

ERNEST LINEBERGER: Yes, sir.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

ERNEST LINEBERGER: I'd like to thank all of you for being here and putting in these long hours, and this great group for being here and sharing their thoughts. I am Ernest Lineberger. I am a candidate for U.S. House for Texas Congressional District 26, a retired naval officer, a veteran, an engineer with 29 years at Texas Instruments in Dallas, a believer in love your neighbor, and we are all neighbors.

I ran for the open seat in 2024 and got 36 percent of the vote. Since then, Representative Brandon Gill and I have been working to convince the voters that I am the better choice. Mr. Gill is new to public service. Mr. Gill is new to public service and seems aligned to serve the wealthy and take from those in need, while my approach is putting the people's needs first.

This redistricting plan -- and I have seen one called C2201, may not be applicable, but

that's the one I'm referring to -- has elongated districts with tiny tails in urban areas and distant massive amount of rural that make it very difficult for House members to stay in touch and correctly represent; equally difficult for constituents to seek support. Old districts are divided up. End-to-end distance is dramatically increased. These seats might as well be Texas at large rather than district-specific.

This proposal is wrong and harmful to our representative government. The changes to CD26 are extreme. This will set me back in name recognition and voter outreach. I'm eager to represent the voters of CD26 and be a statesman of stewardship who will look after their needs and those of the nation: water, hospitals, Medicare, SNAP, VA, FAA, NOAA, FEMA, and any other assistance needed to help everyone to reach their full potential. I'm Ernest Lineberger of Denton County. I oppose this mid-decade redistricting but will serve my district and America regardless. Thank you so much for this opportunity to speak.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony. The gentleman is excused.

At this microphone next, if I could get

Denaja Jones, Denaja Jones. Denaja Jones, if you please come to that microphone next. Thank you for that.

Chair calls Amanda McLaughlin. I show you registered to testify as Amanda McLaughlin, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

AMANDA MCLAUGHLIN: That is correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

AMANDA MCLAUGHLIN: Okay. I am Amanda McLaughlin and I'm representing myself. Why is there an effort to redistrict? For years, any bias in the last redistricting was denied, and that is the basis for redistricting. There has already been a great deal of gerrymandering. The purpose of this redistricting is not to correct any past bias, just the opposite. It is an attempt to seize more power that does not represent the people.

Legislators should serve the people they represent, but now many legislators are there to serve themselves and a president who bullies them in demanding five more Republican seats. The new maps are not available. I believe that they are being hidden from us because it would be obvious how biased and

unfair they are. We should have hearings after the maps are released. This redistricting will discriminate even more against many people in very diverse state for the benefit of one group.

White conservatives represent a small portion of the population but want to control everyone. This control includes forcing Christian nationalisms on everyone. While we are denying children school lunches, we are forcing classes to display the Ten Commandments. Immigrants are being disappeared without any due process. And as a transgender woman, my basic rights are being denied. We are already bullied. We don't need a stronger bully. This is abusing power to gain more power and should not be allowed. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony. You are excused.

If I could get at this microphone next, Kathleen Turner. Kathleen Turner at that microphone.

I show you registered to testify as Denaja Jones, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

DENAJA JONES: Correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

DENAJA JONES: Good afternoon, members of the committee and fellow Texans. My name is Denaja Jones. I'm a junior prelaw political science major at UT Arlington. I'm here today voicing my concerns about the proposed mid-cycle redistricting effort. Redistricting is a process meant to ensure fair and equal representation based on population changes reflected in the ten-year census.

We are witnessing a political motivated and deviation from that demographic justification. Attempting to redraw congressional maps in the middle of the decade just years after the census is not just irregular but also a strategic partisan power. I find it deeply troubling that this process appears to prioritize political control over community representation, especially in a state as diverse and rapidly growing as Texas. Communities of color, black, Latino, and Asian have historically been underrepresented. The proposed changes threaten to dismantle their voting strength through tactics like crackling -- like cracking and packing, making it harder for these communities to elect candidates of their choice.

While the legal standard prohibits race as a predominant factor in redistricting, we must acknowledge race and party are often closely intertwined, especially in Texas. The courts may struggle to separate racial intent from partisan motive, but the lived consequences are always clear. These maps risk disenfranchising millions of voters under the guise of political strategy. I want to sincerely just thank my Commissioner Lisa Simpson, State Rep Chris Turner, and everyone who appeared today to practice and present today, and affirm that demand that still matters in Texas. Thank you for your time.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

The Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony. The witness is excused.

If I could get at that microphone on this side next, Mirian Spencer Morrison. If you would come down right there. I show you registered to testify as Kathleen Turner, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

KATHLEEN TURNER: That is correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

KATHLEEN TURNER: Good evening, Chair and

members of the committee. My name is Kathleen Turner, and I live in the Hulen Bend Estate community of Fort Worth, Tarrant County, in Congressional District 12. I am here today to speak with a heavy heart and a clear voice in opposition to the mid-decade redistricting effort. What's happening is not just political, it's deeply personal for communities like mine.

Right here in Dallas-Fort Worth area CD 33, a district built by black, Latino, and Asian Americans, voters working together to finally have a voice, is under attack. Without a new census, in the middle of the decade, you're opposing to dismantle a community we fought decades to build. Why? What changed other than a political power and racism? Tarrant County voters have already lost representation at the county level. Now this plan risks erasing our voices in Congress as well?

For many of us, it feels like we are being told once again that we don't count. We are not invisible. Communities of color are the very reason DFW is growing. We built this district. We show up. We vote. And yet in a state where nearly 60 percent of the population are people of color, only about a third of our congressional delegation reflects that reality. That's not fair representation. That's deliberate

manipulation.

I urge you, do not silence us. Wait until the 2030 census to draw new maps. And if changes must be made, give the people a real voice in that process before any decisions become final. Please don't take away the representation we've worked so hard to build. We matter. We are watching, and we will not stop speaking out. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

Thank you for your testimony. The witness is excused.

At this microphone, if I could next get Mindy Tackett. All right. I show you registered to testify as Mirian Spencer Morrison, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

MIRIAN SPENCER MORRISON: That is correct. That is correct.

REP. VASUT: All right, perfect. Please give us your testimony.

MIRIAN SPENCER MORRISON: Hi, I am Mirian Spencer Morrison. I am currently the State Democratic Executive Committeewoman for Congressional District 25. I am speaking on behalf of myself as a lifetime Texan,

voter, and currently a rural constituent of District 25.

Good evening, Mr. Chair and members of committee. I oppose redistricting due to the limited opportunities for voters of the 254 counties in Texas to have reasonable input on maps that will affect them for the next six years. My congressional district begins in Callahan County and goes east to Eastland, Stephens, Young, Jack, Comanche, Palo Pinto, Parker, Erath, Somervell, Hood, Johnson, and ends in Tarrant County, including UT Arlington, which we are here today. The maps online for the 2025 proposed redistricting are unofficial, so I won't waste times on proposals for 25, which include some increasing the county total from 13 to 28 and spanning from Amarillo to Austin.

The boundaries were approved, the current ones, were approved during the 2021 session. There were maps and opportunities for Texans to review, comment, and bring meaningful input to the Legislature. While the current districts don't appease most people, there was dialogue and, as usually occurs, lawsuits. Texas is currently in court fighting while entertaining new maps.

In my occupation as a city planner, I

have worked on redistricting within the agencies and departments that I work. Most recently, our agency took on one city. It took us six months to draw service boundaries that will serve our six divisions to be balanced for calls for service and response times and projected population through 2030. Another entity took a year to do that. I am certain none of the background done in my professional capacity has been done and there is zero chance the level of diligence will be done.

It is ridiculous that we are entertaining this process now as candidates for the '26 election have announced and started working. If this is going to be an effect for the '26 maps, it's only going to cause confusion. And if this can wait to 2028, this should be -- this drawn-out process should be expanded through the '27 Legislature. We deserve better as Texans.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

Thank you for your testimony. The witness is excused.

Next at this microphone, if I could get Chris Tackett. I'm going to go out on a limb and say that y'all might be related.

MENDI TACKETT: Yeah.

REP. VASUT: All right.

MENDI TACKETT: You get us both.

REP. VASUT: Okay. Chair calls Mendi Tackett. I show you registered to testify, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

MENDI TACKETT: Correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

MENDI TACKETT: So I am here to tell all of you exactly what I told the Texas Senate, word for word. Texans do not want this. Trump wants this. Mid-decade redistricting is a blatant, racist power grab. It undermines fair representation and rigs the rules to erase the voices of black and brown communities in order to keep politicians who support white Christian nationalism in power.

This is no different than what we have been fighting here in Tarrant County. Just like the Tarrant County commissioners were afraid they might lose power here, Trump and national-level Republicans are afraid they might lose some power. So they're turning to states like Texas to try and ensure they have enough Republican seats. And you're going to

squash black and brown voices to do it.

There's no polite way to say this. Republicans, we see you. We see who you are, and we see what you're doing. You're shameless, power-hungry bootlickers for Trump -- [Audio cut out]

REP. VASUT: Next up at this microphone, if I can get Ernesto Moran. Ernesto Moran at that microphone.

Chair calls Chris Tackett. I show you registered to testify, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

CHRIS TACKETT: That is correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

CHRIST TACKETT: It's asinine that we're here talking about this today when we know the State of Texas has argued in court that the maps drawn after the 2020 census weren't based on race. And yet the DOJ justification is that these maps were drawn based on race. You can't have it make sense unless you are willing to acknowledge that this is nothing more than a step toward authoritarianism. The current administration is scared to death that the people won't vote for them in 2026. They needed to find a place led

by those who will kiss the ring and do their bidding to carve out a handful of seats.

Enter Texas. The administration has embarked on a Christian nationalist agenda to destroy the things that have made this country great. We know that if they have two more years controlling all levers of power, our country will be unrecognizable. That's what they're banking on. Authoritarianism doesn't arrive with trumpets. It creeps in and thrives on our hesitation to speak out, our unwillingness -- our willingness to compromise with injustice. You look at this room, we are saying no more. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness? Chair hears none. Thank you for your time. You are excused.

If I could get -- if I could get Lori, I believe Stelljes, Stelljes. If you could come down to this microphone. I apologize if I mispronounced that last name.

I show you registered to testify as Ernesto Moran, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

ERNESTO MORAN: That is correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

ERNESTO MORAN: I want to acknowledge that we're in land ceded and shared by the Jumanos, Tawakoni, Kickapoo, Wichita and Comanche Nations. My name is Ernie Moran. I'm the proud son of immigrants from South America. I am a native-born U.S. citizen. I am a 30-year resident of Fort Worth. And I'm the father of three public school students. My oldest just graduated high school, and I'm kind of worried about him. And with the dismantling of the Department of Education, I'm worried how we're going to pay for his college. I've got a daughter in high school and a daughter in middle school, and I'm worried about the creep towards Christian nationalism in our schools in Texas. And I'm also a public-school teacher, so I'm doubly worried about that.

But actually, I'm here and I'm kind of -- respectfully, Mr. Chair, it's ironic and kind of sad to me that we're here because I've watched two hearings already where your colleagues have asked you about the existence of this committee, and you've simply passed the buck and said, because there's a letter, this is what we have to do. And you said at the start of this meeting that we had to follow the rules. Your response to the Governor when he put this on the agenda should have been four words, because this is Texas, right?

This is the land of Six Flags. This is the land of Whataburger. This is the land of Shiner Bock. You should have said four words to the Governor, "Don't mess with Texas."

And your answer to the Department of Justice -- your answer to the Department of Justice, instead of asking the Department of Justice to come testify, your answer to the Department of Justice should have been four words about our maps, "Come and take them." So I hope you'll do as others have said here and simply do nothing until the 2030 census and then we'll get to the business of the people. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony. The witness is excused.

At this next -- at this microphone, if I can next have Karen Horgan come down. Karen Horgan.

All right. I show you registered to testify as Lori Stelljes?

LAURIE STELLJES: Stelljes.

REP. VASUT: Stelljes. On behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

LAURIE STELLJES: That is correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

LAURIE STELLJES: Thank you. My name is Laurie Stelljes, and I'm a resident of Fort Worth, which is located in Congressional District 97. I would like to be on the record against the State's redistricting efforts. Do not submit to Trump's request. You should be spending our tax dollars on worthwhile efforts, like how to salvage lives after natural disasters, or how to better financially support our public schools.

This effort to racially gerrymander our state is unjust and discriminatory. Cracking and packing by race is an intentional effort to discourage and weaken the black and brown voice, and worse yet, discourages them from voting -- from bothering to vote. Texas just redrew the maps in 2021, making this process rushed, without transparency, heavily partisan, and one that excludes public input. These few meetings hastily scheduled do not fit the intent of gathering public input. It only checks a box.

You should have -- you haven't even shown us the new maps. It's absolutely unacceptable for both the House and Senate Redistricting Committees to be

holding hearings without having maps visible to the public. Without a doubt, there will be lawsuits if this passes, and that is a further waste of our tax dollars. Texas is already the worst gerrymandered state in the nation and has a long history of passing discriminatory election laws. If you are intent on moving forward with redistricting, this committee must commit to holding public hearings after the maps have been drawn but before they pass through committee. You must give the public time to review the maps before the hearings. Legislators who drew the maps must also explain why they chose to draw them the way they did.

If the only way to get ahead is to cheat by redrawing boundaries that discriminate by race to benefit one party, take a hard look in the mirror and ask yourself about your level of integrity. A tarnished reputation is a shameful legacy to leave those who follow you. You were elected to represent all of your constituents, not just a subset that belongs to your political party. Vote no.

REP. VASUT: Members, questions for the witness? Chair recognizes Vice Chair Rosenthal to question the witness.

REP. ROSENTHAL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Ms. Stelljes?

LAURIE STELLJES: Stelljes, yes.

REP. ROSENTHAL: Stelljes. Sorry. You made a couple of really good points that I don't want to spend a lot of time, but I want to make sure that this gets a little bit of attention. So, is it your contention that this Legislature, being called in an emergency session, should focus on the emergency, that hand in the Hill Country?

LAURIE STELLJES: Yes, yes.

REP. ROSENTHAL: While families are still suffering and we're up here with this political charade. The second thing that you brought up was about how Texas is already a gerrymandered state. Are you aware that every, every redistricting by this legislature for the past 30 years has ended up in federal court?

LAURIE STELLJES: Yes.

REP. ROSENTHAL: And did you also know that we literally are just -- we are awaiting the decision on a current court case for the 2021 redistricting? You just heard that trial in El Paso. Is that right?

LAURIE STELLJES: Yes.

REP. ROSENTHAL: Here's a fun fact for everyone in the room. The last time Texas redistricted

outside of the census was 2003. And those maps were struck down by the United States Supreme Court as being unconstitutional. I want to thank you for highlighting those issues. Thanks for coming here today.

LAURIE STELLJES: Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Members, any other questions for this witness?

Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony. Witness is excused.

Next up at this microphone is going to be Warren Horgan, if you'll make your way down.

I show you registered to testify as Karen Horgan, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

KAREN HORGAN: Correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

KAREN HORGAN: Hi. My name is Karen Horgan. I live in Fort Worth, Congressional District 12. I'm a lifelong Texan, so I know that our state is pretty much gerrymandered to death already. I strongly oppose this attempt to redistrict. This is a brazen move by the governor, pressured by the president, to gain five new Republican seats in the House.

The four districts in Texas being

targeted are all represented by people of color. It is clearly an effort to undermine the voting strength of minority Texans. This is blatant racial discrimination. Communities of color are intentionally being split up, diluting their voting power and representation. No proposed maps are even available. There's no justification for this congressional redistricting. Texas maps were drawn in 2021. Doing it again now, mid-decade, is not normal. We don't even have any new census data to support these maps. Racial data must be taken into consideration, according to the Voting Rights Act.

This special session should be used to help people impacted by the devastating floods, relief efforts, rebuilding efforts, planning better emergency preparedness systems. Helping Texans should be your priority. So, stop this racial gerrymander power grab and do something constructive for the people of Texas.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony. Witness is excused.

Next witness at this microphone is going to be Ryan Davenport.

I show you registered to testify as

Warren Horgan, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

WARREN HORGAN: That's correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

WARREN HORGAN: Hello, my name is Warren Horgan. I live in Fort Worth. I'm a retired veteran, Congressional District 12. I oppose this redistricting proposal. Texas has a long history of passing discriminatory election laws and racially gerrymandered maps. This pattern continues.

As I thought about this, I remembered a song from my youth called Fortunate Son by John Fogarty of Creedence Clearwater Revival. The song written in 1969 at the height of the Vietnam War, while I was stationed at Nakhon Phanom, was more than a protest of the war. It was an anthem against inequality and the idea that the rich make the decisions while the poor have no say in the matter, and yet they bear the consequences. The song's theme of social injustice and unequalled burdens continues to resonate today. The chorus says, "I ain't no millionaire's son, no, no. It ain't me, it ain't me. I ain't no fortunate one, no. It ain't me, it ain't me."

The reference in the song can be applied

to the racial discrimination we see today in these gerrymandered maps. These maps give the privileged few control over the working class and people of color whose votes are diluted and suppressed. We need fairly-chosen representatives who will be responsive to the needs of all people, not just to billionaires and special interests. This is why we need districts that reflect the diversity of our state.

REP. VASUT: Members, questions for this witness?

Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony. The witness is excused.

The next witness at this microphone is going to be Cindy Rocha. If you'll please come down front.

Chair calls Ryan Davenport. I show you registered to testify, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan? Is that correct?

RYAN DAVENPORT: Appreciate you having me.

REP. VASUT: All right. Give us your testimony.

RYAN DAVENPORT: Mr. Chairman and members, my name is Ryan Davenport. I used to work for

the Republican Party of Texas in 2010. I was a field director whenever President Obama was in his midterms. I worked for Congressman Bill Flores. I was a delegate to the Republican National Conventions of 2012 and 2016. I worked for Dan Patrick in the 83rd legislative session and staffed the Committee on Education. I was a government teacher and an economics teacher and a school leader in Dallas ISD at North Dallas High School for almost 11 years.

And I'm here to tell you, you've lost me. You've lost me because the State of Texas isn't Burger King. Donald Trump doesn't get to have it his way. You don't get to walk up and say, I need five more seats because I don't want to pay the consequences for bad governance. You don't get to ask for five more seats to make government less responsive. And this is happening again on the backs of black and brown Texans who already have fewer seats than they should in Congress. Nine fewer seats than they should.

I don't know how, in good conscience, we can do this to our fellow Texans. How did I get here, right? How did I change my mind? If you would have talked to me when I was a senior in high school, I would have told you I would rather die than vote for a Democrat. But I tell you, I've done it twice. But

it's because I've sat at the tables of my students who will lose their representation. We know this to be wrong.

I was raised in Brazoria County, only about 10 miles away from the Chairman. And I tell you, I know the values we were raised on. And I know that this is not doing right by Texans. We know in our hearts that this is not okay. I know, I know that you are receiving pressure from the White House to do this. I know you are. And it has to be scary to stand up and say no. But I'm going to trust you to do the right thing because I know you to be men of good character and women of good character.

REP. VASUT: Members, questions for this witness?

RYAN DAVENPNORT: But if Barack Obama had done this in 2010, we would have had pitchforks and torches. But because it's the orange man in the White House, that's okay. If you get in bed with Donald Trump, you can scrub all you want, but you're never going to get the orange off.

REP. VASUT: Members, questions for this witness? Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony. Thank you, Ryan. You're excused.

At this next -- at this next microphone,

I almost said podium -- that wouldn't make any sense. I've got Celena Vasquez. Celena Vasquez, if you could come down to that one.

I'm going to come back over to you here. I've got you registered to testify as Cindy Rocha?

CINDY ROCHA: Cindy Rocha.

REP. VASUT: Rocha. On behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

CINDY ROCHA: That's correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

CINDY ROCHA: I am a proud member of the Communication Workers of America and the Texas AFL-CIO. Thank you for the opportunity to hear our voices. Thank you to those who have come and taken their time and shared their voices with you. I was born and raised in Fort Worth, and, as an adult, I moved out to a rural area in CD25. North Texas is growing, and our cities continue to expand outward. As a member of organized labor, as well as a retiree and a resident of a rural community in the great State of Texas, I'm fortunate to hear many stories and opinions from a great cross-section of our citizens.

I testify to you that not one of us is in

favor of this redistricting scheme. There's certainly a reason that we only have to do it every ten years. The confusion that it causes isn't bearable for more than one time, or more than that often. As an election worker, I've witnessed this on more than one occasion, and not only after the maps are drawn. From, where do I go to vote? Why can't I vote where I've always voted? To downright disgust at the process, and they just don't want to vote at all. These situations cause disenfranchisement. Please tell us that disenfranchisement is not the point. Texas is already one of the hardest places in the nation to register to vote and then to vote. Please, help qualified Texas voters vote, and please do not add additional confusion by redrawing districts that are already in litigation.

We must get better at serving others. We have an obligation to serve. The heart of Texas beats in unity, and we have always cared for each other. There are so many other issues of concern that should be addressed in this special session. Our safety and preparedness, our health, and the well-being of fellow Texans. Don't fall prey to those that try to divide us. We are Texas. We are the Lone Star. I leave from this podium with the saying that you can see in the rising sun east of the Capitol. All political power is

inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority and instituted for their benefit. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony. The witness is excused.

Next up at this microphone is going to be Deborah Spell, if you'll make your way down.

I show you registered to testify as Celena Vasquez?

CELENA VASQUEZ: Celena Vasquez.

REP. VASUT: Celena, I apologize. It looked like an O. I got you. Celena Vasquez, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

CELENA VASQUEZ: Yes, that is correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

CELENA VASQUEZ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening, Chairman Vasut, Vice Chairman Rosenthal, and all of our state representatives and committee members on this Redistricting Committee. My name is Celena Vasquez. I am a resident of the city of Arlington, the American Dream city. My family and I

work, go to school, and worship right here in Arlington, Texas.

My family is a regular family. I have a 17-year-old son, Diego, who plays in the marching band in Arlington ISD schools. I'm a teacher by training. I'm also on the Democratic National Committee. My husband, Fernando, works in higher education. And we're here -- I'm here because they cannot be here this evening. I'm here for all of the regular working-class families that go to church at St. Matthew's Catholic Church in East Arlington, where my family worships.

We're here because -- I'm here to express on their behalf a huge disappointment and huge opposition to drawing of any maps that are going to crack and pack the Latino voters of this county. I am here to let you know that families like mine who live, work, and worship here oppose any effort to disenfranchise and disempower the Latino community. We're opposed to the changes on any of these maps. I adamantly oppose changes to CD 33, a minority opportunity district created to represent African-Americans, Latinos, senior citizens, and young people because our voices will no longer be heard.

Latino families like mine reject Donald Trump and the Republican elected officials' attempts to

redraw the maps here in Texas. In the Latino community, we have a saying that "su voto es su voz," but y'all are threatening to take away our voice in the Latino community. We will not stand by and allow that to happen any longer here in Texas. We ask that you not disenfranchise us. We ask that you not crack and pack us into districts, and we ask that you please vote against these mid-decade redistricting efforts. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

Thank you for your testimony. The witness is excused.

Next up at this microphone is going to be Erik Wilson.

I show you registered to testify as Deborah Spell, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

DEBORAH SPELL: That is correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

DEBORAH SPELL: We the people, not we the politicians. Black, brown, and Asians have endured voter suppression and the inability to select representation since Section 5 preclearance was gutted.

Your maps, that haven't been published, will be racially biased to guarantee that minorities aren't represented and are voiceless. The criteria when drafting maps should be the contiguous geographical regions, preserving racial communities, existing values, interests, and issues. The 2020 census showed redistricting wasn't necessary.

As a taxpaying citizen, my input on issues such as infrastructure, education, health, and voting regulations, my voice should be represented by someone familiar with the district. Racism is the reason for gerrymandering ethnic minority districts, leaving us without representation. Texas is a minority-majority state, but it doesn't reflect representation in government. Gerrymandering is similar to redlining, which is racist. I vehemently oppose packing and cracking our districts. Electoral districts should be drawn as a minority district or a coalition district to achieve representation. I advocate for state electoral maps to be drawn by unbiased teams to ensure fairness and prevent gerrymandering, to accurately reflect the diversity of the population and not split, dilute, or pack and crack our communities.

We are the people. We, the people,

demand to elect our own candidates. There have been several lawsuits --

REP. VASUT: Please complete your testimony. I'm sorry, I'll give you another sentence if you don't mind.

DEBORAH SPELL: Oh, okay, okay.

REP. VASUT: Yes, ma'am.

DEBORAH SPELL: I will just say that we are prepared to litigate because Texas likes litigation.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony. The witness is excused.

Next up at this microphone is going to be Cheryl Smith, if you could make your way down. Cheryl Smith.

I show you registered to testify as Erik Wilson on behalf of FWBC Social Justice, Southern Sector Rising, Alpha Sigma Lambda, and Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Incorporated. Is that correct? Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Incorporated. That was hard. Is that correct?

ERIK WILSON: Correct.

REP. VASUT: And on the Revised

Congressional Redistricting Plan?

ERIK WILSON: Yes.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony. Thank you for being here.

ERIK WILSON: Good evening, committee members. My name is Erik Wilson. I am a former deputy mayor pro tem for the City of Dallas, the ninth largest city in the United States. I am a resident of Dallas, Texas, specifically Oak Cliff. I am a voter. Above all, I am a concerned citizen.

I'm here to speak out against the governor's redistricting proposal, because let's call it what it really is, a power grab, plain and simple. And that ain't right. This plan isn't about fairness or balance. It's about carving out five new Republican districts to keep power locked away mid-decade without the public's consent and without real justification. And that ain't right.

This proposal goes straight at the coalition districts, Texas Districts 9, 18, 29, and 33, districts that have long given black and Latino communities a seat at the table. Redrawing these lines wouldn't just move boundaries on paper, it would silence real voices, undermine real representation, and trample on the Voting Rights Act. And that ain't

right. Districts 28, 34, and 7 are also under attack, not because people demanded change, but because some politicians fear losing control. And that ain't right.

This isn't what democracy is supposed to look like. This is what fear looks like. Fear of diversity. Fear of new voices. Fear of people they claim to serve. But let me be clear. We see exactly what's happening, and we won't stand quietly. We're not pawns you can shuffle around on maps. We're your constituents. We're your neighbors. We're fellow Texans. And we deserve districts that are fair, legal, and truly represent who we are. I urge you to do the right thing. Reject this plan and protect the integrity of our elections, because that is what's right.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony. Witness is excused.

Next up at this microphone is going to be, I believe, Tara Butler or Jara Butler. If you'll come down.

I show you registered to testify as Cheryl Smith, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

CHERYL SMITH: That is correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

CHERYL SMITH: Good evening. My name is Cheryl Smith. I am a retired, proud resident with the Honorable Chris Turner as my state representative. And I'm here to speak not only for myself but for the generations who came before me and those who will come after me. My grandparents lived in a time when they couldn't vote freely. They marched, they organized, and they fought so I could stand here today and speak into a system that once tried to silence them. And now, in 2025, we're back here again fighting a different version of the same battle.

The Governor's redistricting plan is a betrayal of everything our democracy is supposed to stand for. It's a modern-day attempt to turn back the clock on voter representation. By creating five new districts, the state is not responding to population growth, it's responding to fear, fear of change, fear of equity, fear of rising multiracial electorate. But here's the thing, we're not going anywhere. We are the future, and we're watching. And we will not allow our communities to be cracked, packed, or erased.

I ask you, when your children look back

at this moment, will they say you stood for justice or that you stood silent? Reject the plan. Defend our future. And do what's right, not what's political. Thank you for hearing my voice. And don't ignore the people you were elected to serve.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

Hearing none, thank you for your testimony, ma'am. You're excused.

Next up at this microphone is going to be, I believe it's Khanay Turner?

Okay. And I show you registered to testify -- is it Jara?

JARA BUTLER: Jara, J-A-R-A.

REP. VASUT: Got it. Jara Butler, on behalf of Supermajority and yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

JARA BUTLER: That is correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

JARA BUTLER: Mr. Chair, Mr. Vice Chair, I know you all are tired. You know, try being a black [audio cuts out] and we are here because we see exactly what this redistricting plan is all about, a direct attack on our voices and the voices of women who are

changing this state. This is not about fair representation. It's about fear. Fear of a Texas that's younger, a Texas that's more diverse and more powerful than it's ever been, and an attempt to rig the rules before we even get a chance to get to the starting line.

So let me be clear. Women are not just voting in record numbers. We are organizing. We are running. We are leading. We are building. And we, the women, are the future of this state. But instead, instead of honoring that, some of you are drawing maps in back rooms to silence us. You're not protecting democracy. You're protecting your own power. And as Fannie Lou Hamer once said, I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired.

And I'm going to add this. The young women of Texas are sick and tired of being underestimated, of being locked out of the decisions that affect our bodies, that affect our community, and affect our lives. We refuse to be cracked, packed, or carved out of our communities. And we are not a political inconvenience. We are the majority.

Now, I come from a family, and I'm standing here today because of my grandmother, who was born with Jim Crow, and that survived generations of

disenfranchisements, folks who paid poll taxes, were chased from ballot boxes, and lived through Jim Crow. Today --

REP. VASUT: Please complete your testimony.

JARA BUTLER: -- you may not use dogs, you may not use fire hoses, but the intention is still the same. So let me just say, this is not governance, this is cheating. So for every one of you, every official who has a hand in this scam, in this scheme, I say to you, you are either on the side of democracy, or you are standing in the way with it. Either way, we are going to remember this. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

Hearing none, thank you for your testimony. You're excused.

Next up at this microphone will be Mary Trotty. If you'll make your way up to this microphone, Mary Trotty.

All right. I show you registered to testify as -- is it Khanay?

KHANAY TURNER: Khanay.

REP. VASUT: Khanay Turner.

KHANAY TURNER: Yes.

REP. VASUT: On behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

KHANAY TURNER: That is correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

KHANAY TURNER: Okay. Good evening, members of the committee. My name is Khanay Turner. I'm a proud Fort Worthian and the Executive Director of the Barbara Jordan Leadership Institute, a resident of House District 97, Senate District 10, and Congressional District 12. I am here to strongly oppose this mid-decade redistricting.

Since my representatives serve on this committee, hello, Representative McQueeney, I must express my deep disappointment if, in the case that you and Senator Phil King, who's chairing the Senate committee, would go into this process and participate in any amount of gerrymandering, silencing my voice and that of countless North Texans who already feel unheard and unseen by our conservative representation in Congress. Regardless of my zip code, I know there are members of the Texas delegation fighting for me, representing what I stand for, and protecting the needs of all Texans. But I cannot say much for the majority

of the Texas delegation who voted to cut $1 trillion from federal programs, ensuring Texas remains the most uninsured state for health care. Many of those same leaders refuse to invest in public education, and push policies that disenfranchise hundreds and thousands of women simply because their marital status and many more, because they do not have the white, I mean right, surname.

And we do not need five more congressional members who will continue to ignore the survival and voices of Texans because of our skin colors or our economic status. We need more representation that reflects the true values and growth of Texas, like members representing CD9, 18, 29, 30, 33. And I urge this committee to leave our current districts intact until 2031 redistricting cycle, when we have updated census data available, or, at the very least, until the current maps that we're dealing with right now has exhausted all of its legal challenges since it's in court.

REP. VASUT: Please complete your testimony.

KHANAY TURNER: Yes. Texans deserve fair representation, not more silencing of our voices. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony. Witness is excused.

KHANAY TURNER: Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Next up at this microphone, if you could make your way down, is going to be Lorraine Rogson.

I show you registered to testify as Mary Trotty, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

MARY TROTTY: I would like to say good evening to the members of the committee.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

MARY TROTTY: My name is Mary Trotty. I am 97 years old. I am proud to be a Houstonian. I live in Sunnyside Community in Harris County, a part of CD9. I have lived through Jim Crow and civil rights movement. Now I'm waiting and trying to live for the promise that Texas made for equality and justice.

Now, I remember we had one black member of Congress, the Honorable Barbara Jordan. Then came Mickey Leland. We fought long and hard for our representative. And my representative today is Al

Green, C9. But C18 where Barbara Jordan, Craig Washington, Jackson Lee are all represented with Al Green in C9. C18 was the only place where we was represented as black people.

Now, I do not agree with the redistricting because it does nothing but put us farther back. We are not put together. I do not want it. I will have a voice in Sunnyside where each of us will not vote for it. And I am 97 years old, but I am not going to be silent. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Ms. Trotty, we thank you for coming to testify tonight. We appreciate it. We wish you well. That's a testament, I think, to all of us. And no matter how old you are, you've got a lot to say. And we thank you for being here. The witness is excused.

Next one up at this microphone is going to be Yaseen Tasnif.

Is Lorraine Rogson here? Lorraine Rogson. Chair calls Lorraine Rogson. Chair will show Lorraine Rogson registered to testify, on behalf of herself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

Chair calls Yaseen Tasnif.

YASEEN TASNIF: Yes.

REP. VASUT: I show you registered to testify, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

YASEEN TASNIF: That is correct.

REP. VASUT: Before you start, next one to come down over here will be Larry Killion. Larry Killion at this microphone.

Please give us your testimony, Mr. Tasnif.

YASEEN TASNIF: All right. As we speak about deciding how to divide the land that we stand on, I begin by honoring the original stewards of this land, the Caddo, the Wichita, Comanche, Coahuiltecan, Apache, and so many others who lived on this land before us, the indigenous people whose sovereignty and presence continues today. So, Chairman and members, it is wonderful to be here today. I was a former House staffer, so I welcome you to my school as you all welcomed me to the Capitol this past session. I really appreciate it.

So, yes, my name is Yaseen Tasnif. I am a proud queer South Asian Muslim Texan, born in Houston, raised in McAllen, and now entering my senior year at the University of Texas at Arlington. Mav up! I spent nearly all my adult life organizing young

people, registering voters, and serving as an election judge. I was elected to our student government and served two years as a senator and one as a committee chair. During the 89th session, I had the privilege of working in the Texas Legislature, and it's really good to see some familiar faces. I've missed it a lot.

But, you know, this process just, it feels wrong, unfamiliar. This is not what I'm used to, and I know y'all get up to some crazy stuff in that building, but this is something else. See, our maps, especially districts like Texas 15, have been manipulated beyond recognition. Texas 15 no longer reflects the Rio Grande Valley community I grew up in. I mean, the valley looks like this, not like this, right? So, you know, it was taken, stolen, to serve partisan interests, and I strongly believe that, not the people. That is not just undemocratic or unconstitutional, it's personal, and now it's being stolen again.

Right now, my university, UT Arlington, one of the most diverse campuses in Texas -- I believe it's actually the most, but I could be wrong -- is actually diluted, tucked into a mostly rural district, Texas 25, represented by Congressman Roger Williams. Is he here today? No. Right, exactly. And he hasn't

been this whole time since I've been here. This shouldn't happen to any more Texans, and if this continues, it will, because of how the lines are drawn. So, to the Republicans, I ask you, do you choose Trump or do you choose Texas? Thank you. And to the Democrats, please don't be polite. Please, quorum break, again, if necessary. Do not lend legitimacy to a process that disrespects us.

As I said, I'm proud to be a Muslim. The Quran says, stand firm for justice as witnesses to God, even if it is against yourselves, your parents, or your kin. And as a Muslim, I can say that both the Quran and the Bible demand the same. Proverbs 11:1 says that the Lord detests dishonest scales, but accurate weights find favor with him. Together, they remind us that unjust systems, rigged scales, are not neutral. They are a betrayal of the right to equity and democratic values, values which I actually hope to bring to the House floor with y'all someday.

REP. VASUT: Please complete your testimony.

YASEEN TASNIF: I just have one more sentence, if that's okay.

REP. VASUT: You got it. Absolutely.

YASEEN TASNIF: All right. So, you know

what's being done here. Choose to stop it. I hope this process backfires. I hope California, New York, and Illinois gerrymander right back. Maybe then we'll learn. And last but not least, I say, as a South Asian, lazim hai ke hum bhi dekhenge, verily we too shall see. Thank you. I'm open for any questions.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony. Witness is excused.

The next witness at this microphone will be Emery Callaway. Emery Callaway, if you'll make your way down.

Chair calls Larry Killion. I show you registered to testify, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

LARRY KILLION: That is correct. I have some handouts.

REP. VASUT: You bet. We'll receive those.

LARRY KILLION: I'll go ahead and start. I thank the committee for allowing me to speak today. My name is Larry Killion. Me llamo es Larry Killion, Lorenzo o abuelo. I was born in Amarillo, Texas. I'm

a registered voter in Harris County, Texas. Go Rangers.

I vote by mail, as you can tell by the color of my hair. I respectfully request the redistricting voter map process, if it progresses, adhere to the following objectives. Subscribe to the democratic principle of one person, one vote, and not one person, one party. And for the benefit of my fellow engineer, Representative Rosenthal, I subscribe to that the redistricting maps must be independently assessed by Data and DemocracyLab or PlanScore, and the review results published for public access and provided the public access to uploadable district plan maps in the geospatial file containing polygon or multipolygon. That's science speak that I know how to read RedAppl and I know how to look at maps.

Okay. More important than anything, committee, I'm a grandpa, correct? Abuelo? Doing the right thing is never wrong. I have consulted with my representative and senator in Houston. Quorum breaking is okay. If you've got to go that route to shut down this farce, then do it. My last word is mi voto cuenta. My vote counts.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony. The witness is excused.

The next witness at this microphone is going to be Nikki Chriesman-Green, if you could make your way down.

Chair calls Emeri Callaway. I show you registered to testify, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

EMERI CALLAWAY: Yes, it is correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

EMERI CALLAWAY: Good evening, Chair, Vice Chair, members of the committee. My name is Emeri Callaway. I am the Vice President of the Tarrant County Young Democrats and the state democratic executive committee member for Congressional District 24. But today I am speaking to you as a resident, a proud resident of Tarrant County. Just weeks ago, we went through the sham and sham mid-sentence redistricting process locally right here in Tarrant County, a process that was rushed, dismissive of the public's concerns, wholly lacking in transparency, and designed to divide, silence, and dilute the voices of majority minority communities.

And now here again, we are being subjected to the same immoral agenda at the state level because you are beholden to one man, and that man is Donald Trump, rather than to the people that elected you to represent them. But why? But isn't it that why we, the people, are always up here and end up having to do your jobs for you? Because it is clear to me that a lot of you on this committee tonight do not have the interest of Texans at heart. Redistricting mid-census is not about fair maps or good governance. It's about control. It's about political power. And it is about finding any loophole to rig elections before people can hold their representatives to account.

And while you may argue that gerrymandering is legal, let me remind you, just because it is legal does not mean it's right. We live in America. We clearly do not have a perfect history. Slavery was once legal. Segregation was legal. That didn't make them right. If we set this as the bar by which we hold our values, then do we really hold the promises of America up to its highest potentials?

Democracy is not a game of who can twist the rules the furthest. It is a sacred trust. The law shouldn't be used -- the law should be a pedestal for justice, not a low bar to crawl under for political

expediency, especially when the cost is borne by everyday Texans whose votes are diluted and whose voices will be ignored. Texans deserve fair maps. The people of Tarrant County saw it firsthand. Our county was enraged. Now Texas is enraged, as you can see here tonight. We are tired of being treated like political pawns instead of the very people you are meant to serve.

REP. VASUT: Please complete your testimony.

EMERI CALLAWAY: We, the people, are watching, and we, the people, will remember this. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

Chair hears none. This witness is excused.

The next witness at this microphone will be Tayhlor Coleman. Please make your way down, Tayhlor Coleman.

I show you registered to testify as Nikki, is it --

NIKKI CHRIESMAN-GREEN: It's Chriesman like Christmas with an N.

REP. VASUT: Chriesman-Green. Nikki

Chriesman-Green, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

NIKKI CHRIESMAN-GREEN: That is correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

NIKKI CHRIESMAN-GREEN: Okay. Greetings, committee members. My name is Nikki Chriesman-Green, and I am a resident of Crowley, Texas in Texas Senate District 10, represented by Senator Phil King, and House District 97, represented by John McQueeney. Hello again.

I am testifying today to voice my strong opposition to the proposed mid-decade redistricting plan. As someone who thrives on competition as a lawyer and as an avid fan of sports, I understand the value of fair play. Whether you're building a business, you're coaching a team, or you're coming up with a legal strategy, there's something deeply satisfying about a hard-earned win. But when someone changes the rules in the middle of the game to secure a specific outcome, it cheapens the victory, and it erodes the trust. That is what this redistricting feels like at this point. I'm not opposed to redistricting as a concept when it's done at the right time and with the right data. It's an essential part

of our democracy.

However, this isn't that. The current maps that were from 2021 are actually still under litigation. They're still under federal review, as you've heard today. Multiple lawsuits challenging the 2021 redistricting maps in Texas are still pending, including LULAC v. Abbott, the United States v. Texas, and Gutierrez v. Abbott. Launching a redistricting process now, without any new census data and multiple unresolved lawsuits, raises serious questions about motivation and also fairness.

And let's be honest, this isn't just political gerrymandering. This is racial gerrymandering. The targeting of districts like Congressional District 9, 18, 29, and 33, which are built on diverse minority coalitions, is not coincidental. It is a direct attempt to diminish the electoral power of communities of color. And that's not just wrong, it's illegal. As a taxpayer, I don't want my dollars tied up in yet another legal battle defending unconstitutional maps. Texas has been repeatedly found to have violated the Voting Rights Act. We do not need to relive this history. We need leadership that respects the rule of law and the value of every voter's voice.

To my elected officials, Representative McQuenney, I ask that you understand that voting has consequences. So the decisions that you're making today while in office affect all of your constituents in your district. And we are watching. And the people of your district will not forget who stood for what and who stood for fairness.

REP. VASUT: Please complete your testimony.

NIKKI CHRIESMAN-GREEN: So I ask that you do the right thing. And I also want to say today that, as a Christian and a God-fearing woman, there is no weapon informed against God's children that will prosper. So it doesn't matter what y'all do. We will still rise.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

Chair hears none. The witness is excused.

Next witness at this microphone will be Joshua Worthey.

Chair calls Tayhlor Coleman. I show you registered to testify, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

TAYHLOR COLEMAN: That's correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

TAYHLOR COLEMAN: Thank you. I'm Tayhlor Coleman, a seven-generation Texan here from Chappell Hill, Washington County. That's the birthplace of Texas. Four years ago, I moved into a van to register voters all across this great state, and what I heard most on these travels is that Texans feel like their vote doesn't matter, and the political system is rigged against them.

Today, I'm here as a candidate for Congress in the 10th Congressional District that is already heavily gerrymandered from Houston to Austin. And I can empathize with all those Texans who feel unheard, because this is my third time trying to testify in front of this body, from Houston to Austin to now in Arlington. I made it. What's been made clear by the fact that y'all are only holding five hours of testimony across three hearings to reach 30 million Texans, when we don't even have any maps to look at, it's clear that y'all aren't actually interested in hearing from us. It lays bare that this redistricting scheme is nothing more than a scam on the voters of Texas to rig our maps, demanded by D.C.

politicians who are hungry for more power. Since I know that some of y'all aren't from Texas, I don't know how y'all do things in Kansas, but in Texas, we don't roll over and play dead for politicians in D.C.

In closing, I'd like to address the Democrats on this committee. Since Republicans have made it clear that they're just following orders, y'all have the opportunity to show up not just for every Texan, but for every American who deserves equal and fair representation in Washington, D.C. Republicans may be in power, but Texas Democrats are not powerless. You can show up for us by not showing up for this sham redistricting hearing. And I know that that is asking a lot from y'all, and I know that that requires y'all to put a lot on the line. But as Reverend Haynes said earlier, maybe consider that y'all have been elected for a time such as this.

REP. VASUT: Please complete your testimony.

TAYHLOR COLEMAN: Thank you. So if y'all break quorum and stand up for all of us by walking out, you'll have our support, you'll have our respect, you'll have our donations, and I hope that you all can stand up for all of us and walk out. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for

this witness?

Chair hears none. This witness is excused.

Next witness at this microphone will be Price Warwick, Price Warwick.

I show you registered to testify as Joshua Worthey, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

JOSHUA WORTHEY: That is correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

JOSHUA WORTHEY: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, Vice Chair, and honorable members of the committee. I'm Joshua Worthey, business manager of IBW Local 220, a Navy submarine veteran, a father of three, and lifelong Texan. I also serve on the boards for the Texas AFL-CIO, the Tarrant Labor Council, as well as the North Central Texas Workforce Development Board.

I stand in strong opposition to the redistricting push, not because of maps drawn, but because of it in principle. Without a new census, and with the previous map still under judicial review, this creates a bypass of law, designed to manipulate outcomes before the courts have even spoken. That's not strength, it's fear. Redistricting is meant to

ensure fair representation, not insulate incumbents through political engineering, yet we see taxpayer dollars being spent on consultants and lobbyists just to protect or gain seats, not to serve communities. Is that good government efficiency, or is that just electioneering, fraud, waste, and abuse?

As someone involved in workforce development, I know that this matters. Gerrymandered lines fracture labor markets and distort funding for WIOA programs, dislocated worker support, veteran services, and employer access to talent. When districts serve political convenience instead of community need, working families lose.

Let me share a real example. Our local union office is in an area that was plagued with mail theft. Drop boxes ripped out, checks stolen, delivery stopped entirely. Businesses started pulling out of the area. It wasn't until our local congressman intervened to establish a secure mailroom that the issue was resolved. That's what local representation looks like, something this process potentially threatens. And that would be Congressional District 33. Additionally, with service members deployed abroad, manipulated district lines make access to civic engagement and voting more difficult for service

members. At a time when the VA is already stretched and Social Security Administration is under pressure, this is the wrong direction.

Let's talk about accountability. You don't redraw districts because voters are choosing who you want, you do it because you're afraid you might lose otherwise. I wanted to call it, you know, the new DEI, Districts Engineered for Incumbents, but this isn't what this is. This is Districts Engineered for Insurrectionists.

REP. VASUT: Please complete your testimony.

JOSHUA WORTHEY: Texas deserves better, especially from those who call themselves leaders. So I ask, do we trust voters to choose their leaders, or will we keep moving the goalpost until democracy is nothing but a show? So say no to this power grab, say yes to fairness, trust, and the people of Texas. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions?

Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony. The gentlemen is excused.

REP. ROSENTHAL: Mr. Chairman?

REP. VASUT: Did I miss you, Vice Chair?

REP. ROSENTHAL: No, no, no. Question

for the Chair.

REP. VASUT: Chair yields for question.

REP. ROSENTHAL: How much time is left for public testimony?

REP. VASUT: Approximately -- I had to do a little bit of an adjustment for our break earlier. I believe we're at three hours and roughly ten minutes right now, so one hour and fifty minutes.

REP. ROSENTHAL: So I'm just going to say first, I'm loving hearing from the public, and I would move to extend that time by at least an hour.

REP. VASUT: Gentleman is not recognized for that motion at this time.

Members, any questions of the witness? If not, thank you, sir. You're excused.

The next witness at this microphone will be Carrie Schweitzer. Carrie Schweitzer, if you could make your way down.

Is Price Warwick here? Okay. I show you registered to testify as Price Warwick, on behalf of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 20 and self, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

PRICE WARWICK: That is correct, sir.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your

testimony.

PRICE WARWICK: Chairman, Vice Chairman, distinguished committee members, I want to thank you for your time. I know that it has been a long couple of weeks, but this committee hearing is very important to hear the voices of Texans. My name is Price Warwick III. I am the principal officer of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 20, a position that I am elected to by the electricians of IBEW North Texas here.

Unions are founded on the principle that every worker has a right to have their voice heard in the workplace. As unions, we elect our representatives on our jobs and our officers in our local and national unions. We hold regu- [audio cuts out] rights that are not to be infringed upon, and that the governing body derives its authority from the consent of the governed. I'm paraphrasing the Declaration of Independence here, but I want to point out that the consent cannot be given if the voices of the governed are silenced, which is exactly what the goals of the current redistricting effort are stated to be.

I know that you have not officially seen a map, but the message of the stated goals have been broadcast loud and clear. We are facing the same issue

with the same stated goals here in Tarrant County and the Commissioner's Court, as you heard earlier from Commissioner Alisa Simmons. These redistricting efforts will ensure that certain voices will be strategically silenced, and as such, their interests will not be represented in government. And a government that does not represent and provide for its citizens is not, by definition, a democracy. That is the definition of tyranny.

To circle back to those principles from our Declaration of Independence, strategically silencing the voices of individuals in this state says to the Texans that they are not equal, that their rights can and will be infringed upon, and that their government holds authority over them without their consent. Instead, I ask the members of this committee to do everything in their power to uphold those principles that our nation was founded upon in any redistricting effort that it may take up. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony. The witness is excused.

The Chair will show Representative Josey Garcia present.

The next witness at this microphone is going to be Stephen Pogue, Stephen Pogue.

Chair calls Carrie Schweitzer. I show you registered to testify, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan? Is that correct?

CARRIE SCHWEITZER: Yes.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

CARRIE SCHWEITZER: I'm Carrie Schweitzer. I reside in CD32. I oppose this special session mid-decade redistricting scheme set up by Abbott because Donald Trump told him to. The Texas Legislature does not work for Donald Trump, you work for us. Texan voters, and I for one, am furious about this scheme, which will ultimately cheat us out of our right to choose the candidates who best represent us and our community needs.

Ours is a country of laws and norms, and while the redistricting calendar is not written into law, it is the norm to draw upon a decade's worth of census data to develop a clear picture of our state's changing demographics on which to base new maps. Clearly, you are tossing aside what is normal. So what data are you using for these mid-decade maps? Will you

share it with the voters? Is it reliable? If not, does it even matter? Because the 2020 census proved that people of color accounted for 95 percent of Texas growth in the 1990s. And still the Texas Senate set two massive new Anglo districts and tried to mash up Houston's 18th and 9th districts, people of color.

So my point is that even under normal conditions, Texas maps are typically motivated to crack and pack districts. Our current district maps are still in litigation, as has been said so many times tonight. Prior to preclearance being dropped from the Voting Rights Act, Texas was always under federal oversight because of racist mapmaking. Do not kowtow to Abbott and to Trump. Don't willy-nilly bust up our communities and deny our common concerns. Stand up for the voters of Texas. Protect our voting rights. Do your job.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

Chair hears none. The witness is excused.

Next witness at this microphone will be Jeremy Sutka. If you'll please make your way down.

Chair calls Stephen Pogue. I show you registered to testify, on behalf of yourself, on the

Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

STEPHEN POGUE: That is correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

STEPHEN POGUE: My name is Stephen Pogue. I'm a resident of Mesquite, Texas. I will keep this short. I am opposed to the redistricting before the next census. There is no reason to do this now. Redistricting is being imposed on Texas by weak Republican leadership, which has surrendered to President Trump. Abbott is doing Trump's dirty work here in Texas.

You haven't even shown any maps yet. How can we talk about redistricting when we don't even see the maps? It's incredible. Republicans intend to further undermine the voting strength of minority Texans, disenfranchising minorities already harmed by the current gerrymandering districts. If you create new districts, like one I saw online, stretching from East Dallas on into East Texas all the way to the state line to pick up multiple rural counties, that is not a community of interest.

And listen to this. Trump's effort to get you guys to protect his majority in Congress is

going to fail anyway. Trump will lose his majority in Congress in 2026, regardless of what you do. And so if you proceed with this redistricting, you will have shown yourself to be cowards, bowing down to Trump for nothing. You will debase yourself for nothing.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

Chair hears none. The witness is excused.

At this microphone next will be Mary Palomares. If you could make your way down, up to the front.

Chair calls Jeremy Sutka. I show you registered to testify, on behalf of the Collin County Democratic Party and yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan? Is that correct?

JEREMY SUTKA: That's correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

JEREMY SUTKA: I'm Jeremy Sutka, Chair of the Collin County Democratic Party, and I stand before you to condemn an unconstitutional and racist assault on Texas democracy. There is no legal basis for redistricting today. No new census, no court order. This is a raw political power grab. Donald Trump fears

losing the House due to his toxic agenda, so he has asked Republicans to rig districts again, stealing power from minority voters to prop up a failing regime.

We must follow the rules. We've heard this. This violates our constitution. Article 3, Section 28 of the Texas Constitution permits redistricting only after a census. No census has occurred. Democracy should be representative. But rather than win over voters, Republicans seek to gerrymander an even bigger artificial majority into Texas, where we already have extreme gerrymandering. Democrats only hold 32 percent of the house seats while having 45 percent of the voters. That's gerrymandering.

Federal courts have ruled GOP maps intentionally discriminatory numerous times. While the 2021 maps are still tied up in court, the GOP is going back to redistrict again. Why? Because Trump demands it. Because he knows his policies can't win fair elections even with already rigged maps. We demand you halt this illegal process now, you reject all new maps, and you put Texas over Trump.

Do not be complicit and bow down to this wannabe king. History sees this. Texans see this. Defend our democracy and stop this steal, or you will

give voters yet another reason to vote you all out in 2026. If anyone in this room, and now I'm talking to the room, is not a precinct chair, get involved with your county party and do the work to vote them out. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

Chair hears none. Thank you. The witness is excused.

Chair calls Mary Palomares. Is Mary Palomares here? Chair will show Mary Palomares registered to testify, on behalf of Texas HOPE, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan but not testifying.

Next two witnesses up for the microphones. On this side, if I could get Donna Wurster to come down, and on this side, Raymond Hamden. Donna Wurster, Raymond Hamden.

I show you registered to testify as Raymond Hamden, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

RAYMOND HAMDEN: Yes, sir. That's correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

RAYMOND HAMDEN: Good evening, Chairman and members. Thank you all for being here. Thank you all for having me. I seem to have walked into a lion's den, which is okay. It's how we grow. It's how we learn. When we listen for understanding, it helps us all expand our horizons.

I grew up in Fort Hood, specifically the Killeen-Harker Heights area. Friends of all races, all religions, different socioeconomic statuses. Being next to a military base was a true melting pot. It taught us how to focus on commonalities, not differences. And by doing that, it allowed us to thrive regardless of circumstances.

Coming here again was a good learning lesson, because my take on it was basically this is about representation. Not every black or brown person is a Democrat, just like not every white person is a Republican. So in order to give everyone a fair say, my thought was this was correcting something that happened that was wrongful in '20 or '21. I like to think that this is not happening to a specific group, but this is an opportunity for all of us. I choose to see it as an opportunity, not Republican versus Democrat, not black versus brown versus white or anything in between.

My hope is that we'll have a fresh perspective. We can choose a positive mindset. Again, we can see that this is an opportunity to shake things up and get some of the career politicians out who have been serving for decades with seemingly nothing, no change. I enjoy hearing different perspectives, like I said, and being able to hear just the momentum and the passion from one group of people. When we end up coming together, what could we accomplish? Maybe chipping away at $37 trillion of debt. So again, looking at this, I think it's an opportunity for us to grow and to expand. I appreciate your time, and I'm happy to answer any questions.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony. The witness is excused.

Next witness at this microphone will be Jordan Wheatley. Please make your way down.

I show you registered to testify as Donna Wurster, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

DONNA WURSTER: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

DONNA WURSTER: To the members of the Redistricting Committee, I'm a military veteran and a Texas resident of Collin County. I'm submitting this testimony to oppose any redistricting maps that further divide or weaken the voting power of communities like mine. Veterans are part of nearly every zip code in Texas, yet we are often treated like political afterthoughts when lines are drawn without transparency and fairness. Mid-term redistricting, at a minimum, as Federalist 10 reminds us, is the action of men of factious tempers and sinister designs seeking to obtain our suffrages and then betray our interests, and is likely unconstitutional.

The U.S. Constitution is clear on two points. Amendment 10 says powers not specifically granted to states and not prohibited are reserved to the states. Article 1, Section 2 clearly states that the actual enumeration will take place every subsequent ten years. This statement is clear and does not leave room for any discretion to the governor or the state legislature. I ask that you not move forward with mid-term redistricting.

Should you decide to go forward, please keep communities whole, including communities of veterans, working families, people of color. Stop the

practice of packing, cracking, or manipulating districts to serve short-term power plays. The process requires the county line rule. The idea is to keep communities together because they have something in common. At this time of division, should we not be seeking that goal? I urge you to make this process fair, accessible, and grounded in the constitutional rights we swore to defend.

Finally, I find it amazing, as a former project manager for 20 years, that we're here talking about a plan that you do not have. What you do have is a request from a misguided sponsor for something none of us want at this time.

REP. VASUT: Please complete your testimony.

DONNA WURSTER: Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for the witness?

Chair hears none. Thank you. The witness is excused.

We're going to take one more witness and we'll take a short break.

Chair calls Jordan Wheatley. I show you registered to testify, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that

correct?

JORDAN WHEATLEY: Yes, sir.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

JORDAN WHEATLEY: I'm Jordan Wheatley, a fourth-grade public school teacher and a candidate for Congress in Texas' 3rd Congressional District. And since many of you setting up there decided you needed to defund public schools, maybe you need a teacher to educate you. I'm someone who grew up in a forgotten place. You know that kind of place where politicians only remembered you when they needed a photo op or a vote? And once they got what they came for, they disappeared. This idea of redistricting is exactly what that feels like.

This isn't about fair representation, it's about keeping power. Black, brown, working-class communities, like the one I live in and like the one I work in, keep getting split up, packed in, and pushed aside so the people in charge can keep power, not by earning votes the old-fashioned way, but by cheating. You know, and I get to see -- sorry. Because if this was about facts, you would acknowledge that 90 percent of the growth in Texas has come from communities of color. But instead of drawing maps that represent

that, we're drawing maps that erase those voices and silence them and their votes. And that's not a coincidence, that is a strategy drawn up by the Republican Party.

And I see the damage up close. My students come from families working two or three jobs just to survive in districts drawn by you all to ignore them. These lines you're drawing don't just shape elections, they shape lives. So let's stop pretending. This isn't redistricting, it's rigging, and people are tired of it. And although you may not hear us in the room during your backroom deals, I promise you, you're sure as hell going to hear us at the ballot box if you proceed with this.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

Chair hears none. Thank you. The witness is excused.

At this time, we're going to take our last short break here for our court reporter. The House Select Committee on Congressional Redistricting will stand at ease for five minutes.

[Committee stands at ease]

REP. VASUT: The time is 9:20. The House Select Committee on Congressional Redistricting will

come back to order. If everyone could take their seats, we'll get our next two witnesses up here.

All right. For this microphone, if we could get Robyne Kelly to come on down. And for this one, if we could get Danielle Ayers. Danielle Ayers at this one, and Robyne Kelly at this one.

I show you registered to testify as Robyne Kelly, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

ROBYNE KELLY: That's correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

ROBYNE KELLY: Okay. Thank you, Chairman, fellow Aggie, and to my representative, Nicole Collier. Thank you. And all the representatives here.

I wanted to say, when I first thought about what I'll say tonight in reference to this, the word that came to mind is fear. Fear is the strategy. Power is the goal. Because of the browning of America, those currently in power, by hook or crook, excuse me, I'm sorry, the Governor's plan to withdraw Texas congressional maps is nothing short of a deliberate attempt to silence communities like mine, black, Latino, immigrant, and working-class neighborhoods that

have fought too long and too hard just to be heard.

Now, I want to just make -- I'm going to make this quick. My mother just texted me and said my aunt was rushed to the hospital, but this is how important this is for me, that I need to say these things. I'm sorry, I'm a little all over the place.

REP. VASUT: Take your time.

ROBYNE KELLY: The last thing that I'll say is, Barbara Jordan made a quote. What the people want is very simple. They want an America as good as its promise. What the people of Texas want -- I'm going to addendum that and say what the people of Texas want is to have a voice.

And then I want to end with a quote from Nelson Mandela. I think this was in regards to when one asked him about Robben Island, how he felt. He said that he learned that courage -- I guess, how did he have the courage to do that? He said that I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. So I ask all of you representatives, will you have the courage to triumph? Thank you for your attention.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

Chair hears none. Thank you. The

witness is excused.

Next up at this microphone is going to be Ian Stephens, if you could make your way down front.

Chair calls Danielle Ayers. I show you registered to testify, on behalf of Friendship West Baptist Church and yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

DANIELLE AYERS: That's correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

DANIELLE AYERS: In 1964, Fannie Lou Hamer stood before, sat before, the Credentials Committee of the Democratic National Convention because black voters in Mississippi were being silenced. And she asked the question, she said, I question America. Is this not the land of the free -- [audio cut out] -- black, brown, and communities of color. It is a power grab at the center of this race-based political move.

Texas, as has been mentioned before, the population growth in the last decade has come from communities of color. The possible maps would dilute the power of black, brown, and other communities of color despite the fact that nearly all Texas population growth over the past decade has come from these communities. Mid-decade redistricting will fail to

reflect this reality. They will fracture neighborhoods, split communities, and manipulate boundaries in ways that silence voters who deserve to be heard. The targeted districts will create maps that either pack or crack them, as we've heard before, minimizing Texas' ability to elect candidates of their choice and weakening their influence in Congress, which this is by design. It is fear. Fear of losing power has prompted and promoted this mid-decade redistricting that will result in unfair maps.

As committee members entrusted with the responsibility, I urge you not to ignore the demographic realities of this state or the voices of Texans who will be sidelined and subjected to taxation without representation. Something happened because of that once before in this nation. Representation should not be manipulated for political gain. We deserve congressional maps that uplift, not suppress, protect the power of every Texan, not just politically convenient ones. I urge this committee to engage in a process that centers ongoing community input and reflects true voices of Texans. And not to fall prey to the bullying of the Department of Justice and a cantankerous convicted felon in the White House who is attempting to usher in authoritarianism, because the

fact remains this is still a government of the people, by the people, and for the people, and we will resist all forms of tyranny.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

The Chair hears none. The witness is excused. Thank you, ma'am.

Next up at this microphone is going to be Garry Jones. If you could make your way down front.

Is Ian Stephens here? Chair calls Ian Stephens. Chair will show Ian Stephens registered to testify, on behalf of himself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

Next up at this microphone is going to be Jason Thomas. If you could make your way down front to that one.

We'll come over to you. Mr. Jones, I show you registered to testify as Gary Jones, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

GARRY JONES: Yes, that's correct.

REP. VASUT: Please begin your testimony.

GARRY JONES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice Chairman, and members of the committee for staying so late tonight and coming to Tarrant County.

My name is Garry Jones of Fort Worth, and I am here today testifying on behalf of myself on the process. On May 30th of this year, I testified under oath before a panel of three federal judges in El Paso regarding the State's 2021 redistricting process. At the time these maps were drawn, I served as Chief of Staff to then State Senator Beverly Powell and was her lead staffer in redistricting. I witnessed the 2021 process firsthand.

Throughout 2021, we were repeatedly told the maps were drawn blind to race. During my testimony in May, attorneys from the State asked me a number of questions under the assumption that the State, the lawmakers, drew the data -- drew the maps in 2021 without regard to racial data. Again, drawing the maps blind to race. I've passed around a copy of an email dated September 17th, 2021 from the staff of State Senator Joan Huffman who led the drawing of the Senate and congressional maps. In that email, her redistricting staff explicitly wrote, "We are drafting all maps without regard to racial data." In fact, the email I originally sent, which prompted this response, was said to have been "closed right away" just because the email contained racial data.

So fast forward to today. You would

imagine my shock and surprise when the Department of Justice informed the State of Texas that the 2021 congressional maps must be redrawn citing the district's work created using "race-based considerations." The email I provided today claims that, "all maps were being drawn race blind." So, did the State draw all the maps in 2021 now with racial data as the DOJ claims, or were they drawn blind to race, as was testified under oath and is in the email before you?

Regardless, as we sit here today, the act of dismantling districts specifically because of the resulting racial makeup would be blatant act of intentional racial gerrymandering discrimination. The predominant use of race to justify this process will cause all of us to defend illegal maps in court for years to come. The best way to end this and avoid that would be to end this process and focus on the real needs of the state.

REP. VASUT: Members, questions for this witness?

Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony.

Next up at this microphone is going to be Barbara Applequist. If you could make your way up

front.

I show you registered to testify as Jason Thomas, on behalf of the NAACP of Arlington, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

JASON THOMAS: That is correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

JASON THOMAS: Chair and members of the committee, my name is Jason Thomas, a resident of Tarrant County, a recently-elected trustee of the Mansfield ISD School Board, Director of Road and Bridge Maintenance for the Honorable Commissioner Alisa Simmons, but tonight I proudly speak on behalf of the Arlington, Texas branch of the NAACP where I serve as president.

We at the Arlington, Texas NAACP strongly oppose this unnecessary and racially discriminatory attempt at mid-decade redistricting. I'm a child of a father and a mother who were born in 1929 and 1939 respectively, both African-American, both raised under Jim Crow laws in Birmingham, Alabama, and both taught me the cost of silence in the face of injustice. My mother's favorite phrase, don't just sit on your stool and do nothing, and that's why I'm here doing

something. They lived through poll taxes, literacy tests, and voting districts drawn to suppress their voices. And now, nearly 100 years later, we are witnessing those same tactics resurface under the lie of there being a process, but driven by the same intent to silence voters of color.

This redistricting proposal targets districts where black and Latino voters have consistently elected their candidates of choice. This mid-decade redistricting attempt is a clear attempt to weaken the hard-won representation of black and brown Texas voters. Although black, brown, and Asian communities have fueled this state's population and economic growth, we continue to be excluded from the political future we've helped create. This mid-decade redistricting only deepens that injustice, further destroying our rights to fair and adequate representation. To redraw lines mid-decade is a slap in the face of the voters of Texas who did not ask for this. It is also a signal to this country that Texas is ripe for political bullying and will ignore Texas voters.

We at the NAACP urge you, honor the legacy of the Voting Rights Act. Respect the voices of the people, and reject this mid-decade redistricting

effort that is racially motivated, legally suspect and morally wrong. We also urge you to be the politicians who serve all Texas voters and not just be a political puppet for someone outside of Texas. Say no to this mid-decade redistricting. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Members any questions for this witness?

Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony. Members -- witness is excused.

Next up at this microphone is going to be Stacey Brown, if you could make your way up.

Chair calls Barbara Applewhite, or Applequist.

BARBARA APPLEQUIST: Applequist.

REP. VASUT: Applequist. I just defaulted for a second there. I apologize. I show you registered to testify, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

BARBARA APPLEQUIST: That's correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

BARBARA APPLEQUIST: Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the committee for this opportunity to share my perspective. My name is

Barbara Applequist. For the past two years, my husband and I have lived in Congressional District 32 in Dallas, and for the 36 years prior to that, we lived in Arlington in Congressional District 6 which is currently Congressional District 25. I'm a retired Arlington ISD high school social studies teacher.

My concern about the current redistricting proposal is based on what I understand to have been the intention of the framers of the U.S. Constitution. As seen in the Federalist Papers, there was intense concern about the dangers of factions or political parties. Their concern was, if we had political parties the strongest ones would control government and the government would not protect equally the rights and interests of all the people. Instead, government would promote the interests of the majority political party.

A quick look at the current congressional district map in Texas validates their fears. The current map has 25 of the 38 congressional districts favoring Republicans. That's a 65.8 percent of the districts. That exceeds the percentages of voters who voted Republican in the last two general elections, for an advantage of two to three seats for the Republicans. And yet, here we are with the potential of

redistricting, with the express purpose of providing more Republican seats and thus a safer Republican majority in the U.S. Congress.

Usually, gerrymandering is prettied up a little bit, but this is blatant, out in the open, partisan gerrymandering. It's appalling. That fear of the founding fathers seems alive and well in Texas. So I ask you, how sacred to you is the principle of one person, one vote? How sacred to you is the right of the people to choose their representatives and not the other way around? How sacred and the need of our protection is a truly representative democracy? Just do the right thing. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony.

Chair calls Stacey Brown.

Before that, I apologize, this next witness over here on this microphone is going to be Richard Gonzalez, if you can make your way down.

Chair calls Stacey Brown. I show you registered to testify, on behalf of the Friendship West Baptist Church and yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan? Is that correct?

STACEY BROWN: Yes.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

STACEY BROWN: My name is Reverend Stacey D. Brown, and I am here on behalf of my church, my beautiful three children, my Precinct 4502, which I am the Chair, my sorority Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Incorporated, and my community at large, which stand in objection to this racist, unjust, and downright evil redistricting. In addition to these roles, I am a proud Texas girl through and through. I grew up on the east side of El Paso, was schooled on the campuses of Texas Southern University and Texas A&M, lived in Lubbock, and now reside and lead in Grand Prairie.

But most of all, in addition to all these roles, I'm tired. I'm tired of leaders talking out the side of their necks, pretending that they promote Christian values, but really they harm the very ones which our sacred text, the Bible says, to aid and protect. Now this text, I know you're familiar with it because you voted to keep the Ten Commandments in all of the classrooms. So, allow me to give you a brief Bible study. Now Matthew -- allow me to give you a brief Bible study on the text you either willfully skipped or maybe just didn't understand. Okay.

So Matthew 6:21 says, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." So rather than devote our treasury and our attention to the over 130 people that died needlessly to the flood, here we are. So rather than devote our treasury to the education for our children, my three sitting right here, here we are. So rather than devote our treasury to gun control and laws to protect the citizens of places like El Paso and Allen and the children, children of Santa Fe and Uvalde and all other places, here we are.

Now this teaching stands in direct, in direct opposition to the teachings of the man in Galilee, you know, the one you claim to serve and follow. But, you know, if he was here present day, you would likely have him deported. So you sit at those tables, you sit at tables that Jesus would have flipped and participate in activities that he would have rebuked.

REP. VASUT: Please complete your testimony.

STACEY BROWN: Let me be clear. Isaiah says learn to do right, seek justice, defend the oppressed, take up the cause of the fatherless, and plead the cause of the widow. But obviously, you have

no interest in doing that. And I'm going to say this in closing. I leave you with this. Galatians 6:7 says, "Be not deceived. God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man reapeth, whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." You trying to steal five seats and you might just lose ten.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

The Chair hears none. Witness is excused.

The next witness at this microphone is going to be Joanna Lardoza, if you could -- Cardoza, I apologize. You can come down here.

Chair calls Richard Gonzalez. Is Richard Gonzalez here? Chair will show Richard Gonzalez registered to testify, on behalf of himself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

The next witness here is going to be Armand Avila. If you could make your way down front. Armand Avila.

Okay. Chair shows you registered to testify as Joanna Cardoza, on behalf of LULAC District 2?

JOANNA CARDOZA: 21.

REP. VASUT: District 21, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

JOANNA CARDOZA: Yes.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

JOANNA CARDOZA: Good evening. My name is Joanna Cardoza. I am here this, what used to be afternoon, tonight to speak on behalf of the League of United Latin American Citizens of District 21, which covers several North Texas counties. Although most of Texas's population growth in the last decade has come from people of color, some of you are working very hard to silence those same communities. Texas deserves free -- fair maps, not political manipulation. Every vote should have an equal voice in our democracy. This rushed and forced redistricting, sorry, efforts threatens the fundamental principle.

If Abbott is going to call a special session, it should not be to advance a political agenda. It should be to solve real problems. Texans deserve the right to choose their candidates of choice that will fight for their values and the critical needs of their communities, not a yes man or woman in D.C. Instead of this manufactured attempt to redistrict congressional maps, these are some real problems that

you'll -- let me take my glasses off -- that could be a better use of your time.

Workforce housing. Each day in our community, families struggle to keep a roof above their head. How about investing in the next generation of leaders by fully funding public schools instead of defunding them through vouchers and continued approval of charter schools in our community? How about the expansion of Medicaid to address -- Medicaid, Medicare, to address the huge health disparities among communities of color. Disparities such as the high maternal -- high maternal mortality rate and mental health needs in the Tarrant County community. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

The Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony.

Chair calls -- well, next one up on this side is going to be Anthony Bridges. If you can make your way down front, Anthony Bridges.

Chair calls Armand Avila. Are you here, Armand Avila? I show him registered to testify, on behalf of himself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

Next up on this microphone down here is going to be Bobby Cole. If you can make your way down front for Bobby Cole here.

Chair is going to call Anthony Bridges.

ANTHONY BRIDGES: Which side?

REP. VASUT: Whichever makes you feel comfortable. What's your name?

ANTHONY BRIDGES: Yeah, my name is Anthony Bridges.

REP. VASUT: You got it. That's your microphone. Mr. Bridges, I show you registered to testify, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

ANTHONY BRIDGES: That's correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

ANTHONY BRIDGES: My name is Anthony Bridges, a grassroots candidate, and I say you're worried about the wrong people. AIPAC-sponsored Democrats who spread lies to enable the slaughter of the innocent aren't your political enemy. I am. You are worried about arbitrary power and pseudo-opposition, but there are three powers that you can't control: the power of the people, the power of God, and the power of physics.

Every action has an equal and opposite reaction. The mass starvation of millions of people will have divine retribution to pay, and God knows who is responsible. God knows who profited off these crimes against humanity, and I look forward to the day we stop seeking political solutions to these atrocities. You want to redraw some lines? Go ahead. Give people another reason to feel disenfranchised and underrepresented. So please, show everyone how rigged the game truly is, so we can start playing a new one. Inshallah.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony.

Bobby Cole?

BOBBY COLE: Yes, sir.

REP. VASUT: Okay. One sec. At this microphone, if I could get James Collins. James Collins at that microphone.

Okay. I show you registered to testify as Bobby Cole, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

BOBBY COLE: That is correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your

testimony.

BOBBY COLE: I'm Bobby Cole. I'm a lifelong Texan. I'm an East Texas farmer and a retired fireman. The Texas Republican Party is corrupt to the core. Its spineless devotion to Donald Trump is on full display, with Greg Abbott being the prize pony. All that this blind loyalty to MAGA has brought to the people of Texas has trampled freedoms, liberties, and rights. Common decency and dignity that Texas used to stand for is gone, replaced with cruelty and division and a way of governance, not for the people, but at the behest of only the ultra-rich and the powerful.

We are here today to testify against the naked power grab ordered by Trump himself. This redistricting scheme will disenfranchise hard-working black and Latino communities that deserve to be heard. These new maps will represent the tallest test yet for Texas Republicans in regard to what the national Republicans and Trump want. In trying to turn five blue districts red, you will have to bust them up and dilute the remaining Democratic vote with Republican ones. There is only one way to do this. You have to take your safe Republican districts, dilute them down with Democratic votes, and hope they remain a light pink.

If you are Texas -- if you are a Texas Republican, this makes you nervous. Change is coming. Hard-working Texans feel it. Democrats feel it. And so do Republicans who are desperate to rig this system one more time to hold on to power.

I'm just a common, hard-working Texan who cares about his family and the legacy I will leave them. But I bring forth a message from the people of Texas. Along with change, accountability is coming for Greg Abbott and Texas Republicans. The people of Texas have weighed and measured your 30 years of governance, and it is found to be lacking. Your malfeasance --

REP. VASUT: Please complete your testimony.

BOBBY COLE: -- misfeasance, and non-feasance is going to come home to roost. It doesn't matter what maps you draw or how corrupt your reasoning is to justify it. So do your worst because that's what you're best at. A reckoning is coming, and the people of Texas will render it on November 3rd, 2026. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Dean Thompson, for what purpose? Chair recognizes Dean Thompson to question the witness.

REP. THOMPSON: How would this

redistricting impact you as a farmer?

BOBBY COLE: What's that?

REP. THOMPSON: How would this redistricting impact you as a farmer?

BOBBY COLE: Well, I mean, it really depends. I'm in House District 5, and so it just depends. I mean, like if you if you take in the cities, we're going to have different needs from the rule to the city. So, I mean, it would be better if our district, our House districts were drawn more to represent the common interest of the people in that district.

REP. THOMPSON: Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Members, any other questions?

Hearing none, thank you for your testimony.

Chair calls James Collins. Is James Collins here? Chair will show James Collins registered to testify, on behalf of himself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

Next two, if they could come up. Kristen Harden-Sigler and James Sigler. I apologize if that's Sigler. I'll give them a moment to make their way over. Kristen Harden-Sigler, James Sigler. Chair is

going to give them one more time. Kristen Harden-Sigler, James Sigler. Hearing no response, Chair will show Kristen Harden-Sigler registered to testify, on behalf of herself, on a Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not testifying. Chair will show James Sigler registered to testify, on behalf of himself, on a Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

Next two witnesses, if they could make their way up. David Yaqubian and Crystal Chism.

I show you registered to testify as Crystal Chism, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

CRYSTAL CHISM: I'd like to make an amendment. I'd like to also speak on behalf of the Texas Coalition of Black Democrats for Dallas County.

REP. VASUT: So give me that one more time. Texas?

CRYSTAL CHISM: Coalition Black Democrats for Dallas County.

REP. VASUT: Do I have your permission to modify your witness affirmation form accordingly?

CRYSTAL CHISM: Yes, sir, you do.

REP. VASUT: Okay. And I show you registered to testify as Crystal Chism, on behalf of

the Texas Coalition of Black Democrats of Dallas County and yourself, on a Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

CRYSTAL CHISM: Yes.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

CRYSTAL CHISM: Thank you so much, and thank you all for coming to the Dallas-Fort Worth area for Arlington for this hearing. I serve also as a public servant in the beautiful city of DeSoto, which is the blackest city in Dallas County. As I mentioned also, I am the Chair for the Texas Coalition for Black Democrats in Dallas County, and I am a combat veteran as well.

And I will be honest, when I'm -- I'm saying this not just as an elected official but also as a combat veteran. You know, I've served two tours in Iraq. And I think that when I signed up to go fight for terrorism in early 2000, 2001, I thought, okay, terrorism, I can see it. It's the 9/11. It's the burning of the buildings. But when I came home, I never thought that I'd have to fight for political terrorism that's happening right in our community by the disenfranchisement of our communities and our black and brown communities.

I appreciate a forum to have people speak their minds. I think it's important. It's a part of democracy, right? But I'll be honest with you. I've been sitting here for six hours. I put my card in an hour and a half before your minutes, your meeting started, and I'm looking around in this room, and I don't think you're going to be able to hear everybody. And that's not democracy. And so I ask you as leaders of this committee that you make changes for the rest of the hearing that you have and let all of us have our voice and time with you because we sacrificed our time, we waited in parking and we should be heard as well.

Not to mention, there are no maps, there are no drafts, as we have heard. We don't even know what these lines are going to be withdrawn at, but yet we're being asked to get input on something that we don't even know. But here's what I do know as a fact. Texas is home to the highest population of black people, the highest population of black people, yet our Texas Senate, our House, and as well as our congressional districts don't look nothing like that. Right? And so, whatever you're going to give me, I know that already we're behind the curve.

And so, if you had not guessed, I'm totally against any type of redistricting. This

doesn't make sense at all. And if I could quote -- because I'm in Congressional District 30, the late Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson. She said it is really puzzling why a nation of democracy does not want to see African-Americans vote. You begin to wonder, what is the mentality of those people that have to continue to try to take us back? Here's what I want you to know if nobody else has said it.

REP. VASUT: Please complete your testimony.

CRYSTAL CHISM: We're not going back. For those of you all who are Democrats sitting in this seat, I need to know that you got some soldiers ready to fight. You got some soldiers ready to raise money. You have some soldiers ready to organize and mobilize. Don't be fearful. Don't sit on your back. Don't let money be the reason why you don't -- [audio cut out]. Yes, and I did it at the age of 18 and again at 21.

REP. ROSENTHAL: You got it.

CRYSTAL CHISM: Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Members, any other questions to this witness? Chair recognizes Representative Garcia to question the witness.

REP. GARCIA: Look, you're just trying -- thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ma'am, I just wanted to say

as a fellow combat veteran, thank you so much for your service. I know things might not be understandable right now, but you know what our mission is, and our mission has never wavered. Thank you.

CRYSTAL CHISM: I got you. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Members, any other questions?

The Chair hears none. The witness is excused.

Next up at this microphone, if I can get Tracy Scott. Tracy Scott.

REP. VASUT: Chair calls David Yaqubian.

DAVID YAQUBIAN: Yaqubian.

REP. VASUT: Yes. And on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

DAVID YAQUBIAN: Yes.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

DAVID YAQUBIAN: Hi, I'm David Yaqubian. First, let me share with you words of a renowned Texas politician of old. Any fellow who will cheat for you will cheat against you. Any man who will deceive the voters during a political campaign will deceive them after he is elected. Does this sound familiar? Why

are we being proposed a mid-decade redistricting?

The president, our governor, lieutenant governor, our attorney general, they are all attempting to act like thieves in broad daylight. They have no moral, ethical inhibition from stealing my vote from me and stealing votes away from my neighbors. Remember, if your leadership will cheat for you, they will cheat against you. I oppose this corrupt, bad-faith attempt to redistrict and diminish the voting power of me, my neighbors, and family.

Texas has been a lifelong home, and I've never, never seen such peak corruption as I see now. I'll end with another quote from a legendary Texan. Every American citizen must have an equal right to vote. There is no reason which can excuse the denial of that right. There is no duty which weighs more heavily on us than the duty we have to ensure that right. Tread very, very carefully. Every Texan is watching.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

Chair hears none. The gentlemen is excused. Thank you.

Next up at this microphone, if I can get Ricardo Estrada.

Chair calls Tracy Scott. Is Tracy Scott present? Chair shows Tracy Scott registered to testify on behalf of, I see Outreach and self, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

Next up at this microphone, if I could have Robert Vann come down. Robert Vann.

Is Ricardo Estrada here? Ricardo Estrada. Chair will show Ricardo -- okay. Chair will show him registered to testify, on behalf of himself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

Chair will call Robert Vann. Is Robert Vann here? Robert Vann. Chair will show Robert Vann registered to testify, on behalf of himself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

Chair will call Kay Parr. Kay Parr. Is Ms. Parr here? Please come on down to this microphone. We'll wait for you, ma'am.

And then if I could get Larry Davis at this microphone on our other side. Larry Davis. And if not Larry Davis, then Tevita Uhatafe at that microphone. Okay.

I show you registered to testify as Kay Parr, on behalf of yourself and the Texas Democratic

County Chairs Association and the Parker County Democratic Party. Is that -- on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

KAY KARPF: No, I think you've got the wrong person here.

REP. VASUT: Okay. What's your name, ma'am?

KAY KARPF: Kay Karpf.

REP. VASUT: Kay Parr?

KAY KARPF: Karpf with a K.

REP. VASUT: I have Kay Parr with a P.

KAY KARPF: Oh.

REP. VASUT: Now, the odds of that are very, very low, but it happens. Can we find her registration? Well, let me ask this. Is Kay Parr with a P, P-A-R-R, here? Okay. I show her registered to testify as Kay Parr, with a P, on behalf of herself, the Texas Democratic County Chairs Association, the Parker County Democratic Party on Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

Now, Ms. Karpf, if you'll just stay right there, we'll do everything we can to find your witness registration. We're going to let you testify after you've made that trip down. So if you just wait right there, we're going to find it.

Okay. Is Larry Davis here? Okay. Chair calls Larry Davis. I show Larry Davis registered to testify, on behalf of himself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

REP. ROSENTHAL: Mr. Chairman?

REP. VASUT: Mr. Vice Chair, for what purpose?

REP. ROSENTHAL: Can we pause so I can ask a question of the Chair, please?

REP. VASUT: Absolutely. Chair will pause the timer. Chair will yield for question from the Vice Chair.

REP. ROSENTHAL: Thank you. And also, to allow a minute to find this witness.

REP. VASUT: Absolutely. You bet. We have another stack we're going to go through.

REP. ROSENTHAL: I'd like to reiterate the request that the committee call for and receive the complete transcript of the redistricting trial that just happened in El Paso. Can we get that information distributed to the entire committee, please?

REP. VASUT: I wasn't aware of that request, but I'm happy to make that request and get that for you.

REP. ROSENTHAL: Very good. Thank you so

much.

REP. VASUT: So we will -- we'll make a note of that for staff to request a transcript of that and provide that to the members of the committee. Members, any other questions as we -- okay.

Just wait right there. You own that microphone. Do not let anybody take that microphone from you.

Is Tevita Uhatafe here? Okay. Chair calls Tevita Uhatafe. Show registered to testify, on behalf of the Tarrant County Central Labor Council, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

Okay. I'm going to call up -- all right. Ms. Karr, this is what we're going to do. You did register to testify?

KAY KARR: Yeah, Katherine (phonetic).

REP. VASUT: Okay. I'll take you at your word. We're going to bring you another form. Do we have your permission, once we do this form, to delete your duplicate registration?

KAY KARR: Sure.

REP. VASUT: God bless you. All right. He's going to come and do that for you. In the meantime, we're going to call up Kelly Dennison. Is

Kelly Dennison here? Chair will show Kelly Dennison registered to testify, on behalf of herself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

Chair calls Bruce Richardson. Is Bruce Richardson here? Chair will show Bruce Richardson registered to testify, on behalf of himself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

Chair calls Juan Christman. Is Juan Christman here? Chair will show Juan Christman registered to testify, on behalf of himself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

Chair calls Efrin Carrion. Efrin Carrion. Chair will show Efrin Carrion registered to testify, on behalf of himself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

Chair calls Paul James. All right. Thank you, Paul. We were waiting on you, Paul. Next after Paul will by Dr. Lyndia Thomas. If she is here, just be ready. We'll keep going.

All right. I show you registered to testify as Paul James, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that

correct?

PAUL JAMES: Yes, sir.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

PAUL JAMES: I want to thank you all for letting me present this. It almost felt like I was sitting there waiting for jury duty when you're back there. I live on the south side of Dallas, and I'm proud to be represented by my Congresswoman, Jasmine Crockett. I wondered what it would be like to speak to a Republican and what they would say to voters during a MAGA gerrymandering of Texas.

If I was a fire -- if you were a firefighter, please get to my house quickly, save my house, and save my family. But if you're a Democrat or an Independent, we're going to take -- we are going to water down your vote faster than Donald Trump puts on spray tan. If you're a teacher, please teach our children so they will grow up and be productive and smart. But if you're a Democrat or an Independent, we will take your vote, like a banned book, off the library shelf. If you're a policeman, please keep our towns and families safe. But if you're a Democrat or an Independent, we want your voice to be silenced. If you're a nurse, please take care of us when we are

hospitalized, pay attention to our condition. But if you're a Democrat or an Independent, we want to stifle your rights.

What is perplexing to those of us out on the outside of politics is that we don't understand why some who worked so hard, like all of you, to get elected and serve the people of Texas, but now have to please one governor who has to -- who has to serve the orange felon in the White House. Some Republicans have spoken out about gerrymandering. One said it has completely broken our political system. That was Newt Gingrich. One called gerrymandering anti-democratic and un-American. That was Ronald Reagan. In closing, I oppose redistricting in order to water down some Texans' votes. It should not be that Texans are cheating Texans. It's bad enough that we have cheating, fraud, and even worse come out of the White House. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Thank you. Members, any questions for this witness?

Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony.

All right. I show you registered to testify as Kay -- is it Karpf?

KAY KARPF: Right.

REP. VASUT: Okay. On behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

KAY KARPF: Yes, yes.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

KAY KARPF: Yes. I've lived in Texas most of my life, more than 50 years, and it's good to see my District 105 Texas House Rep, Terry Meza. Anyway, it is Governor Abbott's job to work for all Texans, not mainly for big donors, a political party, or a president. By placing a -- by placing a strictly political issue before the higher-priority flood disaster and Texan safety, the Governor is virtually spitting in the faces of the people he is mandated to serve.

Before the 2020 census, my congressional district was 24, a largely urban/suburban area, geographically centrally close, mainly covering Dallas and Tarrant Counties. When legislators redrew the district in 2021 and changed my home from District 24 to District 6, they extended it far beyond its original area. Boundaries now stretch from Irving to Mansfield to Palestine, so driving within our district can now exceed three hours and be hundreds of miles. And the

issues of interest of Irving couldn't differ more from much of our new district's added territory, very rural. Irving has a rapidly-growing population that includes a well-established school district, plus massively escalating land development in Las Colinas, home of the Toyota Music Factory; whereas part of new territory added in District 6 was the Wells School District, which was only recognized as recently as 2010 by the Texas Education Agency.

Congressman Ellzey, District 6 Rep, isn't someone we typically see in our section of Texas. Is this another example of our state government legislators wanting to redraw our district boundaries without concern for all their constituents? And of our federal house representative not inclined to represent all of his constituents? It's easy to conclude that our legislators have no appetite to improve the district boundaries so as to represent all Texans. Therefore, it's even more egregious to solely address the politicized issue of redistricting before that of flood relief and flood infrastructure.

REP. VASUT: Please complete your testimony.

KAY KARPF: Okay. I'm about at the end. Our Texas legislators showing that they don't want to

accept responsibility for anything related to devastating events where people are still missing. It's not as if Texas lacks a surplus of funds, or would legislators rather hoard money and deny productive action, action that will vastly benefit Texans' safety and wellbeing now and in the future? Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony.

Next up at this microphone is going to be David Griggs, if you can make your way down front for that microphone.

I show you registered to testify as Dr. Lyndia Thomas, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

DR. LYNDIA THOMAS: Yes.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

DR. LYNDIA THOMAS: Thank you for allowing me to speak. And I am with House District 95, Nicole Collier, as well as Congressman Marc Veasey in our 33, in our Congressional District 33. And I'm here because I am appalled. I'm really, really upset at what is going on in our country. And it all started on

January 6th when No. 47, and he was No. 45 then, tried to steal our country.

And we as people allowed this same individual, this convicted felon, to take control of what we take so precious as our White House. He's throwing out there when he's mandating you to redistrict. His first trial was for the United States Capitol. He wanted to see how far he could go with that. He succeeded. He's throwing this into Texas where we say, don't mess with Texas.

He's trying you. Do not allow this man to destroy Texas. You have a voice. Someone said it earlier. Don't be -- don't be confounded about money because money is not the issue here. If you want to get reelected, you need to please the people, not No. 47, because No. 47's time is limited. The people are going to be tired of being sick and tired of whether you're a Democrat, whether you're a Republican, whether you're liberal. You work for the people. When you lose focus of the fact that you work for the people, you can start counting the days that you're going to be in office.

So I'm here to say I am against redistricting. First of all, everybody has a voice whether you agree with them or not. It doesn't matter

where you came from, because we're all aliens in this country. Nobody was really here but the Indians. So I'm asking you all, whether you're Republican or Democrat or whatever, do not support this. Do not support this redistricting. It's wrong. And like my mom used to say, 400 wrongs don't make a right.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony. You're excused.

Next up at this microphone over here, if we could get Nicole Raphiel. Nicole Raphiel, if you could come down there.

All right. I show you registered to testify as David Griggs, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

DAVID GRIGGS: That's correct, Mr. Chairman.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

DAVID GRIGGS: Good evening, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee. My name is David Griggs from Dallas County. I'm an attorney currently in private practice, a former civil prosecutor with the

FTC, a longtime adjunct professor of political science at Dallas College, and currently an adjunct professor of election law at the University of North Texas Dallas College of Law. Today, I am here representing myself.

It is from my experience in teaching election law specifically that I have studied the concepts of partisan gerrymandering and race and redistricting. And it's from that that I draw my comments today, opposing this mid-decade redistricting effort. I agree with the public comments of many of my fellow Texans who previously testified regarding the ill-advised nature of this process. But the main point of why I'm here tonight is to reiterate some of the comments and testimony you've already received from other law professors and legal experts, that the Department of Justice letter is a deliberate misrepresentation of case law governing these issues and should not serve as any kind of legitimate justification for the reconsideration of district lines.

There are three cases. Most of you have read this letter, three cases that are listed. First is Alla v. Michigan. This was a case that upheld the applicability of Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act when Sections 4 and 5 were decimated (phonetic) by the

Shelby County v. Holder case in 2012. It was widely hailed as a positive case for the future of the VRA and its enforcement of Section 2. However, DOJ lawyers distorted dicta in a concurrence by Justice Kavanaugh to twist it around to support their concept of race-based gerrymandering, and even said that it would require a compelling state interest for Texas to keep those districts. This is an absurd argument and a serious misreading of the majority opinion.

The second case was Petteway v. Galveston County. That was a Fifth Circuit case where the Court expounded on coalition districts and what it takes to make a successful claim to challenge them. It does not have anything to do with the unconstitutionality of a gerrymander. It merely asserts that the VRA in this circuit only, the Eleventh -- the Fifth Circuit -- excuse me, yeah, the Fifth Circuit, does not allow individual racial or ethnic groups to join together to claim that the maps dilute their votes. The circuits are split on that. It does not say that coalition districts are not allowed.

And finally, the last case, Bartlett, also misrepresents --

REP. VASUT: Mr. Griggs, one second.

DAVID GRIGGS: Do you have a question?

REP. ROSENTHAL: Sir, your time has expired, but I have a question for you.

DAVID GRIGGS: All right.

REP. VASUT: I think he wants to ask you about Bartlett.

REP. ROSENTHAL: I'm actually going to ask you about the last case first.

REP. VASUT: Okay. Now you can answer.

DAVID GRIGGS: Mr. Chairman, may I answer the question?

REP. VASUT: I think -- you can only answer, but he's going to --

REP. ROSENTHAL: So I'm asking you the question, to please explain the last case. And then I'm --

DAVID GRIGGS: All right. Thank you, Mr. Vice Chairman. The Bartlett case determined that a minority group must meet a numerical test of more than 50 percent of the population to allow what was, in that case, a crossover district. That's not what you're here to consider, and that case doesn't apply. It doesn't consider the permissibility of coalition districts or crossover districts. And it even states the following. It states that states who wish to draw a crossover, or in this case coalition districts, are

free to do so where there are no other prohibitions. So the case was completely misrepresented. And my whole point is that this -- if this was the justification for the governor's call, it is totally bogus, and it has absolutely no purpose here. And I think you all should find another justification because it's not this. Thank you.

REP. ROSENTHAL: I do have one more question if you don't mind.

DAVID GRIGGS: Sure.

REP. ROSENTHAL: I understand -- I believe that the DOJ letter, besides misrepresenting the law -- and remember I'm a lawyer -- I'm an engineer, not a lawyer, so I need advice. But it is my understanding that what they are asking us to do is actually illegal.

DAVID GRIGGS: That is correct.

REP. ROSENTHAL: Can you please help me understand that?

DAVID GRIGGS: Sure. Well, the Supreme Court, by the way, has not weighed in on the Petteway case. You've got to understand that. It's only in the Fifth Circuit, and the circuits are split. And so if you look at all of case law, it is not likely that the Supreme Court is going to take the Petteway, which is

really what they are putting here -- and that's the only reason they wrote it, is because there was a 2024 decision that was a circuit decision. It wasn't even the entire country. And they're assuming that the Supreme Court is going to take that. Well, even if they do, there is other case law which says that you cannot do this. You cannot take districts that were drawn that were race blind and then use a race-based theory to undo them. Even our Attorney General has testified that it was legal.

REP. ROSENTHAL: And actually disputed. So you're -- right. I got it. So the Attorney General has backed up this claim. But let me just boil this down into something that my feeble brain can --

DAVID GRIGGS: And, of course, he would only tell you the truth. You know, you've got to realize that.

REP. ROSENTHAL: The DOJ letter claims that districts were drawn on the basis of race, which is untrue according to the people that drew them in the first place. And the DOJ letter then says, on the basis of race, you are to go after these particular districts, which is unconstitutional. Help me make that make sense.

DAVID GRIGGS: The whole premise -- the

whole premise of this letter is wrong. And it was written by, probably someone who had not passed the bar. And if you -- if you remember Professor Katz testified to you all that if she had graded a paper that was written anything like this, she would have given that student a very bad grade.

REP. ROSENTHAL: Thank you for your testimony.

DAVID GRIGGS: And as a former civil prosecutor for the Federal Trade Commission, and keeping my interest in doing great work for the federal government, it is an embarrassment to read something like this. And it should not be.

REP. ROSENTHAL: Thank you for bringing the expertise.

DAVID GRIGGS: Thank you, Mr. Vice Chairman.

REP. VASUT: Members, any other questions for this witness?

Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony.

At this microphone, can I get Kendyll Locke? Kendyll Locke?

I show you registered to testify as Nicole Raphiel, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised

Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

NICOLE RAPHIEL: That's correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

NICOLE RAPHIEL: Sure thing. God bless you all. Thank you all for being here in the city of Arlington, North Texas. We appreciate that. I appreciate that. As a former elected official in the City of DeSoto, I was located -- or I live, my city, and I live in District 109 where freshman Aicha Davis is my state rep. I appreciate that. As well as I live in Congressional District 30 where Jasmine Crockett is my Congresswoman. And I appreciate that.

I want to -- I'm coming before you today concerned about the Governor's July 9th directive to pursue the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan mid-decade. As someone who has worked closely with residents, community leaders, and city staff, I've seen firsthand how policy and representation directly impacts people's lives, particularly as the 2020 Chair for the City of DeSoto and seeing how redistricting and its purposes really do affect people's lives. Now, in District 30, it is a strong home for those who are civically engaged, black and Latino populations who live in our community. It's a community that's built

in faith, generational wealth, and advocacy for fair housing, education, healthcare access, voting rights. Any efforts to redraw its lines without any clear justification or public input is both reckless and deeply disrespectful for those of us who really care about our community, care about law, care about being a resident here in Texas.

What's most alarming is the lack of transparency. And as of today, the public has not been shown any purpose maps -- proposed maps. The reasons behind the redistricting remain vague. You've heard all the things, and I agree with every single individual who's come here today. But what I want to be clear about is that in District 30 it has earned its voice, particularly as it was carved out specifically, I mean, initially by our late and great Eddie Bernice Johnson. I want you to know that we won't to accept being silenced through political maneuvering. We want to stand firm, and we will stand firm in resolving this issue, doing whatever we need to do to make certain that we're heard, that you hear us.

And I want to strongly urge you to halt the process until the public is properly informed, the maps are released, the interests of the communities of colors like ours in DeSoto and across the southern

Dallas County are fully protected, fully protected, fully protected. But for you as elected leaders, you have a tall order. Here in the State of Texas, it seems like there is a different voice for those of you who are small city versus bigger city. And I want to give you a few words that might help you.

REP. VASUT: Please finish your testimony.

NICOLE RAPHIEL: Thank you. Don't tread on us. So when you go and share this information with others, don't tread on us. That's a racist trope that I've heard in the past, but it's something that might mean something for the smaller, the smaller cities or representatives who represent smaller areas in Texas. One of the things that I fear is that small, not small, but small-city representatives versus big-city representatives have a bigger voice in our city, and that can't continue. That cannot continue. So, thank you for listening.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for this witness?

The Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony.

And then at this microphone, if I could get Andy Lauiolette. Okay. Apologize if I said that

wrong.

Chair calls Kendyll Locke. I show you registered to testify, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

KENDYLL LOCKE: On behalf of myself and Congresswoman Jasmine Crockett.

REP. VASUT: Okay. Technically, since she is an individual -- I don't know if he can testify on behalf of an individual. Technically, under the rules, I think it's only --

REP. ROSENTHAL: Can he testify on behalf of the Congresswoman's office?

REP. VASUT: Yeah, okay, okay. The committee has conferred and agreed. Now, can I change your registration to say that you're testifying on behalf of the Office of Congressman -- Congresswoman Crockett?

KENDYLL LOCKE: Yes.

REP. ROSENTHAL: Engineer playing with law.

REP. VASUT: Okay. So you registered to testify as Kendyll Locke, on behalf of the Office of Congresswoman Crockett and yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

KENDYLL LOCKE: Yes.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

KENDYLL LOCKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair and Mr. Vice Chair, members of the -- [audio cuts out] -- while she couldn't be here due to other official commitments, I thought it's best or would be best that I pick up where she left off. Let's call this what it is, a power grab. This proposed redistricting of congressional districts across the state isn't about fairness. It's not about equal representation. It's not even about righting the wrongs of this state and its state legislature when it comes to giving people of color in this state a voice. It's about securing political advantage at the direct expense of historically underrepresented communities.

Specifically with regard to Texas 30, it's a district that has long been a stronghold for communities of common interest. Black, Hispanic, AAPI, working-class families across South and West Dallas, other cities like DeSoto, Duncanville, Lancaster, Glenn Heights, just to name a few, who all share deep cultural, economic, and social ties. Our district is reflective of who they are, who those people are. It amplifies their voice, and that's exactly why it's

being targeted along with other districts. To break apart Texas 30, or any other majority-minority district across this state, is to fracture communities that have consistently fought for every inch of representation in which it has.

Let me be clear. The people in these districts aren't just voters on a map. They are our neighbors, our churches, small-business owners, and generations of Texans bound by shared values and shared challenges. Disrupting communities of common interest is not just bad policy, it's a direct violation of redistricting principles that I would hope you uphold, and a betrayal of the trust Texans place in you as our elected state leaders to steward this process. This redistricting attempt isn't neutral. It's surgical. It's going to slice through community lines to protect outside interests, not constituents, to secure extreme control, not public service.

I urge you, do not rubber stamp a map that silences communities. Don't dismantle districts that have long provided an actual voice for people in the U.S. House. And as for Texas 30 --

REP. VASUT: Please complete your testimony.

KENDYLL LOCKE: As for Texas 30, let me

be very clear. It's working, it's united, it's representative, and it should remain untouched. Let's focus on the people, their voices, and their interests, because at the end of the day, that's what matters most. Thank you so much.

REP. VASUT: Members, questions for the witness?

Chair hears none. Thank you. You're excused.

This microphone next, if I can get Latrena Lampkin. Latrena Lampkin at that one.

Chair calls Andy Laviolette?

ANDY LAVIOLETTE: Laviolette.

REP. VASUT: Laviolette?

ANDY LAVIOLETTE: Laviolette yes.

REP. VASUT: Okay. On behalf of yourself, on revised Congressional -- that's a pretty cool name, I've got to say.

ANDY LAVIOLETTE: Thank you.

REP. VASUT: On behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

ANDY LAVIOLETTE: Yes.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

ANDY LAVIOLETTE: Thanks. So, my wife, my daughter, and I are all registered voters in Denton, Texas. You know, I think that a lot of, you know, what has been said today is so brilliant and beautifully put, and I won't restate so many of the things that we've heard here today. But I think it comes down to just, sort of, accurate and fair representation. And the problem of where our government has gone to on bending to the will of Donald Trump, and not being able to stand up for what's right. And regardless of what party we're affiliated with, I would hope that the overall goal of the districts that are being put together on maps are to accurately reflect the will of the people.

And so, I would hope that everyone that sits on this committee, when it comes time for that vote, for you to exercise the power that you have, for you to take a moment and to reconsider that you have the ability to stand up to the Trump administration and to Greg Abbott and to what they're asking you to do. This can be your moment, even if your party is not the Democratic Party. If you're part of the Republican Party, this can be your moment to stand up and to stand out and show your constituents that you are willing to vote for what's right, and to do what's right, and to

help us create a society that gives accurate representation of people. So I hope that you consider that.

REP. VASUT: Members, questions for the witness?

Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony.

Chair calls Latrena Lampkin. Latrina Lampkin. Chair will show Latrena Lampkin registered to testify, on behalf of herself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

Chair calls Christopher Erickson. Christopher Erickson. Chair will show Christopher Erickson registered to testify, on behalf of himself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

Chair calls Tigist Solomon. Tigist Solomon. Chair will show Tigist Solomon registered to testify, on behalf of himself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

Chair calls Jeremy Matthews. Mr. Matthews, make your way down to that microphone.

Chair will ask Allison Campolo, if you could make your way down to that other microphone.

I show you registered to testify as

Jeremy Matthews, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

JEREMY MATTHEWS: That's correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

JEREMY MATTHEWS: Greetings, Committee. My name is Jeremy Matthews. I live in Plano, Texas in Congressional District 3. I am against this redistricting, and I would like to make three points.

My first point is addressed to the Republicans on this committee. This redistricting effort is a flagrant abuse of power. Texas's representation in Congress is already distorted in favor of your party. In the past three presidential elections, the Republican presidential ticket has been favored by Texans by only low to mid-50s percentages, yet Republicans currently occupy 66 percent of Texas's congressional seats. The president is asking for five more Republican seats, which would result in the party occupying 79 percent of these seats. The difference between the statewide voting percentages with the current representation to possibly nearly 80 percent Republican occupation is obscene. It is not even Republicanism. The Texas public is not being truly represented, and will be even less so if this

redistricting goes through.

My second point is addressed to the Democrats on the committee. I truly appreciate your opposition to this redistricting effort, but please, can we stop with the talk of breaking quorum? Breaking quorum is not what the public elected you to do. You were not elected to be absent. It is very understandable to want to break quorum, and, if you do, please do not flee the state or go into hiding. I think it is better to stand up for what you believe here in Texas than to flee.

My third point is addressed to the whole committee, but probably more so to the Republicans because I think the Democrats might be more on board with the following. I think an independent redistricting body is in order. I think Texas' congressional seats are the people's seats. They are not political party seats. All of you are in public service, and I commend you for caring about the future of Texas. However, this redistricting is not public service. It is political party service. Fair district lines lead to fair representation, a principle on which our country was founded. Let's please act on that principle. Thank you for your time.

REP. VASUT: Members, questions to the

witness?

Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony.

Next up at this microphone, if I can get Jan McDowell.

Chair calls Allison Campolo. I show you registered to testify, on behalf of the Tarrant County Democratic Party, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

ALLISON CAMPOLO: That's correct. I'm so glad you can read my handwriting. It's really bad.

REP. VASUT: I got you. Please give us your testimony.

ALLISON CAMPOLO: Of course. Members of the committee, my name is Dr. Allison Campolo. I'm the Chair of the Tarrant County Democratic Party, where we are now. I had a whole cool, really eloquent -- I'm really smart. I had a really eloquent thing written out. But, like, we've been here for seven hours, so I've had time to, you know, percolate. So I'm just going to monologue a little bit. Obviously, stop me when I'm done. Okay?

So I'm more like talking to the audience, anybody watching the livestream. And our Democratic House members, thank you, bless you, you're wonderful.

I -- like I said, you know, we've been here all night. I know our House members have had a lot of long nights. Thank you. Thank you for staying for people, no matter how many there are. You're wonderful. I think I represent a lot of Texans, a lot of people who have come out here. I think I'm just like them. I work a full-time job, then I work another full-time job being chair of the party. I have three kids under -- that are all under four now. I mean, life is hard, and we're here, like at 10:30 p.m. Like holy crap. And obviously, you guys have seen that all across the state as you've been going around, right? Like you have way more people coming to testify than you have time to sit here. And man, I gotta tell you, that, like -- that's a message for 2026. Like, what's coming, guys?

So, you know, one of the things -- I still have a green light. I'm going to keep going. All right. So one of the things that really stuns me, one of the things I wrote down, is like, what stuns me about this body undertaking this action, is that it undercuts everybody, not just Democrats, not just people of color. It systematically carves up the urban areas to dilute them with rural voters, right? So you're ruining everyone's chance to have fair representation. Nobody is fairly represented.

And I just want to say -- and I know I'm running out of time, I'm so sorry. We will remember who stood for democracy and who bowed down to political pressure. You will dilute your own Republican districts with our numbers, and your congressional members will lose their seats in droves. Because look at this, it's like midnight. And when the legal challenges come up, as they will, and when the voters rise up, and they will, the shame of this blatant gerrymander will be forever tied to your names.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for the witness?

Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony. You're excused.

Next up at this microphone, if I can get Micaela Watkins. Micaela Watkins at that microphone.

Is Jan McDowell here? Okay. Chair calls Jan McDowell. Chair will show Jan McDowell registered to testify, on behalf of herself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

Chair calls Micaela Watkins. Micaela Watkins. Chair will show Micaela Watkins registered to testify, on behalf of -- oh, Ms. Watkins? Okay. Take your time.

All right. If I could get Chris Wood at

this microphone over here. Chris Wood at that microphone.

Okay. I show you registered to testify as Micaela Watkins, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

MICAELA WATKINS: Yes, sir.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

MICAELA WATKINS: Good evening, Mr. Chairman, committee members, and fellow outraged Texans. My name is Micaela Watkins, and I am a resident of Congressman Veasey's 33rd District. Ladies and gentlemen, complacency and lack of integrity landed us here, and I find it incredibly disheartening to look upon some of the faces on the dais and see soullessness and disinterest in your eyes as we plead for not only our voting rights, but our human rights. What we are seeing and experiencing is the effect of spineless leadership that has placed us under and further in the line of fire of fascist rule.

As we know, this racially motivated redistricting attempt would have immense adverse effects on our black and brown communities. This reactionary violation of the Voting Rights Act is an

acknowledgment of our growth and our power within these historic and beautiful communities. The felon in chief and his incompetent cronies are afraid of our voting power, and they are afraid of our growth. That growth, that power, it reminds them of their ineptitude and lack of deservingness to occupy such prestigious and once respected offices. In a time where we should be significantly more concerned with a near 150 lives lost in Kerr County and the negligence that led to it, we find our leaders moving the goalpost. In a time when we should be working to improve the inefficient, ineffective power grid that simply cannot handle the growth and infrastructure of our great state, we instead must face the abnormality of a mid-decade voter suppression attempt at our fiscal expense, the taxpayers.

When a caveat is repeatedly reiterated that the lines were drawn blind to race, yet the integrity to provide transparency on said maps is non-existent, I would respectfully request that you not insult our intelligence by playing in our faces. Neutrality is no longer an option. Silence is no longer an option. It's time to fight, and I would be remiss if I did not remind each of you, these distinguished representatives present, that your

constituents are watching.

Your jobs are on the line, and before you is a crowd of proud Texans who will not stand for the blatant dilution of our districts. I implore you to be reminded that the felonious predator that holds office at Mar-a-Lago, with the occasional visit to Pennsylvania Avenue, is an egomaniacal self-preservationist. You bowing to him will not provide you proximity to his abusive power, but be mindful, because that power cannot vote you out. Our power can. May God bless you to stand on the side of justice, and may God continue to bless and protect the great state of Texas. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for the witness?

Chair hears none. The witness is excused.

I apologize. Representative Wu, did you have a question?

REP. WU: For you.

REP. VASUT: Okay, okay. You need to ask it now?

REP. WU: I would like to.

REP. VASUT: Okay. Chair will yield for questions. Representative Wu, for what purpose?

REP. WU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. How much time is left?

REP. VASUT: From what I see here, we have about ten minutes.

REP. WU: Okay. Thank you. And the clock is paused, correct?

REP. VASUT: The clock is paused.

REP. WU: So, this is the last of our public hearings.

REP. VASUT: Currently scheduled.

REP. WU: Currently scheduled, correct?

REP. VASUT: That is correct, of the ones currently scheduled.

REP. WU: Have any other hearings been scheduled?

REP. VASUT: Not yet, but they will be.

REP. WU: Okay. So, in the first two hearings, I asked you at the beginning of each hearing whether you have reviewed a map, or has someone talked to you about a map, or your staff has looked at a map that somebody has provided them, and you have said no to both of those questions.

REP. VASUT: The only one I've seen is that one that was posted online that we talked about previously, and I have not since then. No revision to

my previous statement.

REP. WU: And so, my question to you is, I would assume that that has not changed.

REP. VASUT: Correct.

REP. WU: You have not looked at a map that someone else has provided you other than that one?

REP. VASUT: That's correct.

REP. WU: That was just uploaded by the public?

REP. VASUT: Correct.

REP. WU: Okay. Your staff and anyone who works for you has also not looked at a map and not seen a proposed map of any kind?

REP. VASUT: There may have -- there was one that was uploaded that may have been seen that was in the same portal. I can't remember if it was the same one as the first one or another, but nothing beyond what has been put into that public portal.

REP. WU: Okay.

REP. VASUT: And I haven't looked at any of the others since that first one.

REP. WU: And I also asked you whether you have contacted Governor Abbott to see what is at top of mind of his rationale for why he put a mid-cycle redistricting on the call for the special session.

REP. VASUT: I have not.

REP. WU: Okay. And has that changed?

REP. VASUT: Not since we last spoke, no.

REP. WU: Okay. And no one on your staff has spoken to the Governor, or somebody on the Governor's staff, or somebody who works for the Governor or represents the Governor --

REP. VASUT: No, not to my knowledge.

REP. WU: -- about any map?

REP. VASUT: No.

REP. WU: Okay. We have now -- there's only ten -- as you said, there's only ten minutes left of this hearing. In the last three hearings -- I assume that 99 percent of this hearing is basically concluded. We've heard from several hundred witnesses at least. At the beginning of the last hearing, I asked you if you had in mind what you planned to do and what kind of map you planned to draw. And you said you did not have anything in mind as of yet. Now, almost all the hearing has been done. In your mind, do you have an idea of what you propose to do or what type of map or what kind of changes you intend to make?

REP. VASUT: No.

REP. WU: Okay. So, at the beginning of this process, you told us that, because you did not

know and do not know what the Governor wants, why he put this on the call, and you have not contacted him or asked him why, you are -- and you said that the purpose that you're -- all we're doing here is to see how the public feels about the current maps. Is that a fair statement? A summary?

REP. VASUT: Perhaps a fair summary of the first phase of this, is to generally hear from the public about whether to do redistricting, and if so, what are some of the things they'd like to see changed or not changed.

REP. WU: Absolutely. And in my attendance of these hearings and listening to the witnesses, let's just say in a very unofficial way that roughly 99 percent of the witnesses testified against this -- against a mid-cycle redistricting. Would that be fair?

REP. VASUT: I have not done the -- of the testimony that's been given, I haven't done an analysis. I mean, a lot have been opposed. I think that's fair.

REP. WU: An overwhelming majority.

REP. VASUT: Fair, fair. From the testimony given, yes.

REP. WU: Additionally, I have asked you

in the prior hearings whether you have reviewed any kind of population data, census data, or any revised data dealing with population changes or anything like that, and you also said you have not reviewed any kind of data like that. Has that changed?

REP. VASUT: That has not changed.

REP. WU: Okay. So you have also said that, you know, you would let us know when a map comes out, when you have an idea of what you want to do. And right now you're telling us, as of this moment, you don't have anything in mind, correct?

REP. VASUT: Nothing specific, no.

REP. WU: Okay. So, would it be -- if a map does come out -- you're saying that there's nothing in your mind at this moment. Is there anything during this process that makes you think of what you would like to do from hearing the people talk?

REP. VASUT: No, not at this time, other than I want to go and review the written comments that were submitted into the public portal as well. Because, as you know, this is just one of many other forms that have been done. So, I know that two of those have been summarized, I think, that are on the committee's website right now. And, of course, the public portal for this hearing doesn't close until this

hearing is over.

REP. WU: So, we've done this for three hearings now. It's been across about almost a week's worth of time. And after all this, you don't have any idea, you don't have anything in mind of what you're going to do -- my question is sort of, is this plan going to spring forth from your head like Athena from Zeus, fully formed, at some point?

REP. VASUT: My intention is to review the testimony pretty much -- you know, I've obviously been hearing the testimony --

REP. WU: Sure.

REP. VASUT: -- and we've got ten more minutes here tonight. And I want to review the submitted comments. That will probably be tomorrow that I do that. And then --

REP. WU: Do you suspect that after you have reviewed the written testimony, after you've finished listening to the last ten minutes of this, of the in-person testimony, are you going to have a time where you're going to discuss with us, with the entire room, what your thoughts are and what their thoughts are before you draw the map?

REP. VASUT: I don't know right now. I don't know.

REP. WU: You don't know? Were you planning to work with the members of this committee?

REP. VASUT: My intention is, if a map is filed, that will come to this committee for public hearing and will come to this committee for debate, and for feedback and input by all the committee members.

REP. WU: So what you're saying is somebody else is going to submit the map and you will be told which one that is?

REP. VASUT: I don't know what we're going to do yet.

REP. WU: Are you --

REP. VASUT: If I'm going to file a map or not.

REP. WU: Are you intending -- is it your intent to submit a map yourself, or are you simply waiting for someone else to submit the map?

REP. VASUT: I don't definitively know right now whether I'm going to file one or someone else will.

REP. WU: Okay. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: You're welcome.

Members, any other questions?

REP. TURNER: Mr. Chairman.

REP. VASUT: Mr. Turner, for a purpose?

REP. TURNER: Just a follow-up question.

REP. VASUT: Chair yields --

REP. TURNER: For the Chair.

REP. VASUT: Yes.

REP. TURNER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a follow-up on Mr. Wu's conversation with you just now. So to be clear, you've said you haven't seen a map, and you are not drawing a map presently?

REP. VASUT: I'm not drawing a map presently.

REP. TURNER: Okay. And have you -- you said you haven't heard from anyone about a map. Have you heard any indication, say from the Governor's Office or the White House, that a map is coming?

REP. VASUT: I have not heard from the Governor's Office or the White House.

REP. TURNER: Okay. Has anyone else indicated that a map is coming?

REP. VASUT: There's been maps submitted, of course, that people have indicated they put online, and I haven't worked on one yet. I may. That may change. I'm going to review the testimony today, and particularly the written comments that are done. I'll review those tomorrow, and that may change.

REP. TURNER: Okay. To clarify my

question, have any members of the Legislature suggested to you that they'll be filing a map?

REP. VASUT: No member of the Legislature has told me that they are going to definitively file a map. I'm sure that individuals probably have ideas, but no one has told me, "I'm going to file a map."

REP. TURNER: Okay. So right now you're not aware of any map?

REP. VASUT: Basically, the stage I'm at right now is, I want to gather all the testimony. I'm going to review the written comments tomorrow and see what we do next.

REP. TURNER: Okay. And I think that --

REP. VASUT: That's basically it.

REP. TURNER: That's a perfectly reasonable position. And I would just -- I know your previous statements on the record, which I appreciate, that anything we do, if we do anything -- and it's still an option not to do anything.

REP. VASUT: Sure.

REP. TURNER: Anything you do, you said you would want to make sure it complies with the Constitution and the Voting Rights Act.

REP. VASUT: Yes.

REP. TURNER: And I would just observe

the complexity of just those two things, and then the complexity of drawing a statewide congressional map is very detailed, very time-consuming. So is it reasonable to conclude we won't be seeing a map really anytime soon? Because it sounds like there's not any maps under development right now.

REP. VASUT: I don't know the exact timing of that, but what I can commit to you is that, if a map is filed, we're going to have a public hearing on it, and every member of this committee will have an opportunity to provide feedback and input into that process.

REP. TURNER: Okay.

REP. VASUT: That's been my commitment this entire time. I believe, as I mentioned at the first hearing, that we're going to take this in a two-phase process.

REP. TURNER: Okay. As we sit here right now tonight, you're not aware of any maps being filed as a bill for the committee's consideration?

REP. VASUT: Not right now.

REP. TURNER: Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Thank you, Mr. Turner.

REP. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman?

REP. VASUT: Dean Thompson, for what

purpose?

REP. THOMPSON: I'd like to ask a question to the Chair.

REP. VASUT: The Chair yields for questions.

REP. THOMPSON: Will the committee be privy to reviewing, along with the Chair, the written statements that the Chair will be reviewing?

REP. VASUT: Sure. Those -- Dean Thompson, good question. The statements that I have referred to that I have seen, when you go onto the committee's website, and you go to our page and you click Meetings, each of the committee hearings has a notice, which is in text and in PDF. On the right-hand side, you'll see what I believe is a column marked - I can actually - let me give you the exact answer, Dean Thompson. I was looking just a while ago to see what the status of that was.

So if I go to our committee page, and I go to Congressional Redistricting Select, and I click meetings, on the right-hand side is a PDF marked Comments. And so those are some of the comments that I will be going through. We have comments posted for 7/24 and 7/26. We do not have any comments posted for 7/28. I don't know how many or if any are in there.

We won't know that until that portal closes after this hearing. And I would assume those will be either linked there tonight or tomorrow morning.

REP. THOMPSON: How will you be evaluating the public testimony?

REP. VASUT: Just like I do all public testimony, read it, comprehend it, see what the general themes are, and whether or not there's anything specific to take into account.

REP. THOMPSON: Okay.

REP. VASUT: Thank you, Dean.

Members, any other questions? Chair recognizes Representative Gervin-Hawkins. I assume to question the Chair?

REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: I do have a question of the Chair.

REP. VASUT: I yield for such questions.

REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: Mr. Chair, you know, based on reading of the notes, based on the three hearings and the concern that the community has raised, is there a possibility that you would recommend to the Governor not to proceed with any maps?

REP. VASUT: You have my word that I will evaluate that tomorrow. I don't -- I don't know. I'm not going to give you a definitive answer right now,

but I will evaluate that tomorrow based on all the comments. I mean, that is obviously one of the scenarios.

REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: So my final question is that -- so the citizens who spend so much of their time and effort, is it possible, is it possible, or is it impossible, that indeed there could be a recommendation to this committee, this full committee, to take a vote on if maps should be drawn or not?

REP. VASUT: I think to that specific question, if no map is heard in this committee, then that effectively means that there will be no map, on that basis, Representative Gervin-Hawkins. I don't think a formal vote is necessary to the committee on that point. But if no map comes forward, there is no map.

REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. VASUT: Thank you, Ms. Gervin-Hawkins.

Vice Chair Rosenthal, for what purpose?

REP. ROSENTHAL: The Chair yield for a couple questions.

REP. VASUT: The Chair will yield for a

couple questions.

REP. ROSENTHAL: Thank you. Do you have a ballpark idea of the number of comments that have been submitted online?

REP. VASUT: I can give you the exact -- well, I can give you the number for the two, if you'd like that for the record. The number of comments that were submitted, or I would say received, that it shows in the system for the July 24th hearing was 1,071 comments. Well, let me -- actually, hang on. There's two under that in, I think, maybe Spanish-language comments, so I guess you would add those together, 1,073. The number of comments submitted for the last hearing -- and what I haven't done, Vice Chair Rosenthal, is to determine whether these numbers are cumulative or have to be added together. Right? I'd have to ask -- honestly, I'd have to ask the committee gurus how this data comes. I'm assuming, my assumption would be that these are additional comments. And if so, then there were 1,335 additional comments for the July 26th hearing in English and three in Spanish.

REP. ROSENTHAL: So depending on whether they're cumulative or separate --

REP. VASUT: Yeah, it could be -- that could mean there's 2,300 or it could mean that there's

only 1,300 if they add together.

REP. ROSENTHAL: Exactly. Thank you for doing accurate math.

REP. VASUT: I don't know if that was accurate or not. That was top of mind, roughly, roughly thereabouts.

REP. ROSENTHAL: And then over the course of these three hearings, we've had in the neighborhood of 2,000 people register. Is that about right?

REP. VASUT: We had -- what was it? We had about 200 at the first hearing. We had about, a little over 750. I didn't know quite where we exactly landed. That will be in the minutes, but we haven't approved those yet. We've done the ones from the first hearing -- [audio cuts out].

REP. ROSENTHAL: -- quite used them all, so --

REP. VASUT: Correct. I don't know -- several hundred registered today.

REP. ROSENTHAL: So I'm not asking for an exact number, but would it be fair to say 600 or 700? In that neighborhood, in that ballpark?

REP. VASUT: Let's say at least 500 or 600, yeah.

REP. ROSENTHAL: All right. So you're

looking at 1,500 people that took time out of their lives --

REP. VASUT: To register, yes.

REP. ROSENTHAL: -- to come, speak in front of us, to register. And then, because of the limited nature of the number of hours that we have had for these, we've offered this portal for folks to submit comments online.

REP. VASUT: Yes.

REP. ROSENTHAL: And there are either 1,000 or 2,000 more.

REP. VASUT: And an unknown possible additional set right --

REP. ROSENTHAL: For tonight.

REP. VASUT: -- for tonight.

REP. ROSENTHAL: Very good.

REP. VASUT: It won't close until the hearing's done.

REP. ROSENTHAL: So to my recollection, over the course of all these hearings, we had like one person come up to the microphone and say, I strongly want this to happen. That's my recollection.

REP. VASUT: I think there were a handful. I don't know the exact number, a handful. It was more than one, but a handful. I would -- I would

say that, to your point that I would expect you'd make, there were more against.

REP. ROSENTHAL: Yeah. So when we say more against, it's like -- it's like 1,000 to one. So I'll be interested in what that has.

REP. VASUT: Sure.

REP. ROSENTHAL: So here's what the whole line of questioning leads up to is, if the stated purpose of this set of hearings is to elicit input from the people of the State of Texas, as to their opinion as to whether or not we should even engage in this process -- because that's all we can talk about right now. We haven't looked at a map.

REP. VASUT: Well, engage in the process or if -- for example, we've had testimony about, if you do it, then do this. For example, we had several testimony tonight -- and you remember, I think your favorite witness in Houston was the gentleman who came up with the hexagon thing. Right. Okay. So you had testimony about if you're going to do it, do it this way.

REP. ROSENTHAL: Yeah, we had a whole conversation of area versus perimeter. And while I can get into that, yeah, fair. So if you, after prepondering all of this evidence, find an overwhelming

sentiment expressed to us by the people of Texas that they don't want us to do it, would that lead you to actually not do it?

REP. VASUT: I intend to make that decision over the next couple days. But that is absolutely a factor.

REP. ROSENTHAL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. VASUT: Thank you, Mr. Vice Chair. Speaker Moody, for what purpose?

REP. MOODY: Just a couple questions of the Chair.

REP. VASUT: Chair will yield for questions.

REP. MOODY: I know that, I think either yesterday or earlier today, you extended an invitation to the individual who wrote the letter for the Department of Justice that kind of set this process --

REP. VASUT: That's correct.

REP. MOODY: -- in motion. I appreciate you doing that. I assume we still haven't heard back from them during the pendency of this hearing?

REP. VASUT: Speaker Moody, I haven't checked my email box, but I would -- I'll get back to you tomorrow about that. But no, I have not received a formal response to that other than the out-of-office

message.

REP. MOODY: Okay. And I appreciate that. I know we're working on a short timeline. I'd like to focus on the recipients of that letter, both the Governor's Office and the Attorney General's Office. I'd like to request that in any subsequent hearing, that the Chair also extend an invitation to the proper party within either of their offices since they've -- the Governor's Office certainly took note of it, and that's why there's an item on the call. I think it would be important for this committee to hear what they took from it, and why it's on the call, and why it's here, and what their constitutional issues they think we have to address. And the Attorney General actually engaged in conversation, at least in written communication, with the DOJ. And I think it would be important for this committee to hear that as well. And that would be the request I'd make of the Chair.

REP. VASUT: Understood, Mr. Speaker. I'll take that under advisement and view that tomorrow.

REP. MOODY: Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Members, any other questions? Chair hears none.

We'll go back to our witnesses for public

testimony. I believe, let's see, Meg Schuessler?

CHRIS WOOD: Chris Wood.

REP. VASUT: Chris Wood. Okay.

Is Meg Schuessler here? Okay. If you could take that microphone, if you don't mind, we'll come to you in just a second.

I show you registered to testify as Chris Wood, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

CHRIS WOOD: That is correct.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

CHRIS WOOD: Governor Abbott only agreed to include redistricting on his agenda after a phone call from President Trump. Obviously, Governor Abbott was bullied by Trump. My dearly departed brother is also named Greg Abbott. And my brother, Greg Abbott, a student of history and an avid follower of politics, taught me, and he taught me well, always stand up to a bully. Standing up to a bully weakens the bully and strengthens the one being attacked. Trust me, Governor Abbott, you will sleep well after standing up to your bully. Join me and my dearly departed brother, Greg Abbott in heaven, as we say, give me liberty or give me death!

REP. VASUT: Members, questions for the witness?

Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony.

At this microphone next, if I can get Joseph Schuessler, if you would come up.

Okay. I show you registered to tes- -- oh, we've got a husband-and-wife duo ago. All right. Obviously, she's going to beat you, right? Okay. Chair shows you registered to testify as Meg Schuessler?

MEG SCHUESSLER: I am.

REP. VASUT: On behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

MEG SCHUESSLER: It is.

REP. VASUT: All right. Please give us your testimony.

MEG SCHUESSLER: Good evening. My name is Meg Schuessler, and I'm a Texas public school teacher. And I teach federal and Texas government. In fact, Kendyll Locke was one of my students. The fact that we're holding these hearings in '25 tells me that, well, somebody wasn't paying attention in government class. And so I'm here to correct some problems and

misconceptions you might have in the system.

So it's going to just be real quick. It will be three quick lessons. Our first one is about the Constitution. You know, our plan of government? It lays the foundation for redistricting under Article I, Section 2. You know, representatives are among the states based on that census. It's meant to reflect population and not to give a party edge in an election, especially in the midterm. This is a really rare moment, and it should never be used as a political weapon.

Lesson number two. In 2021, Texas officials stood before the federal court in LULAC v. Abbott and argued that those maps were racial neutral. For four years, it's gone on, and now these same officials are claiming that the DOJ's concerns justify redrawing, while telling the same court that those concerns are off base. That's not legal consistency. It's political strategy, and it undermines our public trust.

And lesson three, and the most important thing that I can leave with you all tonight, is that these maps should reflect real communities and the people that they represent. They shouldn't be set up to silence us. I teach my students that their voices

matter, no matter where they live, what they look like, or who they voted for. But this process sends the opposite message. It tells them that the power matters more than the people, that manipulation is acceptable, and that democracy is optional. This is a power grab. It's wrong.

And if you're still in favor of redistricting mid-decade, someone clearly failed government class and is ill-equipped to hold public office. But I'll say this. I'm actually a really good teacher. Again, that's my student. I'm going to offer you guys some extra credit. Adopt an independent redistricting commission like Michigan or Arizona. These models increase transparency, they reduce bias, and they help restore public trust. And this is something you are severely lacking at this moment --

REP. VASUT: Please complete your testimony.

MEG SCHUESSLER: If you didn't notice the thousand people who are opposed to this, you're missing out on the message that we've all been trying to tell you. So, your assignment, because a good teacher leaves you with an assignment, I want you to follow the Constitution. Ten years is ten years, and 2025 isn't the time for a census. Do the right thing for your

constituents, for democracy, and for my students. Class dismissed.

REP. VASUT: Members, questions for the witness?

Chair hears none. The witness is excused.

Chair calls Joseph Schuessler. I show you registered to testify, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

JOSEPH SCHUESSLER: Yes, sir.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

JOSEPH SCHUESSLER: Okay. First off, don't follow your wife. Good evening, committee members. My name is Dr. Joseph Schuessler. As a business professor, I stand before you today.

REP. VASUT: Mr. Schuessler, I think that microphone might be a little finicky. Raise it up.

JOSEPH SCHUESSLER: Is that a little bit better?

REP. VASUT: There, that's perfect. Please give us your testimony.

JOSEPH SCHUESSLER: Apologies. Good evening, committee members. My name is Dr. Joseph

Schuessler. As a business professor, I stand before you today to oppose this mid-census congressional redistricting. This effort is profoundly inappropriate. Redistricting is constitutionally mandated after each decennial census using accurate population data. Doing it now with outdated 2020 census figures ignores Texas's significant non-white population growth. This isn't about fairness. It's a blatant partisan power grab.

As a voter historically aligned with Republican values, I must say I feel profoundly abandoned by my party. Their sudden embrace of DOJ claims about racially-drawn districts directly contradicts their own past offenses. This is a transparent ploy to gain partisan seats, slicing up black and Hispanic communities and diluting their voting strengths. Our current districts, as drawn, already fail to reasonably reflect their constituents, especially given our state's diverse growth. Such politically-motivated actions ignore established process, erode public faith in our government, and undermine our democracy.

I urge this committee to immediately halt these mid-census efforts. The established constitutional process for redistricting is after the

decennial census, and adhering to this constitutionally-mandated process is absolutely necessary. Texas needs non-partisan redistricting, achieved through an independent commission, insulated from political influence, ensuring fair maps for all Texans. Let us choose a path that strengthens our democracy, not one that diminishes it for political expediency. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Members, questions for the witness?

Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony. Witness is excused.

Chair calls Kee West. Kee West. Okay. Chair will show Kee West registered to testify, on behalf of the Black Chamber of Commerce, on a Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

Chair calls Lydia Beam. Lydia Beam. Chair shows Lydia Beam, or Bean, I apologize, Lydia Bean. Chair shows Lydia Bean registered to testify, on behalf of herself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

Chair calls Angela Ferrelli. Angela Ferrelli? All right. Come on down. If I can get you right here at this microphone.

And then Manuel Mata. Manuel Mata?

Okay. Chair calls Manuel Mata. Chair will show Manuel Mata registered to testify, on behalf of himself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

Instead, at that microphone over there, if I could get Ted Ellis. Is Ted Ellis here? Chair shows Ted Ellis registered to testify, on behalf of himself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

Let's try this again. If I can get at this other microphone, Danny Minton.

All right. Chair shows you registered to testify as Angela Ferrelli, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

ANGELA FERRELLI: Yes.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

ANGELA FERRELLI: My name is Angela Ferrelli, and I reside in Dallas, specifically part of the 30th Congressional District. A lot of what I had put in my statement that is going around to you all has already been said. And so, rather, I'd like to use my time to just address what Mr. Chairman, you had said in terms of the number of people who have come out and

spoken and your need to evaluate what has been shared, and if there is still a need for this committee to even exist. You did state that there were about 500 to 600 people who came today.

You weren't prepared to say about how many, what percentage of those people were testifying in terms of opposing this committee's existence or their disapproval of redistricting in general. But from my recollection, there was only one person who spoke very adamantly in terms of favoring redistricting, and one person who was a little wishy-washy and wasn't really quite sure what he was trying to say. Everyone else who has come up to the lectern and made a statement to everyone on this committee very clearly is against this effort, and they are wanting to make sure that their vote counts.

So I really think that it is very prudent of you to acknowledge that and to not say that you're not sure where people stand on this issue. By saying that you're not -- by not being able to say publicly that you have heard what the people are saying, and that the majority overwhelmingly do not want this, doesn't make us trust you. So I just -- I think it's very important for you to know that the people of Texas do not want this. The people of Texas are not going to

trust you if you move forward with this. And that the people of Texas will vote everyone out who does approve this.

REP. VASUT: Members, questions for the witness?

Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony.

ANGELA FERRELLI: Thank you.

Chair calls Danny Minton. I show you registered to testify as Danny Minton, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

DANNY MINTON: Yes.

REP. VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

DANNY MINTON: All right. My name is Danny Minton. I'm very excited to actually get a chance to do this. Thank you for staying here and listening. This subject is near and dear to my heart, as I was going to announce my intention to run for the U.S. House of Representatives tonight. As a very proud Democrat, by the way.

So, I was leaving the house a long time ago to come to the protest beforehand and then to come to this. And my son, who was hoping I was going to

make dinner because I love to cook barbecue every night, and he was excited that I was going to, and then he found out I wasn't. But he's like, Dad, why are you in your best go-out-and-protest gear? That's what I'm wearing. And I had to tell him I'm going to the redistricting meeting. And he says, oh, is that that salamandering thing? And he's 15, he's learning. I said, kind of, yeah, it's gerrymandering. And I explained exactly what it was. And he said, well, isn't that just cheating? And that's come up a couple times tonight, but not enough.

This is something that is blatant cheating. We teach our kids not to cheat. We don't just teach our kids not to cheat. We actually punish our kids when they cheat. When people cheat at work, they get fired. When people cheat in life in general, there are repercussions, and this is blatant cheating.

This is actually epic cheating, what we're trying to do here with redistricting. This is like Coldplay kiss cam cheating, except for a nice-looking CEO standing behind you with his arms wrapped around you, you have a rapist pedophile that is standing there saying, you need to cheat and give us these votes, give us this Congress. And does he have to cheat to win? Yeah, he does. In 2026, we will

annihilate him. But it's still wrong. That's democracy. Democracy means, if we can beat him, we will. And I think even if you cheat, we're going to beat him in 2026. But at the very least, we need to know that this is absolute cheating and it is wrong. Thank you.

REP. VASUT: Members, questions for the witness? Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony.

Members, the time for public testimony at today's hearing has concluded. Thank you for all those who testified today. The electronic portal for today's hearing will close right after we adjourn. If you registered to testify but were not reached today, or if you had more to say than time allowed, you can feel free to turn in your testimony up front. The minutes of today's meeting will also show that you registered.

So my - let's see, where is - where is my - so my assistant clerk is around here, Dylan, right behind me. Okay. So we're out up front. We'll meet you right here. If you want to turn in a written copy of your testimony and bring it down front, we'd be glad to receive that from you.

So there being no further business before the committee, the Chair moves that the House Select

Committee on Congressional Redistricting stand adjourned, subject to the call of the Chair. Is there objection?

REP. ROSENTHAL: I object and ask for --

REP. VASUT: The Chair hears objection.

REP. ROSENTHAL: -- a record vote.

REP. VASUT: Under the rules, this is a non-debatable motion. The Clerk will call the roll.

THE CLERK: Chair Vasut?

REP. VASUT: Aye.

THE CLERK: Vice Chair Rosenthal?

REP. ROSENTHAL: Nay.

THE CLERK: Representative Garcia? Representative Garcia?

REP. GARCIA: No.

THE CLERK: Representative Geren? Representative Geren?

REP. GEREN: Yes.

THE CLERK: Representative Gervin-Hawkins?

[Shouting from the gallery]

REP. VASUT: A motion has been made and a vote is underway. The members of the committee will cast their votes. Representative Gervin-Hawkins?

REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: No.

THE CLERK: Representative Guerra?
Representative Guillen? Representative Guillen?
REP. GUILLEN: Aye.
REP. VASUT: Representative Hefner?
REP. HEFNER: Aye.
THE CLERK: Representative Hickland?
REP. HICKLAND: Yes.
THE CLERK: Representative Hunter?
REP. HUNTER: Yes.
THE CLERK: Representative Manuel?
REP. MANUEL: Nay.
THE CLERK: Representative McQueeney?
REP. MCQUEENEY: Yes.
THE CLERK: Representative Metcalf?
REP. METCALF: Aye.
THE CLERK: Representative Moody?
REP. MOODY: No.
THE CLERK: Representative Pierson?
REP. PIERSON: Aye.
THE CLERK: Representative Spiller?
REP. SPILLER: Aye.
THE CLERK: Representative Tepper?
REP. TEPPER: Aye.
THE CLERK: Representative Thompson?
REP. THOMPSON: No.

THE CLERK: Representative Turner?

REP. TURNER: No.

THE CLERK: Representative Wilson? Representative Wu?

REP. WU: No.

REP. VASUT: There being 11 ayes, 8 nays, the motion prevails. The House Select Committee on Congressional Redistricting stands adjourned subject to the call of the Chair.

(End of proceedings.)

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Abby McGinnis, certify that the foregoing is a correct transcription from the audio recording provided to me in connection with the above-entitled matter.

I further certify that I am neither attorney or counsel for, nor related to or employed by any of the parties to the action in which this transcription is taken, and further that I am not a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, or financially interested in the action.

Certified to by me this 16th day of September 2025.

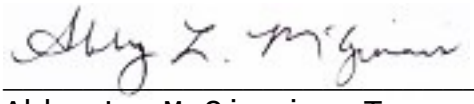


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Exhibit D

Public Policy Institute of California

https://www.ppic.org/blog/do-california-and-texas-have-gerrymandered-districts/

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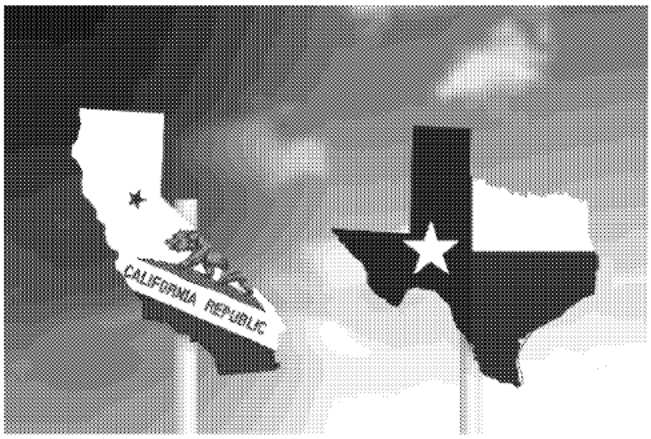
Do California and Texas Have Gerrymandered Districts?



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Eric McGhee

California and Texas have been sparring over redistricting. Republicans in Texas want to redraw their electoral map to win another five congressional seats, and California has threatened to respond with more Democratic seats to match. Each side accuses the other of bad behavior. Governor Abbott of Texas has called the current California redistricting plan a gerrymander, and Governor Newsom of California has said Texas's plans undermine core tenets of American democracy. The reality is more complicated than either presents, and gets wrapped up in chance, competition, and the peculiarities of congressional districting.

A partisan gerrymander redraws electoral maps so that they favor the political party in control of creating those maps. It aims to win that party more seats without needing to win more votes. The gap between a party's seat share and vote share is therefore a reasonable way to gauge the partisan advantage it enjoys under a given plan. The larger the gap, the greater the advantage.

But the path from advantage to gerrymander can be complicated. A particular partisan advantage might emerge by accident, either because the author of the plan was maximizing some other goals and didn't know the partisan consequences, or because the political dynamics of future elections turned out differently than expected.

Moreover, single-member district elections—like the ones for the US House of Representatives—have historically had a natural "winner's bonus" that usually gives the majority party a higher seat share than vote share, even without a gerrymander. For example, a party winning 55% of the votes would rarely win exactly 55% of the seats. It would almost always win at least a few percentage points more, and sometimes far more than that.

So a modest seats-votes discrepancy is normal and not a sign of gerrymandering. In fact, a common measure of fairness, the "efficiency gap," assumes that a party's seat share should increase two percent for every one percent increase in vote share: a baked-in winner's bonus.

California's existing plan was drawn by an independent redistricting commission, and Texas's by its state legislature. Yet coming out of the 2024 election, California's had by far the larger seats-votes gap. Republicans in Texas won 66% of the US House seats off 56% of the major-

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seats off 61% of the vote (a pro-Democratic efficiency gap of 11%). When Governor Abbott says California is gerrymandered, he likely has this contrast in mind.

But the real contrast between the California and Texas plans is not partisan *gerrymandering* so much as partisan *competition*. Texas Republicans in 2021 drew themselves such an uncompetitive plan that it left them little opportunity to pick up more seats when they started winning more votes. The plan would have been a boon for them in 2020—when Biden performed well in Texas—because it might have protected them from losing seats. But the plan wasn't used in 2020, and Republican vote shares have only climbed since then, leaving the party with nothing to show for their gains in popular support.

California's plan is far more competitive. One in five California seats was claimed by less than 10% in 2022, and one in six was close (by this same metric) in 2024. Just one in 20 seats—2 seats out of 38—fit the bill in Texas in either election. (Other thresholds for competitive districts produce the same basic pattern.)

Furthermore, Democrats won their three new seats in 2024 by extremely narrow margins. A switch of just 8,833 votes out of 15 million cast statewide would have been enough to reverse the outcomes in all three. Without a Democratic win in those three seats, California's efficiency gap (5%) would look about like the one in Texas.

Both state parties are talking about padding their seat totals, so this status quo might change. Five more Republican seats in Texas would balloon their efficiency gap advantage from 5% to 17%. California Democrats, meanwhile, want to add five seats to their current total, turning a lucky advantage into overwhelming dominance (an efficiency gap of 20%).

For both parties, good representation of their own electorates is beside the point. Instead, their goal is to stay balanced at the national level. At the moment, the national efficiency gap for the House has a slight Democratic advantage of about seven seats: Republicans have a majority of votes and seats, but their seat share is not as high as the modest winner's bonus of the efficiency gap would expect.

That means Texas, acting by itself, would arguably bring the overall chamber closer to neutral, even while making representation for its own residents more biased. California's response, on the other hand, would increase bias for both. Neither national effect would be very large, but either could make the difference in a very close election.

The real story is less the fight between California and Texas than the broader war their fight might provoke. If more states enter the fray and gerrymander their own plans, the outcome will probably favor Republicans but will be difficult to predict. The possibility of more biased representation—both nationally and separately for each state—is real.

The absence of a common national process or standard looms large over this possible battle royale. National guardrails could bind each state and avoid these spiraling dynamics. Congress and the president have the authority to regulate congressional elections if they choose, and the potential chaos of this moment may prove painful enough that both parties lay down their arms. Whether that happens, and when, remains to be seen.

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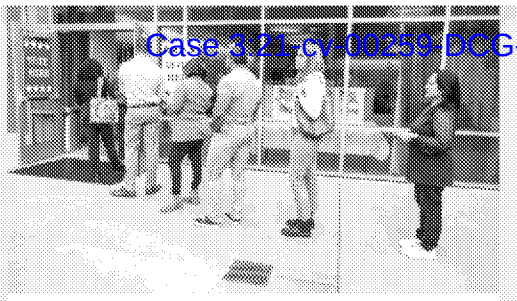

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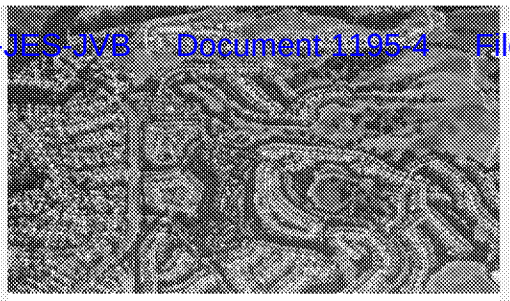

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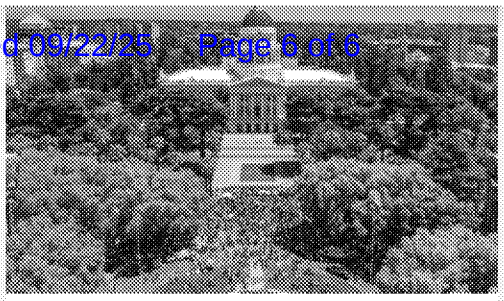

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Exhibit E

Propublica, "How Democrats Fooled California's Redistricting Commission," https://www.propublica.org/article/how-democrats-fooled-californias-redistricting-commission

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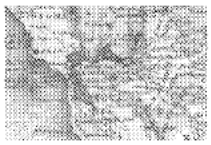
REDISTRICTING

How Democrats Fooled California's Redistricting Commission

To get the districts they wanted, Democrats organized groups that said they represented communities, but really represented the party.

by Olga Pierce and Jeff Larson, Dec. 21, 2011, 6:38 p.m. EST



REDISTRICTING
Opaque redistricting groups are being quietly bankrolled by corporations, unions and others to influence redistricting. They aim to help political allies — and in the process they're hurting voters.

This spring, a group of California Democrats gathered at a modern, airy office building just a few blocks from the U.S. Capitol. The meeting was House members only — no aides allowed — and the mission was seemingly impossible.

In previous years, the party had used its perennial control of California's state Legislature to draw district maps that protected Democratic incumbents. But in 2010, California voters put redistricting in the hands of a citizens' commission where decisions would be guided by public testimony and open debate.

The question facing House Democrats as they met to contemplate the state's new realities was delicate: How could they influence an avowedly nonpartisan process? Alexis Marks, a House aide who invited members to the meeting, warned the representatives that secrecy was paramount. "Never say anything AT ALL

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on Drinking Water Fluoridation — Even in the State Where It Started

contemplate the state's new realities was delicate: How could they influence an avowedly nonpartisan process? Alexis Marks, a House aide who invited members to the meeting, warned the representatives that secrecy was paramount. "Never say anything AT ALL about redistricting — no speculation, no predictions, NOTHING," Marks wrote in an email. "Anything can come back to haunt you."

In the weeks that followed, party leaders came up with a plan. Working with the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee — a national arm of the party that provides money and support to Democratic candidates — members were told to begin "strategizing about potential future district lines," according to another email.

The citizens' commission had pledged to create districts based on testimony from the communities themselves, not from parties or statewide political players. To get around that, Democrats surreptitiously enlisted local voters, elected officials, labor unions and community groups to testify in support of configurations that coincided with the party's interests.

When they appeared before the commission, those groups identified themselves as ordinary Californians and did not disclose their ties to the party. One woman who purported to represent the Asian community of the San Gabriel Valley was actually a lobbyist who grew up in rural Idaho, and lives in Sacramento.

In one instance, party operatives invented a local group to advocate for the Democrats' map.

California's Democratic representatives got much of what they wanted from the 2010 redistricting cycle, especially in the northern part of the state. "Every member of the Northern California Democratic Caucus has a ticket back to DC," said one enthusiastic memo written as the process was winding down. "This is a huge accomplishment that should be celebrated by advocates throughout the region."

Statewide, Democrats had been expected to gain at most a seat or two as a result of redistricting. But an internal party projection says that the Democrats will likely pick up six or seven seats in a state where the party's voter registrations have grown only marginally.

"Very little of this is due to demographic shifts," said Professor Doug Johnson, a fellow at the Rose Institute in Los Angeles. Republican areas actually had higher growth than Democratic ones. "By the numbers, Republicans should have held at least the same number of seats, but they lost."

As part of a national look at redistricting, ProPublica reconstructed the Democrats' stealth success in California, drawing on internal memos, emails, interviews with participants and map analysis. What emerges is a portrait of skilled political professionals armed with modern mapping software and detailed voter information who managed to replicate the results of the smoked-filled rooms of old.

The losers in this once-a-decade reshaping of the electoral map, experts say, were the state's voters. The intent of the citizens' commission was to directly link a lawmaker's political fate to the will of his or her constituents. But as ProPublica's review makes clear, Democratic incumbents are once again insulated from the will of the electorate.

Democrats acknowledge that they faced a challenge in getting the districts they wanted in densely populated, ethnically diverse Southern California. The citizen commission initially proposed districts that would have endangered the political futures of several Democratic incumbents. Fighting back, some Democrats gathered in Washington and discussed alternatives. These sessions were sometimes heated.

"There was horse-trading throughout the process," said one senior Democratic aide.

The revised districts were then presented to the commission by plausible-sounding witnesses who had personal ties to Democrats but did not disclose them.

Commissioners declined to discuss the details of specific districts, citing ongoing litigation. But several said in interviews that while they were aware of some attempts to mislead them, they felt they had defused the most egregious attempts.

"When you've got so many people reporting to you or making comments to you, some of them are going to be political shills," said commissioner Stanley Forbes, a farmer and bookstore owner. "We just had to do the best we could in determining what was for real and what wasn't."

Democrats acknowledge the meetings described in the emails, but said the gatherings "centered on" informing members about the process. In a statement to ProPublica, Rep. Zoe Lofgren, head of California's delegation, said that members, "as citizens of the state of California, were well within their rights to make comments and ensure that voices from communities of interest within their neighborhoods were heard by the Commission."

"The final product voted on by the Commission was entirely out of the hands of the Members," said Lofgren. "They, like any other Californian, were able to comment but had no control over the process."

"At no time did the Delegation draw up a statewide map," Lofgren said. (Read Lofgren's full statement.)

California's Republicans were hardly a factor. The national GOP stayed largely on the sidelines, and individual Republicans had limited success influencing the commission.

"Republicans didn't really do anything," said Johnson. "They were late to the party, and essentially non-entities in the redistricting process."

Fed-up voters create a commission

The once-a-decade redistricting process is supposed to ensure that every

the party, and essentially non-entities in the redistricting process."

Fed-up voters create a commission

The once-a-decade redistricting process is supposed to ensure that every citizen's vote counts equally.

In reality, politicians and parties working to advance their own interests often draw lines that make an individual's vote count less. They create districts dominated by one party or political viewpoint, protecting some candidates (typically incumbents) while dooming others. They can empower a community by grouping its voters in a single district, or disenfranchise it by zigging the lines just so.

Over the decades, few party bosses were better at protecting incumbents than California's Democrats. No Democratic incumbent has lost a Congressional election in the nation's most populous state since 2000.

As they drew the lines each decade, California's party bosses worked in secret. But the oddly shaped districts that emerged from those sessions were visible for all to see. Bruce Cain, a legendary mapmaker who now heads the University of California's Washington center, once drew an improbable-looking state assembly district that could not be traversed by car. (It crossed several impassable mountains.)

Cain proudly told the story of the district, which was set up for one of the governor's friends. Cain said he justified the odd shape by saying it pulled together the state's largest population of endangered condors. "It wasn't legitimate on any level," Cain recalled.

The 2010 ballot initiative giving the citizen commission authority over Congressional districts was sold to voters as a game changer. Not surprisingly, it was strenuously opposed by California's Democrats, who continue to control the Statehouse.

No fewer than 35 Democratic politicians — including Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi — and their allies spent a total of $7 million to campaign against the proposition. The effort included mailings from faux community groups that derided the commission's $1 million annual budget as "bureaucratic waste." Despite this effort, Californians voted 61 percent to 39 percent to wrest federal redistricting from the hands of state lawmakers.

Immediately, Democrats began organizing to influence the citizen commission. There were numerous opportunities.

According to civics textbooks, the aim of redistricting is to group "communities of interest" so that residents in a city, neighborhood or ethnic group wield political power by voting together. The commission took an expansive view of this concept, ultimately defining a "community of interest" as anything from a neighborhood to workers on the same commute, or even areas sharing "intense beach recreation."

This gave savvy players an opening to draw up maps that benefited one party or incumbent and then find — or concoct — "communities of

of interest" as anything from a neighborhood to workers on the same commute, or even areas sharing "intense beach recreation."

This gave savvy players an opening to draw up maps that benefited one party or incumbent and then find — or concoct — "communities of interest" that justified them.

Democrats set out to do exactly that.

On March 16, members of the California delegation gathered at Democratic Party offices to discuss how to handle redistricting. They agreed that congressmen from the various regions of California — North, South and Central — would meet separately to "create a plan of action," according to an email recounting the day's events by Alexis Marks, the House aide. Among the first tasks, Marks wrote, was determining "how to best organize communities of interest."

Democrats were already working "BEHIND THE SCENES" to "get info out" about candidates for the job of commission lawyer who were viewed as unfriendly. "I'll keep you in the loop, but do not broadcast," Marks wrote.

"The CA delegation has been broken down into regions that will be discussing redistricting at the member level," read another party email from late March. "Members will be asked to present ideas on both issues" — communities of interest and district lines — "and will be asked to come to some consensus about how to adopt a regional strategy for redistricting."

Over the next several weeks, California Democrats huddled with Mark Gersh, the party's top mapmaking guru. Officially, Gersh works with the Foundation for the Future, a nonprofit whose declared goal is "to help Democrats get organized for the fight of the decade; the fight that will determine Democratic fortunes in your state and in Washington, D.C. for years to come: Redistricting!"

The foundation is well funded for this fight. Its supporters include longtime supporters of the Democratic Party: the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees as well as the American Association for Justice (previously known as the Association of Trial Lawyers of America). The foundation was launched in 2006 when Nancy Pelosi's office worked with both groups to start it.

Neither Gersh nor participants would describe in detail what was discussed at the meetings. But from Marks' emails and other sources, it is clear that California's Democrats sat down together to discuss mutually agreeable districts that would protect incumbents.

The value of coordinating efforts to influence the commission cannot be overstated. If each Democrat battled separately for the best district, it was likely that one Congress member's gain would harm countless colleagues. Creating Congressional districts is a lot like a Rubik's cube: Each change reshapes the entire puzzle. The Democrats' plan was to deliver synchronized testimony that would herd the commission toward the desired outcomes. If it worked perfectly, the commissioners might not

likely that one Congress member's gain would harm countless colleagues.

Creating Congressional districts is a lot like a Rubik's cube: Each change reshapes the entire puzzle. The Democrats' plan was to deliver synchronized testimony that would herd the commission toward the desired outcomes. If it worked perfectly, the commissioners might not even know they had been influenced.

Over the summer, Marks sent out more than 100emails about redistricting, according to multiple recipients of the messages. According to House records, Marks earned $112,537 in 2010 in her post as deputy director of the California Democratic delegation. That makes her a federal employee. But although many of the messages were sent during the work day, a spokesman insisted Marks did so in her after-hours role as a political staffer for Democrats. They were sent from a Gmail account. Lofgren's office did not make Marks available for comment, citing policy that staffers do not speak on the record. Instead, they pointed to Rep. Lofgren's statement.

Federal employees are not allowed to do campaign work on government time, or use government resources, according to House ethics rules.

The emails alerted staff and legislators when the commission was scheduled to discuss their districts and they encouraged them to have allies testify to "community of interest" lines that supported their maps.

Marks told members they would be asked to raise money for a legal challenge if things didn't work out. The delegation, she said, was working with Marc Elias, who heads an organization called the National Democratic Redistricting Trust. (The trust shares a website with The Foundation for The Future.)

Last year the trust persuaded the Federal Election Commission to allow members to raise money for redistricting lawsuits without disclosing how the money was spent, how much was raised, and who had given it.

The commission blinds itself

Back in California, the commission was getting organized. Its first task was to pick commissioners. The ballot initiative excluded virtually anyone who had any previous political experience. Run for office? Worked as a staffer or consultant to a political campaign? Given more than $2,000 to a candidate in any year? "Cohabitated" for more than 30 days in the past year with anyone in the previous categories? You're barred.

More than 36,000 people applied. The state auditor's office winnowed the applicants to a group of 60 finalists. Each party was allowed to strike 12 applicants without explanation. Then, the state used Bingo-style bouncing balls in a cage to pick eight commissioners — three Republicans, three Democrats and two people whose registration read "decline to state" (California-speak for independent). The randomly selected commissioners then chose six from the remaining finalists to complete the panel.

The result was a commission that included, among others, a farmer, a homemaker, a sports doctor and an architect. Previous redistrictings had

(Californians Opted for Independent) The randomly selected commissioners then chose six from the remaining finalists to complete the panel.

The result was a commission that included, among others, a farmer, a homemaker, a sports doctor and an architect. Previous redistrictings had been executed by political pros with intimate knowledge of California's sprawling political geography. The commissioners had little of that expertise — and one of their first acts was to deprive themselves of the data that might have helped them spot partisan manipulation.

The law creating the commission barred it from considering incumbents' addresses, and instructed it not to draw districts for partisan reasons.

The commissioners decided to go further, agreeing not to even look at data that would tell them how prospective maps affected the fortunes of Democrats or Republicans. This left the commissioners effectively blind to the sort of influence the Democrats were planning.

One of the mapping consultants working for the commission warned that it would be difficult to competently draft district lines without party data. She was overruled.

The lack of political data was "liberating," said Forbes, the commissioner. "We had no one to please except ourselves, based on our best judgment."

"I think," he said, "we did a pretty good job."

The commission's judgments on how to draw lines, Forbes and others said, was based on the testimony from citizens about communities of interest.

"We were provided quite a number of maps from various organizations," said another commissioner, attorney Jodie Filkins-Webber. If the groups were basing their maps on political data to favor one party, "they certainly did not tell us that."

"Districts could have been drawn based on voter registration," Filkins-Webber said, "but we would never have known it."

The commission received a torrent of advice — a total of 30,000 separate pieces of testimony and documents. Records suggest the commission never developed an effective method for organizing it all. The testimony was kept in a jumble of handwritten notes and computer files. The commissioners were often left to recall testimony by memory.

The difficulties in digesting and weighing the reams of often-conflicting testimony enhanced the value of people or groups who came bearing draft maps.

"Other people offered testimony; we offered solutions," said Stuart Waldman, president of the Valley Industry and Commerce Association, a powerful business group outside Los Angeles that persuaded the commission to adopt its Congressional map for the San Fernando Valley.

How Democrats locked down Northern California

Redistricting is a chess game for people with superb spatial perception. Sometimes, anchoring a single line on a map can make everything fall into

commission to adopt its Congressional map for the San Fernando Valley.

How Democrats locked down Northern California

Redistricting is a chess game for people with superb spatial perception. Sometimes, anchoring a single line on a map can make everything fall into place.

According to an internal memo, Democrats recognized early on that they could protect nearly every incumbent in Northern California if they won a few key battles. First, they had to make sure no district crossed the Golden Gate Bridge.Then, they had to draw a new seat that pulled sufficient numbers of Democrats from Contra Costa County into a district that included Republicans from the San Joaquin Valley.

The man with the most to lose was Rep. Jerry McNerney, who represented an octopus-shaped district that had scooped in Democrats from the areas east of San Francisco. McNerney's prospects seemed particularly dismal. Early in the year, he made The Washington Post's national list of top 10 likely redistricting victims.

Republicans moved first, attempting to create a district that would keep San Joaquin County whole and pick up conservative territory to the south. But then a previously unknown group calling itself OneSanJoaquin entered the fray.

OneSanJoaquin described itself as a nonprofit, but records show it is not registered as such in any state. It has no identifiable leadership but it does have a Facebook page, called OneSanJoaquin, created by the Google account OneSanJoaquin.

The page was posted in early April, just as the commission began taking testimony. Its entries urged county residents to download maps and deliver pre-packaged testimony.

On the surface, the OneSanJoaquin page seemed to be serving Republicans' interests. But Democrats were one move ahead and understood that a united valley would inevitably lead to a Democratic-leaning district. (Republicans apparently did not understand that federal voting rights requirements ruled out their proposed district, since it would have interfered with the Latino district to the south. That misconception was encouraged by the maps on the OneSanJoaquin page, which were drawn to make this look possible.)

In fact, the only way to make a district with "one San Joaquin" was to pull in the Democrats in eastern Contra Costa — the far reaches of San Francisco's Bay-area liberals.

The author of OneSanJoaquin's maps was not identified on the Facebook page, but ProPublica has learned it was Paul Mitchell, a redistricting consultant hired by McNerney.

Transcripts show that more than a dozen people delivered or sent the canned testimony to the commission, which accepted it without question. There's no sign that commissioners were aware some of the letters had

consultant hired by McNerney.

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After the commission finished, McNerney announced he was moving to the newly created San Joaquin district to run for re-election. It was a huge improvement for him. In 2010, he barely won his district, beating his opponent by just one point. If the 2010 election were re-run in his new district, he would have won by seven points, according to the Democrats' internal analysis. (McNerney's office did not respond to requests for comment.)

Summing up the story, an internal Democratic memo said the GOP had been decisively out-maneuvered "Their hope was to create a Republican Congressional seat," the memo said. "Their plan backfired."

"McNerney ends up with safer district than before," Mitchell's firm tweeted, after McNerney announced his candidacy in his new district. "Wow! How did he do that?"

An under-funded commission

While players attempting to influence the process were well funded, the commission struggled with a lack of time and money. They responded, in part, by reducing citizens' opportunities for input.

The budget for the whole map drawing undertaking was just over $1 million. At first, the commission had its public hearings transcribed — then the money ran out and they stopped.

The commissioners received $300 per day as compensation and were eligible for reimbursement of travel and out of pocket expenses. Most kept their day jobs at the same time they tried to juggle their roles as commissioners.

It was a grueling schedule, with 35 public hearings taking place over just three months. "I had three days off between" April and August, said Commissioner Filkins-Webber, who maintained her legal practice while serving. "I was working basically on average18 hours a day."

The commissioners also had to deal with public anger. The Tea Party in California decided to use the hearings as a forum to protest the Voting Rights Act, for instance, and at one hearing got so rowdy that police intervened.

Experts hired by the commission to actually draw the maps were also overworked and underpaid. Half a dozen times the meeting transcripts contain references to map drawers working overnight to prepare maps.

Overwhelmed by the task at hand, the commission decided to essentially shut down public participation halfway through the process. After the first round of drafts, which were widely criticized and abandoned, the

contain references to map drawers working overnight to prepare maps.

Overwhelmed by the task at hand, the commission decided to essentially shut down public participation halfway through the process. After the first round of drafts, which were widely criticized and abandoned, the commission stopped releasing formal drafts. More importantly, commissioners stopped holding hearings, which meant the next draft was prepared without public input.

The commission moved its meetings to Sacramento, not far from where party bosses had once gathered in secret to set the lines. The commission's meetings were webcast to the public. But only those with the resources and time could participate.

"You have to ask yourself, who has the money to send people up to Sacramento like that," said Eugene Lee, voting rights project director at the Asian Pacific American Legal Center, which was active in organizing grassroots participation in the redistricting process.

"We didn't have the money to do that. No way."

The commission released no further drafts. In July, it made public a "draft final." Voters had two weeks to submit comments before it became final. Most of those comments came from insiders who had been closely watching the Sacramento meetings.

Southern California Democrats also win

For those who could stay engaged, the Sacramento phase of the commission's work proved rewarding. One politician who benefited was Southern California Congresswoman Judy Chu.

When it appeared that Chu would get an unfavorable district late in the game, a group with ties to the congresswoman went before the commission in Sacramento and convinced the commissioners to draw a favorable map that included her political stronghold, a town called Rosemead. Chu enjoyed broad support in Rosemead, where she was first elected to the school board in 1992 and later served in the state assembly.

The group, which called itself the Asian American Education Institute, worked with Paul Mitchell, the same consultant who helped engineer the triumph of Northern California Democrats.

Records show that crucial last-minute testimony in favor of Chu's district was delivered by Jennifer Wada, who told commissioners she was representing the institute and the overall Asian-American community. Wada did not mention that she lives and works as a registered lobbyist in Sacramento, 400 miles from the district, or that she grew up in rural Idaho, where most of her family still lives. Wada says she was hired by the institute to "convey their concerns about Asian and Pacific Islander representation" to the commission.

The second witness was Chris Chaffee, who said he was a consultant for the institute and an employee of Redistricting Partners, Mitchell's firm.

Commissioners accepted this map without asking a basic question: Who

representation" to the commission.

The second witness was Chris Chaffee, who said he was a consultant for the institute and an employee of Redistricting Partners, Mitchell's firm.

Commissioners accepted this map without asking a basic question: Who, exactly, was the Asian American Education Institute representing?

The group's tax records show it had no full-time employees. Its website is barebones, and clicking on the "get active" button on the home page leads nowhere, simply returning users to the home page.

There's another interesting feature of the Web site: the domain name is registered to a man named Bill Wong, a political consultant who has worked on multiple Chu campaigns, as well as her husband's successful bid for Judy Chu's old state assembly seat. Chu paid Wong $5,725 for consulting work in 2010, FEC records show. Her husband, Mike Eng, donated $4,500 to the Asian American Education Institute in 2010 and 2011.

The institute, said Wong, "argued to keep communities of interest together. Since Rep. Chu has been a strong advocate for Asian communities, it would make sense for her to represent them." Wong added that he "discussed redistricting with a number of Asian-American legislators."

An email obtained by ProPublica shows Amelia Wang, Chu's chief of staff, telling Chu and Bill Wong about testimony submitted by another Asian group, Coalition of Asian Pacific Americans for Fair Redistricting, which also intervened at the last minute to offer similar maps. In case that didn't do the trick, Mitchell himself went before the commission, urging the commissioners to accept the maps submitted by the institute (his employer) and the coalition.

And that's what the commission did, incorporating proposed lines for both groups and drawing a map that included Rosemead in Chu's new district.

Wang told ProPublica that Chu's office and the institute "did communicate about keeping communities of interest together, including Rosemead. However, Rep. Chu did not hire Bill Wong for redistricting or to testify on her behalf before the commission."

"Rep. Chu has represented a united Rosemead city since 2001," said Wang, "it would have been a tragic mistake to divide it."

Though the process turned out well for Chu, it didn't work out so well for the town of South El Monte.

To make room for Rosemead in Chu's district, South El Monte — 85 percent Latino — got bumped into another district across the mountains that is much less Latino, and much more affluent.

The town's mayor, Luis Aguinaga, say the new lines "don't make sense." South El Monte is now split off from sister communities in the San Gabriel Valley — including North El Monte and El Monte.

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"We're always on the same side, always fighting for the same issues," Aguinaga said. "On this side of the San Gabriel Valley we have a voice. If we're apart it will be much harder to be heard."

Other communities lost, too.

Outside Los Angeles, residents of what's known as Little Saigon begged the commission to undo what they saw as decades of discrimination and put the U.S.'s largest Vietnamese community together in one district. Instead, the community was split in two — a result of testimony by supporters of Rep. Loretta Sanchez, including a former staffer and one of her wedding guests, to get her a safe district. A large section of Little Saigon ended up in a district with Long Beach, a town that is 1 percent Vietnamese.

"Residents who live in Little Saigon share the same needs, but if they're in two different districts they may not be represented," said Tri Ta, a City Council member from the area.

"This district is characterized by the Port of Long Beach," the commission writes in its final report, "one of the world's busiest seaports and the area's largest employer."

"It does not make sense to put the area known as Little Saigon in a district with Long Beach," Ta said. "The two areas are distinctively different."

"Congresswoman Sanchez believed strongly throughout the redistricting process that the population growth of the Latino community should be accurately reflected in the newly drawn congressional districts," said Adrienne Elrod, Sanchez's Chief of Staff, in a statement, "She's glad that members of the Orange County community shared her views, and as a result, was pleased to see them take an active role."

Paul Mitchell, the consultant whose work had such a large impact on the commission's decisions, said voters benefited from the work done by him and others deeply involved in the process. The commissioners, he said, "knew some of the testimony was being fabricated by outside groups. But what were they to do? They couldn't create a screen of all testimony and ferret out all the biases."

The work he did on behalf of his diverse group of clients, he said, "created better maps — regardless of if they came with the additional benefit of helping some local city, union, or incumbent that was the client," Mitchell said.

"My only regret is that we didn't do more."

Correction, Dec. 21, 2011: *This story originally stated that the Asian population of Long Beach was less than 1 percent. It has been corrected to say that the Vietnamese population of Long Beach is 1 percent. The story also previously stated that Rep. Judy Chu previously served as a state senator. In fact, she served in the state assembly. This*

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Olga Pierce

Olga Pierce is a reporter at ProPublica, specializing in data-driven stories.

@olgapierce

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Jeff Larson was a reporter at ProPublica.

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The Hidden Hands in Redistricting: Corporations and Other Powerful Interests

Opaque redistricting groups are being quietly bankrolled by corporations, unions and others. They are working not to help voters in the communities they claim to represent but to improve the prospects of their political allies or to harm their enemies.

Florida's 3rd Congressional District

Congresswoman Corrine Brown, an African-American Democrat from Florida, represents one of the most irregularly shaped districts in the nation.

Fair Districts Mass Proposals

Fair Districts Mass says it is an independent group seeking better representation for minorities, but it has proposed maps that call its motives into question.

Video: The Redistricting Song

As part of our investigation into the reality of redistricting, we've created, yes, a music video.

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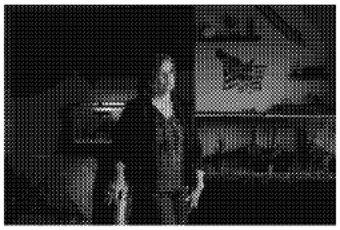

Psychiatric Hospitals Turn Away Patients Who Need Urgent Care. The Facilities Face Few Consequences.

Ohio Chaplain Freed From Jail as DHS Drops Deportation Case

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State Defendants' Response to Plaintiff-Intervenors' and TXNAACP Motion for Preliminary Injunction

Exhibit F

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Legislative Recap Sept. 19, 2025: **House Passes Continuing Resolution; Senate Continues to Weaken filibuster** »

Members of Congress / Illinois

Illinois

Illinois has **two** senators in the United States Senate and **17** representatives in the United States House of Representatives. Illinois is a state in the United States.

Senators | Representatives | Map of Congressional Districts

Representatives

The United States is divided into 435 congressional districts, each with a population of about 710,000 individuals. Each district elects a representative to the House of Representatives for a two-year term. Representatives are also called congressmen/congresswomen. Americans in the United States's six territories are represented in the House of Representatives by an additional six non-voting delegates.

Find your representative by entering your address:

Enter an address in Illinois | Find My District

I'm at home, use my phone/computer's location

Illinois's 17 representatives are:

Jonathan Jackson

Democrat
Since Jan. 3, 2023
View District Map

Robin Kelly

Democrat
Since April 9, 2013
View District Map

Delia Ramirez

Democrat
Since Jan. 3, 2023
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Jesús "Chuy" García

Democrat
Since Jan. 3, 2019
View District Map

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7 TAXES YOU DON'T PAY AFTER 65 →

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Jesús "Chuy" García

Democrat
Since Jan. 3, 2019
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Mike Quigley

Democrat
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Sean Casten

Democrat
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Danny Davis

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Raja Krishnamoorthi

Democrat
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Janice "Jan" Schakowsky

Democrat
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Bradley "Brad" Schneider

Democrat
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Bill Foster

Democrat

Mike Bost

Republican

Bill Foster

Democrat
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Mike Bost

Republican
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Nicole (Nikki) Budzinski

Democrat
Since Jan. 3, 2023
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Lauren Underwood

Democrat
Since Jan. 3, 2019
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Mary Miller

Republican
Since Jan. 3, 2021
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Darin LaHood

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Eric Sorensen

Democrat
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All representatives serve until the end of the current Congress on Jan. 3, 2027.

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1. 7 Taxes You **Don't Pay** After 65 ›

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Mary Miller

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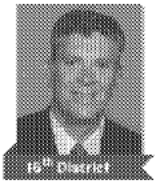

Darin LaHood

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2. **Check** Your Name for **Unclaimed** Funds
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State Defendants' Response to Plaintiff-Intervenors' and TXNAACP Motion for Preliminary Injunction

Exhibit G

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Kamala Harris wins Illinois

Updated Sept. 16, 2025, 3:40 p.m. UTC **2024 ELECTION RESULTS ›**

54.8% HARRIS ✓ **TRUMP 43.8%**

Updated Sept. 16, 2025, 3:37 p.m. UTC

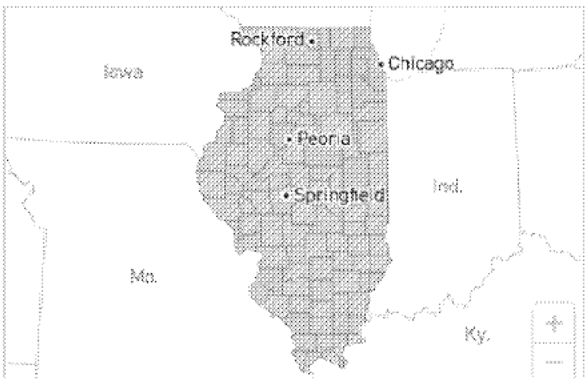
LIVE RESULTS

Illinois, Pres.

19 electoral votes — Dems held

	Votes	Pct.
✓ **Kamala Harris** (D)	**3,056,367**	**54.8%**
Donald Trump (R)	2,444,631	43.8
Robert Kennedy (Ind.)	80,152	1.4

99% of expected vote in



Updated March 14, 2025, 8:15 p.m. UTC

POLITICO LIVE BLOG ›

Follow along on our live blog as the election unfolds. Our reporters will be keeping tabs on all the important developments throughout the night.

- Meet the new members: The dealmaker caucus gets a needed jolt
- State of play: The battle for Congress
- Trump's low-key Senate partner in tax battles
- Mike Johnson asks House colleagues to back him for another term
- Another 2024 election loser: Ranked choice voting

Updated April 9, 2025, 7:07 p.m. UTC

HISTORICAL RESULTS

Presidential vote margins

Past presidential vote margins in Illinois, from more Democratic (left) to more

Case 3:21-cv-00259-DCG-JES-JVB Document 119-7 Filed 09/22/25 Page 4 of 6

Leading/Won Harris Trump

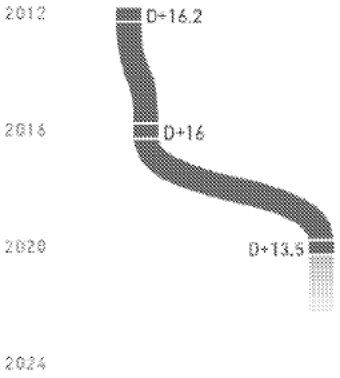
Updated Sept. 16, 2025, 3:40 p.m. UTC

FULL PRESIDENTIAL RESULTS »

226 DEM ✓ GOP 312

Presidential vote margins

Past presidential vote margins in Illinois, from more Democratic (left) to more Republican (right)



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Updated Sept. 16, 2025, 3:40 p.m. UTC

LIVE RESULTS

Presidential battlegrounds

Nov. 18, 2024, 2:14 a.m. UTC
Steve Shepard Politics editor

Trump won all seven battleground states — six of which had tipped against him in 2020.

NC, Pres. 16 EVs	GOP hold ▸
✓ Trump (R)	51.0%
Harris (D)	47.8
Others	1.2
99% in	

GA, Pres. 16 EVs	Flip ▸
✓ Trump (R)	50.7%
Harris (D)	48.5
Others	0.7
99% in	

PA, Pres. 19 EVs	Flip ▸
✓ Trump (R)	50.4%
Harris (D)	48.7
Others	1.0
99% in	

MI, Pres. 15 EVs	Flip ▸
✓ Trump (R)	49.7%
Harris (D)	48.3
Others	2.0
99% in	

AZ, Pres. 11 EVs	Flip ▸
✓ Trump (R)	52.2%
Harris (D)	46.7
Others	1.1
99% in	

NE-02, Pres. 1 EV	Dems hold ▸
✓ Harris (D)	51.6%
Trump (R)	47.0
Others	1.3
99% in	

Case 3:21-cv-00259-DCG-JES-JVB Document 1195-7 Filed 09/22/25 Page 5 of 6

Harris (D)	48.3	
Others	2.0	
	99% in	

Harris (D)	46.7	
Others	1.1	
	99% in	

Trump (R)	47.0	
Others	1.3	
	99% in	

NV, Pres. 6 EVs — Flip

✓ Trump (R)	50.6%
Harris (D)	47.5
Others	1.9
	99% in

WI, Pres. 10 EVs — Flip

✓ Trump (R)	49.7%
Harris (D)	48.8
Others	1.4
	99% in

Updated April 9, 2025, 7:07 p.m. UTC

LIVE | POLLS CLOSING ▸

All polls have closed

POLLS CLOSED NOV. 6, 2024, 6 A.M. UTC

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Updated March 14, 2025, 8:15 p.m. UTC

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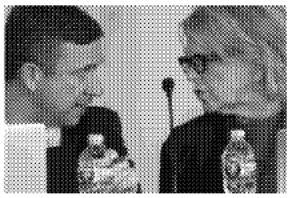
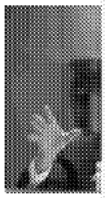
Democrat Marcy Kaptur holds hotly contested Ohio battleground district

BY NICHOLAS WU



Ken Martin jumps into race for DNC chair

BY HOLLY OTTERBEIN



DNC chai as Martin announce

BY LISA KA BRAKKTON

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Design & engineering: Aaron Albright, Abhinanda Bhattacharyya, Andrew Briz, Paula Friedrich, Andrew Milligan and Anna Wiederkehr

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NV, Pres. 6 EVs	Flip
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Updated April 9, 2025, 7:07 p.m. UTC

LIVE | POLLS CLOSING

All polls have closed

POLLS CLOSED NOV. 6, 2024, 6 A.M. UTC

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Updated March 14, 2025, 8:15 p.m. UTC

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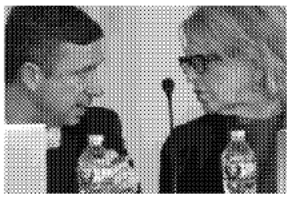
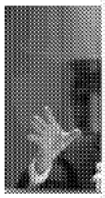
Democrat Marcy Kaptur holds hotly contested Ohio battleground district

BY NICHOLAS WU



Ken Martin jumps into race for DNC chair

BY HOLLY OTTERBEIN



DNC chai as Martin announce

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State Defendants' Response to Plaintiff-Intervenors' and TXNAACP Motion for Preliminary Injunction

Exhibit H

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The 10 Worst Gerrymandered States in the Country

Image generated by IVN staff.

Shawn Griffiths

Published: 18 Aug, 2025

7 min read

Monday marked another escalation in the mid-cycle redistricting fight between Republicans in Texas and Democrats in California – with one in another special session to add 5 more GOP seats, and the other maneuvering to counter this with 5 new Democratic seats.

All of this is for the 2026 midterm election cycle where a razor-thin majority in the U.S. House of Representatives is on the line.

Texas is doing this on the orders of President Donald Trump. California is responding on the orders of Governor Gavin Newsom. However, both efforts would create vastly lopsided congressional maps that do not represent how party affiliation breaks down in each state.

For example, if Texas lawmakers secure 5 more seats for the Republican Party, they will extend their majority in their

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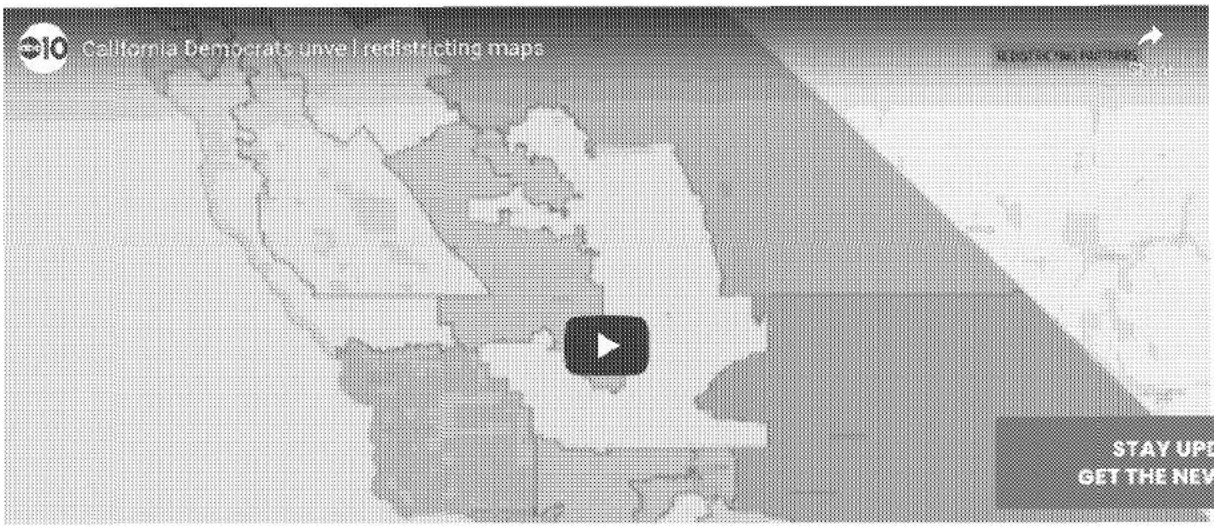
Newsom. However, both efforts would create vastly lopsided congressional maps that do not represent how party affiliation breaks down in each state.

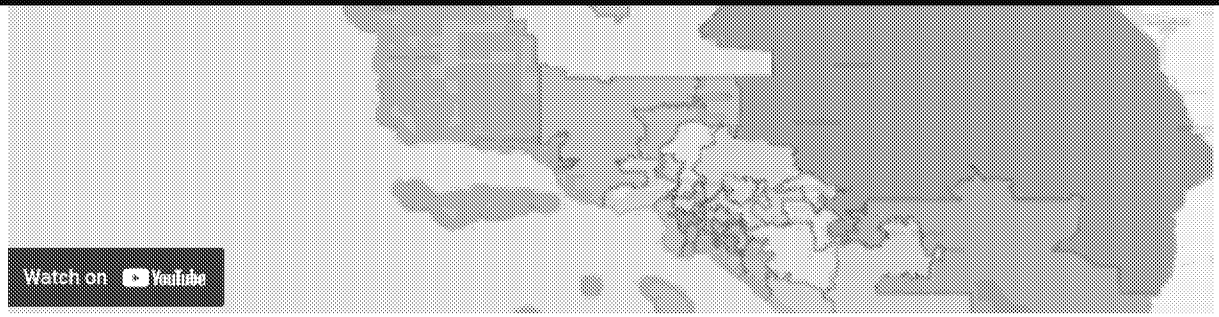
For example, if Texas lawmakers secure 5 more seats for the Republican Party, they will extend their majority in their U.S. House delegation from 65% to potentially 79%, and while President Trump believes he is entitled to these seats, he won Texas with 56% of the vote.

And, according to data modeling from the nonpartisan research group L2 Data, Republicans do not have the majority they think they have in the state.

Conversely, if California Democrats add 5 more seats to their numbers (assuming they keep any swing districts they currently hold), their majority in the state's U.S. House delegation will increase to 48 of the state's 52 seats (or 92.3%, up from 82.7%).

Former Vice President Kamala Harris won California in 2024 with 58.5% of the vote, and according to the latest voter registration numbers, Republicans make up 25.5% of the registered electorate.





In other words, Newsom – in the name of "protecting democracy" – would join Texas in having the most egregious gerrymanders in the U.S. until California's independent redistricting commission redraws maps again in 2031.

That is, if voters approve it at the ballot box.

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This has been called a "race to the bottom" by many better elections groups and reformers. No matter who wins, it ultimately is not about representation. It is about partisan gamesmanship.

The U.S. is Finally Talking About This Assault on Voters' Rights

There is no question that this all started with Trump calling on Texas Republicans to protect the GOP majority in the U.S. House – and because it's Trump, the media is covering the state-by-state redistricting in a way that doesn't make it sound normal for once.

Democrats condemn Texas Republicans for doing the bidding of the president. In response, Republ
pundits point to the way Democrats have unfairly drawn maps in states like Illinois and Maryland.

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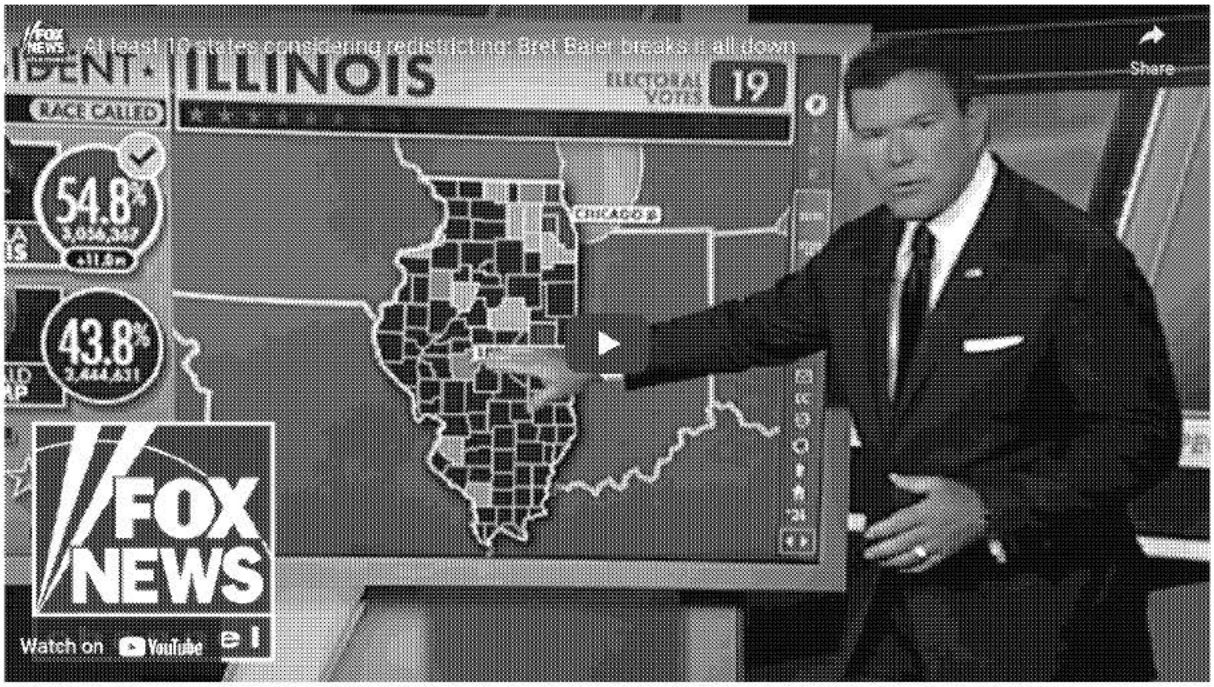
Democrats condemn Texas Republicans for doing the bidding of the president. In response, Republicans and pro-Trump pundits point to the way Democrats have unfairly drawn maps in states like Illinois and Maryland.

And in Maryland, this means Democrats have control of all but one of the state's 8 seats.

Both sides point the finger. They claim it's really the "other side" that has been unfair. Yet, for the first time, Democratic-leaning media and Republican-leaning media have devoted extensive coverage to the fact that both sides have denied voters accurate representation.



Illinois maps, for example, are just as bad as North Carolina maps.

For the first time, voters see coverage that makes it clear – this shouldn't be normal. Much of the conversation in the press focuses on vote share in the 2024 election, but it's worth noting that presidential votes do not equal a perfect proxy for congressional votes.

It can be a simple, comparable yardstick, but other factors matter like geography, incumbency, and candidate quality also matter.

LET US VOTE Everyone Pays for Primary Elections

The 10 Worst Gerrymandered States in 2025

The following list of the 10 most gerrymandered states is based on recent court decisions, academic analyses (like those from Princeton Gerrymandering Project and FairVote), and voter turnout data.

These states are considered among the most egregious due to how distorted their maps are in favor little competition exists in elections, and how badly maps reflect voter preferences.

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These states are considered among the most egregious due to how distorted their maps are in favor of one party, how little competition exists in elections, and how badly maps reflect voter preferences.

1. North Carolina

Why: North Carolina's congressional maps are notoriously gerrymandered in favor of Republicans. In 2022, Republicans won 71.43% of congressional seats despite receiving about 50.7% of the statewide vote.

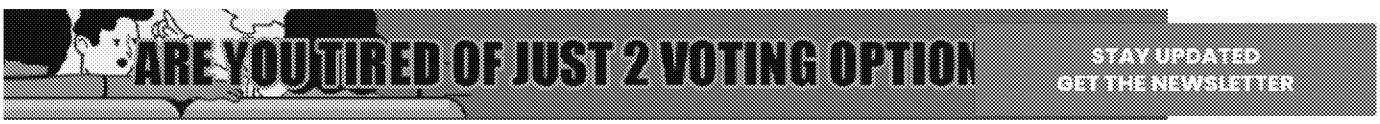
In 2024, Republicans won 50.86% of the statewide vote -- highlighting that congressional makeup should be about 50-50.

Key Issue: After a state Supreme Court flipped from Democratic to Republican control in 2023, it overturned a previous ruling that struck down partisan gerrymanders, greenlighting new maps that maximized GOP control.

2. Maryland

Why: Maryland Democrats have long drawn congressional maps that crack Republican voters into multiple Democratic-leaning districts. Democrats won 62.62% of the statewide vote in 2024 -- but hold all but one congressional seat (7 out of 8).

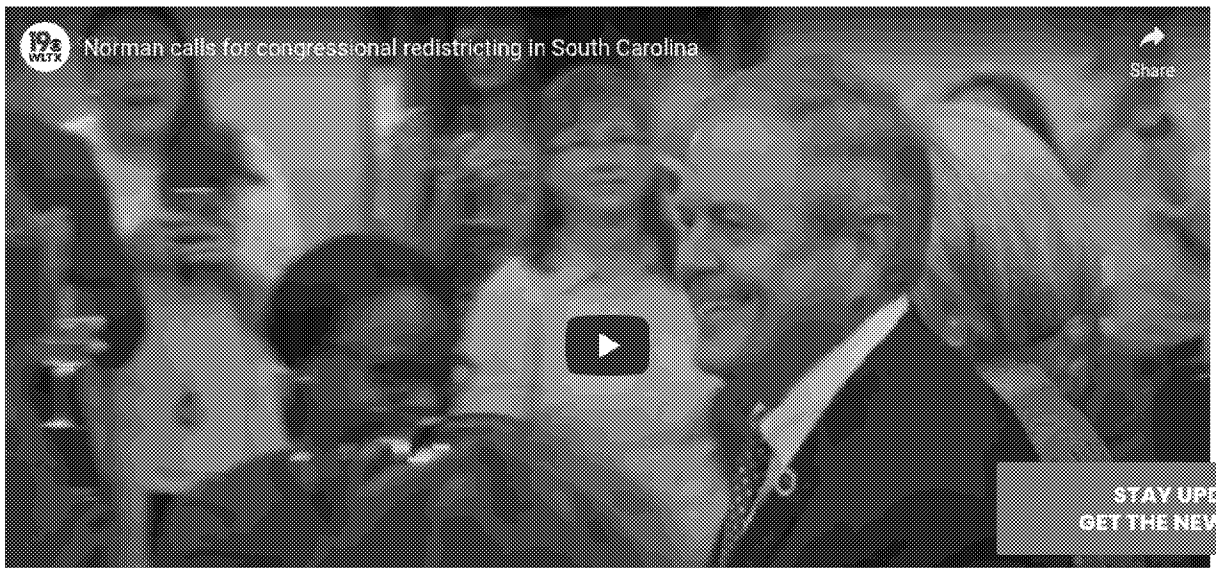
Key Issue: The 2022 map was so extreme that even a Democratic judge ordered it redrawn for being an "extreme gerrymander," but in response to redistricting in Texas. Maryland Democrats may try to take the only seat held by a Republican.



3. South Carolina

Why: With Republicans controlling the General Assembly, they've had a free hand to maximize their advantage. Republicans won 58.23% of the statewide vote in 2024. However, they hold all but one of the state's US House seats (6 of 7).

Key Issue: In *Alexander v. South Carolina State Conference of the NAACP (2024)*, the U.S. Supreme Court rejected a constitutional challenge to SC-01, which civil rights groups said was redrawn to kick Black voters out in order to give Republicans a safe seat.



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4. Illinois

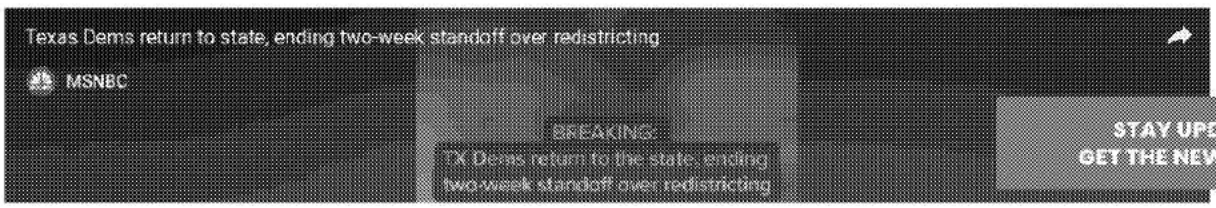
Why: Illinois Democrats drew maps that consolidated power by eliminating Republican seats through strategic district collapses and splits. Democrats won 54.37% of the 2024 statewide vote but hold 82.35% of seats (14 of 17).

Key Issue: Several Republican strongholds were "cracked" or merged to reduce GOP representation. The 2022 map was criticized for having only one truly competitive seat out of 17.

5. Texas

Why: Even before the current mid-cycle redistricting controversy, Texas was considered one of the worst gerrymandered states. Despite consecutive election cycles of close contests between Republicans and Democrats, Republicans control 65% of U.S. House seats.

Key Issue: Adding 5 Republican seats would extend this majority to 79%, even as nonpartisan data shows that Republicans do not even make up a majority of voters anymore.



6. Wisconsin

Why: For over a decade, Wisconsin Republicans have entrenched themselves in the state legislature with maps that protect their super-majority in the legislature and in Congress despite a near-even split between the two major parties at the ballot box.

Republicans won 49.70% of the statewide vote in 2024 and hold 75% of U.S. House seats (6 of 8).

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Key Issue: In 2018, Democrats won all statewide offices and 53% of the vote but only 36% of Assembly seats.

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7. New York

Why: Democrats tried to push through a heavily gerrymandered map in 2022, which was struck down by the courts. A court-appointed special master drew more balanced maps.

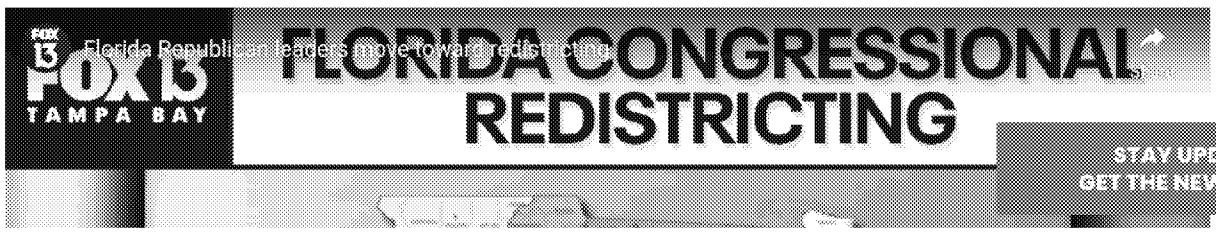
Key Issue: Democrats may follow California's lead and attempt another aggressive redraw for 2026. They currently hold 73% of seats, while they won 55.91% of the statewide vote in 2024.

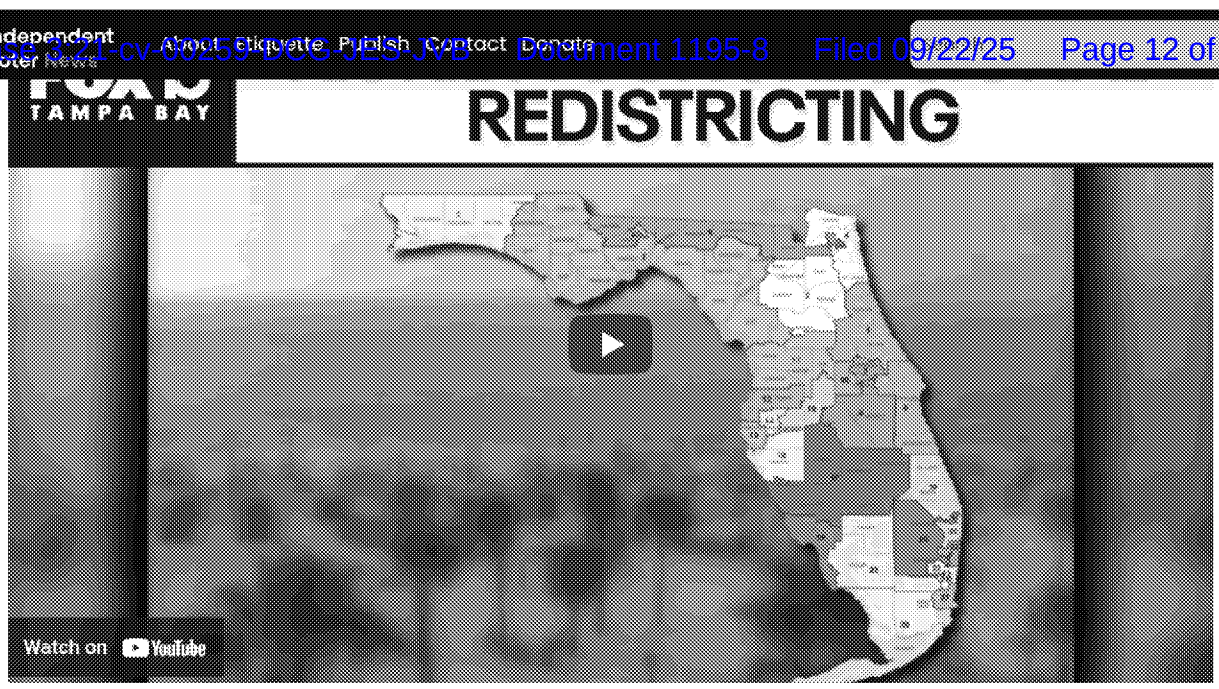
8. Florida

Why: Under Governor Ron DeSantis, Florida scrapped bipartisan compromise maps and adopted a plan that dismantled a Black-opportunity district in North Florida.

Key Issue: Courts have ruled DeSantis's map unconstitutional for racial discrimination, but enforcement has been delayed. The GOP-drawn map helped deliver 20 GOP House seats vs. 8 Democratic in 2022 (71.43%).

Republicans took 56% of the statewide vote in 2024. But the question is – will Florida join the mid-cycle redistricting battle?





9. Ohio

Why: Despite passing anti-gerrymandering constitutional amendments, Ohio Republicans drew maps that a bipartisan redistricting commission refused to make fair.

For example, Republicans took 55% of the vote in 2024 but hold two-thirds of U.S. House seats.

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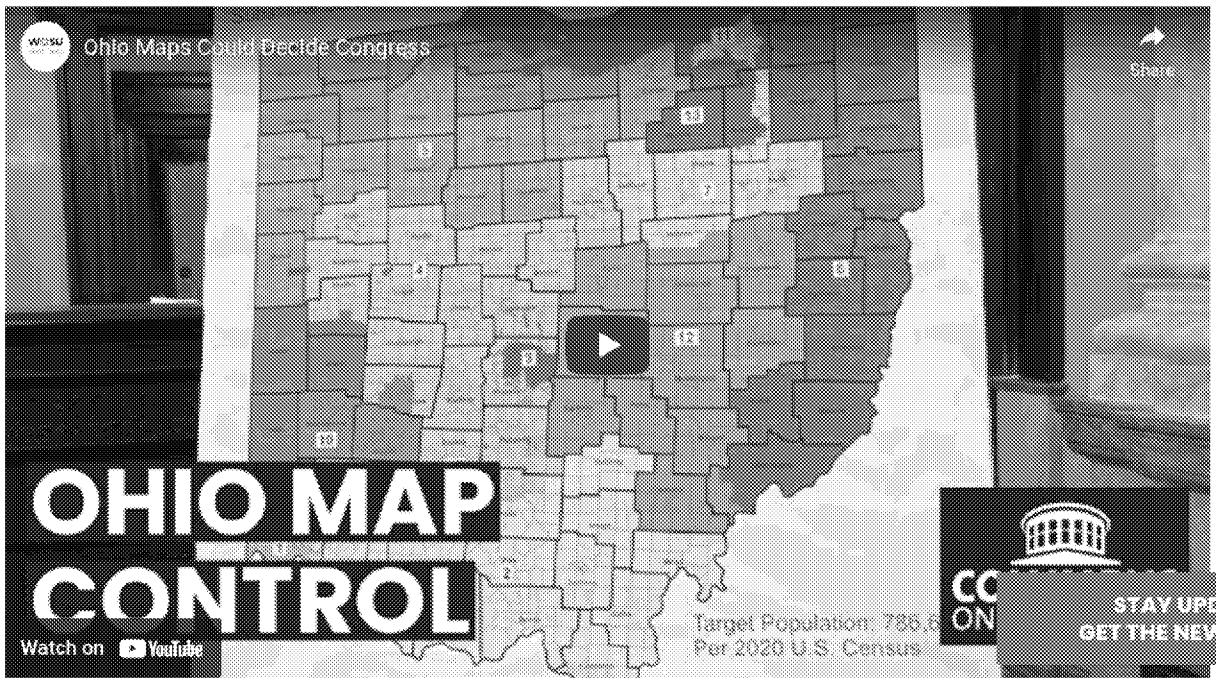
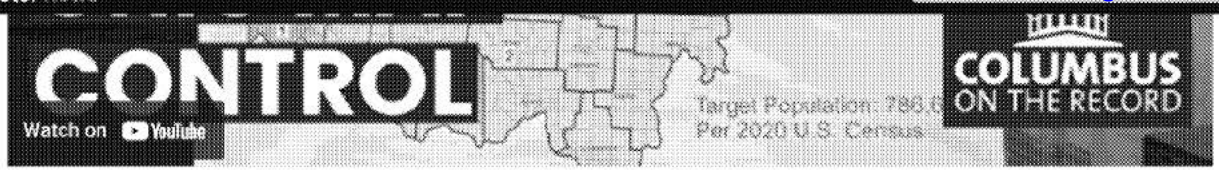
Key Issue: The state Supreme Court ruled 7 times that GOP-drawn maps were unconstitutional. Now, state lawmakers are considering new maps and some Republicans think the congressional map should be 12-3 in their favor.



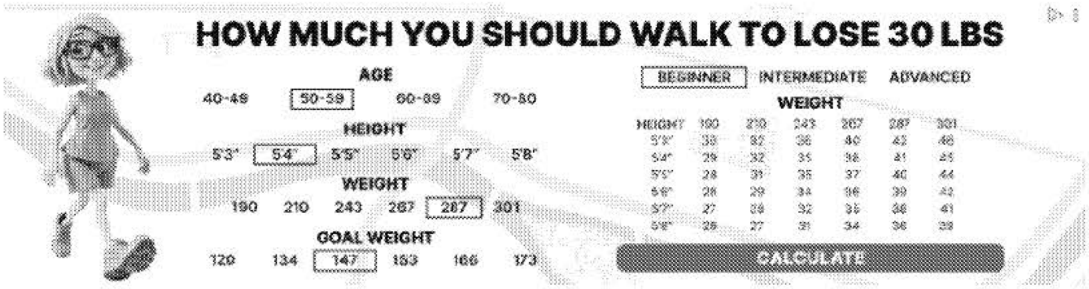


10. Nevada

Why: Nevada is one of the rare examples of a party winning a majority in a statewide vote, despite only holding a quarter of the state's congressional seats. Nevada is a competitive state due to its large independent voter population.

Key Issue: Republicans won 50.59% of the statewide vote in 2024, but hold only 25% of Nevada's U.S. seats (1 of 4). Nevada was the *only* state in 2024 where the party that carried the state for president won a minority of House seats.

Each election delivers a near equal split between the parties -- yet the congressional delegation is not divided 50-50.



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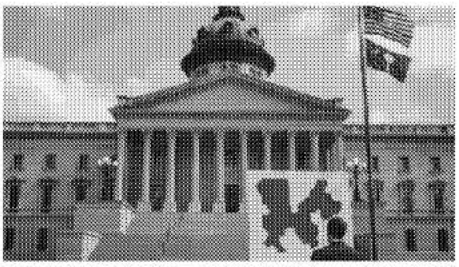

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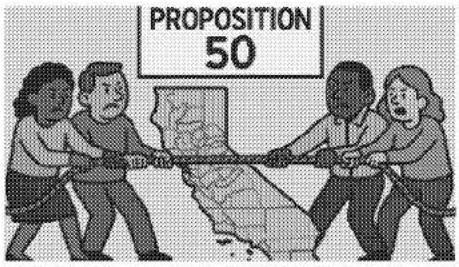

One of California's Biggest Unions Just Endorsed Prop 50; Promises Retribution for Medicaid Cuts

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Oklahoma GOP Fails To Block Open Primaries Initiative from Going Before Voters

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Forward Party Joins Petition to SCOTUS Against State of Florida

Right now, the divide between the Republican and Democratic Parties appears beyond repair. The political rhetoric is toxic, the nation's leadership puts party gain before lasting solutions, and few voters actually feel heard by the people elected to represent them. At a time when it seems things will only get worse from here, the Independent Voter Project filed an amicus brief with the U.S. Supreme Court along with Open Primaries and the Forward Party in support of a lawsuit that targets one of the biggest culprits behind all of this...

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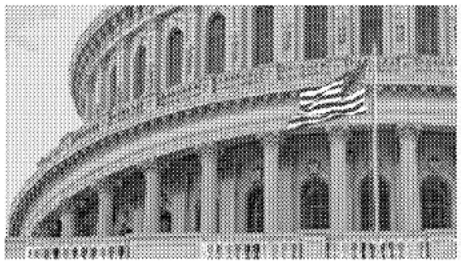

Poll: 82% of Americans Want Redistricting Done by Independent Commission, Not Politicians

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State Defendants' Response to Plaintiff-Intervenors' and TXNAACP Motion for Preliminary Injunction

Exhibit I

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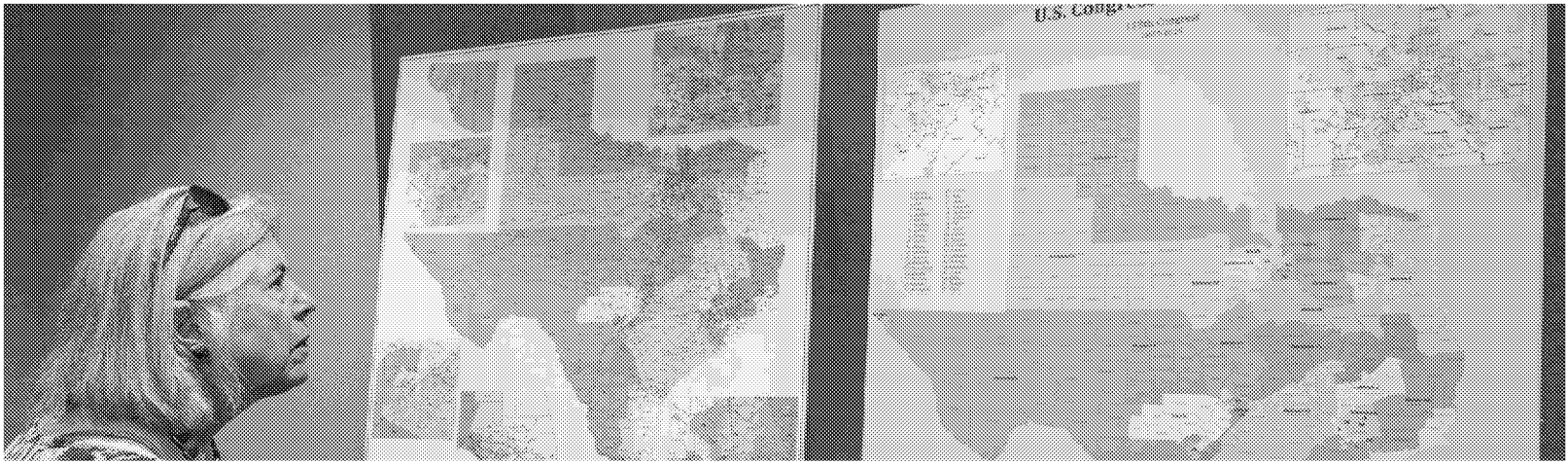

Explainer: Understanding the mid-decade redistricting push in Texas

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Powerful new techniques and a partisan environment are influencing co an HKS expert explains.

August 22, 2025

Republicans in Texas have proposed a remapping of congressional districts that has sparked conflict with state Democrats. The move is unusual, coming mid-decade rather than after a census, which occurs every ten years. The proposed map could give Republicans five seats currently held by Democrats and is ramping up partisan tension, with California Democrats now seeking to shore up their advantage in retaliatory redistricting in their state.

We asked Benjamin Schneer—an associate professor of public policy who studies politics and political representation—to explain what issues were involved in the unusual redistricting push in Texas.

Q: What exactly is the redistricting effort in Texas, and why is it getting so much attention?

In June, President Trump floated the idea of a mid-decade redistricting in Texas. The governor of Texas, Greg Abbott, has called a special session in Texas where they are redrawing the congressional district maps. The very plainly stated goal is to try to add five Republican congressional seats that will be won in the 2026 congressional election. The thinking is that the midterm election nationwide is going to be very competitive. For Republicans to hold onto a majority in the House of Representatives, every seat they can win will be valuable. And, so, adding five seats in Texas may prove to be the margin

Texas, Greg Abbott, has called a special session in Texas where they are redrawing the congressional district maps. The very plainly stated goal is to try to add five Republican congressional seats that will be won in the 2026 congressional election. The thinking is that the midterm election nationwide is going to be very competitive. For Republicans to hold onto a majority in the House of Representatives, every seat they can win will be valuable. And, so, adding five seats in Texas may prove to be the margin of victory to maintain a majority in the House.

This is a hot topic right now because it is somewhat unusual to do mid-decade or mid-cycle redistricting, especially when the idea seems to be floated by the president. Traditionally, redistricting takes place once a decade after the census. So, for example, Texas redrew their maps in 2021, and those maps have been in place for the 2022 and 2024 elections.

Q: Is that approach new?

I wouldn't say it's that new. It is particularly bold, but Republicans and Democrats have talked plainly about partisan gerrymandering for a long time.

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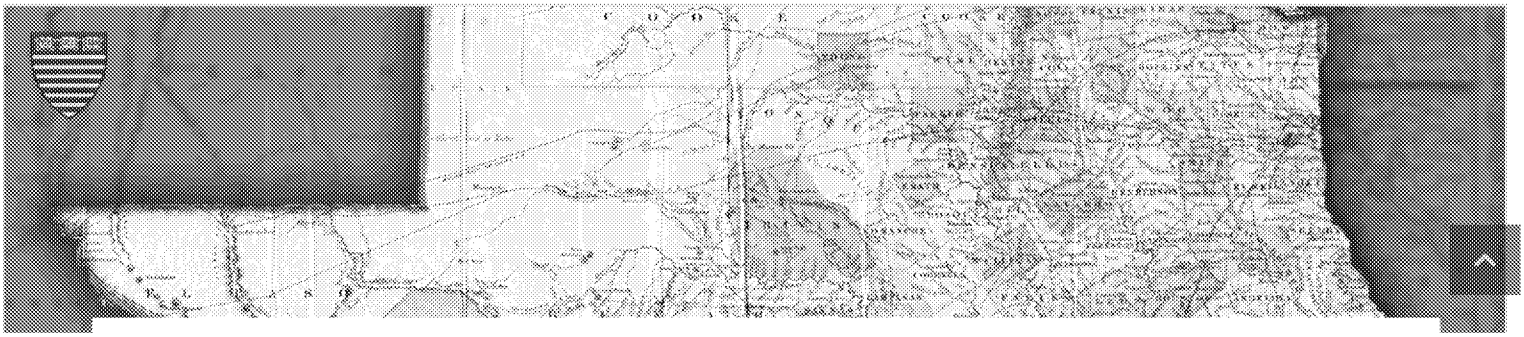
Q: Has it ever not been partisan to redistrict?

This goes to the question of whether there has been gerrymandering since the country's foundi
There have been instances throughout U.S. history where maps were drawn for a political purp
to advantage one party or another in elections. What's new about right now is the scale.
Gerrymandering can be done more effectively now because we have fine-grained data on the po
and on how people are likely to vote and computing techniques to design maps in clever ways. Put all that together with intense polarization and that creates a perfect storm where gerrymandering can flourish.

Q: What is gerrymandering, and why is it legal?

One definition of gerrymandering is when district maps are being drawn to grant a group or party an undue advantage. The specific type of advantage could differ from context to context, but generally it's going to give political power to a particular group or party.

The Supreme Court has found that gerrymandering cuts against democratic principles. However, they have said it's too hard to identify what is and is not a partisan gerrymander. There are states that have specific anti-gerrymandering language in their state constitutions, but at the federal level, there's very little chance that partisan gerrymandering will be countered by the courts.



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Q: Is the proposed Texas map gerrymandered? How would that be determined?

The current congressional map of Texas is already one of the most extreme gerrymanders in th States, and the new map is even more gerrymandered.

Political scientists can simulate maps subject to the constraints in the state. If you were to simulate all these maps not paying any attention to partisanship, what are the chances of getting a map that wins a particular party a certain number of seats? You can compare the enacted map to the range of maps generated randomly without looking at partisanship. When you do that for the Texas map, many more seats are for Republicans than what you would get on average if you just were randomly generating maps.

In Texas and in most of the country, Democrats tend to be clustered in metropolitan areas. So, another telltale sign of gerrymandering is a map with districts reaching into areas that tend to be suburban or rural, where there are a decent number of Republican voters and then reaching into cities and picking out smaller numbers of Democratic voters in the cities. That's known as cracking: taking voters from one party and moving them into a district where there are not enough of them to win in the district.

Another geographic indicator of gerrymandering is what's known as packing. That would be where you give one party a district that they're definitely going to win but put as many voters of that party as possible into that district so their votes are wasted. If you put everyone in one district, then they're not able to help win in other districts.

Q: In your research, you outline a concept called durable majority gerrymandering. Can you explain what that is?

The idea is to be able to put a number on the additional chances that a party has of holding onto a

Q: In your research, you outline a concept called durable majority gerrymandering. Can you explain what that is?

The idea is to be able to put a number on the additional chances that a party has of holding onto a majority in their state legislature due to the map that they've drawn, particularly compared to a neutral map. How much has a party increased their chances of holding onto power just through drawing this map? I developed this idea with a co-author, Max Palmer. The question we started with was, how would a party that was already a majority in a state legislature redraw their legislative districts to try to hold onto power despite a future electoral swing?

We developed tools to forecast elections and then compare the chances that a party would hold onto a majority in a neutrally drawn map that wasn't gerrymandered, in the actual map that the state produced, and in a map that was an optimal attempt at holding onto power. By comparing these three, you can see how the actual map stacks up in the ability of the majority to hold onto power with a majority in the state legislature despite any future electoral swing.

I would say the objective is slightly different for Texas in the congressional districting case. Th trying to just win as many seats as possible, whereas in the case of state legislative redistricting don't really care if you won 57% of the seats or 58% of the seats—you just want to get over 50%.

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"There have been instances throughout U.S. history where maps were drawn for a political purpose and to advantage one party or another in elections. What's new about right now is the scale."

Benjamin Schneer

Q: Is Texas using durable majority gerrymandering?

The way the concept of the durable majority gerrymander applies to Texas is that the map is drawn to continue to perform well for Republicans even if there are future vote swings that favor Democrats. So, for example, if in 2026 there's a swing from the 2024 election totals in Texas to, say, a 5 percentage point greater statewide vote for Democrats, Republicans will continue to hold on to maybe four or five of those new seats. The idea of durability is that it is impervious to swings against the party that drew the

The way the concept of the durable majority gerrymander applies to Texas is that the map is drawn to continue to perform well for Republicans even if there are future vote swings that favor Democrats. So, for example, if in 2026 there's a swing from the 2024 election totals in Texas to, say, a 5 percentage point greater statewide vote for Democrats, Republicans will continue to hold on to maybe four or five of those new seats. The idea of durability is that it is impervious to swings against the party that drew the map.

Q: What are potential solutions for making districting fairer?

Many states have already implemented solutions that help make districting fairer. States like California have independent redistricting commissions where essentially the process of map drawing is taken away from the state legislatures and vested in an independent body made up of some Republicans, some Democrats, and tie-breaking votes held by people not affiliated with either party. That's one approach that has proven generally to produce fairer maps.

Using the courts is another way. People have sued in states where there are fair districting principles. There are cases where a court might appoint a neutral arbiter or an independent map drawer. The idea is to take the map drawing out of the hands of the politicians in the legislature. Finally, there ar you can get partisan politicians in the state legislature to work on the map while still producing outcome. One idea that I've worked on is related to parties taking turns having input into the m process. If you structure that the right way, you can produce fair outcomes.

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—

A woman views a U.S. Congressional District map as the Senate Special Committee on Congressional Redistricting meets to hear invited testimony on Congressional plan C2308 at the Texas State Capitol on August 6, 2025 in Austin, Texas. Photo by Brandon Bell/Getty Images.

Faculty portrait by Martha Stewart.

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Q: What are potential solutions for making districting fairer?

Many states have already implemented solutions that help make districting fairer. States like California have independent redistricting commissions where essentially the process of map drawing is taken away from the state legislatures and vested in an independent body made up of some Republicans, some Democrats, and tie-breaking votes held by people not affiliated with either party. That's one approach that has proven generally to produce fairer maps.

Using the courts is another way. People have sued in states where there are fair districting principles. There are cases where a court might appoint a neutral arbiter or an independent map drawer. The idea is to take the map drawing out of the hands of the politicians in the legislature. Finally, there are ways you can get partisan politicians in the state legislature to work on the map while still producing a fair outcome. One idea that I've worked on is related to parties taking turns having input into the mapping process. If you structure that the right way, you can produce fair outcomes.

—

A woman views a U.S. Congressional District map as the Senate Special Committee on Congres Redistricting meets to hear invited testimony on Congressional plan C2308 at the Texas State on August 6, 2025 in Austin, Texas. Photo by Brandon Bell/Getty Images.

Faculty portrait by Martha Stewart.

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Exhibit J

https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/the-other-states-threatening-action-as-texas-and-californias-redistricting-feud-intensifies

The other states threatening action as Texas and California's redistricting feud intensifies

Politics Aug 14, 2025 6:19 PM EDT

A partisan move by Texas to redraw its congressional maps in the middle of the decade to secure five more GOP seats in the U.S. House set off a clamor to replicate the effort in red and blue states.

So far, though, only California has taken steps toward redistricting.

Changing congressional maps in a bid to ensure one party's victory over another — called gerrymandering — has typically been done more furtively. But President Donald Trump's call for Texas to redraw the maps to better ensure that Republicans retain control of the House in the 2026 elections has blown the lid off the practice.

Here is a rundown of what states are doing.

Texas kicked it off, then Democrats left the state

Dozens of Democratic lawmakers who left Texas and thereby halted the vote on redistricting moved closer to **ending their nearly two-week walkout** on Thursday.

They said they will return to Texas provided that California releases its own redrawn map proposal and Texas Republicans end the special legislative session, both of which are expected to happen Friday.

Past efforts by Democrats to abscond and deny Republicans a quorum similarly only delayed the passage of bills, but didn't quash them. And Gov. Gregg Abbott vowed to keep calling the Legislature back until enough lawmakers are present to pass the redistricting proposal. State Rep. Jon Rosenthal, a Democrat from Houston, told The Associated Press this week that their protest was about raising awareness.

"They may still pass these maps, but we're going to do everything we can to awaken America," he said.

California Democrats propose retaliation

In response to Texas, Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom announced Thursday that the state will move forward with redrawing congressional maps aimed at putting five more Democrats into the U.S. House.

WATCH: Newsom announces California is moving ahead on response to Texas redistricting

The proposed maps, which are expected to be released Friday, are an attempt to counterbalance Texas' and Trump's plan to add five Republican seats.

Newsom has been outspoken about retaliating if Texas's redistricting takes effect, telling Trump this week in a letter that the president was "playing with fire."

Unlike Texas, however, California has an independent commission that handles redistricting after the census each decade, which is typically when districts are reshaped to account for population shifts. Any changes would first need the approval of state lawmakers and voters.

State lawmakers plan to officially declare a special election next week.

Missouri Republicans take steps toward redistricting

At Trump's urging and partly in response to California's threats, Missouri's Republican majority is preparing for a special session on congressional redistricting

A document obtained by The Associated Press shows the state Senate has received a $46,000 invoice for software licenses and staff training for redistricting.

While Republican Gov. Mike Kehoe hasn't officially announced a special session, Republican House Majority Leader Alex Riley told the AP it is "pretty likely" to happen. Riley added that he has had discussions with White House staff about it.

Republicans hold six of Missouri's eight congressional seats. The party could target a Democratic-held district in Kansas City to pick up another seat.

In justifying the redistricting, Missouri Republicans accused neighboring Illinois of rigging its maps and pointed to a draft proposal circulating in California.

New York Democrats try to change state law

New York, similar to California, has an independent commission that changes the political maps only after every census. But state Democrats introduced legislation to allow mid-decade redistricting.

Democratic Gov. Kathy Hochul said that if Texas proceeds, "we must do the same."

But the soonest new maps could be in place would be for the 2028 elections. That is because the proposal would require an amendment to the state constitution, a change that would have to pass the Legislature twice and be approved by voters.

Wisconsin Democrats take a different tack

While Republicans control the Legislature, Democrats turned to the courts to try to force a redrawing of congressional district boundary lines before the 2026 midterms.

Two lawsuits were filed in July after the liberal-controlled Wisconsin Supreme Court — without explanation — previously declined to hear challenges directly.

Maryland Democrats promise a response to Texas

Maryland House Majority Leader David Moon, a Democrat, says he will sponsor legislation to trigger redistricting if Texas or any other state holds redistricting ahead of the census.

Florida's governor hints at support for redistricting

Republican state House Speaker Daniel Perez said his chamber will take up redistricting this year through a special committee. Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis has told the public to "stay tuned" and has reiterated his support for the state joining the redistricting fray.

Ohio must redraw its maps before the 2026 midterms

A law in Republican-led Ohio requires new political maps before the 2026 midterm elections. The GOP holds 10 of its 15 House seats already and could try to expand that edge.

Indiana's governor spoke with the vice president

Vice President JD Vance said he spoke with Republican Gov. Mike Braun last week, as the redistricting melee intensified, but both politicians remained mum about the discussions.

Braun, who would have to call a special session to draw new maps, has said he expects a "broad conversation" with legislative leaders on the move's constitutionality and said no commitments have been made.

Republicans face more limited possibilities of squeezing out another GOP seat in Indiana. Republican U.S. representatives outnumber Democrats 7-2 in the state already.

Kansas Republicans haven't ruled out redistricting

Republican state Senate President Ty Masterson didn't rule out trying to redraw the state's four congressional districts, one of which is held by the state's sole Democrat House representative.

The Legislature's GOP-supermajority could do so early next year, which would put the new lines in place before the June 1 candidate filing deadline.

Associated Press writers Anthony Izaguirre in Albany, New York, Holly Ramer in Concord, New Hampshire, Scott Bauer in Madison, Wisconsin, David Lieb in Jefferson City, Missouri, Isabella Volmert in Lansing, Michigan, and Brian Witte in Annapolis, Maryland, contributed to this report.

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By **Jesse Bedayn, Associated Press/ Report for America**

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https://www.hks.harvard.edu/faculty-research/policy-topics/politics/explainer-understanding-mid-decade-redistricting-push-texas

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Operating system:	Linux (Node 22.17.0)
PDF length:	3
Capture ID:	xeu8wQnr1Gwx7TAfKro54F
Display Name:	adrian.skinner

Benjamin Schneer

Associate Professor of Public Policy

Contact: Email
Assistant: Stacy Hannell
617-496-1477

Profile Selected Publications

Benjamin Schneer is an Assistant Professor of Public Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School. His research is in American politics and focuses primarily on political representation: how citizens express their preferences, how government responds to them, and what may shape and distort these processes. His most recent papers have studied just how much of an effect the media has on the national political conversation, the role that petitioning has played in American political development, and the returns to elected office based on future earnings from corporate board service and lobbying. His research has been published in journals including *Science*, the *American Journal of Political Science*, the *Journal of Politics*, and *Studies in American Political Development*and has received coverage in media outlets including the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Economist*, and *Fast Company*.

He received his Ph.D. in 2016 from the Department of Government at Harvard University. He received his B.A. in History and in Economics from Columbia University and an M.A. in Economics from Stanford University. Prior to joining the Kennedy School, he was an assistant professor in the Department of Political Science at Florida State University.

Additional information can be found on Professor Schneer's website.

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API-202M

Empirical Methods II
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Data Science for Politics
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from corporate board service and lobbying. His research has been published in journals including *Science*, the *American Journal of Political Science*, the *Journal of Politics*, and *Studies in American Political Development* and has received coverage in media outlets including the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Economist*, and *Fast Company*.

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CONTACT

Email
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https://x.com/brittanys/status/1947736642988523885?t=iVWobfgmJ_IjnDt9tvGI3Q&s=19

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Document title:	Brittany Shepherd on X: "NEW: Eric Holder, Hakeem Jeffries, Nancy Pelosi, Greg Casar and Gene Wu will hold a "grassroots emergency strategy call" on strategies to combat Texas Republican's efforts to redraw their congressional maps mid-decade tomorrow night, hosted by Holder's group, @DemRedistrict." / X
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Operating system:	Linux (Node 22.17.0)
PDF length:	2
Capture ID:	8KicZ53vyZRYvH3R9ssu1Y
Display Name:	adrian.skinner

Brittany Shepherd
@brittanys

NEW: Eric Holder, Hakeem Jeffries, Nancy Pelosi, Greg Casar and Gene Wu will hold a "grassroots emergency strategy call" on strategies to combat Texas Republican's efforts to redraw their congressional maps mid-decade tomorrow night, hosted by Holder's group, @DemRedistrict.

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https://x.com/RedistrictNet/status/1948133007417589767?t=iVWobfgmJ_IjnDt9tvGI3Q&s=19

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Document title:	The Redistrict Network on X: "#BREAKING: Former President Barack Obama will headline an August fundraiser in Martha's Vineyard for the the National Democratic Redistricting Committee. The dinner and discussion is in response to GOP efforts to redraw maps before the 2026 midterms. https://t.co/si6wqzEFcx" / X
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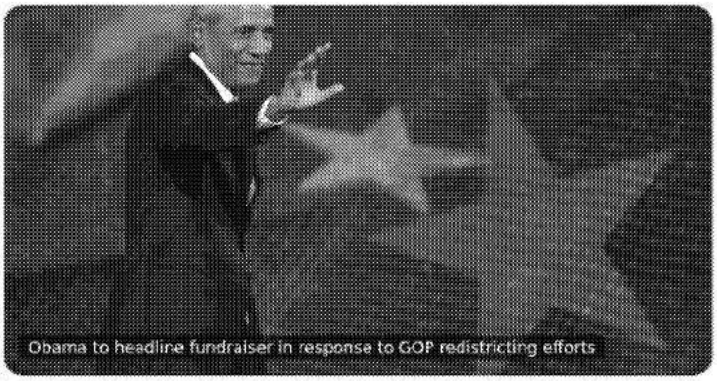
The Redistrict Network
@RedistrictNet

#BREAKING: Former President Barack Obama will headline an August fundraiser in Martha's Vineyard for the the National Democratic Redistricting Committee.

The dinner and discussion is in response to GOP efforts to redraw maps before the 2026 midterms.



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PageVault

Document title:	Brad Johnson on X: "Blue states are looking to redistrict in response to Texas' effort, but they've already been very effective at maximizing their hold on respective congressional delegations. Texas, which went more for incumbent protection in 2021, is actually behind the others proportionally. https://t.co/bUef8k5QgA" / X
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Display Name:	adrian.skinner

Post

Brad Johnson
@bradj_TX

Blue states are looking to redistrict in response to Texas' effort, but they've already been very effective at maximizing their hold on respective congressional delegations.

Texas, which went more for incumbent protection in 2021, is actually behind the others proportionally.

State	Partisan Leaning	Delegation Majority	Percentage
California	D-62%	43-9	82%
Florida	R-55%	20-8	71%
Illinois	D-56%	14-3	82%
Missouri	R-59%	6-2	75%
New York	D-58%	19-7	73%
Texas	R-58%	25-13	65%

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Document title:	Brad Johnson on X: ".@PhilKingTX just now in the #txlege redistricting hearing: "I wanna say right now, I don't think the map that is in place for Congress today is discriminatory. I don't agree with the DOJ letter, but I haven't seen their underlying facts to it. Wanted to state that. I believe the" / X
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Display Name:	adrian.skinner

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Brad Johnson
@bradj_TX

.@PhilKingTX just now in the #txlege redistricting hearing: "I wanna say right now, I don't think the map that is in place for Congress today is discriminatory. I don't agree with the DOJ letter, but I haven't seen their underlying facts to it. Wanted to state that. I believe the map I voted for in 2001 was a legal map. I think that testimony that I've seen in trial supports that. I certainly believe the testimony of Sen. Huffman supports that. But that doesn't mean that we don't have the right to take up redistricting if we choose to do so."

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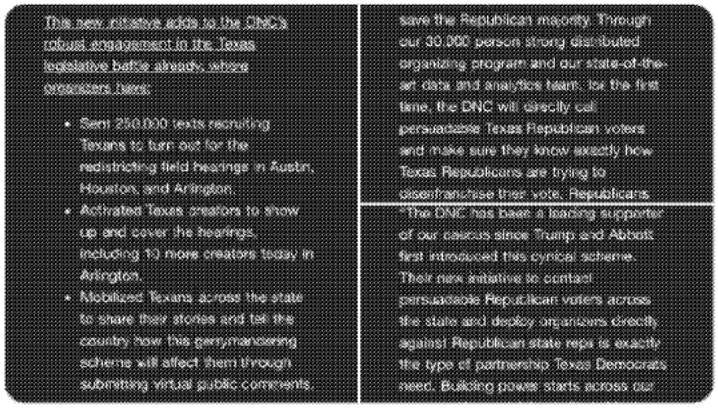
Brad Johnson
@bradj_TX

Inbox: The @DNC is ramping up its presence in Texas opposing the 89(1) congressional redistricting. #txlege



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PageVault

Document title:	Dave Wasserman on X: "Bottom line: it's clear what Republicans' strategy is here. Create as many solid Trump seats as possible while *increasing* the number of Hispanic-majority seats by population, even though Hispanic *voters* will be well south of 40% of the electorate in several of them." / X
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PDF length:	2
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Display Name:	adrian.skinner

Post

Dave Wasserman
@Redistrict

Bottom line: it's clear what Republicans' strategy is here. Create as many solid Trump seats as possible while *increasing* the number of Hispanic-majority seats by population, even though Hispanic *voters* will be well south of 40% of the electorate in several of them.

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Document title:	Dave Wasserman on X: "NEW: as expected, TX Republicans unveil a 30R-8D gerrymander (up from 25R-13D today) that puts Reps. Henry Cuellar (D) and Vicente Gonzalez (D) in double-digit Trump districts and axes one Dem seat each in DFW, Houston & Austin/San Antonio. https://t.co/WRRKgsHA4C" / X
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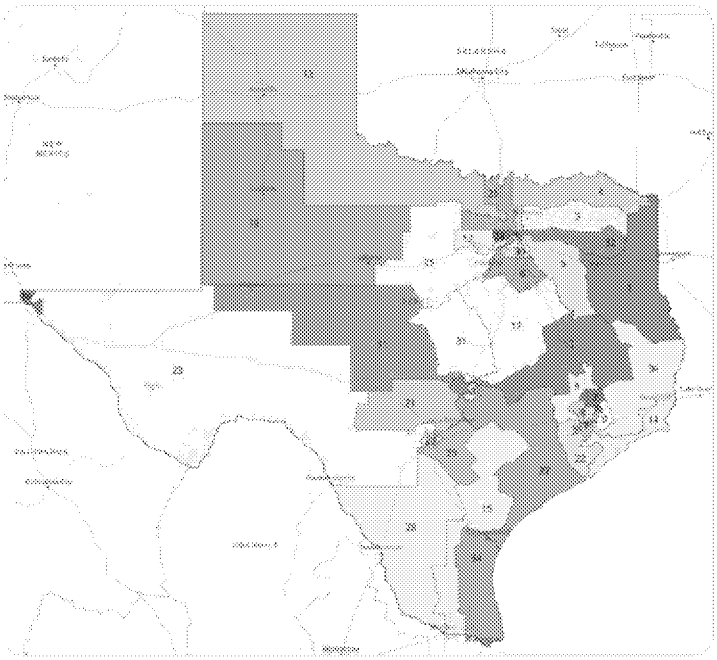
Dave Wasserman
@Redistrict

NEW: as expected, TX Republicans unveil a 30R-8D gerrymander (up from 25R-13D today) that puts Reps. Henry Cuellar (D) and Vicente Gonzalez (D) in double-digit Trump districts and axes one Dem seat each in DFW, Houston & Austin/San Antonio.



2:55 PM · Jul 30, 2025 · **715.7K** Views

457 920 3.1K 376

Read 457 replies

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Exhibit S

https://x.com/RyanChandlerTV/status/1951659747368718621?t=iVWobfgmJ_IjnDt9tvGI3Q&s=19

PageVault

Document title:	Ryan Chandler on X: "We can all drop the pretense about the motivations for TX redistricting. This is not about “constitutional concerns” like Gov. Abbott cited in the special session call. This is, nakedly and unapologetically, about power. Spoke with the redistricting chairman this morning: https://t.co/vZJddSjl84" / X
Capture URL:	https://x.com/RyanChandlerTV/status/1951659747368718621
Page loaded at (UTC):	Mon, 22 Sep 2025 16:02:40 GMT
Capture timestamp (UTC):	Mon, 22 Sep 2025 16:03:29 GMT
Capture tool:	10.61.0
Collection server IP:	54.145.42.72
Browser engine:	Mozilla/5.0 (X11; Linux x86_64) AppleWebKit/537.36 (KHTML, like Gecko) Chrome/138.0.7204.97 Safari/537.36
Operating system:	Linux (Node 22.17.0)
PDF length:	2
Capture ID:	eafZL9jH8XaKnLXEQEaeCM
Display Name:	adrian.skinner

Post

Ryan Chandler
@RyanChandlerTV

We can all drop the pretense about the motivations for TX redistricting. This is not about "constitutional concerns" like Gov. Abbott cited in the special session call. This is, nakedly and unapologetically, about power.

Spoke with the redistricting chairman this morning:

3:01 PM · Aug 2, 2025 · **103.4K** Views

51 192 360 42

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Exhibit T

https://x.com/KFILE/status/1952359281774191088?t=iVWobfgmJ_IjnDt9tvGI3Q&s=19

PageVault

Document title:	Andrew Kaczynski on X: "Was there nobody on the PR side who was like maybe we shouldn't go to one of the most corrupt gerrymandered states in the country?" / X
Capture URL:	https://x.com/KFILE/status/1952359281774191088?t=iVWobfgmJ_IjnDt9tvGI3Q&s=19
Page loaded at (UTC):	Mon, 22 Sep 2025 15:54:48 GMT
Capture timestamp (UTC):	Mon, 22 Sep 2025 15:55:45 GMT
Capture tool:	10.61.0
Collection server IP:	54.145.42.72
Browser engine:	Mozilla/5.0 (X11; Linux x86_64) AppleWebKit/537.36 (KHTML, like Gecko) Chrome/138.0.7204.97 Safari/537.36
Operating system:	Linux (Node 22.17.0)
PDF length:	2
Capture ID:	q76HZZXgv8ocFzDm2Gu3cY
Display Name:	adrian.skinner

Post

Andrew Kaczynski @KFILE

Was there nobody on the PR side who was like maybe we shouldn't go to one of the most corrupt gerrymandered states in the country?

> **Sheryl Cole** @SherylCole1 · Aug 3
> I'm heading to Chicago right now to stop this rigged-redistricting process.
>
> We can't allow Donald Trump and Greg Abbott to steal power from the people with these proposed congressional maps. ...

1:21 PM · Aug 4, 2025 · **394.4K** Views

490 1K 6K 110

Read 490 replies

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Exhibit U

https://x.com/BucyForTexas/status/1952201862595412379

PageVault

Document title:	Rep. John Bucy III on X: "We're breaking quorum because Donald Trump is trying to rig the election and cling to power. Texas Democrats are on the front lines in the fight to protect our democracy. We are not backing down. https://t.co/nRNFDwg4X9" / X
Capture URL:	https://x.com/BucyForTexas/status/1952201862595412379
Page loaded at (UTC):	Mon, 22 Sep 2025 15:51:03 GMT
Capture timestamp (UTC):	Mon, 22 Sep 2025 15:51:31 GMT
Capture tool:	10.61.0
Collection server IP:	54.145.42.72
Browser engine:	Mozilla/5.0 (X11; Linux x86_64) AppleWebKit/537.36 (KHTML, like Gecko) Chrome/138.0.7204.97 Safari/537.36
Operating system:	Linux (Node 22.17.0)
PDF length:	2
Capture ID:	98i6UnrMGny4XtxciSF7hG
Display Name:	adrian.skinner

Post

Rep. John Bucy III
@BucyForTexas

We're breaking quorum because Donald Trump is trying to rig the election and cling to power.

Texas Democrats are on the front lines in the fight to protect our democracy.

We are not backing down.

2:56 AM · Aug 4, 2025 · **57.1K** Views

875 462 1.7K 15

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Exhibit V

https://x.com/RedistrictNet/status/1952455855825170432?t=iVWobfgmJ_IjnDt9tvGI3Q&s=19

PageVault

Document title:	The Redistrict Network on X: "ABC News is reporting that there are California draft congressional maps and they are almost done." / X
Capture URL:	https://x.com/RedistrictNet/status/1952455855825170432?t=iVWobfgmJ_IjnDt9tvGI3Q&s=19
Page loaded at (UTC):	Mon, 22 Sep 2025 16:01:23 GMT
Capture timestamp (UTC):	Mon, 22 Sep 2025 16:02:07 GMT
Capture tool:	10.61.0
Collection server IP:	54.145.42.72
Browser engine:	Mozilla/5.0 (X11; Linux x86_64) AppleWebKit/537.36 (KHTML, like Gecko) Chrome/138.0.7204.97 Safari/537.36
Operating system:	Linux (Node 22.17.0)
PDF length:	2
Capture ID:	arx9MvbuGf7oKzxUh1kPxE
Display Name:	adrian.skinner

Post

The Redistrict Network
@RedistrictNet

ABC News is reporting that there are California draft congressional maps and they are almost done.

> **Monica Madden** @themonicamadden · Aug 4
> NEW: two congressional sources familiar with the matter tell me California Democrats are working on draft maps to punch back at Texas redistricting efforts. California's maps are "almost ready," and were discussed during last night's Zoom call with state + federal legislators.
> Show more

7:45 PM · Aug 4, 2025 · **24.1K** Views

5 48 315 29

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Exhibit W

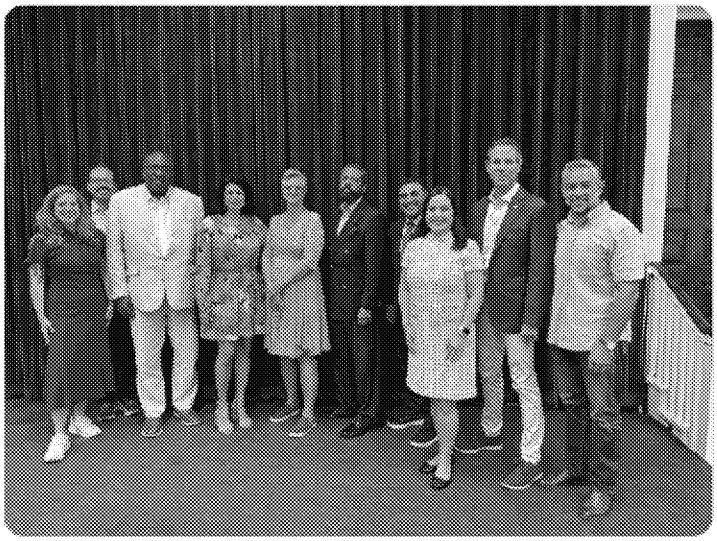
https://x.com/txsenatedem/status/1952823768998437357?t=iVWobfgmJ_IjnDt9tvGI3Q&s=19

PageVault

Document title:	Texas Senate Democratic Caucus on X: "Members of the Senate Democratic Caucus, Representatives Ana Hernandez and Armando Walle getting ready to meet with Massachusetts Gov Healey, Lt Gov Driscoll & Secretary Galvin #txlege https://t.co/KZX0BBoSmF" / X
Capture URL:	https://x.com/txsenatedem/status/1952823768998437357?t=iVWobfgmJ_IjnDt9tvGI3Q&s=19
Page loaded at (UTC):	Mon, 22 Sep 2025 16:06:05 GMT
Capture timestamp (UTC):	Mon, 22 Sep 2025 16:07:25 GMT
Capture tool:	10.61.0
Collection server IP:	54.145.42.72
Browser engine:	Mozilla/5.0 (X11; Linux x86_64) AppleWebKit/537.36 (KHTML, like Gecko) Chrome/138.0.7204.97 Safari/537.36
Operating system:	Linux (Node 22.17.0)
PDF length:	2
Capture ID:	p2N9mLfhzfE9TXtN6xq3Rd
Display Name:	adrian.skinner

Texas Senate Democratic Caucus
@txsenatedem

Members of the Senate Democratic Caucus, Representatives Ana Hernandez and Armando Walle getting ready to meet with Massachusetts Gov Healey, Lt Gov Driscoll & Secretary Galvin #txlege



Last edited 8:07 PM · Aug 5, 2025 · **10.1K** Views

71 35 84 5

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Exhibit X

https://x.com/TheTXVoice/status/1952421743362003370?t=iVWobfgmJ_IjnDt9tvGI3Q&s=19

PageVault

Document title:	The Texas Voice on X: "The National Democratic Redistricting Committee, led by former Obama Attorney General Eric Holder, is helping lead efforts against Texas' redistricting proposal. George Soros and personal injury trial lawyers are among those bankrolling Holder's group. https://t.co/feT8vcZkmK" / X
Capture URL:	https://x.com/TheTXVoice/status/1952421743362003370?t=iVWobfgmJ_IjnDt9tvGI3Q&s=19
Page loaded at (UTC):	Mon, 22 Sep 2025 16:05:05 GMT
Capture timestamp (UTC):	Mon, 22 Sep 2025 16:05:55 GMT
Capture tool:	10.61.0
Collection server IP:	54.145.42.72
Browser engine:	Mozilla/5.0 (X11; Linux x86_64) AppleWebKit/537.36 (KHTML, like Gecko) Chrome/138.0.7204.97 Safari/537.36
Operating system:	Linux (Node 22.17.0)
PDF length:	2
Capture ID:	2xBepVEWH5JwJgxT5fyRr5
Display Name:	adrian.skinner

Post

The Texas Voice
@TheTXVoice

The National Democratic Redistricting Committee, led by former Obama Attorney General Eric Holder, is helping lead efforts against Texas' redistricting proposal. George Soros and personal injury trial lawyers are among those bankrolling Holder's group.

From thetexasvoice.com

5:29 PM · Aug 4, 2025 · **209.3K** Views

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Document title: The Texas Voice on X: "The National Democratic Redistricting Committee, led by former Obama Attorney General Eric Holder, is helping lead effor…
Capture URL: https://x.com/TheTXVoice/status/1952421743362003370?t=iVWobfgmJ_IjnDt9tvGI3Q&s=19
Capture timestamp (UTC): Mon, 22 Sep 2025 16:05:55 GMT

State Defendants' Response to Plaintiff-Intervenors' and TXNAACP Motion for Preliminary Injunction

Exhibit Y

https://x.com/GerryCallahan/status/1952917306411237875?t=iVWobfgmJ_IjnDt9tvGI3Q&s=19

PageVault

Document title:	Gerry Callahan on X: "Oh no. Maura Healey says President Trump and Gov. Abbott have left her with no choice. She MUST gerrymander Massachusetts to get rid of all the Republican Reps. Spoiler: Massachusetts has no Republican Reps. https://t.co/t82PHYXr5i" / X
Capture URL:	https://x.com/GerryCallahan/status/1952917306411237875?t=iVWobfgmJ_IjnDt9tvGI3Q&s=19
Page loaded at (UTC):	Mon, 22 Sep 2025 15:54:11 GMT
Capture timestamp (UTC):	Mon, 22 Sep 2025 15:54:40 GMT
Capture tool:	10.61.0
Collection server IP:	54.145.42.72
Browser engine:	Mozilla/5.0 (X11; Linux x86_64) AppleWebKit/537.36 (KHTML, like Gecko) Chrome/138.0.7204.97 Safari/537.36
Operating system:	Linux (Node 22.17.0)
PDF length:	2
Capture ID:	kL2Z2Ub2p6c3XBNDFswWxe
Display Name:	adrian.skinner

Gerry Callahan
@GerryCallahan

Oh no. Maura Healey says President Trump and Gov. Abbott have left her with no choice.

She MUST gerrymander Massachusetts to get rid of all the Republican Reps.

Spoiler: Massachusetts has no Republican Reps.

From **Carlos Danger**

2:19 AM · Aug 6, 2025 · **2.1M** Views

3.2K 11K 46K 1.3K

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Exhibit Z

https://x.com/StevenDialFox4/status/1956085870001594630?t=iVWobfgmJ_IjnDt9tvGI3Q&s=19

PageVault

Document title:	Steven Dial on X: ".@TXGOPCaucus Chair @TomOliverson just told me "Texas could have and maybe should be more aggressive in redistricting than we initially proposed if this is the way it's going to be." This comes after California Gov. @GavinNewsom said his state will draw new lines. @FOX4" / X
Capture URL:	https://x.com/StevenDialFox4/status/1956085870001594630?t=iVWobfgmJ_IjnDt9tvGI3Q&s=19
Page loaded at (UTC):	Mon, 22 Sep 2025 16:04:22 GMT
Capture timestamp (UTC):	Mon, 22 Sep 2025 16:04:47 GMT
Capture tool:	10.61.0
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Operating system:	Linux (Node 22.17.0)
PDF length:	2
Capture ID:	9Qs9QM4xdWXvGq7pJPF1vB
Display Name:	adrian.skinner

Post

Steven Dial
@StevenDialFox4

.@TXGOPCaucus Chair @TomOliverson just told me "Texas could have and maybe should be more aggressive in redistricting than we initially proposed if this is the way it's going to be."
This comes after California Gov. @GavinNewsom said his state will draw new lines. @FOX4

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Capture URL: https://x.com/StevenDialFox4/status/1956085870001594630?t=iVWobfgmJ_IjnDt9tvGl3Q&s=19
Capture timestamp (UTC): Mon, 22 Sep 2025 16:04:47 GMT

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Exhibit AA

https://x.com/bradj_TX/status/1959308526318153847?t=iVWobfgmJ_IjnDt9tvGI3Q&s=19

PageVault

Document title:	Brad Johnson on X: "Inbox: @DanPatrick statement on the new congressional map's passage early this morning. #txlege https://t.co/yeV311KR5w" / X
Capture URL:	https://x.com/bradj_TX/status/1959308526318153847?t=iVWobfgmJ_IjnDt9tvGI3Q&s=19
Page loaded at (UTC):	Mon, 22 Sep 2025 15:49:19 GMT
Capture timestamp (UTC):	Mon, 22 Sep 2025 15:49:46 GMT
Capture tool:	10.61.0
Collection server IP:	54.145.42.72
Browser engine:	Mozilla/5.0 (X11; Linux x86_64) AppleWebKit/537.36 (KHTML, like Gecko) Chrome/138.0.7204.97 Safari/537.36
Operating system:	Linux (Node 22.17.0)
PDF length:	2
Capture ID:	rNruGB1RQ8nikoeFRujErq
Display Name:	adrian.skinner

Post

Brad Johnson
@bradj_TX

Inbox: @DanPatrick statement on the new congressional map's passage early this morning. #txlege

Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick Statement on the Passage of House Bill 4– Congressional Redistricting Map

AUSTIN – Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick issued the following statement today upon the Texas Senate's Passage of House Bill 4, the Congressional Redistricting Map, sponsored by Sen. Phil King, R-Weatherford, by a vote of 18-11:

After a two-week Democrat quorum break and other delays, HB 4, the Congressional Redistricting Map that adds 5 Republican majority districts, finally passed late last night.

"This is a significant step forward — Texas' Congressional Redistricting Map will now more accurately reflect our state. The people of Texas expect and deserve a Congress that represents their values," said Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick.

###

5:35 PM · Aug 23, 2025 · **2,689** Views

2 2 8 2

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Exhibit AB

https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/congressional-redistricting-trend-kick-started-trump-125655627

PageVault

Document title:	What to know about the congressional redistricting trend kick-started by Trump - ABC News
Capture URL:	https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/congressional-redistricting-trend-kick-started-trump-125655627
Page loaded at (UTC):	Mon, 22 Sep 2025 14:28:26 GMT
Capture timestamp (UTC):	Mon, 22 Sep 2025 14:29:19 GMT
Capture tool:	10.61.0
Collection server IP:	54.145.42.72
Browser engine:	Mozilla/5.0 (X11; Linux x86_64) AppleWebKit/537.36 (KHTML, like Gecko) Chrome/138.0.7204.97 Safari/537.36
Operating system:	Linux (Node 22.17.0)
PDF length:	8
Capture ID:	jeuCdsfU63Q1zbUXQYTJrX
Display Name:	adrian.skinner

Top Doctor: If You Eat Eggs Every Day, This Is What Happens

What to know about the congressional redistricting trend kick-started by Trump

President Donald Trump's call to redraw U.S. House districts before the 2026 elections has led to a wave of political maneuvering among state-level Republicans and Democrats

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press, MICHAEL R. BLOOD Associated Press, and JIM VERTUNO Associated Press
September 17, 2025, 11:29 AM

Headlines from ABC News Live Catch up on the developing stories making headlines.

First came Texas, then California, then Missouri. President Donald Trump's call to redraw U.S. House districts ahead of the 2026 elections has led to a wave of political maneuvering among state-level Republicans and Democrats that continues to unfold across the country.

Politicians are reshaping congressional voting districts — a task typically done just once a decade, after each census — in an effort to give their parties' candidates an edge in next year's elections. The stakes are high because Democrats need to gain just three seats to wrest control of the House from Republicans, who are trying to buck a historical pattern of the president's party losing seats in midterm elections.

The redistricting efforts have triggered protests, petition drives, ad campaigns and lawsuits.

Here's what to know about the redistricting battle.

Missouri became the latest state to take action when the Republican-led

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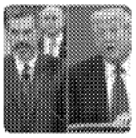
Trump poised to fire US attorney for resisting effort to charge NY AG: Sources
Sep 19, 9:44 PM

Acting CDC director says agency too involved in Americans' health decisions
Sep 17, 9:54 PM

Friend of former FBI Director James Comey subpoenaed in federal probe: Sources
Sep 17, 3:38 PM

Charlie Kirk leaves behind wife, 2 kids: What to know
Sep 18, 5:07 PM

Here's what to know about the redistricting battle.

Missouri became the latest state to take action when the Republican Legislature last week brushed aside Democratic objections and passed U.S. House districts aimed at helping Republicans win seven of the state's eight districts, one more than they currently hold. Republicans are targeting Democratic Rep. Emanuel Cleaver by shifting portions of his Kansas City district into neighboring ones and stretching the remainder into rural Republican areas.

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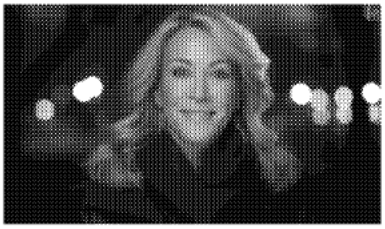
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Republican Gov. Mike Kehoe has said he will sign the measure into law soon. Opponents already have begun gathering petition signatures seeking to force a statewide referendum on the new map. They have until Dec. 11 to submit around 110,000 valid signatures, which would put the map on hold until a public vote.

A referendum normally would occur in November 2026 — too late to use the districts in that same election. But state lawmakers could set an earlier referendum, potentially coinciding with April 7 municipal elections.

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Californians are seeing a steady stream of TV and mail ads aimed at undecided voters in advance of a Nov. 4 referendum on new U.S. House districts. The proposal, backed by Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom and Democratic state lawmakers, is intended to help Democrats win five additional seats in California to offset Trump's moves in Texas to try to gain five Republican districts.

In one TV ad from Newsom, a narrator intones: "Save democracy." Newsom has largely presented the election as a referendum on Trump — who is widely unpopular in the state outside of his loyal conservative base — while avoiding technical discussions about reshaping districts. Teachers, nurses and other labor groups have been among the largest donors to Newsom's committee.

Here's what to know about the redistricting battle.

Missouri became the latest state to take action when the Republican-led Legislature last week brushed aside Democratic objections and passed new U.S. House districts aimed at helping Republicans win seven of the state's eight districts, one more than they currently hold. Republicans are targeting Democratic Rep. Emanuel Cleaver by shifting portions of his Kansas City district into neighboring ones and stretching the remainder into rural Republican areas.

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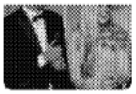
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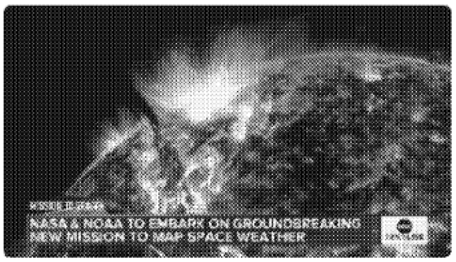

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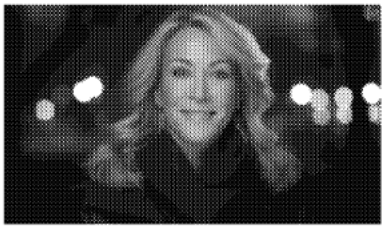

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In Houston, longtime Democratic Rep. Al Green has said he intends to run next year but hasn't said whether he will do so in his current redrawn district that now favors Republicans or try to move to a new, majority-Black district that currently lacks an incumbent.

In the Dallas area, Democratic Reps. Jasmine Crockett, Marc Veasey and Julie Johnson's current districts are being squeezed into two.

Pressure from Trump to redraw House districts has been mounting on Indiana Republicans. Gov. Mike Braun, a Republican, said Tuesday that a legislative session on redistricting probably will happen, and it could come as soon as November.

Ohio and Utah also could have new congressional maps by then.

A Utah judge last month struck down the House districts adopted after the 2020 census because the Republican-led Legislature circumvented an independent redistricting commission established by voters. The Legislature faces a Sept. 25 target to release a new proposal for public comment, with a final vote expected in October and court approval of a new map in November.

Ohio's constitution requires new House districts because the ones adopted after the 2020 census didn't have sufficient bipartisan support. If bipartisan consensus remains elusive, Republican lawmakers in November could adopt revised districts without need of any Democratic votes.

Elected leaders in other states also are considering mid-decade redistricting, including Republicans in Florida and Kansas and Democrats in Maryland and New York.

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The push to redraw districts for partisan advantage — a process known as gerrymandering — is unfolding during a time of unusual political balance in Congress.

The 220-215 House majority that Republicans won over Democrats in the 2024 elections aligns almost perfectly with the share of the vote the two parties received in districts across the U.S., according to a recent Associated Press analysis.

Although Democrats and Republicans each benefited from the way districts were drawn in particular states, those advantages essentially canceled each other out. When adding results from all states, the AP's analysis showed that Democrats nationwide won just a fraction of a seat more than expected last year. Because congressional seats aren't allotted by fractions, the net result was that each party's share of House seats corresponded with their share of the votes.

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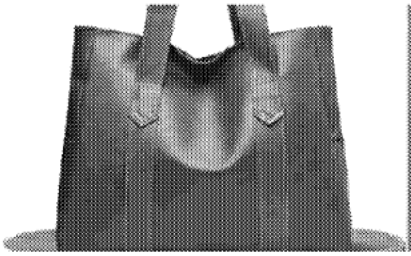
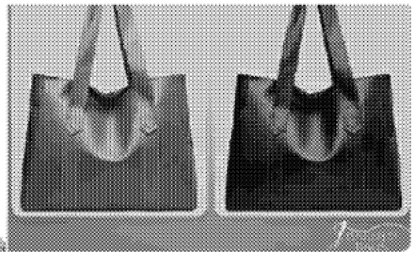

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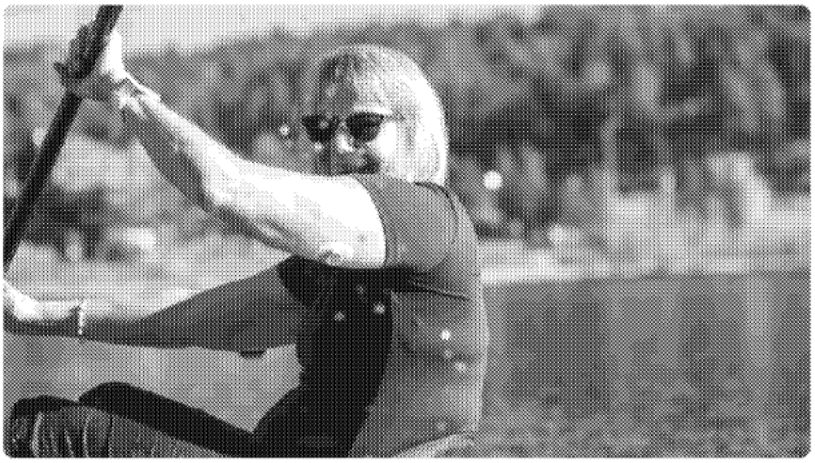

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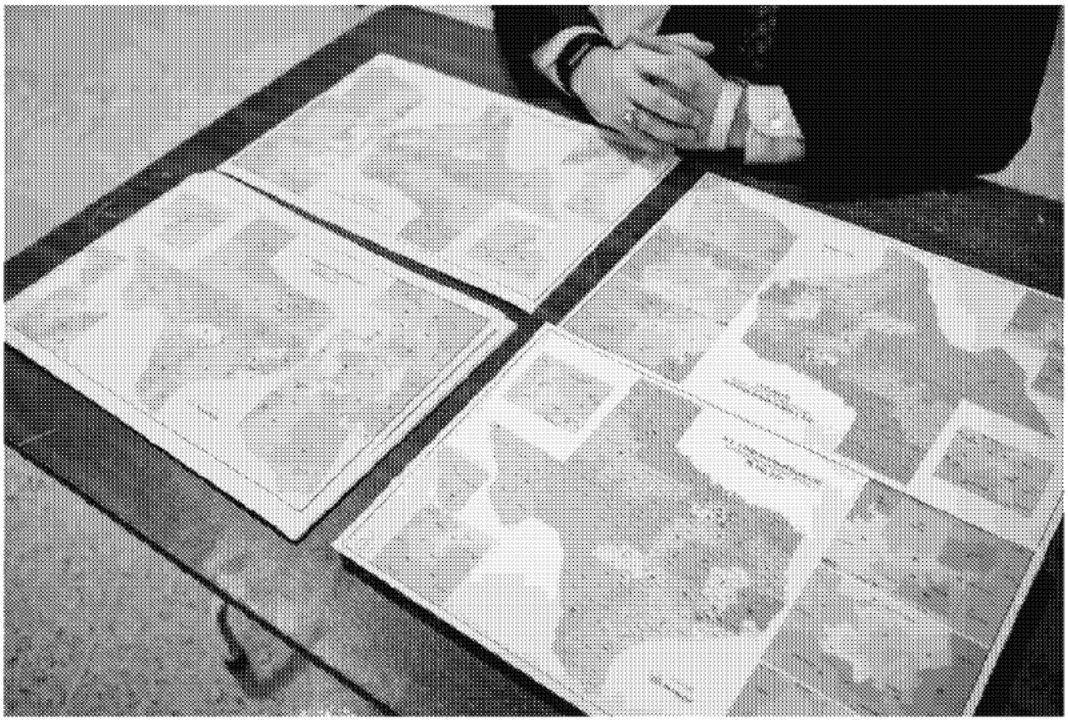
REDISTRICTING TEXAS 2025

Trump aides want Texas to redraw its congressional maps to boost the GOP. What would that mean?

> The plan would shift voters from safely red districts into blue ones. Members of the state's Republican delegation aren't sold on the idea.

BY OWEN DANIELKAMP, THE TEXAS TRIBUNE, AND NATALIA CONTRERAS, VOTEBEAT AND THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

JUNE 11, 2025 5 AM CENTRAL



Proposed drafts of Texas' redrawn congressional districts outside the Senate chamber in the Texas Capitol in Austin on Sept. 30, 2021.
Dimitri Stazewski for The Texas Tribune

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Republicans representing Texas in Congress are considering this week whether to push their state Legislature to take the unusual step of redrawing district lines to shore up the GOP's advantage in the U.S. House.

But the contours of the plan, including whether Gov. Greg Abbott would call a special

Republicans representing Texas in Congress are considering this week whether to push their state Legislature to take the unusual step of redrawing district lines to shore up the GOP's advantage in the U.S. House.

But the contours of the plan, including whether Gov. Greg Abbott would call a special session of the Legislature to redraw the maps, remain largely uncertain.

The idea is being driven by President Donald Trump's political advisers, who want to draw up new maps that would give Republicans a better chance to flip seats currently held by Democrats, according to two GOP congressional aides familiar with the matter. That proposal, which would involve shifting GOP voters from safely red districts into neighboring blue ones, is aimed at safeguarding Republicans' thin majority in Congress, where they control the lower chamber, 220-212.

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The redistricting proposal, and the Trump team's role in pushing it, was first reported by The New York Times Monday.

Without a Republican majority in Congress, Trump's legislative agenda would likely stall, and the president could face investigations from newly empowered Democratic committee chairs intent on scrutinizing the White House.

Here's what we know about the plan so far:

How do Texans in Congress feel about the proposal?

On Capitol Hill, members of the Texas GOP delegation huddled Monday night to discuss the prospect of reshaping their districts. Most of the 25-member group expressed reluctance about the idea, citing concerns about jeopardizing their districts in next year's midterms if the new maps overextended the GOP's advantage, according to the two GOP aides, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the private deliberations.

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Rep. Jodey Arrington, R-Lubbock, was skeptical of the idea

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Rep. Jodey Arrington, R-Lubbock, was skeptical of the idea.

"We just recently worked on the new maps," Arrington told The Texas Tribune. To reopen the process, he said, "there'd have to be a significant benefit to our state."

The delegation has yet to be presented with mockups of new maps, two aides said.

Is a midcycle redistricting like this legal?

Each state's political maps must be redrawn once a decade, after each round of the U.S. census, to account for population growth and ensure every congressional and legislative district has roughly the same number of people. Texas lawmakers last overhauled their district lines in 2021.

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There's no federal law that prohibits states from redrawing district maps midcycle, said Justin Levitt, an election law professor at Loyola Marymount University and a former deputy assistant attorney general in the Department of Justice's civil rights division. Laws around the timing to redraw congressional and state district maps vary by state. In Texas, the state constitution doesn't specify timing, so the redrawing of maps is left to the discretion of the governor and the Legislature.

Lawmakers gaveled out of their 140-day regular session last week, meaning they would need to be called back for a special session to change the state's political maps. Abbott has the sole authority to order overtime sessions and decide what lawmakers are allowed to consider.

If Texas redraws its maps, what would it mean for the ongoing lawsuit over the existing maps?

A trial is underway in El Paso in a long-running challenge to the state legislative and congressional district maps Texas drew after the 2020 U.S. Census.

If Texas redraws its congressional maps, state officials would then ask the court to toss the claims challenging those districts "that no longer exist," Levitt said. The portion of the case over the state legislative district maps would continue.

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If the judge agrees, then both parties would have to file new legal claims for the updated maps.

How would this move affect Texas voters?

It isn't clear how much maps could change, but voters could find themselves in new districts, and Levitt said redrawing the lines in the middle of the redistricting cycle is a bad idea.

"If the people of Texas think that their representatives have done a bad job, then when the [district] lines change, they're not voting on those representatives anymore," Levitt said. "New people are voting on those representatives."

The National Democratic Redistricting Committee, Democrats' national arm for contesting state GOP mapmaking, said the proposal to expand Republicans' stronghold in Texas was "yet another example of Trump trying to suppress votes in order to hold onto power."

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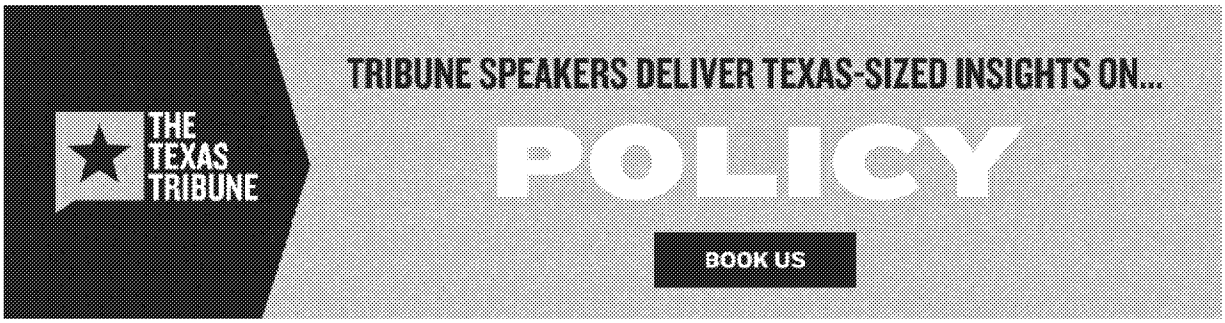

"Texas's congressional map is already being sued for violating the Voting Rights Act because it diminishes the voting power of the state's fast-growing Latino population," John Bisognano, president of the NDRC said. "To draw an even more extreme gerrymander would only assure that the barrage of legal challenges against Texas will continue."

Why does Trump's political team view Texas as a prime target to pick up seats for House Republicans via redistricting?

When Republicans in charge of the Legislature redrew the district lines after the

Why does Trump's political team view Texas as a prime target to pick up seats for House Republicans via redistricting?

When Republicans in charge of the Legislature redrew the district lines after the 2020 census, they focused on reinforcing their political support in districts already controlled by the GOP. This redistricting proposal would likely take a different approach.

As things stand, Republicans hold 25 of the state's 38 congressional seats. Democrats hold 12 seats and are expected to regain control of Texas' one vacant seat in a special election this fall.

Most of Texas' GOP-controlled districts lean heavily Republican: In last year's election, 24 of those 25 seats were carried by a Republican victor who received at least 60% of the vote or ran unopposed. The exception was U.S. Rep. Monica De La Cruz, R-Edinburg, who captured 57% of the vote and won by a comfortable 14-point margin.

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With little competition to speak of, The Times reported, Trump's political advisers believe at least some of those districts could bear the loss of GOP voters who would be reshuffled into neighboring, Democratic-held districts — giving Republican hopefuls a better chance to flip those seats from blue to red.

The party in control of the White House frequently loses seats during midterm cycles, and Trump's team is likely looking to offset potential GOP losses in other states and improve the odds of holding on to a narrow House majority. Incumbent Republicans, though, don't love the idea of sacrificing a comfortable race in a safe district for the possibility of picking up a few seats, according to GOP aides.

Has this happened before?

In 2003, after Texas Republicans initially left it up to the courts to draw new lines following the 2000 census, then-U.S. House Majority Leader Tom DeLay, a Sugar Land Republican, embarked instead on a bold course of action to consolidate GOP power in the state. He, along with his Republican allies, redrew the lines as the opening salvo to a multistate redistricting plan aimed at accumulating power for his party in states across the country.

Enraged by the power play, Democrats fled the state, depriving the Texas House of the quorum it needed to function.

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The rebels eventually relented under threat of arrest, a rare power in the Texas Constitution used to compel absent members back to return to Austin when the Legislature is in session. The lines were then redrawn, cementing the GOP majority the delegation has enjoyed in Washington for the past two decades.

However, what's at play this time is different than in the early 2000s, when Republicans had a newfound majority in the Legislature and had a number of vulnerable Democratic incumbents they could pick off. Now, Republicans have been entrenched in the majority for decades and will have to answer the question of whether there's really more to gain, said Kareem Crayton, the vice president of the Brennan Center for Justice's Washington office.

"That's the tradeoff. You can do that too much so that you actually make them so competitive that the other side wins," Crayton said. "That's always a danger."

What comes next?

Texas Republicans are planning to reconvene Thursday to continue discussing the plan, according to Rep. Beth Van Duyne, R-Irving, and Rep. Wesley Hunt, R-Houston, who said they will attend the meeting. Members of Trump's political team are also expected to attend, according to Hunt and two GOP congressional aides familiar with the matter.

Natalia Contreras is a reporter for Votebeat in partnership with the Texas Tribune. She's based in Corpus Christi. Contact Natalia at ncontreras@votebeat.org.

Disclosure: New York Times has been a financial supporter of The Texas Tribune, a nonprofit, nonpartisan news organization that is funded in part by donations from members, foundations and corporate sponsors. Financial supporters play no role in the Tribune's journalism. Find a complete list of them here.

Big news: 20 more speakers join the TribFest lineup! *New additions include* ***Margaret Spellings****, former U.S. secretary of education and CEO of the Bipartisan Policy Center;* ***Michael Curry****, former presiding bishop and primate of The Episcopal Church;* ***Beto O'Rourke****, former U.S. Representative, D-El Paso;* ***Joe Lonsdale****, entrepreneur, founder and managing partner at 8VC; and* ***Katie Phang****, journalist and trial lawyer.*

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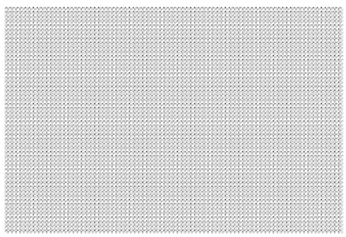

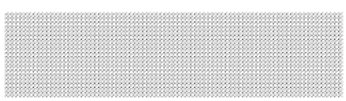

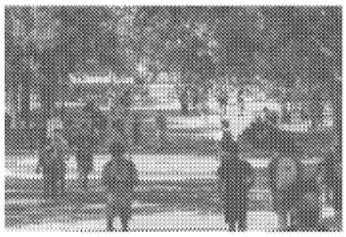

Student who mocked Charlie Kirk's death "no longer" at Texas State University as clampdowns continue

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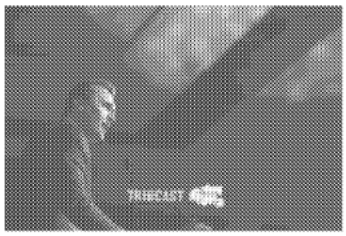

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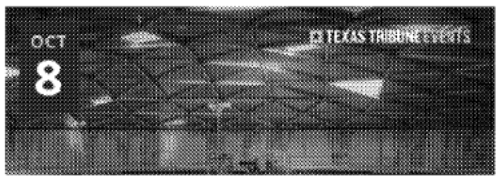

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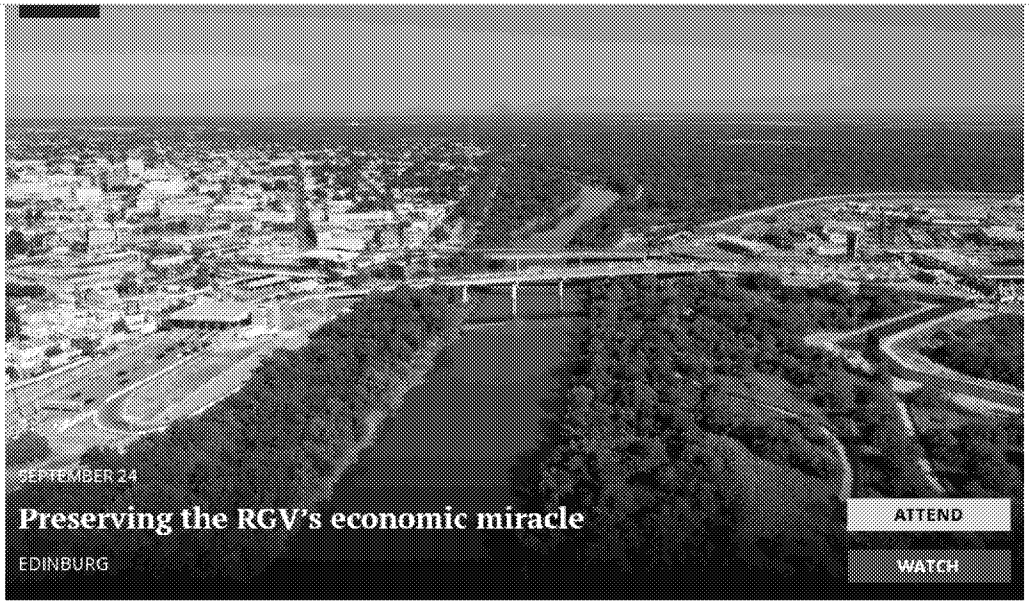

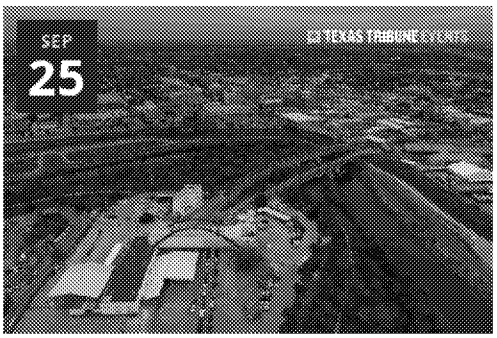

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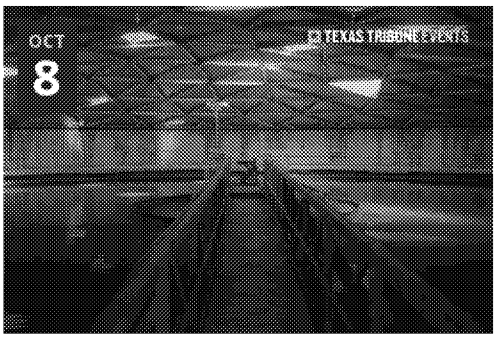

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State Defendants' Response to Plaintiff-Intervenors' and TXNAACP Motion for Preliminary Injunction

Exhibit AD

Texas Senate Chambers, Video Recording August 12th, 2025: 16:53-32:19

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TRANSCRIPTION OF VIDEOTAPE

(EXCERPT FROM 14 MINUTES TO 40 MINUTES)

SENATE FLOOR ACTION

89TH LEGISLATURE

Tuesday, August 12, 2025

****

P R O C E E D I N G S

SENATOR PERRY: Senator Menendez, for what purpose?

SENATOR MENENDEZ: Mr. President, I was sitting down reviewing the maps that we're going to be asked to debate here in a little bit; and I just couldn't help but think about the hearing we held in Kerrville about a week and a half ago. So I was going to ask a parliamentary inquiry.

SENATOR PERRY: State your inquiry.

SENATOR MENENDEZ: Mr. President, is it possible for a member who is not the author of a Senate bill to be able to make a motion to suspend the regular order of business so that we could bring up the flood relief bills to the very top of today's order of business because of the grief and all of the things that we heard in those 13-plus hours of testimony that we heard? And you have a bill -- and there are others that are out there -- and so I just thought maybe we could hear them all together at the very front end and start this day on a positive note, helping take care of Texans. And so is there a motion, a way that we could do that? That's my parliamentary inquiry.

SENATOR PERRY: The order in which we go in is up to the presiding officer.

SENATOR MENENDEZ: Mr. President, are you not the presiding officer right now?

SENATOR PERRY: I would be that guy. I think I'd like to leave this day on a providence note.

SENATOR MENENDEZ: I'm not understanding your answer, Mr. President.

SENATOR PERRY: Your parliamentary inquiry is: Can we change the order so we can start out on a positive note. I'd like to end on a positive note today. And I think those bills that you refer to will do that. I hope that the bills prior to that will still do that. They're each serving a purpose.

SENATOR MENENDEZ: Mr. President, I just thought that the bills you and others have will be able to help provide flood relief; and the bill on the redistricting, all it does is it involves politicians. And so that's why I didn't see how they could --

SENATOR PERRY: I appreciate your perspective.

SENATOR MENENDEZ: Thank you for answering my parliamentary, Mr. President.

SENATOR PERRY: Senator King is recognized on motion to suspend the regular order of business on SB 4.

SENATOR KING: Thank you, Mr. President.

Members, I know that there's been a lot of discussion about this bill coming forward today; and everyone has different perspectives on it. I would like to, with your permission, though, and patience, there are some things -- I know we have a lot of people watching online that haven't been watching the hearings or keeping up with it like we have; and then there's just some things that kind of need to get on the record.

So I'd like to take a little bit of time to walk through this to make sure that every member knows how we got to where we are and where I think this is going; and then, after that, I'll be happy to answer any questions I can. And I'll just try to answer them as truthfully and as thoroughly as I can.

So with that, just by way of where we -- the process to date, I introduced SB 4 in our select committee on Monday, August the 4th. SB 4 is the companion to HB 4, line for line, which passed out of the House Committee on August 2nd, 2025. There had been discussions of waiting for the House bill to get here; but just like each of you have done a hundred times on different bills, when you have a companion and it stalls in one body, you try to do what you can to get it moving in the other body, which is why we went -- or I went ahead and filed with the companion and began with

hearings.

As I said, I want to take a moment to discuss the process to date, specifically the public input we've received on SB 4 and redistricting in general. First, this plan is based on the 2020 Census data, not any annual estimates. Since 2020 the Senate has held 21 regional and other public hearings, and the House has held just as many. Those hearings have afforded the Legislature an abundance of opportunities to hear the public's thoughts about the 2020 Census data and redistricting as a whole.

During the Special Session the Senate Committee held four regional public hearings via virtual testimony, a fifth hearing specifically for invited testimony at the Capitol, and then a sixth hearing at the Capitol for general public testimony. Over the course of the four regional hearings, we heard from 205 individual witnesses and had approximately 3852 clicks to the Senate livestream, meaning that many people -- now, obviously, some of them may have tuned in twice -- but we had well over 3000, obviously, watching the livestream. Testimony also included sitting members of Congress. We heard testimony from Marc Veasey, CD 33; Lizzie Fletcher, CD 7; Sylvia Garcia, CD 29; and Al Green, CD 9.

On August 6th, as I mentioned, the Senate held a hearing specifically for invited testimony. We invited individuals whose names I had received from the Democrat caucus as their requests to be invited to testify. These were organizations such as MALDEF, NAACP, LULAC, and the Asian Americans Advocating [sic] Justice, and many others. Senator Miles suggested -- at his suggestion, we also invited the entire Democrat Congressional Delegation to testify for the invited testimony hearing.

With the exception of Mr. Bledsoe of NAACP Texas, who attended the following day's public hearing and testified, none of our invitees accepted our invitation to attend our August 6th hearing, which, again, had been set up specifically for invited testimony.

The following day, August 7th, we held a hearing for public testimony. We had 117 witnesses register here at the Capitol and 42 chose to stay and testify and 5 others submitted written testimony.

So over the course of the six public hearings during just this Special Session, the Committee heard testimony from 242 witnesses directly.

Ultimately, we voted on SB 4; and it was reported out of the Senate Select Committee on

Congressional Redistricting with 6 ayes, 1 nay, 1 present not voting, and 1 absent from the vote.

Now, if I may, I want to take just a moment now to discuss redistricting history in Texas and principles and legal standards. I believe I'm correct in stating that redistricting has been addressed during Special Sessions of this Legislature dating back to at least 1871, when they took up school districts in Special Session Redistricting; and then in 1882, they took up Congressional Redistricting in a Special Session.

This history also includes Special Sessions in the past six decennial redistricting cycles of 1971, 1981, 1991, 1997, 2003, 2011, 2013, and, most recently, in 2021. Now, I say this because this history illustrates that it is not unusual at all for redistricting to occur in a Special Session and also to show that the Legislature can choose to redistrict at any time, including during Special Sessions and mid-decade.

It's correct to say that States have broad authority recognized by the Courts under the U.S. Constitution and its election clause to choose when to do redistricting.

Now, the purpose -- for purposes of the

map that's before us today, the U.S. Constitution requires that Congressional districts be drawn with population as close to equal as possible to achieve the one-person, one-vote standard. Now, this standard is from the Supreme Court's 1964 decisions in Wesberry v. Sanders and Reynolds v. Sims. It's also grounded in the 14th Amendment and Article 1, Section 2 of the Constitution. Because of that, the ideal district size for us today in terms of this map is 766,987 persons per district.

Senate Bill 4 before you today meets the one-person, one-vote standard. Now, beyond this, the area of redistricting law is robust and gets very complex, to say the least. I have consulted with our legal counsel and I am absolutely confident that SB 4 complies with all applicable law. The House's counsel -- it's a different counsel -- but they came to the same conclusions.

Now, that satisfied my first objective with SB 4 is that the plan that be before you today be legal in every respect, and it is.

My second objective with SB 4 -- the first being that it be legal -- the second objective was to support a plan that, simply put, elects more Republicans to the U.S. Congress. In contrast to the

complications involved with race-based redistricting, this map, SB 4, is built on political performance, which is a well-established and permissible basis for drawing electoral districts, as recognized firmly by the Supreme Court of the United States.

And let me stress before moving forward any further: This map is based on political performance. Race was not used to draw the map and I did not consider race when I filed this bill and I have not looked to any racial criteria with regard to this bill.

I have heard the terms "packed" and "cracked" in testimony some; but I want you to know that throughout all the hearings we've had, no one has put forth data to support that this map packs or cracks. And, honestly, it's difficult for me to see how there can be an intent on my part or anyone's part to pack and crack when race was not even considered in the drafting of this map.

So my first objective was that it be a legal map.

My second objective was that it perform politically well and elect more Republicans, and I believe there will be five more seats that trend Republican.

My third objective -- and I wasn't initially intending to focus on this, but we heard repeated comments in public testimony that some of the districts in the existing map that we're under today from 2021, that some of those districts were not compact. We had a lot of testimony meaning that they -- suggesting that they were unnecessarily irregularly shaped, that they weren't compact; but compactness is a traditional redistricting criteria. It helps keep communities of interest together; it makes the district be easier to represent because it's a centralized area.

Now, SB 4 accomplishes all three of these objectives, that it be legal, that it be -- that it elect more Republican members to the U.S. Congress, and, also now, that it be more compact. And, again, that is a product simply of the testimony that we heard in the hearings.

Now, the impact of this proposed map at a high level, I can tell you that nearly every one of the 38 Texas Congressional districts, nearly every one had their lines changed; but most were in very minor ways. The most significant changes affect five districts; and I believe those districts, due to the changes, now lean Republican in performance. Those would be CD 9 in Houston, CD 28 in the RGV, CD 32 in Dallas, CD 34 in

Coastal and South Texas, and CD 35 in San Antonio. As I said, it's my understanding that these five districts should perform on a partisan basis for the Republican Party.

Also, by drawing race blind, SB 4's districts are more compact than the current map, with more reasonable geographic configurations that I think provide a better basis for representation.

So, in summary, I'll just say that SB 4, as I just said, is more compact than the current plan. And if you want to see a couple of great examples look at Districts 32 and 35 on your desks in the existing map and the new plan. They are great examples of compactness.

SB 4 complies with all applicable law, and I will say that we have an excellent law firm. The lead attorney has been practicing redistricting law for over 40 years. And they came, through their analysis, to the same conclusion that the House did -- and others have as well -- that the map is legal in respects to all applicable law.

We've also had plenty of opportunity to date, really beginning in 2021, with regard to testimony on redistricting and its relation to the 2020 Census data we used for this map; but we've also had a lot of

testimony -- six separate hearings just in this special session -- and no one, no one has presented data or, frankly, any compelling case that this map violates any applicable laws.

Beyond that, I would also mention that no amendments were filed that suggested any changes be recommended by the body, Republican or Democrat, for amendments to change this map.

And with that, Mr. President, I'm happy to answer any questions.

SENATOR PERRY: Dean Zaffirini, for what purpose?

SENATOR ZAFFIRINI: Ask a question.

SENATOR PERRY: Do you yield?

SENATOR KING: Absolutely.

SENATOR ZAFFIRINI: Thank you, Mr. President.

Chairman King, we spoke briefly, sir, just before this session convened, did we not?

SENATOR KING: Yes.

SENATOR ZAFFIRINI: And I explained to you that I ordinarily ask as few questions as possible; but because of my strong opposition for this bill, just as I strongly opposed the Congressional Redistricting Plan in 2021, that I was going to ask many, many, many

more questions, did I not?

SENATOR KING: You gave me ample warning.

SENATOR ZAFFIRINI: In fact, Senator, I have a 12-page document of questions that I was prepared to ask you today; but, frankly, having understood, because of our discussions earlier this morning, that we will take up redistricting anew in the next Special Session, I'm going to reserve those questions until next session. So I will not be asking you questions today. Thank you, though, for your courtesy in expecting them.

Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR PERRY: Thank you, Dean.

Senator King moves to suspend the regular order of business of SB 4. There is objection.

Clerk, call the roll.

SECRETARY SPAW: Alvarado, Bettencourt, Birdwell, Blanco, Campbell, Cook --

SENATOR PERRY: 19 yeas and 2 nays. The rules are suspended.

The Chair lays out on second reading Senate Bill 4.

Secretary, read the caption.

SECRETARY SPAW: Senate Bill 4 relating to the composition of the districts for the election of members of the United States House of Representatives

from the State of Texas.

SENATOR PERRY: Mr. King, recognized for a motion.

SENATOR KING: Move passage to engrossment.

SENATOR PERRY: Mr. King moves passage to engrossment. Is there objection? Hearing none -- I'm sorry.

Clerk, call the roll.

SECRTARY SPAW: Alvarado, Bettencourt, Birdwell, Blanco, Campbell, Cook --

SENATOR PERRY: 19 yeses, 2 nays. Bill passed to engrossment. Will hold there.

SENATOR KING: Thank you, Mr. President, and Members.

(Pause in the proceedings.)

LT. GOV. PATRICK: Senator King, you're recognized with a motion to suspend the regular three-day rule.

SENATOR KING: Thank you, Mr. President. I move to suspend the three-day rule.

LT. GOV. PATRICK: The Secretary will call the roll.

SECRETARY SPAW: Alvarado, Bettencourt, Birdwell, Blanco, Campbell --

LT. GOV. PATRICK: 19 ayes, 2 nays, 9 absent. The rules are suspended.

The Chair now lays out on the second reading Senate Bill 4.

The Secretary will read the caption.

SECRETARY SPAW: Senate Bill 4 relating to the composition of the districts for the election of members of the United States House of Representatives from the State of Texas.

LT. GOV. PATRICK: You're recognized on passage of engrossment.

SENATOR KING: I move final passage.

LT. GOV. PATRICK: Yes. I'm sorry, Senator Zaffirini. I didn't see your light.

SENATOR ZAFFIRINI: Thank you.

LT. GOV. PATRICK: Yes, ma'am. For what purpose?

SENATOR ZAFFIRINI: To make a brief statement in opposition to the bill.

LT. GOV. PATRICK: You're recognized.

SENATOR ZAFFIRINI: Mr. President and Members, just as I reserved my questions for the next special session when we will take up redistricting anew, I had a 13-page closing statement in opposition of this bill; but, again, I will reserve the right to make that

statement during the next special session.

Thank you, Mr. President.

LT. GOV. PATRICK: You've reserved that right; and, hopefully, we won't have another special session if they show up in the House for a quorum.

You're recognized on final passage.

SENATOR KING: Move final passage.

LT. GOV. PATRICK: Secretary will call the roll.

SECRETARY SPAW: Alvarado, Bettencourt, Birdwell, Blanco, Campbell --

LT. GOV. PATRICK: 19 ayes, 2 nays, 9 absent. The bill is finally passed.

SENATOR KING: Thank you, Mr. President.

Thank you, Members.

(End of excerpt.)

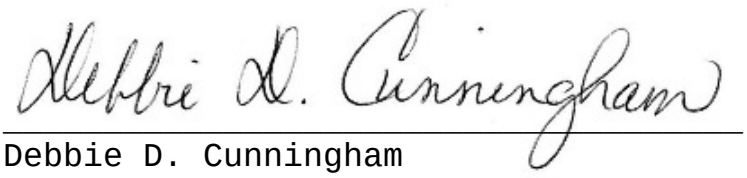
REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

TRANSCRIPTION OF VIDEOTAPE

I, Debbie D. Cunningham, the undersigned Certified Shorthand Reporter in and for the State of Texas, certify that the foregoing pages are a true and correct transcription of the videotaped recording to the best of my ability to understand and decipher the words and identify the speakers based on information provided.

I further certify that I am neither attorney or counsel for, related to, nor employed by any parties to the action in which this testimony is taken and, further, that I am not a relative or employee of any counsel employed by the parties hereto or financially interested in the action.

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO under my hand and seal of office on this 15th day of September, 2025.



Debbie D. Cunningham
Certified Shorthand Reporter
CSR No. 2065 - Expires 6/30/27
INTEGRITY LEGAL SUPPORT SOLUTIONS
9901 Brodie Ln, Ste. 160-400
Austin, Texas 78748
www.integritylegal.support
512-320-8690; FIRM # 528

State Defendants' Response to Plaintiff-Intervenors' and TXNAACP Motion for Preliminary Injunction

Exhibit AE

House Committee on Congressional Redistricting, August 18, 2025: 00:46:46.

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TRANSCRIPTION OF VIDEOTAPE

HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING

RE: HB 4

MONDAY, AUGUST 18, 2025

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P R O C E E D I N G S

CHAIRMAN VASUT: The time is 5:02 p.m. The House Select Committee on Congressional Redistricting will come to order. The Clerk will call the roll.

THE CLERK: Chair Vasut.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Here.

THE CLERK: Vice-Chair Rosenthal.

VICE-CHAIR ROSENTHAL: Here.

THE CLERK: Representative Garcia.

(No audible response.)

THE CLERK: Representative Geren.

REPRESENTATIVE GEREN: Here.

THE CLERK: Representative Gervin-Hawkins.

REPRESENTATIVE GERVIN-HAWKINS: Present.

THE CLERK: Representative Guerra.

REPRESENTATIVE GUERRA: Here.

THE CLERK: Representative Guillen.

REPRESENTATIVE GUILLEN: Here.

THE CLERK: Representative Hefner.

REPRESENTATIVE HEFNER: Here.

THE CLERK: Representative Hickland.

REPRESENTATIVE HICKLAND: Here.

THE CLERK: Representative Hunter.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: Here.

THE CLERK: Representative Manuel.

(No audible response.)

THE CLERK: Representative McQueeney.

REPRESENTATIVE MCQUEENEY: Here.

THE CLERK: Representative Metcalf.

REPRESENTATIVE METCALF: Here.

THE CLERK: Representative Moody.

REPRESENTATIVE MOODY: Present.

THE CLERK: Representative Pierson.

REPRESENTATIVE PIERSON: Here.

THE CLERK: Representative Spiller.

REPRESENTATIVE SPILLER: Here.

THE CLERK: Representative Tepper.

REPRESENTATIVE TEPPER: Here.

THE CLERK: Dean Thompson.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: Here.

THE CLERK: Representative Turner.

REPRESENTATIVE TURNER: Here.

THE CLERK: Representative Wilson.

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON: Here.

THE CLERK: Representative Wu.

REPRESENTATIVE WU: Here.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: A quorum is present. The Chair lays out House Bill 4. Representative Hunter offers up a Committee substitute to House Bill 4. And the Chair recognizes Representative Hunter to explain the Committee

substitute.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Are we on?

CHAIRMAN VASUT: There we go.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: Third time's a charm.

So before you is the Committee substitute. And let me give everybody a summary of the Committee substitute.

The proposed changes to HB 4 affect the following congressional districts: 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 14, 17, 18, 22, 29, 36, 38.

As based in my previous commentary on Rucho, this map is based on partisanship, political performance. And for all of you here, it has enhanced and increased Republican partisanship enhanced performance.

The intent of the changes was to increase Republican political performance in existing Republican districts from the proposed plan.

Nine out of the 12 that I just listed are Republican-performing districts. Six out of these nine Republican-performing districts, 2, 8, 9, 17, 22, 38, improve the Republican political performance in the Committee substitute compared to the other plan.

While remaining three Republican districts, which are 6, 14, 36, they remain strongly Republican at 60 percent plus Trump.

CD-18 remains a majority/minority Black CVAP from the proposed plan, and compactness stays the same overall.

Harris County, there are changes. CD-19, we're increasing Republican performance. CD Republic 9 -- Republican political performance increases from 57.24 percent Trump to 59.41 percent Trump. It now includes all Liberty County.

CD-2, Republican political performance increases from 60.19 percent Trump to 60.80 percent. It also increases from 57.38 percent Cruz to 58.05 percent.

CD-8, the Republican political performance increases from 61.68 percent Trump to 63.10 percent, and 58.57 percent Cruz to 60.08 percent.

These are examples in the 12 that we've laid out.

CD-36, the Republican political performance remains strong. Trump at 61.75 percent, Cruz both high performance.

CD-38 increases Republican political performance from 59.46 percent Trump to 59.64. Cruz would increase from 56.57 percent to 56.73 percent.

Now, CD-22, it increases Republican political performance from 59.47 percent Trump to 60.05 percent. It takes a portion of Brazoria from CD-14.

The CD-14 Republican political performance remains very strong, 61.5 percent and above.

Navarro County area changes, CD-17 removes the split from Navarro County and places Navarro wholly in CD-6. The Republican political performance increases from 59.97 to 60.09.

CD-6 now gains all of Navarro County to make it whole, and the Republican political performance remains strong, over 60 percent.

So, Members, these 12 districts were impacted. Many that I have laid out have focused on Harris County primarily. And there is a Navarro County area change. It increases Republican performance.

The five districts that are new Republican performing districts still exist in the plan. But it exists -- in addition to those five, you're seeing an increase and an enhancement in other Republican areas.

So based on Rucho, based on Petteway, this, Mr. Chairman, is what the Committee substitute addresses.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Thank you, Mr. Hunter.

Chair will show Representative Manuel now present.

Members, questions for the bill author on the substitute.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Chair recognizes Dean Thompson to question the author on the substitute.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, would you

tell me the changes you made in CD-9?

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: CD-9, the -- we increased in the CD-9 area, the particular detail and the lines, it includes now all of Liberty County.

And we made sure that that particular congressional district has an increase to almost 60 percent Republican.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: May I ask you an additional question, please?

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Yes.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: So you -- when you move to include all the Liberty County, you eliminated what part? Because you moved it eastwardly.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: Well, all I can --

REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: -- if you --

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: -- show you is if you take nine, all of Liberty is in it. And you can pull up your district viewer and it will show you where the lines now are with nine in the other county.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: On -- let me ask you a question on 18. What did you say you did in 18?

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: In 18, it remains a majority/minority Black CVAP. The compactness stays the same overall.

CD-18 decreases Black CVAP slightly from

50.81 percent to 50.71 percent, but increases Hispanic CVAP from 22.40 percent to 23.83 percent.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: So that was a decrease in the CVAP of the African Americans but an increase in the Latino in that area, right?

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: Very, very small, but you're correct.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: I noticed that also that looked like that little part looked like a little boot, you put that in what area?

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: You would have to pull up the district viewer and see exactly where those lines are.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: Okay. Thank you so much.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Thank you, Dean.

Representative Manuel, recognize question bill author on the substitute.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Thank you so much.

Chairman Hunter, just some really quick questions. Thank you for laying out the layout of the districts, where they are with President Trump and Vice President Harris.

What I was wondering is looking at CD -- just to start off with CD-30 and 33, has there been any concern about the fact that historically CD-30 has always had an economic engine of the airport in their district and now it

is no longer there?

And the reason I ask that is because not that anybody deserves to have an airport or to have -- deserves to have any economic interest because people move their districts headquarters wherever they choose to.

But there's some historical economic engines that have been in 30 that are now -- and have been moved to Congressional District 33 that were in a predominantly Black, African American area; and was wondering if that was a part of any decision-making when it comes to the maps, as part -- as one of the questions.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: So, Representative Manuel, I think that -- those two districts that you referenced were in the original and unchanged in the substitute. So the questions I think -- the only thing pending before the Committee at this time is --

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Is the substitute.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: -- the substitute and --

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: So --

CHAIRMAN VASUT: -- whether to adopt it. So it -- yeah, questions I think have to be limited only to the substitute, yes, sir.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Okay. So let me ask this way into the substitute.

Are all of the economic engines that were in

Congressional District 30, are they still in that congressional district now?

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: That's again the underlying bill. Again, that's the underlying bill. You're not asking me about -- I told you at the top two, 6, 7, 8, 9, 14, 17, 18, 22, 29, 36, and 38 are the changes.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Okay, sir.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: But --

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Okay.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: -- like I told Dean Thompson, if you'll go on district viewer --

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Yeah.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: -- and look at the original 30, it'll tell you exactly where the line is.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Okay. So as of right now, just -- and I'm so sorry, I promise --

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: Oh, you're fine.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: -- I'm not trying to be facetious.

Can you tell me those districts one more time? And I know it is --

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: Absolutely.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: -- completely my fault.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: No, no, no. 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 14, 17, 18, 22, 29, 36, 38.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Okay. I'm glad you said that. So I have two questions because you answered my question.

So there aren't any changes to 30 and 33, it's only to these lists from 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 14, 17, 18, 22, 29, 36, and 38, just wanted to make sure.

Okay. So you answered my question. So there aren't any changes to those.

As it relates to CD-9 and CD-29 -- and if -- and I completely understand if you don't have the answers to it because I know sometimes we just don't know.

Are there any changes in the economic engines to CD-9 and CD-29? And the reason I ask is because those are traditionally districts that have had minority representation and were minority coalition districts previous.

So I'm wondering if there's been any changes to those coalition districts as it relates to their economic engines that have been used to help prop up those communities in those districts.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: Okay. Now, as a preference, we've already gone through the two, Rochu (sic) and Petteway. So as you remember, there's a different view on the legal involvement --

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Right.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: -- of the coalition.

Do I specifically know? The answer is no.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Okay.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: You could go on district viewer. But being a coastal guy, now that CD-9 --

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: We're both coastal.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: -- has Liberty County, I think that's a great economic energy area. So I think you gained a whole bunch.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Well, we're both coastal guys, I will agree on that.

What I will say is all the refinery and industry that is traditionally in the areas are between mainly Jefferson, Galveston, parts of Orange, but mainly Jefferson and Orange.

I'm not seeing what industry there is that is in Congressional District 9 because I know that we have had prospects of what could come to those areas. But they've all been vastly working class, industrial areas.

And the reason I ask, because I did -- I brought this up before, is that Congressional District 14, which is Jefferson and Orange, which -- well, and Galveston, which predominantly used to not look like this, that brought really bad economic interests to our area because we were -- we ended up being merged with a predominantly blue collar

retail industry, and it caused us to lose a massive amount of GDP, it caused us to have a massive amount of underemployed Blacks, Whites, Hispanics, Latinos, and biracial people.

And I'm just wondering if that was the case that was happening in CD-9 from where it used to be, and CD-18 as well.

So I got that understanding, you don't know if there are any economic engines that have been changed in Congressional District 19 or Congressional District 29. But we're assuming that that should be better for us as coastal members.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: On 19, you mentioned --

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Sorry, not 19, I'm sorry, 9 and 29, I apologize.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: Yeah, 9 and 29 as I indicated, you can go on district viewer to look. Do I know specifically without going to that? I do not.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Okay.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: I do think, as you know, at the top political performance was used, and that was our factor.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Okay. And I think this should be the last question, because I don't want to be a liar.

May I ask what was the reason for the changes in the congressional districts from what we had previous? Like what was the reasoning for changing those districts previous to now --

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: To make it more Republican.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: To make it more Republican. So it was --

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: That's right, partisanship, political performance. That's what I said at the very top. Absolutely they've been enhanced, and it makes it stronger, and it allows a Republican performance, partisan under the U.S. Supreme Court.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Okay. So please forgive me, Chairman, I'm really not trying to be adversarial, I promise.

So we're making sure that now these districts are purely political when the last time we were here -- and I really don't mean that as a pun intended -- that we talked about how some of these districts were predominantly now going to be Hispanic or Latino opportunities.

So now it's not that. We are doing this, you're saying, because it's purely because of President Trump's performance in an election. So it has -- that's -- is that what we're saying is the reason that we're changing CD-9 and

the rest, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 14, 17, 18, 22, 29, 36, and 38, correct?

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: No, I don't agree with you. The U.S. Supreme Court, as we've already talked in many, many hours, Rucho, says a jurisdiction may engage in in constitutional political gerrymandering, recognizing that politics and political considerations are inseparable from districting and apportionment.

It says that you can use partisan interest, it can use political performance. It indicates that this is absolutely a factor. This is a U.S. Supreme Court, and we are able to use that. It's the same premise that I provided in the prior presentation.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Has the U.S. Supreme Court ever put a precedent on doing mid-districting -- mid-decade redistricting?

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: We've done it before.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Well, no, I know we've done it before, but he went to jail. So that's the reason I'm asking, is have we ever -- have they placed anything in there that says that --

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: I don't agree with that. I think that's a remark that I would not agree with. To bring up somebody went to jail, I can give you 14 other reasons why maybe the other side was wrong. I don't think

we want to shoot at each other in the hearing.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: No, no, no, I get that.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: No, I know. But you don't --

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: It's --

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: I don't agree with that. There's nothing that prevents this congressional redistricting.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: No, no, no.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: And we could do it again.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: I'm not saying that. What I'm saying is I'm going to go back to the previous last hearing is my district was redistricted mid-district -- mid-decade redistricting in 2003.

And because of that, Tom DeLay was sentencing to jail because there were things that he had done during that. And Tom DeLay's probably going to get me so I pre-apologize --

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: This doesn't really have any --

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: So, no, what I'm saying is that --

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: -- about this committee's substitute.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: No, I'm asking is because

you brought up the Supreme Court. That's the only -- I promise. I'm not an attorney. I think you all know that I'm just a former simple staffer who's been here for 21 years in October.

And I was just wondering if -- it been that long. I know, I have nothing else important to do in my life.

I'm wondering if since we are bringing up the Supreme Court has said that we can do this because of performance -- and totally understand that, Chairman Hunter -- was wondering if the Supreme Court had ever issued out a statement saying that mid-decade redistricting is something that is not an issue because, again, the only reason I'm saying that is because the last person in Texas who did that did go to jail.

Not saying you are or anyone else. I'm saying the last person who did that in Texas went to jail because he was doing things on a federal level that was --

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: Representative, you're off on --

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: -- found to be for him criminally to spend time in jail.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: -- not the Committee's substitute.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Yeah.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: You're going off. You

know, this was all discussed August 1st.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Yes, sir.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: This is August 18th. We're on a Committee substitute. And we're not re-arguing those areas. If you have questions --

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Okay.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: -- on this plan, I will focus on it. We will not --

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: I do actually have one.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: -- agree, I understand. We will respectfully disagree with each other.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: I hope so.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: Mr. Chairman, let's focus on the subject here.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Okay. I want to focus on the subject. And I'll just say this. Focusing on the Committee substitute, has there ever been a Supreme Court ruling that --

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Well, --

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: -- says the Committee substitute --

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Well, --

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: -- for redistricting --

CHAIRMAN VASUT: I think, Representative, I feel you in the sense of trying to tie the question to it.

It really -- the questions I think pending before the Committee at this time are just about the changes that have been made in the Committee substitute compared to the introduced, and --

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Okay.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: -- the explanations for those, as opposed to the constitutionality of mid-decade redistricting, which I think --

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Perfect.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: -- doesn't touch the changes on the map.

So if you have a question about, you know, a particular change, certainly fair game.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Perfect. Okay. I do actually have one.

When it comes to Congressional District 33, Chairman Hunter, would you mind again -- and I pre-apologize -- can you give me the breakdown and the reasoning for Congressional District 33 changing from where it was to why? Like why we're moving it or changing it to where it is now.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: So on that one, Representative, so 33 did not change.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: So 30 changed.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: 30 did not change either.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: So it was 36.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: 36 and 38.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Okay. So question of the chair then.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Sure.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: And please forgive my novice --

CHAIRMAN VASUT: No, you're fine.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: -- for asking this question. I thought that when we changed any congressional district even by one voter, it changed every congressional --

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Fair --

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: -- district because we had to move people.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Fair question.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: So maybe that's where I'm --

CHAIRMAN VASUT: So in -- what you'll see on your district -- your -- and in front of you, Representative, if you'll see, there's a handout that has at the top in red Plan C-2331, and in --

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Yes.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: -- black underneath it, Plan C-333. So this is -- this shows obviously just with the limit of an 11 by 17 piece of paper the changes that were made between --

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Right.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: -- the introduced and the Committee's substitute.

The introduced is the redlines, you see those?

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Yes.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: And the substitute is the colored areas that are shaded. And so --

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Okay.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: -- what you'll see, for example, your question's there about --

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Real quick. Is that the dark shaded part or the red shaded part?

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Any type of color shading is the --

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Okay.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: -- Committee substitute. And any type of redline is the introduced.

And so if you'll look, Representative, the top right corner of that, --

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Oh, okay.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: -- you'll see 30 and 33, see how they line --

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Yes.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: -- up perfectly?

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: So like in 38 -- sorry, not 38. So like in 22, you see where --

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Yes.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: -- it used to be in this boundary --

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Yes.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: -- up here next to Waller County, but it's now drawn somewhere different. So that's actually going to be --

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Yeah. So --

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: -- within Waller County.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: So you can ask the Representative --

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: The questions --

CHAIRMAN VASUT: -- about -- questions about --

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Okay.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: -- the differentials between the shaded areas and the redlines basically; does that make sense?

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Yes, no, no, no.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: You bet.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Absolutely. So --

CHAIRMAN VASUT: So do you have a question for the Representative about --

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Yes.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: -- anything on that? Yeah. Go ahead.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: I do, if you just give me -- because my biggest --

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Take your time.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: -- concern is --

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Just let us know.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: And, again, I -- Chairman, I appreciate you taking the time. I promise I'm not going to try to belabor the moment because I know people are probably already irritated as it is.

Looking at this, in those redlines of it, looking at 29 and 18, the only changes have been is that Congressional District 18 has been -- basically it has increased its population of Black people while also keeping its economic engines that it traditionally had; is that correct? Or are we only going off of race?

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: No. Again, as I answered Dean Thompson, CD-18 decreases Black CVAP from 50.81 percent to 50.71 percent. But conversely --

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Wait, 50 point -- sorry, 50 point?

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: -- 50.81, one to 50.71.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Seven one, okay. So it increases --

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: But it increases the Hispanic CVAP from 22.40 percent to 23.83 percent.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Okay. And just trying to make sure that I'm staying in the sub, Chairman, so sorry about that.

When we're looking at Congressional District 30, there are no changes to that.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Again, stipulated no changes in the Committee's sub to 30.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Okay. No, I'm sorry. I'm trying to look at the map.

And there also are not any changes to 33; is that correct?

CHAIRMAN VASUT: That's correct.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Okay. So it's 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 14, 18, 22, 29, 36, 38 and --

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: No, no.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: No.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: 2, --

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: That's right.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: -- 6, 7, 8, 9, 14, 17, 18, 22, 29, 36, 38.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Okay. Last question I very much promise.

What were the changes in economic engines to Congressional District 18?

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: As I responded to Dean

Thompson, you would have to go to the district viewer and look exactly at those lines.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Okay. So looking at the district viewer we will be able to see --

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: You'll see exactly where the lines are.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: -- what those lines are.

And I shouldn't have lied and said last question. I promise this is it.

So if there are any congressional districts -- sorry. If there are any severe economic --

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: If we can get you to vote for this, you can ask me ten more questions. I'm counting on you voting yes.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: I live on the Gulf --

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: That's the economic engine right there.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: I live on the Gulf Coast and I would be easily --

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: Come on down.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: -- be able to set a draft -- adrift.

When it comes to CD-18, if there are any severe economic changes to the economic congressional power of 18, would that be something that we as a Committee -- or

shouldn't -- maybe I shouldn't ask the question.

If there are any severe economic changes to Congressional 18, which is historically Black district that has been historically underrepresented now in this moment that has had a very serious need and has been vacant by the time someone would take the seat over a year, would we take that into serious consideration to understand the economic poverty that people who live in 18, particularly Black and Brown people who live in those districts, have historically had to deal with since before the voting rights and after have gone into effect?

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: As I have answered, you'll have to go to the district viewer, look at the exact lines to see where exactly the indicators that you're looking at are or not.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: And then bring that to you on the floor and see if maybe --

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: Sure.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: -- there's a way we can see about making --

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: I am --

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: -- it better?

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: I'm opening to visit with anybody.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Perfect. Thank you so

much, Chairman. I really do appreciate your time for that. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, --

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Dean Thompson, for what purpose?

REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: May I ask -- make an inquiry, please?

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Yes.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman Hunter, the Senate yesterday voted on a map. And we have a substitute. What is going to pass? Do we vote the Senate map out? We -- is it going to be the House substitute?

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: Now, I can't predict, but I sure do love the House map and the authors.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: All right. Thank you. You've answered my question.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Thank you.

Governor Hawkins, for what purpose?

REPRESENTATIVE HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: You're recognized.

REPRESENTATIVE HAWKINS: Chairman Hunter, I'm just trying to understand since I'm a little new to redistricting.

When I look at the map, I'm looking at a -- when you look at that what I call a hodgepodge of 2, 38, 29, 18,

all those, so does that mean that all of that little area have all those different congressional people?

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: I'm not clear on the question.

(Vice-Chair Rosenthal/Representative Hawkins confer off mic.)

REPRESENTATIVE HAWKINS: All right. Thank you.

Chairman Hunter, thank you, you don't have to answer my question and/or interrupt me because my neighbor here just gave me my answer.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: Well, I am glad he's supporting my map. Keep talking to him.

REPRESENTATIVE HAWKING: Well, I don't think he's supporting your map, --

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: Oh.

REPRESENTATIVE HAWKINS: -- let's be clear, because again, I may be losing this, but I'll tell you this, it sure looks fishy to me in terms of how this is all coming out.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: But not to the Republicans.

REPRESENTATIVE HAWKINS: And I get that. But it's like you folks (indiscernible) the Democrats are entitled to their viewpoint.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: And really you're supposed

to be asking questions about the map on the substitute. But we just disagree, like you and I talked, on August 1st, 17 days ago.

REPRESENTATIVE HAWKINS: Sure.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: I don't agree with you. And I'm following Rucho, the U.S. Supreme Court in Petteway. And it allows us to do this substitute.

REPRESENTATIVE HAWKINS: Well, Mr. Chair, with all due respect, why could you finish your statement and I can't finish mine without interruption? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Thank you, Ms. Governor Hawkins.

Now, Dean Thompson, you had a question. You thought you saw something had changed on 16?

REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: Yes, a change on 16.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: I didn't see any change on 16.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: Okay.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Well, okay, not in this substitute.

MALE SPEAKER: Yeah. It looks pretty significant in the substitute.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Well, I think what you're -- what we're looking at right now, just to be clear for the record, is we're looking at the difference between the substitute and the introduced.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: Okay. I'm looking at

16. And 16 has under the substitute and under the one that --

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Dean, I think maybe what we do is once this substitute's adopted, and then I think that's a question for the introduce on the bill itself because that was a difference between the introduced and HB 4 from the first special session. Does that make sense?

REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: Yes, sir. I'm talking about the plan on 23.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Sure. So just the record was clear, so what we have pending before the Committee at this time is whether to adopt the Committee substitute. And so the questions were about the substitute versus the introduced.

Once the substitute's adopted and we're back on the bill, then I think you could ask a question about 16 because that was a difference with the bill.

Thank you, Dean Thompson.

Mr. Vice Chair, for what purpose?

VICE-CHAIR ROSENTHAL: Mr. Chairman, can I ask a question?

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Go for it.

VICE-CHAIR ROSENTHAL: All right. So just so we're clear, in this map that we've been handed in front of us, just today, which is what we're trying to ask questions

about -- and sorry for the protracted questioning.

But since this is the first that we've seen of it, and now we're going to adopt the substitute and then we're going to have some conversation about that, right?

So just to be clear, Plan C-2193 was the original introduced bill; is that correct?

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Yeah. Good question, Vice-Chair.

So Plan C-2193 is the plan that was adopted in the 88th Legislative Session, a duplicate of what was adopted in the 87th is the current lines of the congressional districts.

VICE-CHAIR ROSENTHAL: Right.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: If on your other piece of paper that has Plan C-2331 on your left hand right here, so Plan C-2331 is House Bill 4 as introduced in the Second Special Session.

VICE-CHAIR ROSENTHAL: Got it. And then --

CHAIRMAN VASUT: And in black underneath that is the substitute pending before the Committee.

VICE-CHAIR ROSENTHAL: Got it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Absolutely.

Representative Turner, you're recognized to question. What is it? The author.

REPRESENTATIVE TURNER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Hunter, when we were last here, I asked

you on the previous plan that we had before us if you knew who draw the -- drew the plan, drew the map, and you -- I think you had said you got it from a law firm but didn't know who actually drew it.

Do you know who drew this map?

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: Be the same answer. Everything I've gotten is from the law firm. Don't know who drew it. Same answer as previous.

REPRESENTATIVE TURNER: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Thank you, Mr. Turner.

Members, any other questions for the author on the substitute?

(No audible response.)

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Hearing none, the question occurs on the -- well, actually, Members, is there any objection to the adoption of the Committee substitute?

MALE SPEAKER: Yes.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Okay. There is objection. Since objection has been made, the Clerk will call the roll. And this is -- the question before the Committee is on the adoption of the Committee substitute.

Noted.

THE CLERK: Chair Vasut.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Aye.

THE CLERK: Vice-Chair Rosenthal.

VICE-CHAIR ROSENTHAL: Nay.

THE CLERK: Representative Garcia.

(No audible response.)

THE CLERK: Representative Geren.

REPRESENTATIVE GEREN: Yes.

THE CLERK: Representative Gervin-Hawkins.

REPRESENTATIVE GERVIN-HAWKINS: No.

THE CLERK: Representative Guerra.

REPRESENTATIVE GUERRA: No.

THE CLERK: Representative Guillen.

REPRESENTATIVE GUILLEN: Aye.

THE CLERK: Representative Hefner.

REPRESENTATIVE HEFNER: Aye.

THE CLERK: Representative Hickland.

REPRESENTATIVE HICKLAND: Aye.

THE CLERK: Representative Hunter.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: Yes.

THE CLERK: Representative Manuel.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: No.

THE CLERK: Representative McQueeney.

REPRESENTATIVE MCQUEENEY: Aye.

THE CLERK: Representative Metcalf.

REPRESENTATIVE METCALF: Aye.

THE CLERK: Representative Moody.

REPRESENTATIVE MOODY: No.

THE CLERK: Representative Pierson.
REPRESENTATIVE PIERSON: Aye.
THE CLERK: Representative Spiller.
REPRESENTATIVE SPILLER: Aye.
THE CLERK: Representative Tepper.
REPRESENTATIVE TEPPER: Aye.
THE CLERK: Dean Thompson.
REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: No.
THE CLERK: Representative Turner.
REPRESENTATIVE TURNER: No.
THE CLERK: Representative Wilson.
REPRESENTATIVE WILSON: Aye.
THE CLERK: Representative Wu.
REPRESENTATIVE WU: No.
CHAIRMAN VASUT: There being 12 ayes, eight nays, the substitute is adopted.
Dean Thompson, you wanted to ask a question on the bill I believe. You're so recognized.
REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
Mr. Chairman, I was asking about CD-16. Let me flip --
CHAIRMAN VASUT: Okay.
REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: Okay. I got to flip my papers.
CHAIRMAN VASUT: We're going to -- we're working

on the little microphones for just a second. Dean, I think you're -- you got your mic on now, you're good.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: Thank you.

In July of 2025, CD-19 had 79.8 CVAP Latino, Hispanics. And under the Committee substitute, it has 79.2, so there's a difference of .6. And I was just asking the Chairman, you know, for an explanation on that.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: Were you asking about 19?

REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: No, 16.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: And what is the question on 16?

REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: I -- you made an adjustment there, and I was asking the rationale of it.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: You talking about Fort Bliss, just to cut through it and -- 2021 we heard testimony about Fort Bliss from El Paso testifiers and people that talked to us. And an adjustment was made in 2021.

In 2025, during the hearings we heard and received information from folks in the West Texas to El Paso area because the proposal had it split.

And there was a request -- and I think El Paso Chamber may have been one of them -- there you go. See, they're -- even they're talking about it.

But the bottom line is the request was to keep Fort Bliss whole like it had previously been done in 2021 by

me. And so that's all that was done.

I didn't -- there wasn't any negotiation. There wasn't any -- it was basically to be consistent with 2021.

And I do think probably El Paso -- I'm talking for people there -- that probably want the Fort wholly in an El Paso region versus being in another region of the state. And that was all that it was.

And I made that decision. It was me. But there wasn't anything else. There wasn't any big negotiations consistent with what we did in 2021 to 2025.

And add a little history to it -- and you were there with me when we did it. And that's all it was.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: And that was it. And thank you for asking.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Thank you, Dean. Okay.

Members, the Chair moves that House Bill 4 as substituted be reported to the full house with the recommendation that it do pass and be printed.

Does any member wish to make a statement?

(No audible response.)

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Seeing none -- oh, I'm sorry. Representative Wu, you're recognized to make a statement.

REPRESENTATIVE WU: Mr. Chair, once again, we object to these maps and the way that this process has been

done.

These maps have been altered. The public has not had time to view them, much less have testimony on them. There has been no public input on these new maps at all.

And this is a significant change to many of these districts. And it should be incumbent upon this body to be transparent to the voters and to the people to which we govern.

And I again object to the way that this process has been handled, hiding the maps, refusing to say who helped draw them, refusing to reveal why they're being drawn until the last minute, or what basis they're being drawn on, and the general lack of transparency throughout this process. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Let me -- so, Members, anyone else need to make a statement?

(No audible response.)

CHAIRMAN VASUT: The Chair now members a question occurs on the motion. Again, that was -- I moved to report House Bill 4 as substituted to the full House with recommendation that it do pass and be printed.

FEMALE SPEAKER: Had his hand up.

Oh, I -- did we have any?

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Yes. I was --

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Oh.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: No, I was (indiscernible) --

CHAIRMAN VASUT: That's why I didn't see you. So I haven't called the roll so we're still good.

Mr. Manuel, you'll be recognized to make a statement.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: I would just -- despite politics, despite irritation and everything, I really hope that we look at some of these districts that have been historically underrepresented, and that we would take an opportunity, not -- obviously not here in committee, but when we get to the floor for the Chair and the author of HB 4 to please heavily consider looking at what are the losses to historically Black, Brown, Latino districts and White and Latino districts, but these districts that have historically been underrepresented to (glitch in the audio) engines that have been historical to keeping these people afloat because of the fact that we have statistics endowed on everyone's side that has shown that the lack of economic interest, the lack of economic engines can help bring about a more extreme version of poverty.

And I hope that we look at those when we are on the floor, and that the Chair and the author of the bill would make amendments to these if they are seeing that they're taking out these interests because having poor

people in a state actually increases crime.

And if we are increasing economic interest, increasing economic value in communities, it brings everyone who is in poverty out of it without them having to use government assistance.

And also it puts us in a place where we can be a shining example of if Republicans can truly do this the way that you all keep saying that you can do this by having more representation, I would hope that you all would make sure that our districts would not be underrepresented in a way that has been historically used during the teardown of reconstruction throughout our country.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Mr. Manuel.

Members, any other statements?

(No audible response.)

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Chair hears none.

Members, the question occurs on the motion. The Clerk will call the role.

THE CLERK: Chair Vasut.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: Aye.

THE CLERK: Vice-Chair Rosenthal.

VICE-CHAIR ROSENTHAL: Nay.

THE CLERK: Representative Garcia.

(No audible response.)

THE CLERK: Representative Geren.

REPRESENTATIVE GEREN: Yes.
THE CLERK: Representative Gervin-Hawkins.
REPRESENTATIVE GERVIN-HAWKINS: Nay.
THE CLERK: Representative Guerra.
REPRESENTATIVE GUERRA: No.
THE CLERK: Representative Guillen.
REPRESENTATIVE GUILLEN: Aye.
THE CLERK: Representative Hefner.
REPRESENTATIVE HEFNER: Aye.
THE CLERK: Representative Hickland.
REPRESENTATIVE HICKLAND: Aye.
THE CLERK: Representative Hunter.
REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: Yes.
THE CLERK: Representative Manuel.
REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Absolutely not.
THE CLERK: Representative McQueeney.
REPRESENTATIVE MCQUEENEY: Aye.
THE CLERK: Representative Metcalf.
REPRESENTATIVE METCALF: Aye.
THE CLERK: Representative Moody.
REPRESENTATIVE MOODY: No.
THE CLERK: Representative Pierson.
REPRESENTATIVE PIERSON: Absolutely aye.
THE CLERK: Representative Spiller.
REPRESENTATIVE SPILLER: Aye.

THE CLERK: Representative Tepper.

REPRESENTATIVE TEPPER: Aye.

THE CLERK: Dean Thompson.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: No.

THE CLERK: Representative Turner.

REPRESENTATIVE TURNER: No.

THE CLERK: Representative Wilson.

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON: Aye.

THE CLERK: Representative Wu.

REPRESENTATIVE WU: No.

CHAIRMAN VASUT: There being 12 ayes, eight nays, and zero present not voting, the motion prevails.

There being no further business before the Committee, the Chair moves to adjourn, subject to the call of the chair. Is there objection?

(No audible response.)

CHAIRMAN VASUT: The Chair hears none. The House Selection Committee on Congressional Redistricting stands adjourned subject to the call of the Chair at 5:48 p.m.

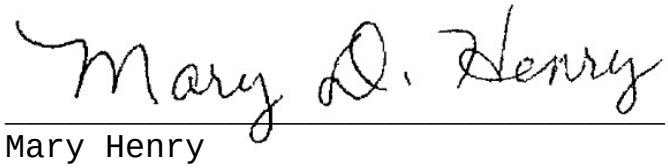
CERTIFICATION PAGE FOR AUDIO RECORDING

I, Mary Henry, certify that the foregoing is a correct transcription from the audio recording of the proceedings in the above-entitled matter.

Please take note that I was not personally present for said recording and, therefore, due to the quality of the audio provided, inaudibles may have created inaccuracies in the transcript of said recording

I further certify that I am neither counsel for, related so, not employed by any of the taking parties to the action in which this deposition was taken, and further that I am not financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO under my hand and of office on this 15th day of September, 2025.



Mary Henry
Integrity Legal Support Solutions
Firm Registration No. 528
9901 Brodie Ln.,#160-400
Austin, Texas 78748
512-320-8690
www.integritylegal.support

State Defendants' Response to Plaintiff-Intervenors' and TXNAACP Motion for Preliminary Injunction

Exhibit AF

Attorney General Letter responding to DOJ

KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

July 11, 2025

The Honorable Harmeet K. Dhillon
Assistant Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division
950 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20530
Harmeet.Dhillon@usdoj.gov

Dear Assistant Attorney General Dhillon,

I am in receipt of your July 7, 2025, letter concerning Texas congressional districts and welcome a discussion both of the constitutionality of those districts, and how they can best serve Texans. I fully support Governor Abbott calling a special session for the Texas Legislature to conduct congressional redistricting to take advantage of recent changes to the legal and political landscape.

As you know, I have stood shoulder to shoulder with President Trump in fighting for the constitutional rights of Texans, and of all Americans. My office filed 107 lawsuits against the unconstitutional policies of the Biden-Harris Administration, setting the constitutional framework for opposing the liberal agenda including DEI, open borders, anti-gun hysteria, and transgender procedures forced on children. I also filed the landmark *Texas v. Pennsylvania* lawsuit and have vigorously defended one of the most comprehensive election integrity bills anywhere in the country. Nothing is more important to me or the office I am proud to lead than upholding the Constitution and combatting the left-wing assault on American values.

We agree that the time for race-based decisions in government is over. As Chief Justice Roberts wrote in *SFFA v. Harvard*, "Eliminating racial discrimination means eliminating all of it." 600 U.S. 181, 206 (2023). We also agree that Justice Kavanaugh has acknowledged temporal constraints on race-based decisions required under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. *Allen v. Milligan*, 599 U.S. 1, 45 (2023) (Kavanaugh, J., concurring).

I am also keenly aware of the Fifth Circuit's decision in *Petteway v. Galveston County*, 111 F.4th 596 (5th Cir. 2024) (*en banc*). My office successfully briefed that case's implications for Texas

congressional districts earlier this year. *See* First Amended Motion for Partial Judgment, *LULAC v. Abbott*, No. 3:21-cv-00259 (W.D. Tex. Feb. 15, 2025), ECF 848; *see also* Defendants' Brief Addressing the Effect of *Petteway*, *id.,* ECF 815. Indeed, a coalition claim under the Voting Rights Act brought against Texas Congressional District 18 has been dismissed under *Petteway*. *See* Order Granting Motion to Dismiss, *id.,* ECF 972; *see also* Response to Order Requiring Additional Briefing, *id.,* ECF 917. Around the same time—which is to say, after the *Petteway* decision—your office dismissed all of its claims against Texas election districts. I agreed with your decision in that regard, and still do. I applaud your leadership and legal acumen in recognizing the futility of the claims brought against Texas under the Biden-Harris administration.

We also agree that, had the Texas legislature felt compelled under pre-*Petteway* strictures to create coalition districts, the basis for such decisions—as you say—"no longer exists." However, my office has just completed a four-week trial against various plaintiff groups concerning the constitutionality of Texas's congressional districts, as well as its State House and State Senate maps. The evidence at that trial was clear and unequivocal: **the Texas legislature did not pass race-based electoral districts for any of those three political maps**. Texas State Senator Joan Huffman, who chaired the Senate Redistricting Committee, testified under oath that she drew Texas districts blind to race, and sought to maximize Republican political advantage balanced against traditional redistricting criteria. *See*, *e.g.*, Tr. Jun. 7, 2025, PM Session at 33; Tr. Jun 9, 2025, AM Session at 54. Dr. Sean Trende, renowned redistricting expert, testified on behalf of Texas that its electoral maps correlate more closely with partisan advantage than any racial consideration. *See* Tr. Jun. 9, 2025, AM Session at 67–177, *id.*

Finally, we agree that there have been substantial changes in the law since Texas drew its congressional districts in 2021. In the four short years since then, the Supreme Court has issued *Milligan*, *SFFA*, and *Alexander v. South Carolina State Conference of the NAACP*, 602 U.S. 1 (2024). At the same time, voting patterns in the state have undergone tremendous change, including—as you are certainly aware—Texas's historic support for President Trump in the 2024 Presidential Election.

The Texas Legislature has led the Nation in rejecting race-based decision-making in its redistricting process—it has drawn its current maps in conformance with traditional, non-racial redistricting criteria to ensure Texas continues to adopt policies that will truly Make America Great Again. As permitted by federal law, the congressional maps in 2021 were drawn on a partisan basis. *See Rucho v. Common Cause*, 588 U.S. 684 (2019).

For these reasons, I welcome continued dialogue about how Texas's electoral districts can best serve Texas voters without regard to outdated and unconstitutional racial considerations. My office stands ready to support President Trump, Governor Abbott, and the Texas Legislature in their redistricting goals and will defend any new maps passed from challenges by the radical Left.

Respectfully,

Ken Paxton

State Defendants' Response to Plaintiff-Intervenors' and TXNAACP Motion for Preliminary Injunction

Exhibit AG

House Committee on Congressional Redistricting, July 26th, 2025:00:15:20

TRANSCRIPTION OF AUDIO VIDEO RECORDING

TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

COMMITTEE ON CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING

SATURDAY, JULY 26, 2025

TRANSCRIBED BY:

JULIE THOMPSON, CET

P R O C E E D I N G S

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: The time is 11:05 a.m. The House Select Committee on Congressional Redistricting will come to order.

The clerk will call the role.

THE CLERK: Chair Vasut.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Here.

THE CLERK: Vice Chair Rosenthal.

VICE CHAIR ROSENTHAL: Here.

THE CLERK: Representative Garcia.

REPRESENTATIVE GARCIA: Here.

THE CLERK: Representative Geren.

REPRESENTATIVE GEREN: Here.

THE CLERK: Representative Gervin-Hawkins.

(No audible response)

THE CLERK: Representative Guerra.

(No audible response)

THE CLERK: Representative Guillen.

REPRESENTATIVE GUILLEN: Here.

THE CLERK: Representative Hefner.

REPRESENTATIVE HEFNER: Here.

THE CLERK: Representative Hickland.

REPRESENTATIVE HICKLAND: Here.

THE CLERK: Representative Hunter.

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: Here.
THE CLERK: Representative Manuel.
REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Here.
THE CLERK: Representative McQueeney.
REPRESENTATIVE MCQUEENEY: Here.
THE CLERK: Representative Metcalf.
REPRESENTATIVE METCALF: Here.
THE CLERK: Speaker Moody.
SPEAKER MOODY: Present.
THE CLERK: Representative Pierson.
REPRESENTATIVE PIERSON: Here.
THE CLERK: Representative Spiller.
REPRESENTATIVE SPILLER: Here.
THE CLERK: Representative Tepper.
REPRESENTATIVE TEPPER: Here.
THE CLERK: Dean Thompson.
REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: Here.
THE CLERK: Representative Turner.
REPRESENTATIVE TURNER: Here.
THE CLERK: Representative Wilson.
REPRESENTATIVE WILSON: Here.
THE CLERK: Representative Wu.
REPRESENTATIVE WU: Here.
CHAIRPERSON VASUT: A quorum is present.

The Chair is pleased to welcome our guests attending today's meeting. The Chair reminds our audience that signs, placards, and verbal expressions of support or disapproval are prohibited under the House rules.

Now, I know some had signs in here earlier. I'm not asking you to remove them. Just keep them down at your feet, and that will be fine. You might even want to use it as a fan.

Now, the Chair has asked to lower the temperature in here and we're endeavoring to do that, and I hope that that will take affect soon.

Yeah. Both. Now and also, you may see the members on the dais remove their coats. Just understand that's because we've got a whole bunch of lights in front of us. It might get a little warm up here.

So I want to thank you for being here today and helping us preserve order and decorum at today's hearing. You know, really, what this is about is making sure that we hear from you, and so when we maintain order and decorum, it ensures that we're able to do that effectively, so thank you for that.

Before we take up any revision to the congressional redistricting plan or discuss such a plan amongst ourselves, we are of course here today in our second public hearing to hear about what revisions should be made, if any.

As set out in the posting for today's hearing, we will take public testimony regarding a revised congressional redistricting plan pursuant to the governor's July 9, 2025, proclamation calling a special session of the 89th Legislature.

This hearing will focus on those counties of the state lying wholly or partly within Congressional Districts 2, 7, 8, 9, 14, 18, 22, 29, 36, and 38, for the 119th Congress. But the committee will hear testimony about any region of the state.

Today's hearing will feature in-person public testimony only. For everyone in the audience, thank you for being here today. In order to testify in person today, you must register outside at the table that's outside those doors back there. We have staff there for you. If you have any questions, please ask the staff there.

Be sure to fill out your blue sheet all the way through and make sure to sign it at the

bottom. Some of you didn't sign, so when I call you up to testify, I might flag that for you, and we're going to need to have you sign it before you testify, if that's okay.

We're going to be -- as you know, we've had to kind of limit who can be in this room because of fire code, and so I want to say that after you testify, if you wouldn't mind exiting so that somebody outside can come in, that would be appreciated.

We're going to be closing registration for in-person testimony today at 12:30 p.m. The Chair will remind you all about that, and then we'll close that at 12:30; so make sure to register outside.

For everyone wishing to testify, testimony will be limited to two minutes in length. I'll have a timer up here at the dais, and I believe there is one -- yes -- right in front of the four Chairs up at the front here. The yellow light, I believe, will indicate 30 seconds, and then you'll have another chirp, I believe at 15. And then it will really be at the end, and then I will kind of ask you nicely, please wrap up your testimony. That

means basically kind of finish your sentence, and then we'll go on.

Now, any questions you receive from the members of the committee or on the dais here today, that's not really an opportunity to just extend your testimony without end. That's for specific questions. The whole reason for that is we want to be fair to everybody in this room and reach as many (audio cuts out).

...five-hour limit, I want you to know. That five hours is just for the testimony portion.

Now I want to drive home this point, because we have such a great group of people here today, that testifying at these Chairs and at the microphones is not the only way that your testimony can be recorded and given to the committee. And it's very important that we hear from all of you.

Now, first, if you are testifying and you have more to say than time allows, as was put into the notice, you're encouraged to have a written copy of your testimony, and you'll be able to turn that in to our assistant clerk seated at this table over here. And I'd encourage you to do that. That testimony will be scanned in and given to all of the

members of the committee, who will have your affirmation form that you filled out and can call you or email you with any questions.

Second, if you have any handouts today, we ask for 22 copies so that we can give one to every member of the committee and then one for the record that will be shared electronically. Please feel free to give those, again, to the assistant clerk up front if you have them.

Third, everyone in this room and anyone watching online is welcome to submit an electronic comment without testifying. You can do that online on the electronic portal. It's linked in today's hearing notice. It can be found at comments.house.texas.gov. Again, that comments.house.texas.gov. So even if you want to just upload your testimony there too, even if you do testify, you're welcome to do that. We'd love to have it. And so the more, the merrier.

The Texas Legislative Council also hosts a website for redistricting at redistricting.capitol -- now, that's with an O, c-a-p-i-t-o-l. So just so you know, capitol with an O is the building. Capital with an A is Austin. So there's your trivia for today. So that's

redistricting.capitol.texas.gov. On that website you can find information about submitting proposed maps for consideration. I believe you click "2020s" and then "Public participation," and then you can upload that there.

Finally, every member of the public is always welcome to email, contact, or call any member of the legislature at any time, particularly your state representative, and we welcome you to do so. You can find out information about contacting your member at house.texas.gov.

Finally, let's talk about logistics. Since today is only in-person, we're going to take in-person public testimony in panels of four. I'm going to call four up to testify at the front, and then I will read off four names that will be on the next panel, or at least I'm going to try to do that. If you hear your name called, just be ready. So if I say, "on deck," just be ready. Make sure you're in this room. And then that way when the first panel is done and they're excused, you can come right up, and we'll be moving pretty efficiently here.

Finally, since we have no bill before this committee at any of these first three public hearings, all testimony today will be neutral or on.

That's why you had to fill out your form that way. It's just required by the rules. But guess what? You can take any position you want at that microphone or any position you want when you email us. So it's just for the registration under the rules that you're having to be on. We had a few questions about that; I wanted to make sure that you knew.

With that, I believe we'll get started. You got --

DEAN THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, may I have a point of information?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: The Chair recognizes Dean Thompson for a question.

DEAN THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to advise the public that they would not be testifying on a revised congressional redistricting plan because there is no revised congressional redistricting plan.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: The Chair would note that the reason we're kind of reading it off that way is a hyper technicality in the way the hearing notice was done. Now, hyper technically it's whether there will be a revised congressional districting plan. But the Chair is going to just reflect for the notes that it's on revised

congressional districting plan. Now, that testimony of course can be anything that they want. But I thank the Dean for the question.

DEAN THOMPSON: I just did want the committee -- I just didn't want the audience to be confused that there is a plan already in place.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: That's a very fair point. All of the congressional districts that were mentioned in this notice or any of the other notices are the current districts and you can find those online in Plan C2193 on the redistricting website DDR.capitol.texas.gov. But as Dean Thompson correctly notes, there is no revised map in front of the committee at this time.

Thank you, Dean.

Vice Chair Rosenthal for what purpose?

VICE CHAIR ROSENTHAL: I would like to make a statement at the beginning.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Chair recognizes Vice Chair Rosenthal for a statement.

VICE CHAIR ROSENTHAL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thanks for helping to work with us on invited testimony today.

Can you hear me now?

Can you all hear me?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Good.

VICE CHAIR ROSENTHAL: All right. You all, my name is John Rosenthal. I'm actually a state representative in the Houston area. Northwest Houston District 135. And I'm -- I often feel out of place in these settings. I'm a career mechanical engineer, and I seek practical solutions whenever we're in this business. So to me this is kind of anything but that. It's the exact opposite.

Now, for someone like me, this is an incredible responsibility that I feel, and I'm honored but also feel the gravity to serve as your Vice Chair on this House select committee on congressional redistricting. Listen, I've done some big things as an oil field engineer, but nothing in my life compares to this right here today. And thank you for being here. There's a real fight in front of us, and you can count on me and my colleagues to be in it.

At the first hearing, I passed out the letter from the Department of Justice that was sent to Governor Abbott where he specifically mentions -- the Department of Justice specifically mentioned four congressional districts. That is 9, 18, 29, and 33.

Before I even say anything else, I would remiss -- I would be remiss if I didn't mention that Congressional 18 is where we're sitting. It's historic, iconic district. And when I say historic, I mean historic. This district gave us Barbara Jordon, Mickey Leland, Craig Washington, Sheila Jackson Lee, and the late, great Sylvester Turner. So when we -- when we look at what's going on right now and the three of these four districts called out just happen to be represented by African American representatives. Tell me that that is not a racist attack on our black reps.

And I'll note it's black and brown. We've got Sylvia Garcia here who we're going to hear from in a little bit. Mid-decade redistricting is unusual. It's unnecessary. We actually are required every 10 years to redraw our district boundaries after the census, and we did that. There was a 2020 census, and we redrew the boundaries in 2021.

So this process is not about making things fair, which is what it's supposed to be. It's mostly about removing districts represented by people of color. It's about taking power. It's about taking the voice away from black and brown communities. If they dismantle all four of these,

that is like almost two million voices silenced that -- already Congressional 18 will go more than a year without having a voice in Congress, so this effort has nothing to do with representing people better. It's the opposite of that.

Texas is growing. Between 2010 and 2020 we added almost exactly 4 million people. 3,999,9994 according to the United States census. I can call that 4 million for practical purposes. Of that growth, 187,252 were white, 550,887 were black, 1.98 million were Hispanic or Latino.

So let me just say, if 4 percent -- 4 and a half percent of our 10 year growth was white, when we added the 2 new districts that was required because we had so many new people here, how did they manage to draw those both to be majority white districts? That is not the purpose of the exercise, right? We take the census, and then we draw the districts to make sure everyone is fairly represented.

So I'm just going to say, if we end up trying -- if these folks end up trying to take away seats, we will be fighting those. That is just stealing voices, plain and simple.

So I'm going to point out -- for those who haven't noticed, I'm a white guy. But I think it's especially important for people that look like me to speak out because when Desmond Tutu said, "If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor." Sign me up to oppose the oppressor.

So it's on us, those of us -- and you know who I'm talking to. The people that benefit from this system, we need your help in this fight because we cannot let our brothers and sisters, no matter what race, or zip code, or ethnicity, or anything else, we cannot let this system -- this process silence their voices.

So with that, I'll yield back. But thank you all very much.

DEAN THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Dean Thompson, for what purpose?

DEAN THOMPSON: I'd like to respond.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Chair recognizes Dean Thompson for an opening statement.

DEAN THOMPSON: I'm the last person in the United States that need to defend Ken Paxton and

Dan Patrick, but I'm going to defend them today. When we drew the lines, and the DOJ sitting down here and saying they were racial lines, here's what Ken Paxton said. "The Texas Legislature did not pass race space electoral districts for any of those three political maps. Texas State Senator Joan Huffman, who Chairs the Senate Redistricting Committee, testified under oath that she drew Texas districts blind to race and sought to maximize Republican political advantage balanced against traditional redistricting criteria. The Texas Legislature has led the nation in rejecting race based decision making in its redistricting process."

You all know that I'm the wrong person to defend Dan Patrick, but there's no way in hell that a racist map is going to come out of the Texas Senate. And I resent that the United States Justice Department would send a bogus letter down here to the state of Texas accusing the people in this state of doing such.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Representative Turner, for what purpose?

REPRESENTATIVE TURNER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Would the Chair yield for a couple of questions?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Chair yields for questions.

REPRESENTATIVE TURNER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to follow up on the conversation you and I had on the dais at our Thursday hearing in Austin, I asked you at that time if the Chair had any contact or if the committee had any contact with the Department of Justice with respect to their July 7th letter. You answered that you had not. Has that changed since that time?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: That has not changed since our last conversation.

REPRESENTATIVE TURNER: Okay. You may be aware, yesterday your Senate counterpart Senator Phil King sent a letter to the Department of Justice addressed to Harmeet Dhillon, who is the assistant attorney general who signed the July 7th letter, extending an invitation to Ms. Dhillon to testify before the Senate Redistricting Committee so the senators could hear the Department of Justice's perspective on why that letter was sent, why it was necessary, and what their legal rationale was for it.

My question is: would the House committee also send a similar letter formally inviting Ms. Dhillon to testify before our committee so we can understand exactly what the Department of Justice's position is with respect to this redistricting process?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: The Chair's understanding is we extended an invitation to anyone that wanted to come testify, which would include Ms. Dhillon, at the first hearing that we had two days ago. I understand the Vice Chair is willing to invite them, and she's more than willing to come and testify in person. And pursuant to the conversations that I've had with the Vice Chair, happy to take her out of order either today or at the hearing in Arlington on Monday.

REPRESENTATIVE TURNER: Okay. So is the Chair not prepared to send a formal letter from -- I think -- I appreciate --

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: The Chair is happy to consider that. I will. I'll consider that and meet with you on this.

REPRESENTATIVE TURNER: Would the Chair recognize me for a motion for us to -- for the

committee to vote to formally invite the assistant attorney general to appear before the committee?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Not at this time, but I will get with you and I'm happy to consider sending her a letter. And even just so it's clear for the public right now, she's welcome to come testify. I don't believe that I or the committee have the power to subpoena her because she's a federal official, but she's more than welcome to come. And I know if the Vice Chair, or anyone, or me wants to reach out to her, we'd be happy to have her if she wants to come.

REPRESENTATIVE TURNER: I understand, and I would just hope the Department of Justice would respond positively to a formal invitation from you and from our committee to come and testify. That's why I think a formal invitation would be appropriate and hopefully well received, and we'd get their testimony here before our committee.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Understood. I will follow up with you on that for sure.

REPRESENTATIVE TURNER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I'm prepared to make that motion at any time you deem is appropriate for me to offer it.

Lastly, you had indicated the other day that the house has retained a law firm for purposes of redistricting. Butler Snow, I believe you said?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: That's correct.

REPRESENTATIVE TURNER: Okay. You said you wanted to check to see if that law firm was available to the entire committee for purposes of redistricting. You weren't sure about that when we talked about it Thursday. Did you have an answer on that?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Yes. The Chair has looked into that. Butler Snow has been retained to represent the speaker and his staff, the Chair and his staff. And because of the litigation that was ongoing at the time, Chairman Hunter and his staff as well.

REPRESENTATIVE TURNER: Okay. So just so I'm crystal clear on that, Butler Snow has been retained by the House of Representatives to represent the speaker and his staff, yourself and your staff --

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: And the committee staff I guess would be indirectly under that too. Yes. And then Chairman Hunter is --

REPRESENTATIVE TURNER: Your personal staff and the committee staff.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: That's correct.

REPRESENTATIVE TURNER: And Chairman Hunter and his staff.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: That is correct, Representative Turner.

REPRESENTATIVE TURNER: And that's the scope of their representation?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: That is my understanding of the scope. Yes, sir.

REPRESENTATIVE TURNER: Okay. Would the committee be able to provide resources for members of the committee -- I'm talking specifically Democratic members and the political minority -- to also retain our own counsel for purposes of redistricting?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: I'm happy to look at that. I'm not sure if that's been done before, but I'm happy to look at that. I do know that we all have legislative counsel that's available to every member, but I'm happy to look at that and get with you.

REPRESENTATIVE TURNER: Okay. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you, Representative Turner.

Members, any other questions?

Representative Wu, for what purpose

REPRESENTATIVE WU: Questions.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Chair yields for questions.

REPRESENTATIVE WU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the last hearing I had asked you if you had any information from the governor's office on exactly the governor's intent or rationale for putting this on the call, thus giving the committee some direction of what we're supposed to be doing, what we're supposed to be looking at, more than just naming a few -- naming an issue. Have you contacted the governor's office since that last hearing?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: I have not.

REPRESENTATIVE WU: Okay. Has anyone in your office contacted them?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Not to my knowledge.

REPRESENTATIVE WU: Has anyone asked him, "Could you clarify what exactly your intent is, and reasoning is for putting this on the call?"

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Not beyond my personal knowledge. I don't know.

REPRESENTATIVE WU: Okay. Have you considered asking the governor to explain what exactly he means when he's putting this issue on the call?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Not at this time. I'll take that under advisement. I mean, I think that the proclamation that we have received and that we reviewed at the last hearing was, in my mind, pretty clear in the sense that he's put this item on the call, and that it is prudent for this committee to take it up.

REPRESENTATIVE WU: Could you explain, in your mind, what is the rationale that you understand of what the governor is --

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: I'll give a little leeway up at the front. I just want to make sure that we understand that the audience is not to respond, and it's going to be particularly important when we get into witness testimony. I just want to make sure that we know that now. That's okay.

If the gentleman would please repeat his question.

REPRESENTATIVE WU: You explained that you think that it's not necessary for you to ask the governor to clarify his intent and his rationale for placing this on the call -- for placing a mid-cycle redistricting on the call. You said you understand that, in your mind, it is clear to you what it is. It is unclear to me and many other members on here. Could you explain, in your own words, in your mind, what you believe the governor's intent is in putting this on the call.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: I could not speculate what the governor's intent is. The Chair's position is that the governor has put an item on the proclamation, and as is customary, when the governor puts items on the proclamation, the legislature responds with these hearings. And so on that basis that the Chair has set up these public hearings, including the one two days ago in Austin, the one today here in Houston, and one on Monday in Arlington.

REPRESENTATIVE WU: Okay. So now I'm even more confused because just not more than two minutes ago you said it was clear in your mind what the governor intended, what he wants, and his logic, even though you haven't talked to him. But now

you're saying that we don't know and that's why we're having these hearings.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: My statement was that the proclamation itself was clear as to the jurisdiction conferred upon the House of Representatives under the constitution to take action or not take action under the constitution. And on that basis, because the governor has put it on the call, as is customary, the Chair was going to take it up. I believe that's the position that has been taken in the Senate as well, and it's customary that any time we have a special session proclamation, we take up that legislation along with all the other items.

REPRESENTATIVE WU: Do you know whether or not the governor's true intent is to remove coalition districts from Texas maps?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: I do not, and I struggle to know anyone's true intent. I'm not a mind reader. I haven't been able to read my wife's mind many times, and I can't read the governor's necessarily.

REPRESENTATIVE WU: Sure.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: So I can't speculate on what anyone's intent is.

REPRESENTATIVE WU: Would you be surprised if the governor specifically said, point blank, "We have the ability now to draw maps that don't have coalition districts"? Are you aware the governor said that publicly?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: I'm aware of the governor making remarks. I'm not aware of the specific details, but I true that you've done a quote, so on that basis, I don't have a reason to dispute the quote. But it's not the Chair's intention to be taking action based off of the expressed words of the governor in a private setting. The governor has given a proclamation, and, as the Chair has indicated, the Chair is going to act on that proclamation.

REPRESENTATIVE WU: Well, that again brings us back to my original point. I'm not clear what the intent is and what the purpose of this is and here -- I've read the proclamation. The proclamation to me, as an attorney, provides no basis of why we are redistricting under the law -- under state and federal law -- other than you can, or you have the legal ability to do it right now. But it has not provided to me, as a sitting member of the legislature, of why and for what purpose.

So all the other legislation, the governor has provided information on what his feelings are, what his intent is, and what kind of law he would like to see passed. Now, he has not provided that in writing to any of us as members of this committee. Has he provided that in writing or verbally to you?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: He has not.

REPRESENTATIVE WU: Okay. So I would assume that you are not a mind reader, as you just said. That you are as in the dark as we are about this.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: I don't know if I would use that terminology. The Chair's position is that the proclamation --

REPRESENTATIVE WU: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: The proclamation was clear as to the jurisdiction conferred upon the legislature under the constitution to take action on items put on call and it has been the intention and the practice of the House for the committees to take up hearings and action on the items put on the call.

REPRESENTATIVE WU: Sure. Now, you're an attorney as well. It's reasonable to say that

there is a distinction between jurisdiction and a purpose. Would that be fair?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: I think that jurisdiction is obviously a legal terminology. Purpose would be in the eye of the beholder, of course.

REPRESENTATIVE WU: Sure. And just like the legislature has a jurisdiction to either increase school funding or decrease school fundings, you would agree that those are very different things.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: I would presume that those are certainly different things.

REPRESENTATIVE WU: Okay. Now, that would apply to this here and you have stated that we have the clear jurisdiction to be sitting here based on the governor's call, but we do not have any purpose in being here. Could you explain -- could you explain in your own words, in your mind, what the purpose is of this committee? What are we looking to do?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: The purpose of the hearings, as was announced two days ago, is a proclamation has been issued where the governor has put this item on the call. In accordance with the historical practice, we're going to take it up in two

phases. The first phase is of course for the public to provide testimony on whether to revise the congressional plan or not and if so, what are things that you would like to see and not see? And we've received testimony at the last hearing on that basis. I anticipate in a moment we'll be able to get to that here today and in Arlington on Monday.

And then depending on that testimony, we may or may not take action thereafter. And so this is a two-phase process, and I think it's always prudent when the governor puts an item on the call that we take it seriously and we look into it and that's exactly what we're doing.

REPRESENTATIVE WU: So what you're saying is you don't have any idea of what you want to do, correct?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: I wouldn't say that.

REPRESENTATIVE WU: You're waiting for public testimony.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Well, I think that my main purpose here today is to hear from the public, and I'd like to be able to do that. Obviously, we've got to get through these questions

first to be able to hear from the people. And I'd like to be able to go into public testimony.

REPRESENTATIVE WU: Thank you. In your own mind have you already an idea or a plan of what you would like to see done on these maps?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: In the sense that whether we take action or not, I've heard testimony that would lead me to believe that perhaps some revisions are necessary. I believe there was testimony two days ago that some people didn't like the current maps. But whether or not we do that is still to be determined and I'd like to get to the public testimony so we can hear that today and in two days.

REPRESENTATIVE WU: All right. Let's get to it.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Members, any other --

Speaker Moody, for what purpose?

SPEAKER MOODY: Just a couple questions of the Chair.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Chair yields for questions.

SPEAKER MOODY: Since we took up testimony on Thursday and we had a conversation at

that point about whether you had been provided any proposed maps or had begun to prepare any at that time, you said no. And I just want to, now that a couple days have passed, some testimony has come online, have you or your office begun to engage in drafting a proposed map for this committee to consider?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: No.

SPEAKER MOODY: Has any -- I keep hearing that maps are coming down from Washington, D.C. Have any maps like that been provided to you or your staff?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: No.

SPEAKER MOODY: So we still -- you don't have anything in front of you after one hearing that would indicate what a potential redraw of congressional districts in Texas would look like?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: No. The only one that I have seen was that one that was uploaded to the public portal, and I believe there might have been more uploaded. I haven't looked at them. So that's it.

SPEAKER MOODY: Okay. I appreciate it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Members, any other questions?

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Chair is going to recognize on the dais with us today Representatives Walle, Lalani, Morales Shaw, Jones, Perez, and Simmons.

Did I miss anyone?

Okay. Mr. Walle, for what purpose?

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Thank you. Just to ask a few questions of the Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Chair yields for questions.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for allowing the non-redistricting committee members to at least sit on the committee and allowing us to participate so that voices are heard from every part of Harris County. Being a member from Harris County for the last nine terms, it's an honor to represent, not just my district, House District 140 and North Harris County and Aldine area. But I just don't represent North Harris County. I get to vote on -- many of us get to vote -- all of us, 150 members, get to vote on legislation

that impacts statewide issues. And so appreciate the opportunity.

But as it pertains to any maps or potential maps that would be presented by this committee or identified by this committee, is the Chair aware or how would this committee ensure that committees of interest, like those in CD 29, 18, 9, 7, are not split or diluted during the redistricting process?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: It's the Chair's intention, as he's previously stated, as far as it depends on the Chair to comply with the Voting Rights Act and -- at all times.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: And what specifically will that criteria be -- how will that criteria be used in redrawing these maps?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: The Chair doesn't have a particular plan in mind on specific districts. As I mentioned, I haven't even seen a map. I haven't prepared a map. And so it would be premature for me to comment on that other than to say I'm going to comply with the Voting Rights Act in everything I do.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Okay. And so to that point, how will the Chair and the committee do that?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: It's the Chair's understanding that if a bill is filed after these public hearings, we'll take it up and consider it. At that time we'll have another public hearing, of course, on any proposal, and then we will evaluate it and ensure at all times that it complies with the Voting Rights Act.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: And in compliance with the Voting Rights Act, how will the committee ensure that there are no gerrymandering or racial gerrymandering of these districts?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: The Chair understands and part of the purpose of counsel is to make sure that we get appropriate advice. I'm not an expert on redistricting law, but we receive that advice. And whoever, you know, moves forward with anything would -- of course we have counsel in that sense, and I would -- you know, my expectation is that any map that is drawn will be reviewed for compliance with the Voting Rights Act, and that it will comply with the Voting Rights Act.

And of course throughout the process we'll have a deliberative process for the members of this committee on any proposal if one comes forward, as well as on the floor of the House.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Okay. And you mentioned that you have hired outside counsel for the committee on redistricting; is that correct?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: As I mentioned to Representative Turner, outside counsel has been retained for the speaker and his staff, the Chair and his staff. And because of the litigation that was ongoing, for Chairman Hunter and his staff.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Just so the record is clear, he's the former Chair redistricting.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Correct. And as I understand it, there has been -- since there is no map, we are -- are you aware that we recently had a trial on the 2021 map? Is that -- are you aware of that?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: I'm generally aware. The Chair was not involved in the lawsuit.

(Audio cuts out)

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: And that map was passed by the Texas Legislature, and who controls the Texas Legislature?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: The people of Texas.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Just to be clear -- and I'm not trying to be cute here -- but who is in control -- which political party is in control of the Texas Legislature as we speak?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: The Republican party currently holds and held in '21 a majority of the seats in the House and Senate.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Okay. And they are the ones that approved this particular map; is that correct?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: I don't recall actually offhand, Representative Walle. I don't want to lie to you about what the exact vote count was, but I do know that it was approved by the House and Senate in '21. I believe in the third special session it passed Senate.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: You're aware that the Republicans drew this map that now the Republicans saying are now illegal; is that my understanding?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: All right. The Chair will remind the audience that clapping or outbursts in response to statements is not allowed under the rules of decorum -- rules of decorum. And

I trust that the audience will help me comply with the rules of decorum going forward.

To the gentleman's point -- and I apologize if I have forgotten the exact question asked. The votes in '21, I understand the Republicans voted for the map, me included, because I believed it complied with the Voting Rights Act. Whether or not individuals believe it does or doesn't, it is not the Chair's position that the map drawn in '21 violates the Voting Rights Act.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Okay. But it wasn't until you got a -- well, the governor, Abbott, received a letter from the Department of Justice that now ironically says that these maps are now -- I'm paraphrasing -- are discriminatory in a particular way. Is that your understanding?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: I don't necessarily read into the proclamation that. If the governor has made a statement, he'd have to defer to the governor, right. The Chair has read the proclamation. The proclamation says what it says and as the Chair has mentioned, it's the customary practice in the legislature when the governor puts an item on the call to take it up.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Okay. Are you --

DEAN THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Dean Thompson, for what purpose?

DEAN THOMPSON: May I respond just a little bit to my colleague?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: The Chair will recognize Dean Thompson for a brief statement.

DEAN THOMPSON: It just -- Representative Walle, it seems to me that the DOJ is accusing Texas of being racist. And I know you know I don't need to defend Dan Patrick because he can defend himself. And I don't need to defend the legislature because they can defend themselves. And I don't need to defend -- definitely don't need to defend Ken Paxton because he can defend himself. But he specifically stated that those maps was drawn, and they were not racially -- race was not involved in it. And I don't know why the United States Justice Department is accusing us of drawing racist maps. I just don't get it.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Chair recognizes Representative Walle for a brief statement, and then

if he wants to ask the questions to the Chair he will. The Chair will yield for that.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: I think that's what the perplexing, Dean Thompson, is really why we're here. We don't know why we're here, honestly. I'm kind of speechless on that fact.

But to Chair Vasut, are you aware that -- and if the committee -- if you answered this question at a previous (audio cuts out), I just want to get this at least for our Harris County folk to understand. Are you aware that the 2021 map increased majority white districts?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: I have not looked at that -- the breakdown of every single one and tabulate every single one. It's been four years, Representative Walle, and I don't want to give you a wrong answer. So I'm just going to say I'm not advised at this time.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Are you or any of the committee members, but particularly you -- you Chair this committee -- are you aware that the most recent census data shows that most of Texas' population growth in the past decade has come communities of color. Is that a fair statement?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: I'm not 100 percent sure, Representative Walle. I don't have information in front of me to dispute that because I haven't looked at the --

Ladies and gentlemen, the Chair will admonish the audience to follow the rules of decorum. The Chair wants to ensure that everyone remains and has an opportunity to speak, so let's make sure that we follow the rules of decorum.

To the gentleman's point, the reason I'm not able to -- I have not looked at that census in detail and I don't want to --

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Again, my rule is I'm going to give you the straight answer I can, and I'm going to answer your question. And so on that basis, I don't have that census data in front of me. I haven't looked at it.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Okay. Well, just --

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: I have no reason to doubt your statement if that helps.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Okay. So for the Chairman's information, census data, also the American Community Survey indicates that 80, 90

percent of the growth in the state of Texas has been by -- the last decade by black, brown, Asian folks. Just want to set that record straight.

And that you're sitting in the most diverse county in the country. Are you aware of that?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: I believe, hyper technically, gentleman Representative Lalani might take issue with that because I believe that Fort Bend County is the most --

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: And where is Fort Bend?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Fort Bend County is very close by.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: It abuts Harris County; is that correct?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: And the Houston Metro area. You are absolutely right.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: It's in the Houston Metro area. So this region is one of the most diverse communities in the country; is that correct?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: I have -- I would assume so I think we're better for it.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: And that would be a strength. That diversity would be a strength because we're all Americans; is that correct?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Absolutely. I think that unity and diversity is the strongest principle that there is.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Okay. And is the Chair aware that this university campus is one of the most diverse university campuses, the University of Houston, in the country?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: That's the Chair's understanding. As Representative Walle knows, the Chair is a graduate of this institution.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: You are. The University of Houston Law Center, as I.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Yes, sir.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: I appreciate the time you've given us to answer, particularly myself as a member of this body, and look forward to hearing from our members of Congress and the panelists. And I want all of you guys to know that you're being heard, and we're going to do everything we can to fight for you, your interests. You deserve it. We're all Americans. Godspeed.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Ms. Jones, for what purpose?

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: I have questions of the Chair.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Chair yields for questions.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Chair, as you know, I represent this district, House District 147 where we are.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: That's the Chair's understanding. Yes.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Yes. And I have two degrees from this institution. An undergraduate degree and a law degree. The Chair understands that?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Chair understands that. Chair understands that you might have been a track star here at some point in time.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: That too. And the Chair would agree that when people are elected by their constituents, we know what's going on in our communities because we're here on the ground. Would the Chair agree with that?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: I believe the Texas House of all, whether it's compared to the

Senate or U.S. Congress, is the closest to the people. And so on that basis, I'd of course agree with the --

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Exactly. So my colleague brought up the 2021 maps. Would you agree that in 2021 the black and brown communities and Asian communities were cracked, and packed, and baked into districts that diluted their voting power to create more Anglo-dominated districts, even though the majority of the growth came from people of color?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Again, the Chair has not looked at the census data for the districts that exist now. It's been four years since they were drawn and back in '21. So I can't either -- I can't answer that question in the affirmative.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: And would the Chair agree that we're repeating the same unjust process only worse because it's mid-decade, mid-census? Would the Chair agree with that?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: The Chair would not agree. Chair's position is that we're going to always following the Voting Rights Act, and that's the Chair's position and always will be the Chair's position.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: The Chair is a lawyer, right?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: The Chair has engaged in what is known as the "practice" of law.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: And the Chair is familiar with due process, right?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: The Chair is absolutely familiar with due process.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: And the Chair understands that with due process we're entitled to meaningful notice and hearing of rights that are being taken away from us, correct?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Due process -- the due process that is owed depends upon the action being taken and whether it infringes fundamental rights, but in all cases due process is at the minimum, notice and hearing.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Right. So at a minimum, notice and hearing, do you not -- does the Chair agree that the people that are coming to testify in this hearing, at least at this point, are unable to testify as to how they will be negatively or positively affected by any maps because there are no maps filed for anybody to testify to?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: The question that the members of the public will be able to address whenever we get to public testimony will be whether or not they believe the current maps are appropriate or if they'd like to see changes.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: And so I cannot speak for the members of the public and what their opinion will be. I'd love to be able to hear it.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Okay. So to your point, once the Chair hears what the public has to say as to whether they think we should change the current maps, if the Chair believes that maps should be changed, is the public going to have the opportunity to have public hearings on the maps that are redrawn prior to us voting on them?

And second part of the question, will the hearings after a map is filed be held across the state, not in three places like we have now?

Third, will the maps also -- will these public hearings, that I believe our constituents are entitled to, be able to be via Zoom like they were in Austin? Because I just find it curious that in Austin, where the people that look like us, people were allowed to testify via Zoom, and

here you have to be here present. And I'm concerned about our disabled people who actually have opinions about whether we should be mid-decade redistricting don't have the opportunity to come before us because they can't get here or whatever. Will they have the opportunity to come before us and have us ask them questions? So those are the questions I have for now, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: The answer to your first question is 1000 percent. The answer to your second and third questions --

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Wait, wait. For purposes of the people who weren't taking notes, when you say --

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Yeah. It's a compound question under Texas Rules of Evidence. I had to answer it. It would have been objected form if we were in a deposition. But I would say this --

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: But we're not in a deposition.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: -- the question that you asked -- and correct me if I'm wrong, Representative -- was will the public have an opportunity to weigh in through a public hearing and testimony on any proposal, if any, that this

committee hears. And the answer to that question is 1000 percent.

The second questions that you asked about the method, and the timing, and the number of places, the Chair will take those under advisement when scheduling the public hearings, which have not been scheduled at this time.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Right. So would you agree with me, Mr. Chair, that right now there's no new proposed map for anyone here testifying today to speak to?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: There is no proposed map pending before the committee at this time for which public testimony will be offered. But we will have a hearing if such a map is filed. And --

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: I'm sorry. I thought you were finished.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Representative, I yield for questions.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: So when will the public receive the map of any proposed changes?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: The Chair is not sure at this time, but the Chair, as he previously announced the first hearing, while the rules allow

for 24 hours' notice after a bill is referred to set it for hearing, the Chair is going to give more notice than that.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: How much notice is the Chair going to give?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: The Chair is not sure at this time. It depends on the calendar.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: And so again, once --

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: But it will be more than 24 hours. You have the Chair's word on that.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Okay. Right. Will the Chair, in addition to giving more than 48 hours, give more than one hearing?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Chair is not sure at this time. Maybe. I don't know. I haven't made a final determination on that.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: And where will that hearing be?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: The Chair is not sure at this time, but I will take your suggestions under advisement as have been made by others as well.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: And I'll just say this, that some people have jobs to go to. Some

people have to make arrangements to get places if it's not where they are. So I would respectfully request for the people that live in Texas that we be given sufficient notice -- or they be given sufficient notice so that they can make arrangements to come to any hearings that we hope are near them so that they can give their testimony on the actual maps that will absolutely affect their rights and their representation in Congress.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you, Representative.

Representative Simmons --

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: I'm sorry. I had just one more question.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Oh, I'm sorry. Representative Jones, you're recognized for another question.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Okay. So why are we not waiting to hold these hearings until after the current litigation about the 2021 maps are resolved?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: The Chair has already answered the question that the governor has placed an item on the call, and the committee will respond to it.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: And along those same lines, in 2021, one of the proposed maps was going to consolidate CD 9 and CD 18, which would have wiped out one black district. Does this -- does the Chair have any intention to do the same thing or attempt to do the same thing in this redistricting fiasco?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: The Chair doesn't have a map in front of him, hasn't seen a map in that regards, and so I don't have any -- I can't tell you one way or the other, but I can tell you this. We will always follow the Voting Rights Act, and I would like to hear the public testimony to see what they'd like to do.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you, Representative --

REPRESENTATIVE SHAW: Chairman, I have a procedural question, please.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Point of parliamentary inquiry is stated by Representative Shaw. Please state your inquiry.

REPRESENTATIVE SHAW: Thank you, Chairman. We're sitting here in front of hundreds of

my fellow Houstonians. Happy to be here. Many of which are the target of this mid-decade redistricting. And I just want to know, Chairman, is it your intent that as the individuals testify and if they leave the room that the other members who have -- other public citizens who have signed up to testify and are standing right outside of these chambers are going to be allowed to come in to give their testimony for which they have signed up for and are waiting outside the doors to give?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: It is the Chair's intention, as he previously indicated, that when individuals testify, if you'll please leave the room so that individuals outside may be able to come in and take your seat, so we can extend that courtesy to our fellow citizens outside.

Thank you, Representative Shaw.

REPRESENTATIVE SHAW: Thank you for that clarification, Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you.

Representative Simmons for what purpose?

REPRESENTATIVE SIMMONS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just had a quick question. I know it's very important for us to get to the public --

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Chair yields for questions.

REPRESENTATIVE SIMMONS: -- testimony. Thank you so much. Just for clarification, so typically when we are -- the legislature is charged with drawing maps it is due to a census that has been taken, and new information has been made available. In this case, this seems atypical, but has there been new census data that has been given or shared? Is there a new every five year census that has come out? I'm just trying to get clarification as to why -- or what new data will be used for these maps. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: While the census does provide estimates, I believe on an annual basis, we have not, of course, received any new census. That is done every 10 years. And any map that is drawn, it's my understanding, will be based off the 2020 census. Thank you, Ms. Simmons.

REPRESENTATIVE TURNER: Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Mr. Turner, for what purpose?

REPRESENTATIVE TURNER: It's been brought to my attention, Mr. Chairman, that apparently, we've run out witness affirmation forms

outside the hearing room. Is the Chair aware of that? Is there a plan to make sure we get more witness affirmation forms so people can sign up to testify?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Chair has been advised that that is the case, and we are printing more. I thank you for bringing that to the Chair's attention.

REPRESENTATIVE TURNER: Okay. There have been more already printed?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: They're printing them right now. On that basis, the Chair will extend registration by 30 minutes to 1:00 p.m. today.

REPRESENTATIVE TURNER: Very good. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you, Representative Turner, for bringing that to my attention.

REPRESENTATIVE TURNER: And Mr. Chairman, just a quick follow up.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Mr. Turner, for what purpose?

REPRESENTATIVE TURNER: Your dialogue with Representative Walle, you made mention of the fact that you believe the plan -- the redistricting

plans that you voted for in 2021 complied with the Voting Rights Act. Do you believe that those plans complied with all applicable laws?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Yes.

REPRESENTATIVE TURNER: All right. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you, Mr. Turner.

Any other questions?

Mr. Wu, for what purpose?

REPRESENTATIVE WU: Just a brief statement.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Chair recognizes Mr. Wu for a brief statement.

REPRESENTATIVE WU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I was just going back over in my mind some of your comments from earlier. And you made a statement that members of the public had said that they were unhappy with the current maps, and I think you're intentionally conflating that -- what is happening today with what is happening in the redistricting trial -- or what has happened at redistricting trial.

That there -- by a lot of people on this dais and a lot of people in this room accuse the

majority leadership of Republicans in the 2021 redistricting of racial gerrymandering. In fact, that is why that map -- those maps, the 2021 maps, went to trial in El Paso for three weeks.

And I think that people in the last hearing, 100 percent -- 100 percent of the people, including the people who testified afterwards, after the five-hour mark and you shut the committee down, those people also 100 percent testified against the process of redistricting and also disliked the past maps for the same reasons. That the past maps, the 2021 maps included racial gerrymandering.

Because we created a system where the 96 percent of the growth in the state was in minority communities, but 100 percent of the growth of elected positions occurred in non-minority communities. That 40 percent of the state basically governs the other 60 percent. And I think it is disingenuous and maybe a little bit of a misstatement to say that people are unhappy with the current maps in the way that I think you're saying.

That I think that people are unhappy with the current maps because they do include racial gerrymandering as we alleged in the trial. But people would rather accept the current racial

gerrymandering over the intensive racial gerrymandering that the governor's proclamation calls for.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: The audience will maintain decorum. If we get to the point where we're distracting from our time here today, I'd hate to have to take any action to maintain decorum. I don't want to. I want to hear from everybody.

But did the gentleman complete his statement?

REPRESENTATIVE WU: No.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Chair recognizes Mr. Wu to continue his statement.

REPRESENTATIVE WU: And I think it would be important for witnesses when they testify today that they can say that "I disapprove of racial gerrymandering that I believe occurred in the past maps, and I especially disapprove of the future racial gerrymandering that's going to occur to make this 5C Trump map occur." Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Any other statements or questions from members of the committee?

We will now proceed to public testimony. I'll allow you to clap for that one. All right.

Chair is going to call our first panel and then give information for the second panel. Again, if your name is called for the first panel, please come down to the front. If your name is called for the second to be ready, please be ready.

Chair calls Sylvia Garcia, Jasmine Crockett (phonetic), Lizzie Fletcher (phonetic), and Al Green.

Mr. Green has been called as well.

Now, if the gentleman -- I believe that the gentleman may be sitting at the table right now. Actually --

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: That's John Mata.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: That's John Mata? You want me to --

Is he in your list here?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: He is. He is (indiscernible).

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Okay. Congressman Green, would you be so kind if I took this gentleman's testimony first? Is that all right with you?

CONGRESSMAN GREEN: That's fine with me.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: All right. Chair will not call -- Congressman Green, please be ready. You'll be on the second panel.

Chair calls Johnny Mata, who I believe is seated already. Okay.

Now, joining Congressman Green on the second panel will be Nick Lampson (phonetic), Sasha Leggett (phonetic), and Dr. Sergio Lira. Please be ready after this panel to come and testify.

Lira, I apologize.

And if I mispronounce a name at all, please correct me. I don't intend to, and I want to make sure that we call you correctly here. I'm looking at these forms. Since we've done these in paper form, if I could have -- could you take --

Congressman Crockett, we need you to sign your affirmation form. That's going to be brought to you momentarily. I'll come to you last so that we can get going here.

Chair calls Johnny Mata. Mr. Mata, I show you registered as Johnny Mata testifying on behalf of Greater of -- Houston for Greater Justice. You are, as required by the rules, on the revised

congressional redistricting plan. And place -- is that correct?

JOHNNY MATA: I'm the Chair of the Greater Houston Coalition for Justice.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: And I did I read everything about your name and your registration correctly?

JOHNNY MATA: I've been called all kinds of names, so don't feel bad.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Chair will take it as it's accurate. Please give us your testimony, sir.

JOHNNY MATA: Okay. First of all, I am very interested in and was listening to questions to you as the Chairman of why are we having this redistricting on a special session? Never heard an answer. But I will say that the issue is, as you know, (indiscernible) speaking about greed and power.

It's very funny, I've been doing this for over 50 years, participated in many redistricting, and we have to have -- this is on a special session, when we just had a real major tragedy in the river -- Gaudalupe River. And a lot of lost lives, and a lot of people that still don't

have their life together. That's what this session should be, not in redistricting.

Furthermore, let us not fool ourselves. The governor, in whatever intent this special session came, it came as a surprise. We've been preparing for other things as groups, civil rights groups. We are really faced with a lot of the immigration issues that even U.S. citizens, especially military people, are being deported.

And redistricting comes every 10 years. We weren't ready for this. And I think the message should be there should not be a special session on redistricting.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please finish your testimony.

JOHNNY MATA: That message should go to the governor. I would call the governor because as a state judge, he made a decision on a man that was accused of taking a lawnmower --

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you. Gentleman's time is expired. We may come back to you for some questions. Members at the end of the panel will come back to you.

JOHNNY MATA: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you, sir.

Chair calls Sylvia Garcia. I show you registered to testify as Sylvia Garcia on behalf of yourself and testifying on revisions to the congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

SYLVIA GARCIA: Yes. But I want to be on record that my answer is hell no, we don't need to be doing this.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: I understand. Please give us your testimony.

SYLVIA GARCIA: Thank you.

As I testified in Austin, we should not be here today. You all should really be back in Austin, passing legislation to support families in the Hill Country after the devastating flooding. Instead, we're here today playing political games to appease the fellow in the White House in his lust to retain power.

We are pretending that the governor did not approve the very maps he is now insisting must be changed. This political theatre will hurt communities in my district targeted in the DOJ letter, CD 29, and it is just shameful.

So let me tell you about District 29. Our shared values and cultures far outnumber our differences. We're a community that values faith,

family, and hard work, and service. At nearly 75 percent Latino, this district was created to comply with the Voting Rights Act which you, Mr. Chairman, say you fully support. And any suggestion otherwise by the Department of Justice is simply a lie.

From Lindale, to the East End, to Aldine to Pasadena, to Galena Park, to Jacinto City in South Houston, we are a community and we stick together. We are home to the area's largest Dia de Los Muertos celebration, award winning mariachis, championship high school teams, and some of the greatest people you'll ever have the privilege of meeting here in Texas.

We drive the Texas economy by working the Houston ship channel, and we would never, ever, ever let a conman from New York tell us Texas what to do.

Ripping up the 29th District will silence the voices of this community and that is a travesty. As has been said earlier, the population growth in Texas is because of the Latino population. The Voting Rights Act protects districts like the 29th with common interests, priorities, and background. Given this, I urge you to reject this partisan gerrymandering, reject the maps from the

fellow in the White House that no one has seen, end the charade, and support the families who are grieving and do what matters. Please stand up for Texas. And with that, I yield back.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Chair calls Lizzie Fletcher. I show you registered to testify as Lizzie Fletcher on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

LIZZIE FLETCHER: It is correct that I'm here to testify on behalf of myself and the constituents of Texas' 7th Congressional District, who I represent.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Is it okay if we keep your -- and I understand your position. Is it okay if we keep your registration on behalf of yourself just because that's not an organization, but in your elected capacity, which we understand? Is that okay?

LIZZIE FLETCHER: Yes. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Understood. Please give us your testimony.

LIZZIE FLETCHER: Good morning, Chair Vasut, Vice Chair Rosenthal, and members of the

committee. I'm Congresswoman Lizzie Fletcher. I have the privilege of representing Texas' 7th Congressional (video/audio cuts out).

...elected their candidate of choice since this district was configured in 2021. I'm proud to be their candidate of choice. It is the honor of my life to serve the people of this district. And it is my duty to defend them against the harm that could come from this redistricting process.

I'm disappointed to be here today for a hearing purporting to get the views of Texans on a congressional redistricting map and replacing it with a map that no one has seen.

It is important for you to know, however, that all but 1 of the 13 congressional districts currently represented by a Democrat has a majority minority population, including all 4 districts here in Houston. And in all 13 of those district, minority voters elect their candidate of choice. And those 13 districts are the only districts where minority votes, who make up more than 60 percent of the population of our state, consistently and reliably elect their candidate of choice.

To dismantle any of these 13 districts currently represented by Democrats would be intentionally diluting the voting strength of minority communities. You cannot do this without harming Texans and you should not. It is against the law, and it is against the fundamental organizing principle of a democratic society that all citizens, not just the privileged few, have the right and the ability to have a say in our government.

We have a long and shameful history of discrimination when it comes to voting in our beloved state. From poll taxes to white-only primaries, Texas has discriminated against voters of color for generations.

THE CLERK: Please complete your testimony.

LIZZIE FLETCHER: You have the power to reject that, to reject the pressure from President Trump and national Republican operatives urging you to offset their anticipated electoral losses elsewhere by redrawing the map in Texas to discriminate against minority communities.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony. We'll come back to you.

Chair calls Jasmine Crockett. I show you registered to testify as Jasmine Crockett on behalf of yourself on the revisions to the congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

JASMINE CROCKETT: Yes. As well as --

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

JASMINE CROCKETT: Okay. Thank you.

So I am Congresswoman Jasmine Crockett. I am also testifying on behalf of the people of Texas 30th and frankly, all the people that have any sense or any compassion in the state of Texas.

Now, it seems like we have consistently heard the refrain that Michael Jackson used to sing of "Why, why, why." And so, I just want to be clear because I have an opportunity to see so many people that I served with, and unlike the Chair, I actually do recall a number of things, such as the fact that the state was grown by 95 percent people of color.

I also recall and I'm old enough to remember when Texas lawmakers took pride in not being D.C. I'm old enough to remember how you ignored the voices of people during the last redistricting. I'm

old enough to remember that we were assured that we would have our map done from the Texas House, yet we didn't. Instead, we took the Texas Senate map.

I'm old enough to remember that we were assured that we would have two new seats, one in the DFW area and one in the Harris/Fort Bend area. I am old enough to remember that we acknowledged that the Latino community absolutely was entitled to another seat under the Voting Rights Act.

I am old enough to remember when we fought the current maps because while 95 percent of the growth was due to people of color, not only did they create two new Anglo-majority seats that are approximately 766,000 people each, you all paired the 9th and 18th congressional districts, and we had to fight to unpair them.

I am old enough to remember that I testified in court about a month ago, and the state took the position that they didn't consider race when they created the maps that we're currently sitting under. I am old enough to remember that this legislature has consistently been found to be intentionally racially discriminatory in the drawing of these maps ever since the Voting Rights Act was enacted.

I am also old enough to remember that it was a great Texan that signed the Voting Rights Act of 1965 into law. So --

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please finish your testimony.

JASMINE CROCKETT: Yes. To comply with the Voting Rights Act, we should have 60 percent of the seats that allow people of color to elect their representatives. That would be 24 seats. Instead, we currently only have 14. The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience but where he stands in times of challenge and controversy. I am asking you in the words of M.L.K., "Where will you stand?"

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

The room will come to order. Thank you. The gallery will come to order. The gallery will come to order, or the Chair will have to clear the gallery. The gallery will come to order, or the Chair will have to clear the gallery. The Chair does not want to do that. Remember, every time you're taking away from other people talking.

Members of the committee, any questions for this panel?

REPRESENTATIVE WU: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Representative Wu, you're recognized to question the panel.

REPRESENTATIVE WU: Thank you.

This question is for everyone here. The preface is, we've been trying to find out why we're here. The Chair says that he knows jurisdictionally what the authority is that we're here but not exactly what we're supposed to be doing. The governor has not really said anything other than he wants to eliminate coalition districts.

Could you tell us, do you support districts made up of coalitions of all races that black, white, Asian, Latino, everyone together coming together to pick their people, pick the person that they want, no matter who that person happens to be? Do you support that, and do you think that should be protected?

LIZZIE FLETCHER: Yes. Representative Wu, I do support coalition districts, and as I testified, all 13 districts currently held by a democratic member of Congress are districts where a coalition of minority voters elect their candidate of choice. And therefore, if this panel does as President Trump has suggested or stated, that he

would like to remove five Democratic members and replace them with five Republican members, you will be intentionally dismantling coalition districts in violation of the Voting Rights Act and the needs and desires of the people of Congressional District 7 and districts throughout the state.

JASMINE CROCKETT: I echo the points that were just made, but I want to say that while we've been talking about law, and there's a number of lawyers that are sitting here, we understand what the Voting Rights Act stands for. We also understand that there's a little thing called the Constitution that some people in D.C. want to ignore.

The reality is that we are simply seeking representation of all people in Texas. All 30 million people should have a voice in the policies that are made. And frankly, when you live in a democracy, if you have a problem because you don't want to answer to your poor policies, then maybe come up with better policies.

But at the end of the day, we absolutely should not be going out of our way to do what this legislature is consistently been found to be guilty of doing, which is to make sure that they can do an overemphasis of Anglo voices in this state.

Only 40 percent of this state is Anglo, yet somehow, we have more than 60 percent of our seats that are elected by Anglo-majority districts. As I said in 2021, as I argued against these maps, the math ain't mathing.

SYLVIA GARCIA: Representative, thank you for the question and I totally concur with both of my colleagues, and I think that is the nature of the Voting Rights Act. And it would, in fact, be unlawful and unconstitutional to dismantle coalition districts.

And I think it's interesting to note that the DOJ letter quotes the coalition district definition of a supreme court opinion. What they failed to tell you, that it's a dissenting opinion, not a majority opinion, and it's a dissenting opinion by Justice Kavanaugh who has never been, in my mind, a greater lawyer for justice.

But the bottom line here is, when you ask yourselves why you're here, you're here because Donald Trump wants to remain in power. The big ugly bill that takes 17 million people off of Medicaid. The big ugly bill that takes food away from hungry children. The big ugly bill cuts some veteran's

benefits. That big ugly bill passed by just one vote, and that was his signature agenda.

So he knows he's got to find seats somewhere in the country to offset some of their losses because there will be losses. So he picked Texas because he can pick up the phone and talk to our governor, our lieutenant governor, and when they call and he says jump, they simply ask how high? That's why we're here.

JOHNNY MATA: The answer is yes, yes, yes. And why? Democracy, democracy, democracy. That's what we're losing in America today. A lot of my forefathers in (indiscernible), American GI form, NAACP, that worked so hard for the Voting Rights Act and equality are gone now. They're rolling up in their tombs right now over what's happening here today.

I said something about greed and power and how to deal with House, I guess back then they were talking about the House of Representatives of Texas of what your job is. But let your conscious be your guide because accountability begins in our community. They decide whether you go back to your position or not.

And let me say this. The pride of America and the trust in the world is in decline. We -- many of us are ashamed of how we're about to lose democracy in all of these things. Don't let that happen to us.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Mr. Wu, any more questions?

REPRESENTATIVE WU: And on that same note, could you answer, for all of you, do you support minority-majority districts just like coalition districts? That means that like in Houston in Harris County, we've been a minority-majority area for quite a while now. And do you support in those places where it's already minority-majority, do you support keeping districts that are minority-majority?

SYLVIA GARCIA: Yes, I do.

LIZZIE FLETCHER: Yes, I do.

JOHNNY MATA: Yes, I do.

JASMINE CROCKETT: Yes, I do. And I just want to add that we have levels to this. Nevertheless, we have protections. I am also old enough to remember the Texas 30 prior to me representing it but during the redistricting battle that we had on the floor, the citizen voting age population of Texas 30 was 52 percent African

Americans. This legislature decided for no apparent reason to take it down to 48 percent.

They also decided that they wanted to wash out certain black folk and put other black folk in because they just felt like that was enough because it would give them the numbers. But we know that if there is a district -- and I have the most compact district in the state of Texas. We didn't go drawing squiggly lines to find black folk to put them in my seat. My seat is actually compact. It's these other districts that look like some kid just decided they were going to scribble whatever.

And so when we're looking at compactness, that looks like not necessarily cutting our urban centers that tend to be the most diverse areas of this state into little pizza pieces. It looks like making sure that you can hold those communities of common interest together. That means that if it's HISD, HISD people stay together, so that when there are fights when they decide that they want to do things like defund HISD, they have a federal representative who understands that instead of giving them HISD and giving them another ISD. It is important that you keep these communities of common interests, where they live together, where they play

together, where they go to church together, where they go to school together, where they shop together, and that's not what these maps have done.

And so do we need new maps? We do. Do we need better maps? Yes. But your response has nothing to do with the people regardless of what you all say. Because the people told you all in 2021 not to do this, and you did it.

The people are going to come up here today, I can guarantee you, and tell you not to break up their communities again because there's a target on their back because they know that they're weak in D.C. I am asking you all to do what you say you love to do in this state which is to honor the people that we serve. We are Texas. We are better than this.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Ms. Garcia, for what purpose?

REPRESENTATIVE GARCIA: May I ask the panel some questions, Mr. Chair?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: You may. You're recognized for such purpose.

REPRESENTATIVE GARCIA: Thank you.

Thank you so much, Congresswoman, for being here. I wish it wasn't under these circumstances. Do you know how many Texas cities are

declared disaster areas? Or counties? Texas counties are now nationally declared federal disaster areas?

JASMINE CROCKETT: I don't because I don't have any in mine currently.

SYLVIA GARCIA: Yeah. I don't know the number, but I suspect that there is still some disaster declaration in the Hill Country, either at the state level or the national level.

JASMINE CROCKETT: As well as --

SYLVIA GARCIA: That's just a guess but I don't know for a fact.

REPRESENTATIVE GARCIA: From federally, just to talk federally, is there any conversation about how many of our counties are declared disasters?

JASMINE CROCKETT: No. But I can tell you that we are aware of, obviously, the fires that took place. We're aware of, obviously, the most recent flooding. We're aware of the fact that -- we have not been hit by any tornados recently. No.

So I don't know what the current numbers are, especially since we have an administration that just came in, and whether or not they revoked any of those declarations or continued

any of those declarations. So I'm unsure, but I can tell you for Texas 30, I currently don't have any.

LIZZIE FLETCHER: Thank you, Representative Garcia, for the question. I think it's an important question. We do know that, of course, recently there has been the disaster in the Hill Country, and I know that Kerr County, and I believe there are five other counties that fall under that disaster declaration. We also know that we have ongoing disasters here in Harris County. We're continuing to recover from Hurricane Beryl last summer and the (indiscernible), which were also federally declared disasters. We're still recovering from Hurricane Harvey back in 2017.

So we have many challenges, and we know the importance of ensuring that there is an appropriate federal response; and that we have advocates in Congress who are fighting for our communities. Just this week, all the members -- all the Democratic members of the congressional delegation asked for a full federal report from the GAO to examine the federal response from FEMA, and the National Weather Service, NOAA, et cetera, to understand the federal response and where there were failures so that we can address those. And we also

submitted, just this week, supplemental disaster funding requests to the appropriations committee for $15 billion to address the ongoing disasters in Texas.

REPRESENTATIVE GARCIA: And how would redistricting impact that?

SYLVIA GARCIA: Well, I would say that it would have an impact because just listen to what Representative Fletcher said. She's still dealing with issues related to Harvey. So constituent work related to FEMA requests, requests from the national -- you know insurance from National Flood Control, those never end.

I mean, it's not easy to just take care of the constituent question, you know, within a week or two. It's ongoing. So when you have redistricting, if Lizzie is hoping to file on Jasmine Crockett because she lost her home, then all of a sudden, Lizzie gets put somewhere else, then somebody else is going to have to start from scratch. The institutional knowledge, the network, the relationship with the constituent, all of that goes away.

It's about constituent services and access to your member of Congress. People want to be

able to know that you can go and say hello to them. You're going to run into them at the grocery store. You can't do that if you've got these squiggly districts that go from, you know, Austin all the way to the Valley or for me, you know, from Houston to Orange, Texas. I mean, what relationship do I have with Orange other than wearing orange on go Astro days? You know, it just doesn't work.

REPRESENTATIVE GARCIA: Yes, ma'am.

SYLVIA GARCIA: And then be mindful, Representative Garcia, that the fellow at the White House has already said that he plans to do away with FEMA after this next hurricane season. I think maybe he may be changing his mind a little bit after he went down to the Hill Country, but they're still set on giving FEMA and recovery disasters to the states. And you all are going to be faced with the issue of how to fund that and how to administer that.

REPRESENTATIVE GARCIA: Are you aware that in my day job I am a disaster recovery humanitarian relief specialist?

SYLVIA GARCIA: No, I didn't. But thank you for your service.

REPRESENTATIVE GARCIA: Are you aware that I'm the first and only woman veteran to ever

service in the Texas House of Representatives or the capitol?

SYLVIA GARCIA: I heard you say that in Austin. Yes, ma'am.

REPRESENTATIVE GARCIA: My team has been boots on the ground. We have over 1000 search and rescue response personnel that I have organized through my military contacts and Military City USA in which I represent House District 124. We have been boots on the ground since July 6th in these search and recovery efforts. So much so that we collaborate singlehandedly with the EOC and the Texas Department of Emergency Management in recovering missing people who are in the rivers.

It's not for me. Please don't clap. Please don't clap. I'm saying this for a reason. Out of every elected official that represents the state of Texas, would it surprise you if I told you I've heard of none from Congress, one from Senate, and three from the House? Would it surprise you if I told you that my team's actions are being reported to the White House sit reps.

Sit reps, for those who aren't military, are situational reports. Those are firsthand accounts of the bodies we find. Firsthand

accounts of the thousands of tons of humanitarian supplies that my network has put into the Hill Country in its efforts. We are the number one collaborator of law enforcement first responders from all over this nation, and we have heard nothing.

Now, that's not for me. But when I've been sitting here for two days while my team is out in the field depending on me because they're getting calls every day from residents who are saying, "Please come find my daddy," and we talk about political theatre and all these fun words. You know, felon in the White House, political games, pretending, shameful. These are all words that we lovingly throw around.

I'm not a politician. I am a U.S. Air Force retired combat veteran, and I'm the first for a reason. Because the politics you all practice does not translate to real service. And I love you all dearly. I respect all my colleagues here. And I can even -- I can tell you -- I can look you straight in your face and say I can say with confidence that not a colleague up here would ever say anything bad about me to you.

And that is because from the day I was elected two sessions ago, I remained mission focused.

That mission is connecting the dots of resources. Connecting the dots of policy. Connecting the dots of relationships, Colonel Wilson. Colonel Wilson, he is a Republican. I am a Texas Democrat. That means something different. Colonel Wilson and I politically, night and day. I'm a civil rights activist. I am the secretary of the Texas Legislative Black Caucus. I am the whip of the Mexican American legislative Caucus. I am the secretary of the LGBTQ Caucus. And all of my colleagues still love me.

So while we're sitting around here entertaining the racism, we know it's alive and well. Trust me. Our boots on the ground are witnessing it with the very people that we try to help. We know what it is already. But how are we going to navigate from this point forward? And I'm telling you right now, division is not the way. The only way is to unify. Unify one Texan, one party.

My call is, please, Mr. Chairman, if we could please -- and congresswomen, I need you. We need our commander in chief right now in Texas. People are hurting. We need it.

If I may say, Mr. Chairman, if we could, please, I would love for us to get together,

finish out these hearings because Texans need to have their say. We need to go to Monday, finish out our hearings, and then ask to please have a brief hold so we can focus on this disaster. Bring this up in the next session. Set up appropriate tours across Texas where we offer more people to be able to come to the table and have their say. Thank you so much.

JOHNNY MATA: Let me respond to your -- let me give you example of what happened. I got a call last week thinking I was an attorney, and I said, "No, ma'am." And she was calling the coalition. She said she had a disaster in her home. They put her in a hotel, and her grandchild wanted to go swimming, but the swimming pool was broke.

And so to make a story short, there was another hotel similar to her house, so they moved. And when she got there, they said, "I'm sorry. We can't take you because you complained about the pool." So she went back to the place, and they said, "I'm sorry. We're not going to take you."

I told her about HUD and Title VII of the law, but I said, "We're going to -- we are going to meet with you, and once we do a thorough investigation, we're going to deal with the hotel and

embarrass them for such inhuman and unconscionable action."

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Mr. Chair?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Mr. Walle, for what purpose?

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Chairman, I respectfully ask if you'll allow me to ask a few questions of the panelist.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Absolutely. The Chair has recognized Mr. Walle to question the panel.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Thank you, Chairman Vasut.

Congresswoman Garcia, I want to focus on CD 29 because I just want to get some clarifications. You mentioned some data about the creation of CD 29, and that was created after the 1990 census; is that correct?

SYLVIA GARCIA: Correct.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: And that 1990 census, based on the Voting Rights Act, mandated that we create CD 29; is that correct?

SYLVIA GARCIA: Correct.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: And that was because of the growth of the Latino population in

Harris County, particularly in these particular parts of Houston; is that correct?

SYLVIA GARCIA: Well, it's parts of Houston but also, Representative, it includes part of Galina, Pasadena. It includes almost all of Galena Park, South Houston, Jacinto City, and then the upper part of the Aldine area. So it's more than just Houston. It's about -- maybe about 30 percent of Houston.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Correct. And I was going to get to that because it's just not Houston, it was mainly -- at the time. Now obviously Latinos are everywhere in this county.

SYLVIA GARCIA: You can't draw a map in Houston without touching the Latino community. The Houston region or the state.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Well, you can find a taco truck in every corner in Houston or Harris County.

SYLVIA GARCIA: Right next to the Starbucks.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: So at the time the size and compactness of the Latino community was such that it mandated the creation of that district; is that correct? And that was, as you mentioned,

parts of North Houston, parts of the Aldine area, North Harris County, stretching over to East Harris County along the ship channel; is that correct?

SYLVIA GARCIA: Right. The original went all the way to parts of Baytown that got removed this last census.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Okay. And then it kind of meandered over -- it kind of hugged the Houston ship channel down to Southeast Houston and the East End; is that correct?

SYLVIA GARCIA: Correct.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: And currently you mentioned that the population of CD 29 is 70 percent Hispanic; is that correct?

SYLVIA GARCIA: 74.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Okay. But the citizen voting age population, to clarify, just to make sure that that's on the record, and I think it's been testified as such in many public settings, here, and in legal settings, in courtrooms, that there's about 64, 65 percent of CD 29 citizen voting age population has a Spanish surname or they're Hispanic; is that correct?

SYLVIA GARCIA: Correct.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: And there is political cohesion in that CD 29; is that correct?

SYLVIA GARCIA: Correct.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: And overtime they've also -- that community tends to vote as a block; is that correct?

SYLVIA GARCIA: I would generally say that, but Republican candidate gets between 20 to 22, sometimes -- you know, 15 to 20 percent. I don't think anyone has done better than that.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Okay. And over time, that district has -- it's grown but for the most part it's been the Northeast/East Harris County, Southeast Houston/East Ends parts of Houston and they've been pretty compact as a community of interest; is that correct?

SYLVIA GARCIA: Yes. As I said earlier, it's a lot of common language, common culture, you know, values. I mean, there's a true community of interest not only between, you know, Latinos in Houston but Latinos in Galena Park and South Houston. I mean, there is a lot of pride and a lot of strong work ethic and a lot of, frankly, trusting government.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: And they -- and that community has primarily -- it's grown with our Central American brothers and sisters, but it's primarily still a Mexican/Mexican American community that have been here for generations; is that correct?

SYLVIA GARCIA: Many generations.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Okay. And that community -- actually, that community of -- that community, CD 29, has elected you as their representative of choice; is that correct?

SYLVIA GARCIA: Correct. And just to note, I mean, you know, when I was elected together with Veronica Escobar from El Paso, we were the first Latinas to ever be elected to United States Congress from Texas.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Okay. And one distinction that I'd like to also add, Congresswoman, and for the committee to be aware that in the creation of CD 29, did that community of interest -- who did they elect at the time?

SYLVIA GARCIA: It was not a Latino.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: It was not a Latino.

SYLVIA GARCIA: The districts were meant to give someone the opportunity --

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Correct.

SYLVIA GARCIA: -- to elect someone of their choice and it's their choice. So again, I was the first Latino, the first Hispanic elected in this -- in District 29.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: And then how long have you been in office as a member of Congress?

SYLVIA GARCIA: This is my seventh year.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Your seventh term.

SYLVIA GARCIA: No. Seventh year.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Your seventh year. And prior to that, where did you serve?

SYLVIA GARCIA: I served in the Texas State Senate.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: And then prior to that I understand you were a county commissioner.

SYLVIA GARCIA: I was the Harris County Commissioner.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Okay. And you were the first Latina to be elected in that position, correct?

SYLVIA GARCIA: First Hispanic. Yes.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Hispanic. Period. And then you were also a city controller.

SYLVIA GARCIA: I was elected citywide --

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Citywide.

SYLVIA GARCIA: -- in the City of Houston back in the '80s.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: And then you were a municipal court judge, correct?

SYLVIA GARCIA: Yes. I was a judge before that.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: And then you were, I understand a social worker; is that correct?

SYLVIA GARCIA: Yes, sir.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Okay. And --

SYLVIA GARCIA: I'm like a cat. I have many lives.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: And I want to focus -- particularly your story is compelling in that obviously you and Representative --

SYLVIA GARCIA: Escobar.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: -- Escobar in El Paso were the first two Latinas. But your story has been emblematic of the district as well; is that correct?

SYLVIA GARCIA: Yes, sir.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Okay. And the distinction in the creation of the district was that the district, that community of interest that was majority Hispanic elected an Anglo Democrat in that primary; is that correct?

SYLVIA GARCIA: Yes, sir. I in fact was in that race. I came out third.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Correct.

SYLVIA GARCIA: But I kept trying. I didn't give up.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: But regardless, that community, majority Hispanic/Mexican American, they elected Gene Green from --

SYLVIA GARCIA: 20 plus years.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: -- 20 plus years, correct? That was their candidate of choice.

SYLVIA GARCIA: Correct.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: And since we're talking about numbers, your district is a majority Hispanic opportunity district, correct?

SYLVIA GARCIA: Correct.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: And I know we're talking about the power of Congress and the powerful forces in the White House. But to the

average American, the average Texan, the average person that lives in CD 29, why does that matter? Why does it matter to the average family that's trying to put food on the table, the average mother that's trying to get healthcare, to the average worker that's trying to get a job maybe at the ship channel and doesn't have maybe adequate resources, or childcare that we need? Why does it matter to those families?

SYLVIA GARCA: Well, it matters, especially in our district because they want to elect someone who shares their values, shares their communities of interests, shares their cultures, shares their language. And it makes a huge difference. I know it was pointed out to me when I was working on the investigation to the first missing, and later of course discovered that she had been murdered, Vanessa Guillen case.

We always used as an example of -- her mother was able to come and speak directly to a member of Congress that was accessible, easy to get to. Someone they could identify with and sit down and talk in Spanish and hear her complaint, which was something the Army had never done. And it was, you

know, I who insisted that we go to Fort Hood and see what was going on.

It's possible that someone who would not have been able to share her values, and her language, and her cultures, and her -- being able to just sit down and put yourself in their shoes is just critical when you're doing constituent services. You shouldn't just brush it off and just say, oh, well, no, the Army said this and it's the Army. We can't -- we can't question them. Or, oh, no, Social Security said you're not disabled, so that's it. Sorry.

So I think it matters when it's someone who is committed to putting, you know, people over politics and just fighting for them. People want us to be out there and fight for them, and I think that's what your candidate of choice will do.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: And you mentioned Vanessa Guillen, and for the panelist, I know those of us in Harris County know who she was. But who was she?

SYLVIA GARCIA: Well, she was just a -- she was a young soldier here from our neighborhood. As a result of redistricting her family no longer lives in my district. They now live

in Congressman Green's district. And, you know, that's another issue about why it's important for districts to stay together because they had to go to Congressman Green and kind of -- not really start all over because, obviously, she was already gone.

But she was sexually assaulted. She was murdered and dismembered, and her remains were buried by a river there in the Fort Hood area. And initially the Army was not being aggressive enough, in my view, in searching for her. They just considered her missing.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: And --

SYLVIA GARCIA: So we really had to push and get the White House involved and others to make sure that they did the right thing and searched for her, and then they discovered that she had been murdered right there at Fort Hood.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: And Vanessa, born in the United States.

SYLVIA GARCIA: Born in the United States.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Was trying to serve her country.

SYLVIA GARCIA: Serving her country. Yes. That's all she ever wanted to do.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: And was brutally murdered. Was brutally murdered. But as I understand it, her mother is from Mexico; is that my understanding?

SYLVIA GARCIA: Correct.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: And she came from a mixed status family; is that correct?

SYLVIA GARCIA: Correct.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: And many mixed status families live in CD -- not just in CD 29, they live everywhere; is that correct?

SYLVIA GARCIA: Correct.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: So it would be important to have representation, not because maybe they look like you, but they at least share and can fight for their issues, and they can come to their member of Congress, Ms. Crockett, or Ms. Fletcher, or Mr. Al Green because they at least have empathy to go to the DOD and fight for somebody that looks like Vanessa Guillen. Is that correct?

SYLVIA GARCIA: Correct.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Okay. Representative Fletcher, you have a district that's considered a coalition district; is that correct?

LIZZIE FLETCHER: That is correct. Yes, Representative Walle.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: And in that district, majority minority as mentioned -- and what does that mean? Because we throw that around but what does that mean?

LIZZIE FLETCHER: Well, Texas' 7th Congressional District may be the most diverse district in the entire United States. It covers Southwest Houston, and it includes communities, black families, Latino families, Asian American families. If you think about what we all know in sort of Southwest Houston, it goes everywhere from the heart -- the historic heart of the LGBTQ community to Gulfton down to Sugarland, Alief, Mission Bend. We have the heart of the Jewish community in Meyerland. We have so many different communities that come together that work together collaboratively. And so more than -- it's close to 65 percent of the citizen voting age population is non-white.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Right.

LIZZIE FLETCHER: But we have an incredible coalition and community that works together to support people throughout Southwest Houston and the Greater Houston area.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: And prior to your election, CD 7, who was elected to that position?

LIZZIE FLETCHER: So I was elected for the first time in November of 2018, and the prior incumbent in that seat was John Culberson, who had been the representative since the year 2000.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: And we redrew that district since then; is that correct?

LIZZIE FLETCHER: That's correct. The district as it's currently configured was configured in the 2021 map.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: And that's the current map that you distinguished members of Congress are running under; is that correct?

LIZZIE FLETCHER: Yes, that's correct.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Okay. And that district, CD 7, rich in diversity, rich in language. Different types of languages being spoken in that community, correct?

LIZZIE FLETCHER: That's right. As many --

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Not just Spanish?

LIZZIE FLETCHER: Not just Spanish. As many people know, throughout the city of Houston there are more than 140 languages spoken in our city and the 7th Congressional District includes one of the most diverse areas where the most languages are spoken. I get to represent the community in Gulfton, which is its own version of kind of our Ellis Island in Houston. There are so many languages spoken in Gulfton.

And in the 7th Congressional District, about 38 percent, give or take, are people who were born outside of the United States, which is more than twice the average in the state of Texas. And so there's an incredible diversity of experience. I've worked closely with folks. It's a big refugee resettlement area which is, of course, really struggling under this current administration and cutting off the refugee resettlement funds and the organizations that work in our district and across our community. But there are people from all around the world who call the 7th Congressional District their home.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: And that part of Houston, CD 7, rich in diversity, rich in culture, rich in languages being spoken, rich in food.

LIZZIE FLETCHER: Yeah. I was going to say, great restaurants.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Yes. They have collectively, in their size and compactness, in their political cohesion, they voted as a block to elect you as their candidate of choice; is that correct?

LIZZIE FLETCHER: That is correct.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Obviously. And so at the end of the day, it's not so much about you individually as members of Congress, it's the people --

LIZZIE FLETCHER: That is exactly --

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: -- the people that have elected you as their candidate of choice; is that correct?

LIZZIE FLETCHER: That is exactly right, Representative Walle, and I think it's the most important point that we can take away from these hearings. This is not about any particular member of Congress. It is about the voters. It is about the people we represent and giving them the opportunity to elect their candidate of choice and to have a real opportunity to do that.

And when we talk about what historically has happened with redistricting efforts

in Texas and elsewhere, there are conventional ways that people break up the voices of those communities. Either packing them tightly into very compact districts and minimizing their ability to have a voice throughout multiple districts, or cracking them so that they have such little presence in various districts that they can't have enough political power to choose their candidate of choice.

And so that's why this conversation about coalition districts, that's why the conversation about why it's so important to give people that opportunity. I believe as Representative Crockett said and in my original testimony, more than 60 percent of the population of this state is non-white, and yet the Anglo population determines about 65 percent of the congressional seats in Congress. And so it's very important not to further dilute these districts.

And as I said, the 13 existing congressional districts under this map all have representatives who are elected by minority communities as their candidate of choice. It's not about the member. It is about the voters, and it is about the people choosing their representatives rather than politicians choosing their voters.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: And thank you, Representative Fletcher. And I think you heard the question that I posed to Congresswoman Garcia, and it's unfortunate because I would ask the same line of questioning to our member of Congress from CD 18, but they haven't had representation in about a year. And I'm sensitive to that only because I worked for Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee for -- many years ago. And loved my service in working for her as well.

But why does it matter? Why does it matter to the average Texan who loves this state like anybody else? Why does it matter? Because we're talking about a power struggle, right. A power struggle that's occurring. But why does it matter to average people that live in your district?

LIZZIE FLETCHER: Well, I think that this matters and it should matter to every Texan. Because what we're talking about are the fundamental principles of democracy. It's about all of us having not just the right to have a say but the ability to meaningfully cast our ballots for the people we want to represent us and to be able to know who they are.

As Congressman Garcia was saying, to be able to reach out to them, to be able to know that

they're there to help you with all the kinds of things we members of Congress can help with, whether it's problems with the IRS. We've certainly helped people with FEMA and with the Small Business Administration following disasters, with veteran's benefits. With the many things that members of Congress can do to help.

And it takes a long time to build those relationships, to know who your representatives are and to be able to contact them, reach out to them, and know that they're there, and that they're listening to you.

And one of the most important things we can do is be connected to our communities and be present in our communities. And one of the challenges that we see in some of the maps -- and Representative Crockett talked about this too in past maps where communities are broken up so that communities don't have the same ability to have those relationships and to have that contact.

But what we're talking about here, as you mentioned, is so much bigger than any one district. It is about the fundamental principles of democracy, and it is about us being able to choose our representatives and have our voices and our votes

count at the ballot box. And as Congresswoman Garcia mentioned in her opening testimony, right now we know that in the United States Congress that it's a very slim majority and that, in part, the reason that the Republicans are in the majority is because they redistricted North Carolina and took away three Democratic seats, which is the margin in the House.

The policies that this administration is imposing and directing the House Republicans to vote for are deeply unpopular, and they are going to result in real harm to our constituents. And we're talking about 17 millions Americans losing access to healthcare. We're talking about cutting funding for food assistance. People are going to be hungrier. People are going to be sicker because of the policies that this Congress is passing.

And so if we don't have the ability to send the people that represent us and our values and what we care about to Congress, we're going to continue to see policies that people don't want because they aren't actually able to change the outcome of the election. We should all be accountable to the votes, and we shouldn't change the map and change the game and move the goalpost in the middle.

We are in the middle of a congressional session that is going to go down in history as one of the most damaging to the American people, and we need to be able to respond at the ballot box next November and beyond. And this effort is about taking away our ability to do that.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Representative -- and I --

And Chairman Vasut, I apologize. I'm going to end my questioning here. But I'm going to just ask a follow-up question.

At the end of the day though, you mentioned legislation at the federal level that is very unpopular. But what does that mean? Does that mean children getting kicked off Medicaid?

LIZZIE FLETCHER: Exactly.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Okay.

LIZZIE FLETCHER: It means children losing their Medicaid. It means people losing the subsidies that help them afford health insurance. It means people not being able to go to Planned Parenthood to get birth control. It means that there's no food assistance for families. Millions of families not getting $6 a day to help keep them from being hungry. It means not having school lunches in

schools. It means so many things and that's just -- that's the tip of iceberg.

I mean, there is so much that got rolled up into that one big ugly bill, 1000 page bill, and done in the dark of night. People are still figuring out what's in it. I mean, our electricity rates are going to go up. Our electric bills are going to be higher. There are so many terrible things coming out of that bill. And people need to be able to say no to that.

Yeah. I mean, Congresswoman Garcia, it wasn't covered in that particular bill, but the immigration policies that we're seeing that people across our community are devastated by and afraid of. People who live in the 7th Congressional District are afraid to go to church. They're afraid to go out. They're afraid of what's going to happen. And I hear that from my constituents because they know that I share their values, and they know that I'm up there fighting.

And they need to be able to continue to have a voice in Congress, and we are talking about taking away their voices. It's not about me. It's not about my voice. It's about taking away their voices and minimizing the number of people who can

carry the message from Texas that we don't like what they're doing, and that we're going to change things.

And you have to be accountable to your voters and when you talk about drawing these maps this way to make sure that they don't need to worry about whether they get reelected, that's a disservice to every single Texan.

REPRESENTATIVE WALLE: Thank you to the panelists.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Members, are there any other questions for the members of the panel? I know we've been going awhile on this one.

REPRESENTATIVE PIERSON: I have a question.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: The Chair recognizes Ms. Pierson for a question.

REPRESENTATIVE PIERSON: Thank you, Chairman.

Thank you all for being here today and sharing your passion on this issue. I will say Representative Walle flushed out a little bit of what my question was but not all the way. I'm a little confused because the beginning of the testimony I heard about -- and my question is for you, Congressman Fletcher.

Your colleagues testified earlier that it was important for people of color to have people who look like them. Your other colleague mentioned that it's important to have the same language and the same culture. And then you testified that you have a -- is it 65 percent non-white district?

LIZZIE FLETCHER: Non-white. That's right.

REPRESENTATIVE PIERSON: And do you agree with that? I'm just curious. Because for me it sounds like in your position, black and brown people just simply vote for someone who best represents their value, not based on their race or culture. So I'm just curious on what your position is on this.

LIZZIE FLETCHER: Well, I think you've heard many people say over the years, if you can see it, you can be it. I think it is important to have diverse representation in the United States Congress of all kinds. And the geographic diversity is built in, but the diversity of members of different racial and ethnic backgrounds is absolutely essential. It's critical that we have women in Congress and more women in Congress.

Congresswoman Garcia and I came into the largest class of women ever elected to the Congress, and there will be more. It is important to have diverse voices and that matters. In our congressional district, it's an incredibly diverse district. There is no one person that can be everything that the 7th Congressional District is. But what we do need is somebody who cares about everybody in the 7th Congressional District. Who prioritizes them and their needs and their values and priorities and is accessible to them and is out in the community and is working to understand the experiences that are not necessarily my own personal experiences, but the things that matter to the people I represent.

And so I do agree, absolutely, that we need diversity of representation. But the most important thing that we're talking about today is giving the people the opportunity to choose that person. And when Donald Trump says, "I need five more Republican seats," you are taking the ability away from the people to decide who their representative is going to be, and that is wrong.

REPRESENTATIVE PIERSON: Well, thank you. Thank you for that response. It sounds like

you agree that minorities vote for the person that best represent their values, not necessarily based on their skin color, so I appreciate that.

And since you mentioned Donald Trump -- I wasn't going to but since you did -- he actually won the majority of the Hispanic vote in the state of Texas. President Trump has actually increased his numbers in black, and Hispanic, and Asian voters since --

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: The gallery will stay in order.

REPRESENTATIVE PIERSON: -- 2016. So my question for you now, since you mentioned it --

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: I don't believe that statement is true.

REPRESENTATIVE PIERSON: My question for you now is: do you believe that those voters should be accurately reflected in the state of Texas?

LIZZIE FLETCHER: I'm not sure I fully understand your question, but I don't think anyone is contesting that Donald Trump didn't win the state of Texas. I don't have the breakdown.

REPRESENTATIVE PIERSON: I'm speaking minority voters only.

LIZZIE FLETCHER: Well, I think overwhelmingly minority voters across the state of Texas elected -- or voted for Vice President Harris as their candidate of choice.

REPRESENTATIVE PIERSON: That's not accurate. But my question for you is: do those voters deserve the same representation?

JASMINE CROCKETT: I'm going to just jump in really quickly.

LIZZIE FLETCHER: Thank you.

JASMINE CROCKETT: I think earlier I made it clear --

You said what?

I made it clear that the majority of the state is minority; 60 percent of the state is minority. So when you're drawing maps, just to be clear, you should not be looking and trying to guess and figure out who voted for who. It should be about minority representation and them allowing -- and then allowing them to elect their representation. If we did right in this state -- regardless of who anybody votes for because we don't have a magic wand, even though I know that Trump is afraid of them black votes.

But nevertheless -- so when I do the math, 24 percent -- or 24 of the 38 seats that we have in the state of Texas, they should be represented -- it should be minorities that are electing their representation. So if you all are going to draw maps, I just want to be clear, instead of us having 14 -- I think there's -- no, 14 total. Because there's some --

Instead of having 14 seats that minorities are allowed to elect their representation, take it up to 24. If Donald Trump feels like he's going to be real strong, if Abbott feels like he's going to be real strong, if everybody sitting here feels like they're going to be real strong with the black, brown, Asian, whoever, that is perfectly fine so long as their communities are not broken up.

So all I'm asking is that we do follow the law, we follow the constitution, and we give Texas 24 minority opportunity seats because 60 percent of this state is represented by people of color.

And to go to your point, I do want to be clear because it's not about who sits in the seats, it's who does the electing.

REPRESENTATIVE PIERSON: Right.

JASMINE CROCKETT: One of those new seats -- because we got two new seats in 2021 -- they both are Anglo majority districts even though there was no Anglo majority that we got information about in the census.

One of those seats elected a black man. The other seat elected a white man. One is a Republican. One is a Democrat. So I want to be clear that this is about race because when we start to talk about the Voting Rights Act and we talk about section two, that is what it's about.

It's about the state being reflective of the minority voices in that state. And when I'm talking minority, I am talking color. I don't care who they elect, but it's up to them to do the electing of who it is that they want to see. Not allowing a minority of people -- which Anglos are the minority in this state -- allowing them to have an overrepresentation in D.C. That's it.

REPRESENTATIVE PIERSON: I agree with you 100 percent. Let me just finish.

JOHNNY MATA: Let me add to that.

REPRESENTATIVE PIERSON: I agree with you 100 percent. That is actually my point in asking the question because we have a majority minority

district who did not elect a minority. So thank you for your answer.

JOHNNY MATA: Let me add to that. We've been locked out of the system for so many years. Lack of representation of people of color. That is the intent of the Voting Rights Act. And a person like her that does a good job gets elected by a majority of people of color. But the intent, we must not forget, and I agree with my colleague here, on the number of representation from Texas should be. I agree 100 percent.

SYLVIA GARCIA: I just wanted to ask the representative what her source for the statement she made that the Latino population --

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Ma'am, questions only come from the dais.

SYLVIA GARCIA: Well, she asked the question of the panel, and I'm just responding. I guess she doesn't want to answer. Well, enough said.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Any other member wishing to question this panel?

The Chair recognizes Ms. Jones to question the panel.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: This question is to the congresspersons sitting out there because

you know your districts, you're boots on the ground. So all three of you are lawyers, correct?

LIZZIE FLETCHER: Yes.

SLYVIA GARCIA: Correct.

JASMINE CROCKETT: Correct.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Okay. I thought so. And have all three of you participated in redistricting in your capacity as elected officials ever?

SLYVIA GARCIA: I was on the special committee on redistricting when I was on the Texas Senate and I was on -- I've been through about every redistricting since we redistricted city council back in the '90s.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Okay. And --

JASMINE CROCKETT: And I was in the State House in 2021 when we did that redistricting.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: During that redistricting.

JASMINE CROCKETT: Yes.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: So you have or you have not?

LIZZIE FLETCHER: I have not been involved in redistricting in any official capacity. I was a sitting member of Congress when the last map

was drawn, and so I observed the redistricting process; but I have had no involvement in it.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Okay. So then my question is to the two, Congresswoman Garcia and Congresswoman Crockett. This redistricting process, please explain to me if it's the same or different than previous redistricting processes. Could you do that, please.

JASMINE CROCKETT: I can tell you that we noticed a lot of inconsistencies. And I was able to testify about this because we are in litigation, and it is so interesting that the state for four years has been arguing how these maps were race neutral and how great these maps were. And we do know that every single Republican voted for these maps. But now, all of a sudden, they don't like the maps that the put into place.

But nevertheless, I will tell you that there was some random person or persons that were in some random room that were drawing maps. I never got to see the person. We heard rumblings that it was a guy that had messed up maps I believe in Colorado or some other state he had been in. And so this was not a matter -- just for the people that are sitting here, we have the ability to draw maps as lawmakers.

There is this thing called Red Apple, and we actually -- when it comes down to doing our maps for the State House, we didn't let some random person in the room come and draw those for us. We actually drew the maps ourselves.

And so I participated. I offered an amendment specifically on Texas 30 which I was not representing or running for at that time. And in order for me to get my amendment approved to even be able to make the amendment, number one, we had to pre-file, which that never happened. We had gone through redistricting for our State House maps. There was no pre-filing of the amendment required before you could actually bring the amendment to the floor.

So I had to pre-file with an amendment, and then ultimately, before I could actually bring the amendment on the floor, whoever these random people were in the room, I never got to go. I had to hand my amendment off to one of my colleagues from the Republican side. They then went to the people in the back somewhere. Then they came back out and told me whether or not I could actually present my amendment on the floor.

We also know that they did what they're doing now, which is pretended as if they were going to draw some maps but in actuality somebody else is going to give them the maps. And then they had people testifying as if they were listening. But then there is no clear record for the courts about how people feel when they directly impact their districts because they weren't given an opportunity to talk about the impact on their districts because they don't know the impacts. But they get to say that we just -- we did hear from them when you really didn't.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: So in order to -- would you agree with me that in order to file an amendment there's got to be something filed.

JASMINE CROCKETT: Yes.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: And I have to like it or not.

JASMINE CROCKET: Yes.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: And then if I think something needs to be changed then I file an amendment to change that. Would you agree with me on that?

JASMINE CROCKETT: Yes. Yes.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Okay. So in the process that we're having right now, there literally is nothing to file an amendment on. Would you agree with me?

JASMINE CROCKETT: Correct.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Right. And so let me ask you this. Whenever there is a map proposed, because -- whenever there is one filed -- and for purposes of people who don't understand, the way that a bill looks for a map is it has a whole bunch of like zip codes.

JASMINE CROCKETT: Yes.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: It tells all of the zip codes that are a part of whatever congressional district it is. So it's hard to tell what it looks like on the paper, right. So but sometimes you can see the picture when you file what the map actually looks like in Red Apple, correct?

JASMINE CROCKETT: Correct. So my amendment, it had the picture of the district so you could see the counties, you could see -- because my -- because Texas 30 fell under the Voting Rights Act, it was important to lay out what the citizen voting age population was as well to make sure that there

were no violations. So it's a little bit more but you get typically a picture.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: But my point is this. After you give them the picture and the people in counsel redistricting put all the zip codes in there, then you can tell. And would you say that's -- and this is a yes or no question -- is it simple or is it complicated?

JASMINE CROCKETT: Oh, the entire process is very complicated.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Right. And the reason I bring that up is the fact that we're not having public hearings where people have time in advance to look at these maps so that they can figure out where all these zip codes are to see how it affects them is definitely a lack of transparency for the people that are fighting for their rights to stay together. Would you agree with that?

JASMINE CROCKETT: Yes, I would. I would say that this is not a flaw in the process but instead this is --

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: A design --

JASMINE CROCKETT: Correct.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: -- in the process.

JASMINE CROCKETT: Correct.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: And so that's a problem. So are you asking this committee specifically, who holds these public hearings, that once the bill is filed that has everything divided up that there be public hearings across the state so that people will actually know how this bill/map affects them, and only then can they make educated testimony about how the maps will affect them? Do you agree with that?

JASMINE CROCKETT: Oh, absolutely. I mean, as we heard the Chairman say, we are here to testify on this instead of for or against. And you know as a representative that typically when we have hearings you are testifying for or against. But when we go to court -- because this ultimately will go to court because I know how Texas likes to do -- ultimately when you're looking at the record, it doesn't look like anybody was against it.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Exactly. Which is why when you come up to testify -- and you understand this because you used to sit in this seat in the House -- they're asking you to be neutral.

JASMINE CROCKETT: Correct.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Right. Which hurts us in court later.

JASMINE CROCKETT: Correct.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: So are you asking -- or are you three congresspeople asking that after the bill with whatever map is shoved down our throats is filed, are you asking for us to have hearings -- public hearings (audio cuts out) evaluate and reflect and figure this out and talk to our constituents to allow our constituents of Texas to come and testify about the specific harm or good that these maps, or that this bill is going to do? Is that what you're asking?

JASMINE CROCKETT: We're absolutely asking for that.

SYLVIA GARCIA: Absolutely.

JASMINE CROCKETT: And I'll tell you that as much time as they are spending during these field hearings without a map, they should absolutely invest even more time once they have the maps.

So the idea that they're going to minimize the amount of time that people have to speak on this and actually do less when they have more is a problem, and that should be something seen as irregular in this process as well.

SYLVIA GARCIA: Representative, my experience of course with serving in the Senate -- and we did do -- during that period we did four field hearings. And of course the biggest flaw in this whole process is that we're letting the White House dictate and prepare the maps in some backroom. We don't have a map. It's difficult to speak about an item that you haven't even seen. So that I think is probably the biggest flaw.

And secondly, I think there should be robust field hearings particularly in those districts that are going to be impacted. But keep in mind, four districts were named in the DOJ letter, but once you go in there, the domino effect of what other districts are impacted, because if you move something here in Houston, it may move -- create a movement somewhere in Fort Bend County or Galveston County.

So it impacts all of us, so they should be robust. There's no reason why in my mind that you couldn't have had a field hearing in the Rio Grand Valley. It's a five county region with over a million people, really important to our economy. El Paso. Even San Antonio doesn't get one. You know, what about the Port Arthur/Beaumont folks? You know,

I think it's just a disservice to Texas that we're not allowing all Texans to be heard.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: And speaking of -- because you talked about it before -- communities that have similar experiences.

SYLVIA GARCIA: Absolutely.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Right. So we talked about that, and we talked about already why it's important to have someone who understands what you're going through. For example, for you, Congresswoman Garcia -- and maybe everyone because there are mixed status families everywhere -- don't you think that in a -- I'm trying to look at you as I speak.

Don't you think that in a community, for example, if you have a mixed status family, right, and you have people actually going through the citizenship process. They have their documentation, right. And then that you would be able to call a congressperson like you, Congresswoman, who is going to try to help you get your citizenship because you're trying to go through the lawful process, rather than have a congressperson, if they crack your community, that is actually trying to deport you or get your status in court dismissed.

And by that, I mean this. We had so many people -- and people didn't understand what was going on when President Trump was getting rid of all those immigration judges. But now we see he wanted an immigration system where they could dismiss the cases and literally create undocumented people because they no longer have a case where they're here documented.

Don't you think your constituents are entitled to have someone like you who understands the struggles and who is going to try to help them get to a path to citizenship, as opposed to if they call their congressperson in a racially gerrymandered map that is going to try to deport them and break up their family? Is that an accurate concern?

SYLVIA GARCIA: Well, of course it's always been a concern. And regretfully, I have to tell you that we take many calls where people call us from another district who tell us that they called their member of Congress, but they were told over the phone that there's no one who speaks Spanish to really work with them. Or who will tell them, "Well, we don't really handle those kind of cases. Call Garcia in Houston."

So we do get those kind of calls, and I say regrettably because it's shameful that those members aren't doing full constituent services, number one. But we have strict rules in Congress that I can only spend resources, time, and personnel within my district, which really limits some of the things that I can do.

So I wish that there was more members of Congress that looked like me and did constituent services to everybody in English, Spanish, you know, Vietnamese, whatever language.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: So it effectively disenfranchises people who don't look like you.

SYLVIA GARCIA: Right. And it makes them not have faith in government, not have faith in the process and the system when they can't even get a phone call returned.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: And I'll say this to -- would this be accurate? The only way to create a majority Anglo district, right, when you have a majority of minorities, is to literally crack or split the majority-minority.

So what you'll have is you'll have urban areas where minorities flock to because they

see discrimination against themselves in their little towns that they're from, and so they'll have -- they'll get black, or brown, or Hispanic, or whatever minority you are, and they'll drive it all the way out to the rural areas that's majoritarily Anglo. Is that accurate?

SYLVIA GARCIA: I think you're very close to accurate. Yes, ma'am.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: I'm sorry. Say it again.

SYLVIA GARCIA: I think you're pretty accurate.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Jones.

JASMINE CROCKETT: I'm going to say you're spot on. That was one of the -- I mean, that's what it is. That was one of the issues that existed with my district, just to be clear.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Okay.

JASMINE CROCKETT: While my district's number remain the same, what they did was, my neighbor, Jake Ellzey, who is CD 6, Jake Ellzey represented three counties. They ended up taking Jake Ellzey's seat and making it about maybe seven counties or so.

But what they did over in Tarrant County, was Tarrant County, in one city, Grand Prairie, they decided that Grand Prairie was getting a little too colorful for them to potentially maintain control over. So what happened is this one city got split into three. One third came to me. One third went to Ellzey. One third went to Burgess.

And so they cracked that community of one city, and the next thing you know, they're paired up with people that have no idea what their struggles are in Grand Prairie versus what they are dealing with in say farming areas of Texas.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Right. So -- and that's my last question. But the point is that that's how they're able to create majority Anglo districts. They crack the minority areas, and then they put a small number of minorities in a district with people who look nothing like them; and that's how they're able to highjack, to terrorize, to kidnap the United States Congress, and it's just not right. Thank you for explaining that.

LIZZIE FLETCHER: And thank you, Representative Jones. I just wanted to say -- people say for the record all the time, but this time truly for the record, I agree with my colleagues that we

should absolutely have more hearings on the maps for precisely the reasons they just outlined. People need to see what a new map is going to do to their community and be able to come to all of you and talk about why it should or should not -- and most likely should not happen based on the things that we've seen.

So it's really important that once there is a bill and a map, that the public has an opportunity to see it and to meaningfully give you all input before you proceed.

And I would ask that you not proceed. That you make the decision whether to do this or not, that you choose to end this process and focus on the real and urgent needs of our fellow Texans and our great state. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Members, Chair will show Representative Barbara Gervin-Hawkins is present. She was actually present at 12:45.

So Barbara, good to have you.

Any other questions for this panel?

Hearing none, the panel is excused. Now for all in attendance --

SYLVIA GARCIA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: You're welcome.

The witness affirmation forms were printed, and individuals were able to sign those. The Chair though didn't get an opportunity to announce that they were closed. So what we're going to do is we're going to stand at ease for about five minutes to give our precious court reporter a break here.

And just to remind everybody, when we come back to, I'm going to close registration at that time. So that's your warning. So on that, the House Select Committee on Congressional Redistricting will stand at ease for five minutes.

(Recess taken)

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: The House Select Committee on Congressional Redistricting will come to order, and that's all right if it takes a little bit of time.

Is my audio on?

DEAN THOMPSON: The House Committee will come to order.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you, Dean Thompson.

Please take your seats. We'll give you a little bit of time. And just so that the record is clear -- I want to make sure everybody hears me. Just so the record is clear, any time we take one of these breaks where we're standing at ease, that clock is not running. I just want you to know that.

Oh, and just so you're aware as well --

Thank you, Speaker Moody.

-- all the questions that we had at the very beginning, none of that counted towards the time at all. So that clock only runs when someone is testifying or answering questions up here at the front. All right. And just so the record is clear, we've only used an hour and 22 minutes, okay.

So now, as the Chair previously mentioned, the time for registration has been reached. Is anyone else in this room that is present wishing to register to testify that has not registered to testify?

The Chair hears none. Registration is closed.

All right. Members, we have one more important announcement. Would Crystal Jordan -- is

Crystal Jordan here? If Crystal Jordon could make her way into the room or up front. I have your credit card. Now, I'm a man of honor, and I am not going to use your credit card. But if you could come claim it, I would feel much better about myself. Either that or it's going to go to the police. So if Crystal Jordan could come kindly pick up her credit card, and it is in the safe keeping of the Chair right up here at the front.

Now, with that we're going to go back to our panelists here. Chair will call as our next panel, Dr. Sergio Lira, Al Green, Nick Lampson, and Sasha Legette, if you'll make your way up front now.

Now, Dr. Lira, we're going to have you go last because I need you to sign your witness affirmation form. I'm going to have them bring that to you. I haven't started the clock.

And our next panel after this, so please be ready, is going to be Bishop James Dixon, Christian Menefee, and Augustin Pinedo. And I apologize if I messed up any of those names.

With that, we're back on the clock. Chair calls Al Green. Chair shows you registered to testify as Al Green on behalf of yourself on congressional redistricting plan. Of course you're

the congressman for the 9th District of Texas. Is that correct, sir?

AL GREEN: It is.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

AL GREEN: Before I give my testimony, Mr. Chairman, I do have a document for the record.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: And we have passed those out for you, Congressman.

AL GREEN: Well, thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, by way of further introduction, I am Al Green, a liberated Democrat - unbought, unbossed, and unafraid. And I stand and sit here today because the Dean is correct. The attorney general of the United States, by command of the President of the United States, has indicated in a letter -- and I shall just read one sentence -- it says, "If the state of Texas fails to rectify the racial gerrymandering of Texas 9, Texas 18, Texas 29, and 33, the attorney general reserves the right to seek legal action against the state, including without limitation under the 14th Amendment." Literally, the state has been ordered to do what we're doing by the AG.

I'm not sure that that order has to be fulfilled, but in so doing, the attorney general has singled out four congressional districts, all of whom are represented by people of color. The co-Chair is imminently correct. This is about racism. It is about people of color being denied the opportunity to have representation.

I know there's some question now as to why people have to have people of color. Because I've walked the neighborhood. Government of the people. I've played pool in the pool halls. I've been on the buses. I know the bus lines. I kind of think it's good to have somebody who has been in the hood with you. It means something. It does.

And while my time is short, let me just end with this, because I have much more I can say, but I want to end with this, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, if this plan is perfected, there will be more white faces in Congress and fewer black and Latino faces. I thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Chair calls -- and again, members, we'll question the panel at the end. Chair calls Nick Lampson. I show you're registered to testify as

Nick Lampson on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

NICK LAMPSON: Yes, it is.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

NICK LAMPSON: Thank you. I'm Nick Lampson. I served Southeast Texas in Congress for a decade and as the Jefferson County Tax Assessor Collector for nearly two decades. I appreciate the opportunity to be here today, and I thank the Chair and the committee.

I've got to tell you, I'm experiencing a troubling sense of deja vu. Governor Abbott has called the special session to advance a mid-decade redistricting plan just as the Department of Justice (audio/video cuts out).

...2003 I was a target of Tom DeLay's mid-decadal redistricting scheme, the first in the country. That plan was not about reflecting population changes. It was about locking in partisan power. I was approached and offered a deal. Switch parties and they'll leave my district alone. I was even promised a committee Chairmanship. I refused because public service is about the people you represent, not personal gain.

DeLay thought he had drawn himself a safe seat, and I ran against him to prove that no abuse of power goes unanswered; and I won.

Communities of interest deserve fair and undiluted representation. The people of Texas deserve maps that reflect who they are, not maps that are designed to protect the powerful.

Now 20 years later the same playbook is being reopened and Jefferson County, once an anchor of a congressional district, still lives with the consequences. Our influence was stripped away, and we have yet to recover. This is not just about redistricting. It is about equity, accountability, and whether Texans choose their representatives or politicians continue choosing their voters. Democracy does not belong to a party, it belongs to the people, and it is the responsibility of every --

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please finish your testimony.

NICK LAMPSON: -- person in this room to protect it. I urge the committee to reject the effort. Not because it is an inconvenience but because it is wrong.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Chair recognizes Sasha Legette. I show you registered to testify as Sasha Legette on behalf of Harris County Commissioner Rodney Ellis on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

SASHA LEGETTE: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

SASHA LEGETTE: Chairman, members, my name is Sasha Legette, and I am here to read a statement on behalf of Harris County Commissioner Rodney Ellis.

I've been in this fight before. In 2003, I broke quorum and left the state to stop discriminatory redistricting maps from becoming law. The media called me a father in exile. I spent a month away from my family after my youngest daughter was born because I believed Texans deserved fair representation, and now we are here again. But this time, it's worse.

This isn't about redrawing maps. It's about erasing progress. About dismantling the constitution and destroying what remains of the Voting Rights Act. Let's be honest. This process is designed to break apart multiracial coalition

districts, undermine black and Latino voting power, and concentrate control in the hands of a small political minority.

Texans of all backgrounds have built power together across race, region, and party. But instead of honoring that process, it punishes it. These maps being drawn are not to represent the people but to insulate a shrinking group of politicians from accountability. And make no mistake, this is a political operation. A top-down strategy driven by Donald Trump and his allies to rig the rules, silence opposition, and turn racial discrimination into law.

Even the process itself shows the intent. Limiting hearings, cutting people off early, and no in-person access in Austin. Nearly a quarter of Texans don't have internet, and they are being shut out. Let's not forget this. Nothing has even been filed. Texans are being asked to testify on something we can't see, we can't review, and we can't trust. This is not representative government. It's a coordinated assault on our democracy, and we will fight it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

And if members of the audience could please withhold your applause just because it takes a little bit longer then for me to announce the next witness. I want to be as efficient as we can.

Chair calls Dr. Sergio Lira on behalf of the Greater Houston LULAC on the revised congressional redistricting plan. That's your registration; is that correct?

SERGIO LIRA: That is correct. And also, I'm the Chair of LULAC redistricting task force that was created after the 2020 census.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Are you intending to testify on behalf of them, or is it okay if your form just says test "Testifying on behalf of the Greater Houston LULAC"?

SERGIO LIRA: I'll go ahead and testify on behalf of Greater Houston LULAC.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Okay. Understood. Please give us your testimony.

SERGIO LIRA: Yes. It's called the courage to care. We ask -- I'm asking all the Republican colleagues to have the courage to care and let me explain why. Because the population boom in Texas in 2020, according to AI and Google, was 95

percent folks of color. Mostly Latinos, Asian Americans, and African Americans.

This population growth, as you know, was rightfully -- every census and population growth, we ask for new congressional seats. This is democracy. However, a majority-minority district was not created. In fact, as we know, two congressional districts were Republicans. But I want you to know that the Latino economic force that's happening in our state contributes $582 billion to the economy.

I know that your heart is in the right place to do the right thing, and I know you want to ensure fair representations to everyone in your district, and you have voted for the previous map that was considered race neutral. But you were elected to serve all constituents and Latinos are now the majority in many areas, and in particularly these four districts.

But I want you to do know that Latinos live in your community. Latinos attend your church. Latinos go to your schools. Latinos built your homes. Latinos are actually the essential workers in this building, and they need representation.

Do not vote for the mid-decade redistricting map. Let me tell you why. This is a

dangerous precedent. It will cause a snowball effect where, in fact, Democrats may do the same thing in the blue states, and in reality, we all lose.

Let's focus on savings lives. Let's focus on flood litigation. Let's focus on the THC legislations to no longer hurt and harm young children. What's more at stake here are the lives whether you're red or blue. But we have to save lives and do what's right and have the courage to care, and let's keep things as they are. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Members, any questions for the members of this panel?

The Chair recognizes Mr. Manuel to question the witnesses.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Thank you.

Mr. Lampson, we're from the same area, and we have a very different demographic than most people. We are really a midsize rural, and we're often grouped in with Harris County when it comes to healthcare access. Can you tell me what has been the consequences of not just Jefferson County but Orange and Harden and those other East Texas places that we used to have districts where we were -- we had things

more aligned then, what that's done to our rural hospitals, to women trying to give birth, for people who need healthcare access when we had those districts of interest split in two?

NICK LAMPSON: It was a true community of interest -- a community of interest. We have primarily interests in coastal issues, industrial, and agricultural. The district ran -- before it turned to District 9 where Al is now. That district ran down the coastline for a little over 100 miles. There were a lot of issues that were very specific to that area. The main one, the deepening and widening of the Sabine-Neches ship channel.

We had worked -- my predecessor, Jack Brooks -- not the immediate predecessor, Steve Stockman -- but Brooks worked for years trying to prepare the continuation of the development of that ship channel. I picked it up, was on this transportation committee, had won support from members of Congress all over the country to be able to move those activities forward.

And in 2001, we built the most important piece of it, which is a saltwater barrier, because as the channel gets deeper, saltwater comes in. It would run up and could potentially kill off

the Davy Crockett forest to the north and other environmental impacts.

That $53 million project was completed, and we were set to do the others. So the redistricting then set that economic development project back by at least 20 to 25 years. It has just been put back on the list of the Corps of Engineers for activity. That kind of chaos.

The community of interest that we were attached to -- Northern Beaumont was attached to North Houston, a white collar retail district. I won't say a word about -- a negative word about the member that took over the activity in that district when I left. He is a good person, but he had a whole different focus. I can't say he didn't care about the Neches's River, but he was not there to understand what the problems, and the needs, and the concerns of industry, which is the economic driver of the entire of East Texas, including Orange County. It was a major problem for us.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: And -- because you touched on this. The way that we were trying to improve our area was to make sure that we didn't get the flooding that was happening from anywhere else that was northern to us in Texas, but it was also

helping -- unless I'm wrong -- it was helping cities like Houston and Dallas where they wouldn't have so much flooding. Because what would happen is we had done all the work for all of the water to come down faster but without flooding our area as well. And a lot of that stopped, unless I'm incorrect on that one.

NICK LAMPSON: It takes a community. People have to work together. Unity is required. And yes, the things that we were doing in the 9th Congressional District worked very closely with the folks -- excuse me, the old 9th -- worked very closely with the people here in Houston. The 9th District had the southeastern portion of Harris County in it at the time.

You're correct. There are many, many issues that affect it. I now work for a hospital system. That hospital will be impacted because of the decisions that are going to be coming out the Congress over the next several months. One of our major demands -- we're a rural critical access hospital in the middle of a rice field, and if it goes down, most of our patients are Medicaid patients. And if that goes into effect in the manner in which we think it will, it very likely could drive

this company into bankruptcy, which is what we took it from 11 years ago.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: And then this is my last question. When it comes to the Healthcare Act, because we know that we have women who are trying to get to the hospital in our area and just dying because they're driving 40 minutes to an hour just to give birth because there are no hospitals in certain parts. Can you explain in a -- I guess as fast as you can, explain have people's income in East Texas gone up or down since they started busting up districts with community interests, they're a coalition district, or a majority-minority districts? Has that helped people's income when we said we were steady in the '90s, or has that made areas like ours go down and become poorer?

NICK LAMPSON: Poorer. It has not been helpful. And I was on a task force that included folks as far up as Jasper. Actually, some people from Lufkin came down and participated in it as well. And the study was, is there something that our hospital system and the hospitals in Beaumont could do to assist those people up around Jasper, an hour, hour and a half north of us, deep East Texas.

And what we found, that over -- I forgot the exact number -- 600 -- approximately 600 women with their pregnancies could not find assistance and had to drive for more than an hour and a half to get prenatal or postnatal care or delivery services. That area is a poor place to be, and it needs improvement. It needs someone who cares enough to inject themselves into the issues and make something happen.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Ms. Jones, for what purpose?

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: To ask one question to Congressman Green.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: So recognized.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Congressman, can you tell why redistricting, specifically Congressional District 18, is disadvantaged in this process because it does not have a sitting congressperson.

AL GREEN: Thank you for the question. Let me start with this. District 18 has made a difference, and when we had the vote on this big ugly steal of a bill, it passed by one vote, one vote. If

the 18th Congressional District had been represented, it would not have passed with those votes.

And the 18th is important because Jackson Lee and I were partners. We worked together. She did casework. If you had a problem and you were a veteran, she would take up your calls. If you were a person who was undocumented and out of the country, she would try to get you back, if the law permitted. If you were a person who literally had no air in your home and you needed air conditioning, she would help find it for you. She went above and beyond the call of duty. This means something to people.

And let's not forget Sylvester Turner. Sylvester Turner had a very brief tenure, but in that period of time, it became intuitively obvious to even the most casual observer that he was going to be a great congressperson.

I was with him the night that he transitioned. We were at the joint session of Congress. Some of you may recall that I was there. And after he and I talked, he traversed his way up the aisle, and I saw him no more. He was no longer there. But I want his legacy to be important too. Because he didn't control that part of his destiny but what he did in Houston as mayor was indicative of

what he would have done in Congress a United States Congressman. So yes, the 18th Congressional District means a lot. It does.

NICK LAMPSON: Mr. Chairman.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Thank you, Congressman Green.

NICK LAMPSON: May I add one thing, Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Not at this time.

Members, any other questions for the panel?

DEAN THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make a --

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Ms. Thompson, for what purpose?

DEAN THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, a lot of people are here to testify and I know my colleagues have a lot of questions. If they can shorten some of those questions and get to the public testimony.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Understood. Thank you, Dean.

Members, any other questions to this panel?

Seeing none, thank you for your testimony. The panel is excused.

The next panel, as we've previously mentioned, if you'll make your way up, Bishop James Dixon, Christian Menefee, and Augustin Pinedo.

While they're making their way up, the Chair recognizes Vice Chair Rosenthal for a brief announcement.

VICE CHAIR ROSENTHAL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you all really for bearing with us.

So first housekeeping item, we've confirmed that if you need to get up and like go to the restroom, get a water break, whatever, they will let you back in. You won't lose your seat. So that's first.

Second, we want to move through this next panel quickly if we can because we came here to listen to you, and we want your testimony. So I will be moving at the -- at the end of -- when we reach 4:00 p.m., I'll be moving to extend time. We'll take a vote on the objection to adjourn and stuff. Should that end up being voted down, or even if we do extend time, so many people have signed up to testify today that we have arranged for you to speak directly to us.

We're going to reconvene outside of the formal hearing at Wheeler Avenue Church. So when this is over, anybody who has not been able to be heard yet, you are invited to come speak directly to us. We will live stream it. We will record it.

The gym at the church. Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church gymnasium after this.

Okay. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you, Vice Chair.

And as our panel is up here, our next panel -- so please be ready to come up after this one -- Lanita Robinson, Eric Ross, Ebony Raine Eatmon, Deborah Allen (phonetic). Please be on deck.

All right. Turning now to our panel here. Chair calls Augustin Pinedo. Is Augustin Pinedo here?

Chair will show Augustin Pinedo registered to testify on behalf of LULAC District 18 on revised congressional redistrict plan but not testifying.

Okay. Chair calls Christian Menefee.

And before you testify, Bishop Dixon, I have a signature on your form here but it's on the line that I'm supposed to sign. Do I have your

permission to put a little arrow up from your signature to the line you were supposed to sign?

BISHOP DIXON: No. Just sign yours under mine.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: There we go. Got it. You got it. Thank you, Bishop

Mr. Menefee, I show you registered to testify as Christian Menefee on behalf of yourself on revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

CHRISTIAN MENEFEE: That's correct.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

CHRISTIAN MENEFEE: Good afternoon. I'm Christian Menefee, and I'm here in the protection and defense of the districts that were deemed the minority. The black and brown districts that were named by the Trump DOJ to try to steal their political power. I'm here to say enough is enough. Do not steal the political power of these districts.

Now, I live in the 18th Congressional District, and the folks who live there know that historically the reason that that district is what we've known it to come to be is because of the severe racism that existed in this country. Black folks in

this country couldn't register to vote, couldn't vote, and if they did, they faced violence, and in some instances, even worse.

But despite that -- despite that, we know that over time, just because time has passed, that doesn't mean that that racism has gone away. You've got redlining. You've got blocking people's access to capital. And over time you've seen that the relics of that racism still exist today. That's why if you go throughout the 18th Congressional District, you'll see food deserts. That's why there are communities in the 18th Congressional District that have 9 or 10 concrete batch plants in a mile of a single community.

That's why you have lower life expectancy, and that's why you got cancer clusters all across the 18th Congressional District.

Now, despite all that, the governor in the state of Texas has targeted this district. When we lost our Congressman, Sylvester Turner, the law says that the governor is supposed to call the special election immediately. But he set it for November so that people in this district are going to go more than a year without congressional representation. That means that when there are votes

on the floor, nobody is there to vote for our district. That means that when immigrants and veterans need their cases worked, nobody is here to do that work. That means that when SNAP benefits and Medicaid are cut, there is no voice for this district.

I'm here to say enough is enough. State leaders have targeted this district for far too long, and it's time for you to do the right thing. Do not strip these folks of their political power. Do not adopt a redistricting plan that does that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Chair calls Mr. Dixon.

JAMES DIXON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Mr. Dixon, I show you registered to testify on behalf of the NAACP and Ministers of Houston. Is that correct?

JAMES DIXON: That's correct.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: And that's on the revised congressional redistricting plan?

JAMES DIXON: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

JAMES DIXON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And to all of the representatives here, welcome to Houston, and thank all of you for being here today.

I represent the Houston NAACP, and I'm also privileged to speak for the state NAACP, along with, of course, pastors across the city of Houston and the Community of Faith Church, which has been in District 18, long before it was a district. Our church is 150 years old, founded by the formerly enslaved Reverend Jack Yates, for whom the high school is named, who helped purchase Emancipation Park in District 18.

I want to say that because those individuals who are making decisions about the future of District 18 and 9 and the other districts mentioned need to really understand the richness of the history and the value that representation has added, not just to people of color, but that everyone who resides in the Greater Houston and Harris County community. That's very important.

We are here today under unfortunate circumstances, as it's been articulated multiple times. We have a census every 10 years. The data from which should dictate necessary changes to the

maps for Congressional representation. That is a common-sense plan.

We are here today, not because the data has dictated it. We are here today because there is a decision that the people of this state don't deserve to elect their own representatives. And it's proven that political and racial gerrymandering proves that the elected chooses their voters as opposed to the voters choosing their elected. And whenever that occurs, the people always lose. I want to say to us very quickly --

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Yeah. Please finish your testimony.

JAMES DIXON: I will. Very quickly that what is being done is oppressive, it's racist, and we need to be clear on this, that it's unconstitutional and immoral.

As speaking as a prophet, the word of God says in Zachariah Chapter 9, Subchapter 7, "When you oppress God's people and your hearts are too hard to change, the wrath of God will come." This is a warning to Texas. Don't play with God's poor, oppressed people taking their insurance, their Medicare, and their healthcare because there is a God who's bigger than anyone in the White House, the

Texas Senate, or the Congress, and judgment shall come.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Members.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: I have one.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Gallery will come to order. Members, questions for the panel. Chair recognizes Mr. Manuel to question the panel.

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: Mr. Menefee, I know that you're a county official. I have one question about CD 18 because I've brought this up before. How long has Congressional District 18 been without representation, and what have been the implications on the county by not having representation, even though apparently, we just need to get a map done and redistrict right now, because the governor gave us two and a half weeks and said, let's get it done?

CHRISTIAN MENEFEE: The late Congressman Sylvester Turner passed away on March 5th. An important point here is, under the law, the governor is supposed to call the election as soon as practical. Now, there have been Republican districts, Filemon Vela in 2022, right. When that

district became vacant, Governor Abbott called the election to take place in June. And one of the reasons that he gave when he did so in the proclamation was because hurricane season was approaching, and people need access to their federal representative to get resources from FEMA into their communities, right. This is the governor of Texas speaking.

That same governor then looked at the black and brown folk in the 18th Congressional District and said you get November; you don't get June. So we're going to go more than a year without congressional representation. When that's happening, I'm telling you right now, when -- back when Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee was in office, if there was a hurricane that happened, she was on the phone with the county working with FEMA to get resources back into the community.

That's what's missing right now is we don't have an advocate who can get those resources directly into our community. And we don't have people who are in place right now to handle new veterans' cases, new immigrant cases, and of course, we don't have a vote. It's a major, major impact to our communities, and it's completely inhumane that

the governor did it; and he gave a nonsense reason when he did it. He said -- he said it was a problem with the county's elections. And everybody sitting in this room knows that Tanisha (Indiscernible) is doing a fantastic job running our elections.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Ms. Gervin Hawkins, for what purpose?

REPRESENTATIVE GERVIN-HAWKINS: Quick question, Mr. Dixon.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: You're so recognized.

REPRESENTATIVE GERVIN-HAWKINS: I'd like for you to repeat those four things so my colleagues can understand. This is serious business, serious business. And we do not need someone in D.C. in the White House, where they're putting their arm in Texas and destroying and dividing our community. What are those four things you -- you just said?

JAMES DIXON: We're dealing with oppressing poor people, taking their healthcare; this is Medicaid, this is SNAP, oppressing our seniors. This is life and death. And when you take away people's healthcare, their food, oppress the poor, God always responds on behalf of the oppressed.

And listen, Texas is about to practice, politician politics to enact and legalize politician policies in order to disenfranchise people that some folk think belong back on the plantation. We need to understand that this is against the laws of God and not just the laws of the legislature. It's a higher law than that.

And I'm asking every Texan, black, white, brown, Democrat, Republican, if you say you love God, you love people, you've got to love, the right people right now, and enact the right policies, or your name will be guilty of the blood that it will cost.

JAMES DIXON: Thank you, Mr. Dixon.

DEAN THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman.

CHAIR VASUT: Dean Thompson, what purpose?

DEAN THOMPSON: I'd like to ask Mr. Menefee a question.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: You're so recognized.

DEAN THOMPSON: Mr. Menefee, if I'm -- I live in the 18th Congressional District. Are there not cancer clusters there that's not being taken care of?

CHRISTIAN MENEFEE: That's right.

DEAN THOMPSON: Are there not being concrete batching plants? We have over 300 batching plants in that area that we are -- people are inundated with. Is that -- isn't that also a problem there?

CHRISTIAN MENEFEE: Yes, there is.

DEAN THOMPSON: And there have also been other EPA problems that impact the health and safety, not only of the people, but all of the people that live within that geographical area that are impacted.

CHRISTIAN MENEFEE: That's 100 percent right. When Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee was in office, she was one of the people who was at the table that got the EPA into Fifth Ward to start doing additional testing to address the cancer clusters. When we at the county filed a lawsuit against the state over its failure to regulate concrete batch plants in black and brown neighborhoods, it was Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee who helped get the EPA involved to get the TCQ to change the rules.

Time after time after time, you've seen that having a fierce advocate in Congress who is focused on environmental justice can really move the

needle for people. But right now, folks are dying without a voice. Folks are sick without a voice because the governor decided to play politics with a seat, but he's playing politics with these people's lives.

DEAN THOMPSON: And we've been denied representation.

CHRISTIAN MENEFEE: No representation right now.

DEAN THOMPSON: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Members, any other questions for the members of this panel?

Hearing none. Thank you for your testimony. This panel is excused.

Chair calls Lynita Robinson, Eric Ross, Ebony Rain Eatmon, and Debra Allen for our next panel.

The panel after that, please be ready - Mary Ham, Angela Ravin-Anderson, Patricia Garris, and Maritza Wong. Please be ready.

All right. Chair calls Lynita Robinson. Okay. I show you registered to testify as Lynita Robinson on behalf of Pure Justice on revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

LYNITA ROBINSON: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony. Is that mic working?

LYNITA ROBINSON: Is it working?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: There. If you just make sure you talk right into it. Thank you very much.

LYNITA ROBINSON: Let me get right into it. Good afternoon, honorable Chairs and committee members. My name is Lynita Robinson, and I am proudly representing Pure Justice, a grassroots organization committed to economic justice, racial justice, and criminal justice reform. I am also a seventh-generation Texan and the granddaughter of a 100-year-old matriarch whose life spans from Jim Crow to George Floyd, from poll taxes to voter ID laws.

The mid-decade redistricting effort is not about population shifts or court mandates. It is a calculated move that threatens to dismantle the decades of hard-fought progress in black and brown communities across Texas. When you fracture and manipulate districts, you weaken our collective power to push for economic opportunity for fair wages, infrastructure, and education.

You undercut racial justice by silencing every -- the very voices that continue to

call out discrimination in healthcare, housing, and policing. You stall criminal justice reform by reducing our ability to elect leaders who understand what it means to be overpoliced and underserved.

This is not the first time black Texans have seen power stripped away through redistricting. After reconstruction, black representation was legislated out of existence. Now in 2025, that same suppression is addressed in legal lease and wrapped in political strategy.

I call on this committee, do not be the architects of another rollback. Protect the democratic rights of Texans. Not just those with wealth and influence, but those whose voices have historically been ignored.

Let me close with the words of Fannie Lou Hamer, a woman who never stopped demanding justice in the face of politics. Nobody, nobody is free, until we're all free. Let's not allow the maps to become another tool of injustice. Let's make a blueprint for equity. Thank you for your time. You all have a blessed day.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony. Chair calls Eric Ross. I show you registered to testify as Eric Ross on behalf of

yourself on revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

ERIC ROSS: Yes, that's correct.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

ERIC ROSS: Good afternoon, honorable committee members. My name is Eric Ross from Congressional District 18. I'd like to take a moment of silence to remember the children and families affected by the recent floods in Central Texas.

The United States is a republic, not a democracy, but the DOJ and the current administration's pressure on our governor to withdraw districts mid-decade threatens our constitutional foundation. Our founders created a republic where authority flows from the people's concern, Respublica, through carefully designed institutions, not raw majority rule. They feared temporary and prudent majorities, trampling minority rights, and created checks and balances to prevent exactly what we're witnessing.

As the late Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee once declared, this is outrage when districts lose their communities. Her words ring true today. This manipulation violates both

Republican principles and constitutional law. This mid-decade power grab represents everything our system was designed to prevent, a narrow majority using temporary power to permanently rig elections.

Madison warned of this in the Federalist 10, factions terrorizing through manipulation, through persuasion.

To conservatives - true republicanism protects minority rights and prevents hasty minorities from dominating. Fair redistricting upholds constitutional safeguards.

To progressives - our republic's anti-majoritarian features, protect vulnerable communities from political manipulation.

To all Texans - we're witnessing the abuse of power our fathers most feared. Federal politicians, compelling states to rig elections for partisan advantage.

Scripture reminds us, learn to do right, seek justice, defend the oppressed. Isaiah 1:17. Our Republican system works through deliberation and broad consensus, not backroom deals, predetermining outcomes. When districts are rigged, we lose competitive elections that make representatives accountable to all constituents.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please finish your testimony.

ERIC ROSS: Cultural and economic diversity strengthens our republic. Gerrymandering destroys it by solace and voices and predetermining results.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

ERIC ROSS: Stand against the assault on Republican institutions, reject federal pressure, draw fair districts allowing democratic input within our constitutional framework. God bless Texas, and God bless the United States of America.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Chair calls Ebony Rain Eatmon.

EBONY EATMON: Present.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: I show you registered to testify as Ebony Rain Eatmon on behalf of yourself on revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

EBONY EATMON: That is correct.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

EBONY EATMON: Thank you all so much for the opportunity. Once again, my name is Ebony Rain Eatmon. I failed to mention this last time, but I am one of the many candidates that are running for the Congressional 18th District.

But I want to bring attention to this moment. Representative Wu, Walle, and Turner expressed that we are all unclear why we're here in this particular process at this time. But the answer is very evident. This administration is currently being bullied into breaking procedure to appease a fascist. Growing up, I was taught that giving in to a bully doesn't stop them from tormenting you. It makes you an easier target.

Your actions reflect a government that does not understand what its true power is and where it comes from. So let me help you understand where it comes from. Your power comes from the consent of the governed, not from threat of force. A government --

We are not scared of a fascist manchild. So why are you? Your mandate shouldn't come from a felonious self-appointed king, but from us. And we did not ask for this.

We, the people, demand that you remove this agenda from the special session and disregard the President's blatant attempt to rig our democracy. Last time I spoke to you, I begged you to get a spine. This time I'm echoing a warning from my colleague, Isaiah Martin, when he mentioned in his Thursday's remark before he was unceremoniously removed from his speaking podium.

History will not remember you kindly if you don't stand up for Texans. Fight like a Texan. Fight back. And there is no reason why this government has to kowtow once again to a felonious, self-appointed king who has no intention of meeting the needs of Texans.

His one resource is to say that he can live and rule according to what the real people need, but the real people have been telling you for the last 72 hours, we did not want this. We did not want this. We did not ask for this. We asked for help in Kerr County. We asked for representation in District 18. We asked for leaders, our neighbors, to take our words and represent us and fight for us, not just in the state, but in the United States of America. And you are blatantly disregarding our needs because you're scared of a bully.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

EBONY EATMON: I yield my time.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Chair calls -- come to order. Chair calls Debra Allen. I show you registered to testify as Debra Allen on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

DEBRA ALLEN: That's correct.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

DEBRA ALLEN: My name is Debra Allen. I am not a d, an e, or an i, I'm a human being. I live in the cancer cluster. I'm a senior citizen. I live in Northeast Houston, and I'm a member of the National Black Women Making a Difference.

But what I don't understand is when you do these redistricting hearings -- and I testified at the last hearing, so I'm confused as to why I'm back here again asking you to do the same thing again.

I'm here representing my children, my grandchildren, my great-grandchildren, and my great-great-grandchildren. So if you can please explain to me why, when you draw the lines, my community stays

in the flood zone; why my neighborhood is in the cancer cluster; why when it floods, it doesn't flood in your area, but only in mine?

So I want to come to the table to ask you if you can explain to me how this is happening in my community in Congressional District 18, which I'm a proud member of, and Representative District 142, and the state Senate District 13.

So you'll see where I'm going with this - 18, 13, 142. So when you're drawing these lines, someone is deliberately drawing us inside of basically death. It doesn't flood in your area like mine, but your water flows down to where I live in Northeast Houston. So you guys are safe. You don't understand what it means to jump into a dump truck to get out of flood water. You don't understand what it means when I have to drive 20 and 30 miles out of my community to get quality food.

You don't understand, and if you do, please correct me, because I'm taking care of my family and my neighbors. But if I came to your house, would you feed me? If I came to your house, would you help me? So when you draw those lines, make sure that you are taking that into consideration because where we live, in Northeast Houston, we help

everybody. We don't care if you're black, blue, brown, or green.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you.

DEBORAH ALLEN: We help everyone. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Members, any questions for this panel?

Seeing none, the panel is excused. Thank you for your testimony.

Chair calls up for our next panel - Mary Ham, Angela Ravin-Anderson, Patricia Garris, and Maritza Wong. If you'll make your way up to the front for these four seats.

The next panel after that's going to be Benjamin Whitman, Marcus Emmanuel, Jacqueline Santillana, and Jonathan Marcantel. If you will, please ensure that you're ready here in the room, and we'll come to you.

Chair calls Marita Wong. I show you registered to testify as Marita Wong on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

MARITZA WONG: It's Maritza Wong.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Maritza Wong. Thank you. Please give us your testimony.

MARITZA WONG: Hello. My name is Maritza Wong, and I am a resident of unincorporated Brazoria County in Congressional District 9, formerly CD 22.

I am here to ask this committee to reject any further gerrymandering of our state. The last election in which I felt that my vote made a difference in determining my Congress person and my state legislators was 2020. The gerrymandering that -- gerrymandering that occurred in 2021 made the outcome of those elections predetermined where I live. The sad thing is that I'm not even here to ask you to fix that. I'm just here to ask you to not make it worse.

Gerrymandering is wrong, no matter which party is doing it. I do not belong to any political party. I vote for people who I see making a genuine effort to make our communities, our state, and our country better. Nothing about this proposed redistricting is in good faith, and everyone knows it. This is a blatant attempt by the Republican Party to rule through total domination, but not even a dictatorship can silence your voters.

In 1973, my grandfather became the first Hispanic city council member in Alvin, Texas. This room is probably full of people whose ancestors were the first at something. So what you might not understand about those you are trying to silence, especially people of color, is that we have been in this position before. We have been told we do not count and we are not worthy, sometimes to the point of violence at the hands of those in power. Oppression is not new to us, and we carry those stories deep inside of us, no matter how long ago they happened, 5 days or 500 years. So we are not afraid of the outcome here because we will persist as we always have.

We will continue to speak the truth so that it does not die beneath the lies coming from the halls of power. The actions this committee is considering make it very clear who is actually afraid, and that is every lawmaker who is abandoning Texas and bending to the will of Washington D.C.

In this moment, I ask you to consider what your legacy will be. Did you stand for anything at all, or did you just do as you were told? Because one day, all of our descendants will be telling this story. What will they say about you? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Chair calls Patricia Garris. I show you registered to testify as Patricia Garris on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

PATRICIA GARRIS: That is correct.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

PATRICIA GARRIS: The year is 2040. Harry holds his elderly mother's hand, and even with long care Â– long-term care coverage, she must live with him. The 2025 budget bill forced the closing and consolidation of skilled nursing homes. The nearest one is now four hours away. The home nurse wait is six to nine months, so he must start the bath that's embarrassing for her and difficult for him.

Immigrants, who used to make up 40 percent of health professionals, don't come to the United States anymore. After driving two hours to the nearest hospital last month, Harry's daughter endured an emergency hysterectomy. Although his daughter survived, his grandbaby died with a cord around his neck.

Harry's son and his wife earn $170,000 a year. Since 17 million Americans lost their healthcare, his son's cost is now $2500 a month with an $8000 deductible and 25 percent copay. The tariffs keep costs high, and Harry worries that he may need to delay his retirement to help his son.

Harry checks the bath temperature; his breathing is labored. Pollution has turned his asthma into emphysema, and the doctor can't see him for four months. Anti-immigration and student loan restrictions have decimated. The number of new doctors and older ones are retiring out. Harry feels a small, sharp pain in his chest. He walks, locks eyes with his mother, then falls back.

Having served as a Texas representative for many years, Harry suddenly begins to think about his votes. As his eyes close, Harry mouths, forgive me. He knows his votes caused the deaths, the shattered dreams, and suffering of people who simply didn't look, act, or think like him. Harry got what he voted for. The pain and the misery he voted for others has come for him and his family.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Chair calls Angela Ravin-Anderson. I show you registered to testify as Angela Ravin-Anderson on behalf of Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church and -- and yourself, and testifying on revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

ANGELA ANDERSON: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: All right. Please give us your testimony.

ANGELA ANDERSON: Good afternoon. I am Reverend Dr. Angela Ravin-Anderson with Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church. I live in Congressional District 9. And my business home, instead, is located in Congressional District 18.

I rise today in defense of democracy and dignity. During the American Revolution, our fore-parents declared a simple yet profound truth, no taxation without representation. That cry was not just about taxes; it was about power, voice, and justice. It was a demand that the people, not the privileged few, should shape the future of this nation.

This is a democracy. We decided a long time ago that no king, no one person, no ruling class would govern over us. We would govern ourselves through fair and free representation.

Today in 2025, that same cry echoes in our hearts as we confront the deliberate racist assault on Congressional Districts 18 and 9 and others like them, districts that have long served as platforms of power for black and brown communities.

Let's be clear, every line that is drawn on a map determines more than political boundaries. It determines the flow of resources, the funding of schools, the protection of civil rights, and access to quality healthcare. These lines either open the door to progress or slam it shut. The proposed redistricting isn't about fairness. It is -- it's about fear. It's about racism. It's about diluting the voices of communities that have historically been denied power and are now standing in it.

We see the tactic. We know the playbook, and we refuse to be silent. We pay taxes. We serve this country. We build this economy, and we demand that what we have earned, which is fair representation.

So to close, I close with this call. Stop the steal. Hands off our districts. Let the people choose their leaders, not the other way. We demand fair maps.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Chair calls Mary Ham. I show you registered to testify as Mary Ham on behalf of the Texas Democratic Party CD 2, or is that where you reside?

MARY HAM: Congressional District 2, I am the SDEC committee woman.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Okay. So you're testifying on behalf of Texas Democratic Party CD 2.

MARY HAM: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: On the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

MARY HAM: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

MARY HAM: Okay. And I'm going to be very brief. Part of what I was going to say already got covered by Congressman Lapmson.

Looking at the numbers, Republicans hold over two-thirds of the congressional delegation in Texas. When you look at statewide races, this does not correlate. And actually, in state-wide races, they're very closely matched. About 48 percent -- about 5 percent difference between

Republicans and Democrats. So you would think that there would be a -- you know, the maps would be a little more generous to Democrats; that we would have more seats, but that's simply not the case.

Given in partial lines, the numbers will be more even. A representative would actually have to work for the betterment of people. When you make a district so forth in one direction, you prevent -- well, actually, you don't prevent. You make it so that the Congress person doesn't have to do much of anything unless it's in their nature. And we see in some of the congressional districts, it's not in the nature of the Republicans, just being honest.

Now times change. When you look at demographics on how you'd do the map, since you don't have a recent -- since you don't have a recent census, basically redistricting is going to be a crap sheet, okay. So you would basically be looking at the numbers from the last election, who voted what, to draw lines. And what you've got to understand is people move. Times are changing. People are changing jobs, and we are moving quickly. So what you've got to understand is what you think is there may not be there.

And I'll tell you a quick story, and it was told to you very, very, very little while ago. In the early 2000s, I worked for like the best boss in the world, Congressman Nick Lampson. And as he said, did a redistricting led by Tom DeLay. He lost his seat.

Well, he didn't let that faze him. He then moved to family property, and he won DeLay's seat that should have been set for a Republican. So you cannot guarantee outcomes. People are fed up. We're tired of the games. The people need --

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please finish your testimony.

MARY HAM: You need to go back, and you need to tell Abbott, it's time to work on progress for the people of the state of Texas, and not more power grabs that are not helping anybody.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Members, any questions for this panel?

Seeing none, the panel is excused. Thank you for your testimony.

Chair calls up our next panel - Benjamin Whitman, Marcus Emmanuel, Jonathan Marcantel, and Jacqueline Santillana.

Benjamin, I'm going to need you to sign your witness affirmation form. If you don't mind taking this to Benjamin. So we're going to come to you last if that's okay.

Our next panel after that, so please be ready, is Ashley Tabor, Michael Anthony Watson, Tiffany Hill, and Jesus Mepel or Medel. I apologize. It's a little ambiguous on the DRP.

All right. Chair calls Marcus Emmanuel. Okay. I show you registered to testify as Marcus Emmanuel on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

MARCUS EMMANUEL: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

MARCUS EMMANUEL: Now, under normal circumstances, I would thank this committee for the opportunity to speak, but considering that this committee hearing shouldn't be happening in the first place, I don't feel like that's very appropriate.

Epstein's wingman literally went on live TV and admitted that the reason he wanted Texas' congressional map to be redistricted is for the sake of picking up five seats in this upcoming -- in this

upcoming midterm because he knows it's going to be a blue wave. The corruption is so blatantly obvious.

Now, I'm not going to sit here and waste my time talking about the detriments and harms of redistricting for two reasons. One, because the speakers before me already gave a good synopsis, but secondly, because Republicans will go about pushing for initiatives, already being conscious of the detriments and harms. They just don't care.

We can see it with the Big Beautiful Bill that took away -- or it's going to take away, Medicare from 17 million Americans. And we can also see it with the voucher scam that recently was passed in Texas, that's going to defund our public schools.

That's why I'm more focused on making sure or encouraging voters to go out and vote in this upcoming midterm election, specifically vote Democrat. Because my prerogative is to make sure that bad actors don't hold office anymore, rather than trying to beg and plead with bad actors to vote against their own immoral self-interest, although we know they're not going to.

Americans have to realize that democracy is being torn down right before our very eyes. What the Republican Party currently stands for

needs to be completely eradicated, and hopefully, something more moderate rises from the ashes. And if not, then it needs to be eradicated again and again and again, as many times as it takes. Because if the Republican Party keeps moving in the direction that it currently is, under this fascist dictator, there won't be an America to speak of anymore. That will be my testimony.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Chair calls Benjamin Whitman. I show you registered to testify as Benjamin Whitman on behalf of the Cameron County Democratic Party and yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

BENJAMIN WHITMAN: Yes. That's correct, sir.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please, give us your testimony.

BENJAMIN WHITMAN: Good afternoon. My name is Benjamin Guillermo Whitman. I'm a resident of Harlingen in Cameron County and a constituent of House District 37 -- of House District 37 and Congressional District 34. I'm here today because I care about the Rio Grande Valley, and I'm against the

current redistricting efforts. I travel across the state regularly advocating for RGV-focused policies and greater investment in South Texas. But it's frustrating that to participate in this process, I had to leave at 3:00 a.m. from my home in Harlingen to get here and testify.

So I've looked at many of those proposed maps, but among the most radical, plan 2202, which stretches CD 34 from Cameron County all the way up to the coastline, just literally the coastline to Brazoria County. Another plan, 2201, shoots inland, but reaches all the way up to Woden again, hundreds of miles from the valley. I wouldn't be left speculating if I just saw what the map that's being proposed.

So many of these proposals, as well, do not reflect the communities of -- of Texas. They're blatant attempts to gerrymander us into Republican pickups and dilute the voices of Latinos. It combines border towns like where I'm from, in Harlingen, with rural counties near Houston that have vastly different needs and cultural identities. For years, I've heard Republicans say that areas where I'm from are forgotten, that border communities are under-invested. And yet this process and these

proposals actively undermine our voice by -- by diluting it across hundreds of miles.

Cameron County -- Cameron County deserves dedicated representation. Our -- our challenges require a member of Congress to be focused on our area, not having to balance rural areas hundreds of miles north. In March, for example, Harlingen was hit by hard flooding, where I myself was trapped. But redistricting -- redistricting like this could very well cost us funding and attention we need for things like critical infrastructure.

And I want to take a moment to speak directly to my fellow South Texans. Republicans are trying to dilute your voice and our region's importance in Congress. I'm still going to show up for my community even if it's designed to discourage our participation, but I urge you to make your voice heard and to join me in -- in rejecting this current partisan mid-decade redistricting effort. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Chair calls Jacqueline Santillana. I show you registered on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

JACQUELINE SANTILLANA: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you. Please give us your testimony.

JACQUELINE SANTILLANA: Good afternoon. My name is Jacqueline Santillana. I live in Willesee County, and I am a constituent of Congressional District 34. I have lived in the Rio Grande Valley for most of my life. I care deeply about my community having fair representation and their voices being heard, which is why I'm here today.

In 2021, I testified to urge that the redistricting process be conducted fairly and transparently. It is concerning that we are once again having to testify, especially when this process is happening five years early and while the 2021 Congressional District maps remain under review in federal court. I'm also disappointed that no public hearings have been scheduled in or near the Rio Grande Valley, leaving our community with more barriers to speak here today.

Our community deserves the opportunity to participate within their proximity and not be limited to five hours online or in person. I've also seen maps proposals that stretch as far, as north as

Warren County areas with vastly different needs, cultural identities, infrastructure, projects, and priorities. Redrawing these maps risks diluting the voices of communities in the Rio Grande Valley, taking away resources, and effectively stripping us of fair representation.

We should be able to elect leaders who have the same lived experiences and understand our needs. Instead of stripping power away from communities of color, our focus right now should be on delivering relief and support to those still struggling from the recent floods, not on redistricting that further divides us. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Chair calls Jonathan Marcantel. I show you registered to testify on behalf of the Texas Democratic Caucus and yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

JONATHAN MARCANTEL: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

JONATHAN MARCANTEL: Mr. Chairman, if you'll permit it. I have provided written testimony

to the committee, and I will let that stand in my testimony in the interest of time.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Well, we accept it and thank you and appreciate your help earlier. Members, any questions for this panel?

Dean Thompson.

DEAN THOMPSON: Would you like for that testimony to be a part of a written -- the written --

JONATHAN MARCANTEL: Yes, ma'am. I'd like you to be part of the written record.

DEAN THOMPSON: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Perfect. And we -- I believe you've handed that to the assistant clerk?

JONATHAN MARCANTEL: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: We'll -- we'll make sure that the members get it.

Members, any other questions? Mr. Marcantel, thank you. Panel, thank you for your time. You're excused.

Chair calls up our next panel - Ashley Tabor, Michael Anthony Watson, Tiffany Hill, and Jesus Medel or Mepel. I apologize. I'm not sure which one.

Our next panel, just so you'll be ready, is going to be Karin Knapp, Jerome Wald, Christopher Camporeale, and Victoria Salin.

Okay. Ma'am, on the end, what's your name?

ASHLEY TABOR: Ashley Tabor.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Okay. Chair calls Ashley Tabor. I show you registered to testify as Ashley Tabor on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

ASHLEY TABOR: Yes, indeed. That's correct.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please -- please give us your testimony.

ASHLEY TABOR: All right. So let's address the elephant in the room. The sole reason why Texas is considering redrawing its maps is at the behest of our president. It's also true that many people voted for this man because they believe him to be a good businessman.

I'm not a politician, but I know a thing or two about business. I've been with the same employer for almost 11 years, and I've traveled around the globe in order to do my work. I can tell you that what's happening here and what our president

and governor hope to achieve is the antithesis of good business.

At its core, good business is customer-focused. When companies prioritize their internal and external stakeholders, they often do well with their KPIs, their key performance indicators, their customer satisfaction scores, and revenue. On the flip side, when your company's leaders cater to the whims and delusions of the CEO, trust in the system begins to erode, and the mission of the business can no longer be one of integrity.

We live in a country that celebrates crony capitalism, but let's make one thing clear. Good businessmen and women embrace the free market. They welcome competition because they believe that their ideas have merit and are innately persuasive.

As soon as they start to cheat, one has to wonder whether their mission was ever noble or in the best interest (audio/video cut out).

They're content to cook the books and not win you over with good ideas, but with force and potentially intimidation tactics, they would rather rig the market and sacrifice accountability in order to appease a corrupt and irreparably immoral CEO.

The message I have here is for the dais, but also for everybody in this room, especially my fellow Texans. If you believe in the business of our democratic republic, do not let the politicians forget the mistakes that they might be making by redrawing these political maps. Hold them accountable every chance you get at every turn.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

ASHLEY TABOR: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Mr. Watson.

MICHAEL WATSON: Michael Anthony Watson.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Perfect. Chair calls Michael Anthony --

MICHAEL WATSON: There are two Michael Watsons in Fort Bend.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: All right. Chair calls Michael Anthony Watson, not the other Michael Anthony Watson.

MICHAEL WATSON: That's right.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: I show you registered to testify on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

MICHAEL WATSON: That's correct.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

MICHAEL WATSON: Okay. Good afternoon. My name is Michael Anthony Watson. I live at 1800 FM 1092 --

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Mr. Watson, would you mind getting that mic just a little bit closer?

MICHAEL WATSON: Oh, sorry.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: No, you're fine.

MICHAEL WATSON: Because I'm normally --

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: I'll give you a lecture time too. You're fine.

MICHAEL WATSON: Okay. Can you all hear me now?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Yes, sir. Good.

MICHAEL WATSON: Okay. I'll have to go back. My name is Michael Anthony Watson. I live at 1800 FM 1092, in Missouri City, Texas. That's TX 9, House District 27, and Senate District 13.

We, the people, my people, black people, have been in the fabric of Texas since 1528, when Estevanico set foot on Galveston Island. He was

an African Moor and a very skilled ship navigator, according to the Texas Historical Society.

Voting is the essence of our democracy. The 15th Amendment enshrined the right to vote for African Americans at the rebirth of our nation. I grew up on the Gulf Coast in Mobile, Alabama. My grandmother's house was firebombed by the Ku Klux Klan because she had the audacity to help black World War II veterans study for literacy tests so they could attempt to register to vote. So free and fair elections are in my DNA.

This Texas mid-decade redistricting is clearly racially motivated. Res ipsa loquitur. The thing speaks for itself. Anglos make up merely 40 percent of Texas, but control 28 of the 38 Congressional seats. Forty percent of one group taking 70 percent of the seats is not fair. The black, brown, and Asian populations grew much faster than the Anglo population in the last decades. However --

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please complete your testimony.

MICHAEL WATSON: However, Texas awarded two seats derived from the 2020 census to the

white population, clearly not there. Just one last thing.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: You bet.

MICHAEL WATSON: The Roberts Supreme Court in the Millman case, Alabama, just affirmed that black people may not be intentionally discriminated with -- when you're drawing new congressional maps. So my people are merely asking for the opportunity to be heard and to secure the blessings of liberty in this nation. Thank you. And I thank my forebearers.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your time.

MICHAEL WATSON: Absolutely.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Hold for just a second, panelists.

Chair calls Jesus Medel or Mepel. Is he here? Chair will show him registered to testify on behalf of LULAC, but not testifying on revised congressional redistricting plan.

Chair is going to call Tiffany Hill. Is Tiffany Hill here? Chair will show Tiffany Hill registered to testify on behalf of herself on the revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying.

Members, any questions for the members of this panel?

Ms. Jones is recognized to question the panel.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Sorry. I don't -- I don't remember your name. What's your name again, ma'am?

ASHLEY TABOR: Ashley Tabor.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: So this is what I want to say to you.

ASHLEY TABOR: Yeah.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Donald Trump is running this country the way he ran his bankrupt businesses into the ground, and I appreciate the clear and powerful way that you explained why this redistricting is wrong and racist in a way that people pay attention to business could understand. Thank you.

ASHLEY TABOR: With all due respect, I have been living in Texas for five years. I'm originally from New Jersey, and I know all too well that he is not the good businessman that people think he is. So you can put that on the record.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Two casinos ran bankrupt.

ASHLEY TABOR: Yeah. Atlantic City speaks for itself.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Right.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Members, any other questions for the members of this panel? Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony. Panel is excused.

Chair calls Christopher Camporeale, Jerome Wald, Karin Knapp, and Victoria Salin.

Christopher, we're going to need you to sign your witness affirmation form. We're going to bring that to you.

Our next panel is going to be Karen Washington, Cynthia Drabek, Dawn Marshall, and Thurman Bartie. Please be ready.

All right. And ma'am, what's your name on the far end? Yes.

KARIN KNAPP: Karin Knapp.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: All Right. Chair calls Karin Knapp. Chair will show you registered to testify as Karin Knapp on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

KARIN KNAPP: That is correct. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: And -- and Ms. Knapp, I showed you, you had signed the very bottom where I'm supposed to sign. Can I put a little arrow that you signed the other line?

KARIN KNAPP: Yes. Please do.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Okay. No worries. We're just getting this right. Please give us your testimony.

KARIN KNAPP: Okay. Thank you. As a resident of Congressional District 18, I have a message for Donald Trump and Greg Abbott. If you want to flip this district, earn our votes. Don't steal them. Listen to all of your constituents. Abbott has silenced CD 18 for months now to serve Trump's agenda. CD 18 is a majority black and brown district, as are other Harris County districts you're targeting. We see exactly what you're doing.

Make our streets safer. Poll after poll shows that the majority of Texans are tired of gun violence in this state. Fully fund public education. Stop destroying it. Get out of HISD and stay out. Feed hungry children in the summer. Texas can fund summer meal programs for children all by itself. No federal funding needed.

Keep people healthy by making healthcare affordable and accessible. Stop passing laws that put Texas at the top of the medically uninsured states in this nation. Get out of OB-GYN offices and delivery rooms. Strengthen environmental protections. Stop favoring polluters over human beings. Fortify the grid, hold CenterPoint accountable for their negligence. Stop making us pay for their failures.

Stop putting up barriers to voting. And by the way, you're making it harder for Republicans to vote, especially elderly Republicans. Support LGBTQ youth and their families. Don't persecute and criminalize them. In fact, support all families and children. Stop abducting people off the streets who aren't criminals. And finally, stop teaching Texas children that the only way to get what you want is to cheat.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Chair calls Victoria Salin.

VICTORIA SALIN: Thank you, Chair. Victoria Salin.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Salin. And I show you registered to testify on behalf of yourself on

the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

VICTORIA SALIN: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

VICTORIA SALIN: Greetings to the committee. My name's Victoria Salin. I come from College Station. What's the rush? We don't have a map. After people and experts get the map, please, I ask you to provide notice and hearings so that everyone can carefully consider the redistricting issue. I understand the time in this special session is really short, but I encourage the legislature not to use time constraints as an excuse to exclude the public from deliberations. And we can really only fairly make deliberations once we have the map.

If you do go forward, what will be the impact? The time spent now on redistricting -- and it's your time as our representatives -- takes away from considering other really important issues such as flood recovery and improving flood prevention. Not to mention all the other issues.

From my own perspective, I've been a volunteer voter registrar for Brazos County for a couple of cycles now, and I know firsthand that

county elections committees and officials have a lot on their plate.

Counties also don't have a lot of extra money to spend on the work it would take to implement new maps, and it will put a big burden on county staff, not to mention the confusion among our fellow voters who may lose their representation if the lines are moved. I've personally been redistricted a couple of times in the 30 years that I've been a Texas voter, and I know it can be confusing for voters who depend on federal programs, who are very vulnerable people.

We all need to know how to access services, and with cuts in the federal government, we, the people, need to be represented effectively. New maps might well harm many, many people, and especially this would be a bad outcome if the new map is motivated by a racially motivated political power grab. Please don't rush into redistricting.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Chair calls Jerome Wald. I show you registered as Jerome Wald testifying on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistrict plan. Is that correct?

JEROME WALD: That is correct.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Glad to have you here today. Good to see you again. Please give us your testimony.

JEROME WALD: Thank you. So again, good afternoon, committee members. Thank you for this hearing. My name is Jerome Wald, and I'm a native Houstonian. I am a retired state -- Texas state employee. I'm 75 years old, and I've been involved with politics since I was 14. And so, I am a proud constituent of Congressional District 7.

As a Texan, I wish that this legislature were working on redistricting fairness rather than gerrymandering. Instead, I'm here to testify against this harmful attempt to withdraw -- to redraw our congressional districts in the middle of the decade. I have about seven talking points I'd like to address. I hope I get to them all.

First of all, one is, show voters the maps by holding a public hearing as you're doing now with testimony on any proposed maps that have been drawn, but before they're voted on.

Point two, do not discriminate against voters of color. It's a blatant racial discrimination.

Number three, do not limit public testimony to five hours. Our voices deserve to be heard. People have taken time away from their work and their families so they can address their representatives.

Point four, we need at least five days to review the maps. Maps must be made public at least five days in advance of any public hearings during a special session or votes in order to allow sufficient time for the public to review the maps, prepare testimony, and propose alternative maps.

Number five, we also need at least five days to review any proposed changes in the maps. Any amendments or changes offered to a map proposal must be presented at least five days in advance of any vote to allow for public to analyze the proposed amendments and advocate for or against them.

Point six, provide an analysis of how the new maps impact historically disenfranchised communities of color and VRA-protected language minorities to elect candidates of their choice.

My last statement, which is not going to be included, number seven, but I will say, to remember to do unto others as you would have them do

unto you because the titles can turn. And that's quotations from the Talmud and Leviticus 19:18.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

JEROME WALD: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Chair calls Christopher Camporeale. Don't see him. I show Christopher Camporeale registered to testify on behalf of himself on the revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying.

Members, any questions for the members of this panel?

Chair hears none. Thank you again, all, for your testimony. Panel is excused.

JEROME WALD: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Chair calls up our next panel - Cynthia Drabek, Dawn Marshall, Thurman Bartie, and Karen Washington.

The panel after that is going to be Carmela Walker, Judson Robinson, Demethra Orion, and Lucy Reyna. So please be ready.

Okay. Chair calls Thurman Bartie.

THURMAN BARTIE: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Good to see you again.

THURMAN BARTIE: Okay. I'd like to say good afternoon to this (indiscernible) body and these great panelists.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Let me make sure I get your registration right. I show you registered to testify as Thurman Bartie on -- you have citizen support, Arthur. I know you're a former mayor there and --

THURMAN BARTIE: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: But I think since that's not an organization theoretically or technically, we have to say on behalf of yourself on revised congressional redistricting plan.

THURMAN BARTIE: I'll say I represent myself and --

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Sure.

THURMAN BARTIE: -- a great number of individuals who may not want to be recognized at this point.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Sure. So is it okay if I have your registration show that you were testifying on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan?

THURMAN BARTIE: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: All right. Please give us your testimony.

THURMAN BARTIE: Okay. And again, as you stated, I am Thurman Bill Bartie, former mayor -- past mayor of the great city of Port Arthur, Texas. I just stepped down, turned out a few weeks ago.

And I'm speaking, however, as a resident of Congressional District 14, which is situated in a very large portion of Jefferson County, Texas. And Port Arthur, Texas, happens to be a part of Jefferson County, the second largest city there. And again, I represent unofficially a very significant population situated in Congressional District 14.

And with that in mind, I pray upon each of you for consideration to not, please, do not gerrymander the district any more than it already is. Presently, a large portion of the population is systematically disenfranchised because of political ideology interference. But there are certain other issues that this special legislative session can actually be addressing besides polluting the political atmosphere with more disgusting maneuvers.

So please consider not changing the description, the boundaries, or anything that deals

with Congressional District 14. And for that reason, any of the Congressional districts here in our great state of Texas. Allow Texans throughout this great state to be proud participants of the governance in our great state without regard for political ideological interference on all levels.

So again, I pray upon you, we've learned to live with what we have since '21. Don't change it. I cannot remember in 71 years that we've gone through a change in four years or three years simply because it might be constitutionally correct, but just think it's not morally proper. And for sure it's not politically sound to do this right now and hurt this country. And might I add to hurt minorities --

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please finish your testimony.

THURMAN BARTIE: -- to hurt blacks and browns just because you have a leader -- or we have a leader who doesn't care about anybody but himself. Because if you think he cares about you, get in the tight. God bless you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Chair calls Cynthia Drabek. Okay. I show you registered to testify as Cynthia Drabek on behalf of yourself on the revised Congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

CYNTHIA DRABEK: That is correct.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

CYNTHIA DRABEK: Absolutely. And thank you for your time today. American attempts to tailor district lines for political gains stretch way back to the country's very origin. Patrick Henry, who opposed the new constitution, tried to draw district lines to deny a seat in the first Congress to James Madison, the constitution's primary author.

Henry assured that Madison's district was drawn to include counties politically opposed to Madison. The attempt failed and Madison was elected, but American gerrymander had begun. Here are my districts. I'm in United States Rep, District 2, and then here are my other two gerrymandered districts, as you can see. They look like pieces of a puzzle.

These maps should reflect communities, not be driven by racial quotas or political manipulations. Based on the population growth and the problems currently presented in the currently

drawn districts, redistricting into neighboring districts should be considered. These hearings should continue. I'm humbly asking for representative districts to be concise, to adequately represent contiguous neighborhoods, schools, businesses, infrastructure, and constituents. Thank you for your time.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Chair calls Dawn Marshall. I show you registered to testify as Dawn Marshall on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

DAWN MARSHALL: Yes, it is.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

DAWN MARSHALL: My name is Dawn Marshall. And although I'm running for the 10th -- Texas 10th U.S. Congressional District, I'm here today to give testimony as is my right as a citizen of Texas in opposition to this unconstitutional redistricting proposal.

Our elected officials are not rulers. They are representatives. They hold office not by divine right or family name, but by the faith and support of

we, the people. And that faith must be earned and re-earned through transparency, accountability, and a profound respect for our will.

Freedom means that we, the people, choose our leaders, and we must terminate their employment when they no longer reflect our values, our struggles, or our hopes. It means that no one, no governor, no senator, no president is above the law or beyond the reach of a ballot box.

But freedom only works when we exercise it, when we show up, when we raise our voices, when we hold elected officials accountable for what they do, not for what they say. For how they vote, who they protect, and whether they stand with the people or stand in our way.

So let us be very clear. In a free country, democracy doesn't end on election day. It begins there because freedom is not a gift. It is a responsibility, and the will of the people is not a whisper. It is a force.

I urge this committee to do what they know to be right. It is time to do your job and not just keep your job. Say no to gerrymandering and stop the redistricting. Thank you for your time.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Chair calls Karen Washington. I show you registered to testify as Karen Washington on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

KAREN WASHINGTON: That is correct.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: And I had you signed at the bottom. Is it okay if I do a little arrow up there, and I sign under you?

KAREN WASHINGTON: That is fine.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: All right.

KAREN WASHINGTON: And if you'll also notice on that application, I did not agree with neutral.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Understood.

KAREN WASHINGTON: So I check that I am against redistricting.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Understood.

KAREN WASHINGTON: I want that to be noted.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: And absolutely as part of your testimony, it will. Technically, for the minutes, it will have to just say neutral. But again, that's just because the rules require it. And

I understand completely. Please give us your testimony.

KAREN WASHINGTON: So this morning at 7:00 o'clock a.m., I am a part of an organization that gathered to collect items to send to Kerr County. I was not available to participate in that because I had to be here, because I vehemently do not agree with what's happening here today.

I wanted to work with my grandchildren because I'm teaching them to learn to be a volunteer regardless of -- in helping others in our community, regardless of race, color, or creed. It is important to me that we help one another. That is what I teach my children. I teach them integrity, and I teach them to have morals.

So with that being said, I'm wondering why we are here today. Because it appears to me that someone did not have the intestinal fortitude to say, no. There are no maps. What are we looking at, and what are we discussing? So when that event occurs, that we do get redistricting maps, I certainly want to be here to talk about it again. All my life, I've had to fight. I'm not stopping now.

Normally, I roll up my sleeves, but this time I'm taking the jacket off. I'll be

considering calling all of my friends and all of the districts where you guys sit and say, listen, we've got to get people who are going to speak for us. That is very critical to the survival of democracy. You guys were voted into position to speak for us. We shouldn't have to sit at this table and beg you to speak on our behalf.

So with that being said, I worked in a corporation for over 30 years, where there typically were dog and pony shows. In case you don't know what that means, dog and pony show is where you go out and you pretend to want to hear genuinely what your constituents have to say, and then all along knowing what the plan's going to be.

Just so you know and are very clear, we know what that is, and we're not going to sit back, lay back, and allow that to happen. We'll be back here. And what I like about what's happening now is that strategically, you guys are forcing us to lock arms. You know, before the last election, we were divided, but now we're collectively joining together to say this will not happen. We are against gerrymandering. It is racist. It is racist. It is racist.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please finish your testimony.

KAREN WASHINGTON: So with that being said, I'd like you to know that it's a tactic that we are not -- it's divide and conquer. We're not going to allow that to happen. 100 years from now, history is being written today about you and your stance. What will it say, that you had a spine or spine list?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

KAREN WASHINGTON: You write that.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Members, any -- any questions -- any questions for this panel?

Chair recognizes Representative Jones to question the panel.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Mr. Chair, this is actually a question for you. I'd like to know --

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Chair, you have a question.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Yes. Mr. Chair, why wasn't this hearing set up to let witnesses speak their truth for or against instead of forcing them to say they're neutral?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: As the lady should be aware that's required by the rules.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Well --

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Because the rules require when there is no bill before the body at a hearing that the testimony is always on.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Right. So I guess -- so I guess that's my question. Why are we having hearings before we have a bill where we can actually say for or against?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: The Chair -- the Chair has repeatedly answered that. It has always been the practice of the redistricting committee, to my knowledge, to first have hearings before even considering a map, and then to have a hearing on the map. And that is for that reason, we're doing it this way.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Okay. So all I'll say is this. Slavery used to be legal, and it's not anymore. Just because something was done a way doesn't mean we should just do it that way. And I believe that people are really struggling here with being forced to say that they're neutral because of how we, the legislature, decided to have this hearing when we could have done it where they could actually put how they truly feel about what's going on, and

know in advance of hearings how potential maps will actually affect us. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Members, any questions for the members of this panel?

Hearing none, thank you for your testimony. The panel is excused.

Gallery, stay in order.

Chair calls Carmela Walker, Judson Robinson, Demethra Orion, and Lucy Reyna.

Ma'am, what is your name on the end there?

CARMELA WALKER: Carmela Walker.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Okay. Chair calls Carmela Walker. I show you registered to testify as Carmela Walker on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

CARMELA WALKER: Yes, it is.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

CARMELA WALKER: Thank you to the Chair, Vice Chair, and members. Really appreciate this opportunity today. I worked the 83rd legislative session with Honorable Sylvester Turner through the -- the legislative internship program

under Senator Ellis when he was senator. Now he's commissioner.

And you know, he was a master at bipartisanship, but what we're seeing today is not bipartisanship. It's very partisan. And I wanted to say that we don't need packing and cracking and stacking issues, what we need -- or jacking the -- our constituents and our community, you know, and robbing them of inalienable rights in due process.

We need a process that's going to work, and this is not working. What we're seeing here is a partisanship position that's literally ripping Texas apart. And so we're asking you just to keep the maps the way that they are. I'm not quite sure if you're aware, but District 9 and the issues that they have there, the infrastructure, aging roads, and public transportation systems require upgrades. Public safety concerns about crime rates and police community relations persisted -- persist.

District 18, the economic disparities prevalent poverty rates affecting access and services, housing, affordable housing, and improvements in existing structures need help. Health services.

District 29, flooding -- is prone to flooding and damage -- drainage damages. Environmental concerns.

District 33 has transportation issues, public amenities, social service -- services and -- and resources are needed.

So we don't need anyone to redistrict anything. What we need are our representatives to do their jobs so that we can address some of these issues that are on behalf of the public. That's what we're asking.

And lastly, I'm going to say to you, between 1899 and 1867, we had a 68-year gap with no representation. And that was before -- that was actually after Representative Robert L. Smith of Colorado County. And then after that, we had Senator Barbara Jordan of Harris County. We had Representative Curtis Graves and Representative Joe Lockridge of Dallas, and they were sworn in in 1967. So what I'm saying to you is, is that we need representatives right now who can represent Texas in a way that's equitable. Represent us, do the job. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Chair calls Judson Robinson. I show you registered to testify on behalf of, is it HAUL?

JUDSON ROBINSON: Yes. The Houston Area Urban League.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Houston Area Urban League. Short for HAUL. Okay. And on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

JUDSON ROBINSON: Correct.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: All right. And do I have your permission to write out the -- what was that title? Houston --

JUDSON ROBINSON: Area.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Urban League.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: -- Area Urban League.

JUDSON ROBINSON: Correct.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Okay. Is it okay if I update your registration to spell that out?

JUDSON ROBINSON: Correct.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: All right. Perfect. Please give us your testimony,

JUDSON ROBINSON: Mr. Chairman, thank you. Members of the community, thank you for being here and listening to this testimony. I think you've heard kind of conclusively where this audience

stands, where this city stands, where this District 18, 29, 33, and 10 stand as it relates to redistricting.

We don't want any redistricting. We are comfortable with the lines as they are drawn. We don't want to make a decision on any new map that we have not even seen. We don't want to do it within 30 days. We don't want redistricting in our community. We are built on a community that has seen Barbara Jordan rise to a position of prominence that has made the 18th Congressional District something to be proud of.

I come from a small community called Pleasantville. Many of the people from Pleasantville are here. I've seen members of our guild that are here. I've seen members of the Urban League Young Professionals that are here. Many of those folks have lived in Pleasantville.

When Pleasantville was formed, we didn't have streetlights. We didn't have a bus stop that came to that community. But thanks to the 18th Congressional District and Barbara Jordan, she was able to work with people like Judson Robinson, Junior, who was the first African American to be elected to Houston City Council since reconstruction.

But it took people working together, people who had common likeness, common causes, common experiences, that could understand why it was important to have streetlights in a community like Pleasantville when our current council member didn't think that was important. When our current council member didn't think it was important that we have a bus line so that people could get to work. When our current council member didn't think it was important that we have a healthcare center in the neighborhood that we could get to when we need it.

You see, it takes experiencing and walking in the shoes of others that you have common ground with to appreciate where they come from, to see things through their lens. I hope that you, as our leaders, will put yourselves in the shoes of others, put yourselves into the shoes of the people that are (audio cut out) things through our lens. It's fair. It's important, and that's what we elected you to do. Thank you for your time.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Would the panel remain right there for a moment.

Chair calls Lucy Reyna. Is Lucy Reyna here? Chair will show Lucy Reyna registered to testify on behalf of herself on the revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying.

Chair calls Demethra Orion. Demethra Orion. Chair will show Demethra Orion registered to testify on behalf of herself on the revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying.

Members, any questions for the members of this panel? Chair hears none.

Thank you for your testimony. The panel is excused.

CARMELA WALKER: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Chair call our next panel - Kia Baptist, Manuel Cohen, Bill Robinson, and Patrick Logan. Please make your way up to the front.

The next panel after that, which we'll do -- we'll do one more after this next one, and then we'll take another little break - Andrea Hubert, Lisa Hunt, Makia Thomas, and Stephanie Foy. Please be ready.

Okay. Chair calls Patrick Logan. Is Patrick Logan here?

PATRICK LOGAN: Yes, I'm here.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Okay. I show you registered to testify as Patrick Logan on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

PATRICK LOGAN: That is correct.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

PATRICK LOGAN: Thank you for the opportunity to testify in front of this hearing committee. My name is Patrick Logan. I'm a U.S. Navy veteran who served on two different aircraft carriers. So if I can't hear some of your responses, it's probably because of jets and flight decks and noises and other stuff.

Anyway, I live in Congressional District 18 in an unincorporated neighborhood. My neighborhood, Greenwood Forest, has almost 1600 families. And that neighborhood also, is almost 50 years old. It's so large that we're split into two different precincts. However, we're a single community. As a member of the Greenwood Forest Social Club, I help plan events for the entire neighborhood.

We have an Easter egg hunt for the children with family movie night, family game night.

And on the 4th of July, we have a parade that stretches almost a mile long that goes down the boulevard that divides the two precincts, and the streets are lined with neighborhood people. We had over 1000 people this year.

Our swim team is also comprised solely of residents at Greenwood Forest and competes regionally, and recently won the district championship.

The reason I'm here is, I'm concerned about this process because we don't know what the new districting map will be. If you draw a new congressional map, you need to ensure you do not divide communities such as mine.

I'm also testifying because I've reviewed the more than 40 different redistricting maps that have been proposed. They appear to have one thing in common. The people who drew these maps have absolutely no understanding of the Texas Constitution. Every map that I've reviewed is complete garbage and is openly violating Section 26 of the Texas Constitution.

Knowing these proposals will not pass even the weakest of court challenges. I have to ask, why did she even propose these ridiculous maps in the

first place? You know, your policies are unpopular. You know your proposals are unfair, and you know you'll be swept from power if you do not rig the vote.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

PATRICK LOGAN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Chair calls Manuel Cohen. I show you registered to testify as Manuel Cohen on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

MANUEL COHEN: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

MANUEL COHEN: My name is Manuel Cohen. I'm a longtime resident of Congressional District 9, represented by the Honorable Al Green. In my first election that I ever voted for, 2024, I already knew I was going to be represented in a gerrymandered district. That's been the history of this state as long as I know is gerrymandering, gerrymandering, gerrymandering. But even still, the people of the 9th District chose to elect someone that represented them.

These future maps are going to divide our community so badly that we will no longer have a fair representation in Congress. We are going to be deprived of our vote simply because Texas Republicans want to defend a pedophile. This is it. It's plain and simple. The man in office right now was Jeffrey Epstein's best friend. And the only way to protect him from any congressional subpoenas is if we put more Republicans in Congress.

I don't know why you would seek to defend a pedophile, sir. It doesn't make any sense. You are the party of supposed family values. I don't think of family values as being a pedophile. I want to make an appeal to you to at least try to draw a fair map. You know it's possible. I know all of you on this committee have the power to do so. Draw a fair map that repudiates this disgusting criminal in the White House and actually represents Texas voters.

To the Democrats in this committee, you all have said for a long time that every option is on the table. I want to make it clear to you, that should include breaking the quorum. When the time comes, you all need to be prepared to break the quorum so that way you defend our voices in Congress.

We understand that the Republicans here are going to do everything in their capacity to gerrymander the state more and more, and you all are in the minority. The one thing that you all have left is to break that quorum. Please, for the state, break the quorum and actually force the Republicans to create a map that represents us.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Chair calls Kia Baptist. I show you registered to testify as Kia Baptist on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

KIA BAPTIST: That's correct.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

KIA BAPTIST: My name is Kia Baptist, and you're probably looking at me thinking, she's one in a long line of people who've come up here and sat in this room all day, some of us from very early to say what needs to be said. A lot -- I have a script.

A lot of it has already been said. Who am I? I'm not a politician. I am the hope and the dream of people who are named in my family and ancestors I don't even know.

I think it is very important for you to understand, because I suspect a whole lot of you all are sitting at your house frustrated at the news every day the same way that I am, the same way that a lot of us are, and wondering when on earth is somebody going to not be afraid of speaking truth to power and speaking truth to anarchy and oligarchy. AAnd this is not an autocracy.

We are a democratic republic. That means, no oligarchy, no kings, no people who just said, I want five more seats, and I want Texas to go get them. Now I have lived in Texas for 20 plus years, and not one of those years has any Texan decided that they were going to go along to get along if they didn't agree with what was going on. Why are we doing it now? Why now?

It used to be that bipartisanship was something that was lauded. People were elected because they were able to work across the aisles and work together to see that the right things were done. Where did that go? We are relying on you all to make sure that that happens. Don't give in to fear. They are trying to --

We know why we're here. I know you said -- we've asked the question. We know why we're

here. Because the person in the White House has said this is what he wants, and he's going to figure out how to get it from our governor. And if the governor is not going to stand up for us, darn it, I expect for you to. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Chair calls Bill Robinson. Is Bill Robinson here? Chair will show Bill Robinson registered to testify on behalf of himself on the revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying.

Members, questions for the panel?

Chair recognizes Vice Chair Rosenthal to question the panel.

VICE CHAIR ROSENTHAL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ms. Kia, thank you for being here today. Sometimes you just walk out of a neighborhood and into a room like this with 1000 of your dear friends and make a difference, and my dear, you have made a difference there. A lot of people have said a lot of powerful things in this room. Nobody said it as clearly and concisely as you did right now. So thank you for bringing that.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Members, any other questions for the members of this panel?

Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony. The panel is excused.

Chair will call up our next panel - Stephanie Foy, Makia Thomas, Lisa Hunt, and Andrea Hubert. When we're done with this panel, of course, we'll take a brief break.

And just a reminder, Crystal Jordan, we're still looking for you. Got your credit card up here. Promise not to -- not to do anything with it, but if you wouldn't mind coming to get it. If not, it's going to go to the police. I think that's right. Yes.

All right. Ma'am, what's your name on the end?

LISA HUNT: I'm Reverend Lisa Hunt.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Lisa Hunt. Chair calls Lisa Hunt. I show you registered to testify as Lisa Hunt on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

LISA HUNT: Yes, that's correct.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

LISA HUNT: Thank you. Hello, members of the committee and Mr. Chair. Thank you for coming to Houston in person to hear our remarks. My name is Lisa Hunt. I'm a resident of House District 29, an Episcopal priest, and a target of this rushed gerrymandering effort.

In the biblical book of Proverbs, we find, where there is no vision, the people perish, but those that keep the law are happy. The effort to disappear thousands of Texas voters of color by redrawing congressional districts is a cynical attempt to undermine any possibility of a vision for the common good of our state and our nation.

Income inequality, lack of access to healthcare, hunger, cancer clusters, housing shortages, fear of immigration raids, and food deserts rack my community. My neighbors and I do not have a million dollars to contribute to your election campaigns, but we do have a vote, if you will let us exercise it.

Texas has one of the lowest rates of voting in the nation. Voter apathy and disengagement is one result of the current and historic gerrymandering and stems from the experience that our votes don't make a difference. The perception is

that you, our elected leaders, only represent the rich and powerful business interests of this state and country.

Now, I want to believe that you are capable of casting a vision of a more just Texas, where all voters have access to the polls, where minorities are represented in elected office, and where the needs of our citizens take precedence over the lust for ever greater power. We have major issues to address, and we need leaders like you who reflect the experience of all of us.

I urge you to reject this immoral effort and to -- this immortal -- immoral effort to further marginalize my community and others like it. Don't even consider this redistricting effort. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Ma'am, what's your name? What's your name?

MAKIA THOMAS: Makia Thomas.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Okay. Makia, we're going to need you to fill out -- to sign your witness information form. She's going to bring that to you real quick.

MAKIA THOMAS: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: While she's doing that, I'm going to go ahead and call the other two who -- unless they're Casper, the Friendly Ghost, are not here.

Stephanie Foy. Stephanie Foy. Chair will show Stephanie Foy registered to testify on behalf of herself on the revised congressional districting plan but not testifying.

Chair will call Andrea Hubert. Andrea Hubert. Chair will show Andrea Hubert registered to testify on behalf of herself on the revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying.

Okay. Let that, YF, as it's commonly known, make its way back up here. I show you registered to testify as Makia Thomas on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional district plan. Is that correct?

MAKIA THOMAS: Yes. It's Makia Thomas.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Makia, Makia.

MAKIA THOMAS: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: I see it's an A. Okay. I thought it was an E. My apologies. Makia, please give us your testimony.

MAKIA THOMAS: All right. Thank you. Good afternoon, Chairs and committee members. My name is Makia Thomas, and I'm a proud resident of Congressional District 9. I'm here to speak about a critical issue impacting the democratic integrity of our state. The stark disparity between Texas's diverse population and composition of its congressional delegation.

This isn't a partisan debate. It's a fundamental fight for political power in ensuring who gets to wield it. Texas is a vibrant, diverse state where 60 percent of our population identifies as people of color, yet our congressional delegation only reflects 34 percent. This imbalance isn't an accident. It's a direct consequence of redistricting process that appears to employ racial discrimination to dilute the voice and power of communities of color.

Our district should be designed to elect candidates who genuinely reflect the rich diversity of our state. Ultimately, we need representation that is truly responsive to the needs of all Texans, not just a wealthy or special interest groups. When districts reflect our diversity, our government can effectively address the real problems

faced by ordinary people, affordable housing, food access, living wages, quality public schools, and accessible healthcare.

Our election should amplify the voices of all citizens, not just a select few. In closing, I hope this is the first of many opportunities for the community to provide testimony on this issue. We currently do not have any maps to respond to, and we will need an opportunity to do so. Thank you for your time today, committee members.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony. Members, any questions for the members of this panel? Chair hears none.

Thank you for your testimony. The panel is excused.

At this time, we're going to take a brief break for our wonderful court reporter and for the members of the public in this room. The House --

Chair recognizes Mr. Rosenthal for what purpose?

VICE CHAIR ROSENTHAL: Mr. Vasut, quick question for the Chair.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: State your question.

VICE CHAIR ROSENTHAL: How much time do we have left for public testimony?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: I am pausing the timer right now. We have used 3 hours and 14 minutes.

VICE CHAIR ROSENTHAL: And so that leaves?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: One hour and 46 minutes.

VICE CHAIR ROSENTHAL: Okay. Very good. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you. Members, any other? Okay.

With that, the House Select Committee on Congressional Redistricting will stand at ease for five minutes.

(Recess taken)

The time is 3:48, and the House Select Committee on Congressional Redistricting will come back to order. The Chair will show Representative Dutton up here on the dais with us today.

REPRESENTATIVE DUTTON: Now you're in trouble.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Now you're in the record, Harold. And all as we left timer now at 3

hours, 14 minutes, and 8 seconds. What's our next chapter? Okay. I'm going to call up four people, and then I'm going to read the names of four people if those would be on deck.

So Chair is going to call up Dana Foy, Natalie King, Alan Foster, and Darice Huyen. That will be our next panel.

And then if we can have Vienna Huynh, Bill Kelly, Robert Slater, and Charity Flores available to be for our next panel. So be ready. So Darice Nguyen, Alan Foster, Natalie King, and Dana Foy. And I won't start the timer until we get that first panel up here.

All right. We're going to go ahead and get started on the timer here.

Chair calls Darice Nguyen. Darice Nguyen. Chair will show Darius Nguyen registered to testify on behalf of himself on the revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying.

Chair calls Alan Foster. Alan Foster. Chair shows Alan Foster registered to testify on the revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying.

Chair calls Natalie King. Natalie King. Chair shows Natalie King registered to testify

on behalf of herself on the revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying.

Chair calls Dana Foy. Dana Foy. Chair shows Dana Foy registered to testify on behalf of herself on the revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying. That was a fast panel.

All right. Chair calls up our next panel - Vienna Huynh, Bill Kelly, Robert Slater, and Charity Flores. Please make your way up to those seats.

The next four, please be ready - Jessica Campos, Carrie White, Misha Lesley Burkins, and Patty Cwacinski. I'd apologize if I mispronounced any name.

Okay. Let's take it. Sir, on the right over here. What's your name?

ROBERT SLATER: Oh, Robert Slater.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Robert Slater. Okay. Chair calls Robert Slater. I show you registered to testify as Robert Slater on behalf of the Culture Commission Coalition on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

ROBERT SLATER: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

ROBERT SLATER: Thank you for having us. With all due respect, I kind of find it very audacious, Mr. Chairman, for you guys to have this hearing in an underrepresented district as District 18, underfunded. And with all due respect you have, the great Mrs. Thomas -- Thomas next to you, that for you not to have a lot of information for the people, is just unsatisfactory, respectfully.

I do believe that it's not about what we're saying, but what is not being said here. I do believe that this hearing is a mere notion for future legal challenges, if you will, so you can say that you have the input of the community. I want to say also as a candidate of District 18 running, that it is fair to say that when we have this special election in November 4th and then possibly a runoff in January, and then the primary right there in March, this new map that may probably going to go in effect for March primary (indiscernible) these district maps are only going to have two months to really know their candidate of choice. And so not only are we without representation for a year, it's possible that another year may pass before you really have true representation.

We are undoing, we are in trouble, and we have been hurting. We saw what happened with FEMA as the Culture Commission, we have mobilized privately to get funding and trucks, and food prepared because we just can't trust FEMA to come in, or the government, or you.

With all due respect, when Donald Trump called the Secretary of State in Georgia, I believe, and asked for 11,001 votes to -- for election interference, that Secretary of State stood ground, and he was a Republican.

Now that he's not running for re-election, he's calling for a special election per se, of interference on behalf of our congressional racists. And I ask that you stand forth also, not only is this racially motivated, it also seems that it's election interference. So please have the gall and the spine to stand forward and represent Texas. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Chair calls Bill Kelly. I show you registered to testify as Bill Kelly on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

BILL KELLY: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

BILL KELLY: Thank you to the members of the Select Committee on redistricting for being here today. My name is Bill Kelly. I'm a precinct chair for Precinct 0001 here in Houston's first ward. And as others have rightly stated, this December will mark a full year of not having a congressional representative with the deaths of Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee and Congressman Sylvester Turner.

During this time, Congress has passed significant national legislation, including changes to federal healthcare. One of the provisions passed will require re-enrollment in Medicaid every six months. The last recorded words of Congressman Sylvester Turner were, "Don't mess with Medicaid." We have seen the harm this policy caused in Texas when our state adopted that six-month enrollment policy for CHIP back in 2003.

Then through Representative Turner's House Bill 109, Texas repealed it. Representative Guillen, you are a co-author of that bill. Representative Geren, you voted for it, as did 126 members of the Texas House. I say this to remind

members of the majority on this committee how you would stop when Sylvester Turner stood up on the House floor. You would listen to what he had to say because you knew who he represented. You were his friends, not his work colleagues, his friends.

Representative Hunter, you are his classmate. I know how close you were.

I am asking you today to stop and listen to what your friend would be saying right now. He would take out his abacus and say you cannot go to one district without pulling from another.

Running for Congress, he put on his signs, the historic 18th Congressional District, because of the pride that African Americans felt for the seat of Barbara Jordan and Mickey Leland. The elimination of districts where black and brown residents have the chance to elect a representative of their choice is both undemocratic and disrespectful.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please complete your testimony.

BILL KELLY: Today. We are meeting at the same university that Mayor Turner graduated from, and where he learned so much. I hope you learn something here today. Tearing apart minority

districts is wrong and certainly something that your friend Sylvester Turner would speak against. I ask you, his friends, to stop.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

The panelists will stay right there. Chair calls Vienna, H-u-y-n-h. Are you here?

Oh, hang on, panel. One sec. One sec. I show Vienna Huynh registered to testify on behalf of herself on the revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying.

Chair calls Charity Flores. Is Charity Flores here? Chair will show Charity Flores registered to testify on behalf of the Culture Commission Coalition but not testifying actually. In her defense, she did check the box not to testify, so that's just fine.

Okay. Members, any questions for this panel?

Chair recognizes Representative Jones to question the panel.

REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Yes. Comment to one of the speakers.

Mr. Kelly, I just want to tell you that I think you spoke very well to explain why

coalitions matter. And as a black person in CD 18 and the state representative for House District 147, I appreciate the allyship that you just showed to know your history, which is not like bad, but to remind people who may not receive it from us about why CD 18 and why not having a representative is so important. So thank you so very much.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Members, any other questions for the members of this panel?

Chair hears none. Thank you for your testimony. The panel is excused.

Chair calls up our next panel = Patty Cwacinski, Misha Leslie Burkins, Carrie White, Jessica Campos.

Our next panel is going to be Melissa Allala, Michelle Ebrahimi, Mary Koch, and Alexia Hodge. Please be ready.

Ma'am, what's your testimony? You might be up by yourself.

MISHA BURKINS: Okay then. Well, I am Misha Leslie Burkins.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Okay.

MISHA BURKINS: Misha Leslie Birkins.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: All right. I show you registered to testify as Misha Leslie Burkins on

behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan? Is that correct?

MISHA BURKINS: That is correct.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

MISHA BURKINS: Thank you for recognizing me. I am Misha Leslie Burkins, a lifetime resident of the 18th Congressional District, a member of the Good Hope Missionary Baptist Church, the 153-year-old historic church in this district, and the home of Barbara Jordan. I'm also a 1993 graduate of the University of Texas at Austin, as well as my husband and my daughter. We are lifelong Texans, and we are standing here today asking you to not redistrict.

It was said earlier that a majority of minorities voted in the last election for the Republican who was running. And that may be true. However, the 18th Congressional District did not. And so we're not talking about statewide elections. What we're talking about are our representatives in Congress who are representing people who have common interests.

We've been here a long time, and I know many of you are tired. But I'm asking you to

please, as, Texans, stand up for everyone in Texas, regardless of their political party, their political affiliation, whether they are Democratic, Republican voters, independent voters, or not voting at all because they're fed up with this system. Stand up for Texans and say no to the power grab, the racially motivated, racist power grab that's coming from the White House. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Chair calls -- let me ask real quick. Members, any questions for this witness?

Chair hears none. The witness is accused. Thank you, ma'am.

Chair calls Patty Cwacinski. Patty Cwacinski. Chair shows Patty Cwacinski registered to testify on behalf of herself on the revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying.

Chair calls Jessica Campos. Jessica Campos. Chair will show Jessica Campos registered to testify on behalf of herself on the revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying.

Chair calls Carrie White. Carrie White. Chair shows Carrie White registered to

testify on behalf of herself on the revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying.

Chair is going to call our next panel - Alexia Hodge, Mary Koch, Michelle Ebrahimi, Melissa Allala.

For our next panel, it's going to be Roy Sanchez, Amethyst James Nwaonicha. Where's -- I was just talking to Amethyst. We got you in. Andreina Keller and Julie Marinucci. Please be ready. Okay.

Ma'am, what's your name on the end?

ALEXIA HODGE: Alexia Hodge.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: All right. I show you registered to testify as Alexia Hodge on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

ALEXIA HODGE: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

ALEXIA HODGE: Of course. Thank you for being here. My full name is Alexia Sabine Hodge, and I'm a resident of Houston. I'm here to argue for fair district maps.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Ma'am, if you get closer to the mic, please.

ALEXIA HODGE: Of course. Hi.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: We can hear you now. Thank you. Please continue.

ALEXIA HODGE: Okay, great. I'm here to argue for fair district maps. I have amended my statement to reflect the crowd is still waiting and be brief. I implore this committee to schedule future hearings in districts you all propose to change when there are maps to see so constituents may speak again.

Whatever the proposed maps look like, this committee is likely planning for Houston districts, including my district, CD 29, to be gerrymandered and have less political power in a clear violation of the Voting Rights Act.

I ask you to adhere to the Voting Rights Act because if not, you're only inviting more litigation against your own drawn districts, costing Texan taxpayers money and our fair representation. All of this money and time should go to the needs of constituents, and we do not need this. Thank you for your time.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Chair calls Mary Koch.

MARY KOCH: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: I show you registered to testify as Mary Koch on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional districting plan. Is that correct?

MARY KOCH: Yes. Except I pronounce my name Koch, Mary Koch.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Koch. I apologize for that. Mary Koch.

MARY KOCH: It's all right.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Well, Ms. Koch, if you wouldn't mind, give us your testimony.

MARY KOCH: Yes. I'm glad to be here, and thank you for being here. I'm a resident of Houston for about 30 years. And as you may notice, I'm an old white woman, and I am a proud constituent of District 9. I've been well represented by Representative Al Green.

A lot of what I have in this piece of paper has already been said. So my first statement is going to be to answer the Chairman's question. We are here -- or a statement. We're here to hear what you have to say. I'm here to say, don't do redistricting. It's not necessary. Nobody except President Trump and Governor Abbott have asked for

it. I haven't seen an upsurge in any journal, newspaper reporting that says, please redistrict this year. So please don't do that.

Secondly, while you're taking the time, all of you here for 4, 5, 6 hours, you travelled, we'll say, just 12 hours each, in terms of traveling, listening, and going home. How much time have you spent where you could be working on flood mitigation, climate control?

This big bill that was passed has taken away healthcare and food for millions of Texans, mostly children. We need your help on that. We need your attention. Texas has resources. We have gaps to fill.

I don't know about your churches. My church is working hard to raise money to get to school children this summer and also school children next year when they go back to school, and there is no -- or there is far less funded food programs for them. We need your help on that kind of stuff.

This, in my opinion, is a waste of your time, not only my time. I mean, I've been here since 9 o'clock this morning. We need you working on our priorities, please. Just a few other things I want to say.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please finish your testimony briefly.

MARY KOCH: Okay. Basically, we cannot unsee what we have seen, nor can we unhear what we have heard. This effort to redistrict this year is a blatant power grab by President Trump and supported by Governor Abbott. Please do not do it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

What's your name?

MELISSA ALLALA: Melissa Allala.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Okay. I show you registered to testify as Michelle -- Melissa Allala?

MELISSA ALLALA: Allala.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Allala. Okay.

MELISSA ALLALA: The double l makes a y?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: No. I got you. And I show you registered to testify on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

MELISSA ALLALA: Correct.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

MELISSA ALLALA: Thank you. Good afternoon, Chair and committee members. My name is Melissa Allala. And I am a proud constituent of Congresswoman Sylvia Garcia in Congressional District 29, Senator Carol Alvarado in Senate District 6, and State Representative Armando Wally in House District 140.

I am submitting this testimony to strongly oppose any attempt by the Texas legislature to redraw congressional district maps at this time. There is no legal demographic or constitutional justification for redistricting before the next decennial census. Any efforts to reopen or revise the maps, particularly outside the normal 10-year cycle, raises serious concerns and political motivations and the potential for violation of this vote -- the Voting Rights Act, especially Section 2, which prohibits actions that dilute the voting strengths of communities of color.

As a former senior partnership specialist for the U.S. Census Bureau during the 2020 census, I witnessed firsthand how fear-based political messaging and disinformation caused real harm in undercounted and historically marginalized communities. Those same communities, Latino, Black,

Asian, and immigrant populations across Texas, are now at risk of being further silenced if this legislature chooses to move forward with redistricting that is not mandated by severe population shifts or legal necessity.

I'd like to note that the same president who was fearmongering in 2020 is the same one trying to influence the governor and those who support him to gerrymander these congressional districts.

Let me be clear. Revisiting the maps now under the guise of legislative convenience or partisan interest is both unnecessary and dangerous. It would undermine public trust, invite costly legal challenges on top of the already costly special session, and erode the foundational principle of equal representation.

CD 29 and other districts with strong cultural, geographic, and community cohesion must not be used as bargaining chips for political gain.

I urge this committee not only to reject any proposed mass, but to refuse to entertain the process all together. This is not the time for redistricting. It is time to protect democracy, honor the integrity of the 2020 census data, as many

of us worked so hard to ensure that all work counted, so funding could go into their communities, and ensure that every Texas -- Texan's voice remains fairly represented.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please complete your testimony.

MELISSA ALLALA: Please include my testimony in the official record. Thank you for your attention in this vital matter.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Panel, stay right there.

Chair will call Michelle Ebrahimi. Michelle Ebrahimi, I show she registered to testify on behalf of herself on revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying.

Members, any questions for the members of this panel? Chair hears none.

Thank you for your testimony. The panel is excused.

Chair calls Roy Sanchez, Amethyst James Nwaonicha, Andreina Keller, and Julie Marinucci.

While they're making their way up here, our next panel, so be ready, will be Kiran

Pashikanti, Tanya Rollins, Latoya Jarrett, and Michael Knight. Please be ready.

Mr. Sanchez, we'll talk with -- start with you. I show you registered to testify as Roy Sanchez on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

ROY SANCHEZ: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

ROY SANCHEZ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and the committee. I know it's been a long day. I'm kind of hungry. I haven't eaten. But anyway, my name is Roy Sanchez. I'm a proud member of HOPE AFSCME Local 123. And I'm a resident and voter in Congressional District 29.

I just want to let you know that I'm against past and future gerrymandering. As we discussed -- as we discussed redistricting, shouldn't we be more focused on life safety issues that could have saved those souls on the Guadalupe River and any future disasters?

I strongly encourage you to consider the potential impact on communities of color. Can we prioritize transparency, inclusivity by sharing maps and engaging in a collaborative discussion? We don't

have any maps, right. By doing so, we can ensure that the voices of all constituents are heard and valued.

Currently, we have a Congresswoman Garcia who is a huge part of our community. Everybody respects her. She's everywhere in our community. So -- I'm sorry. By focusing the -- what we need to do is build a safer and more equitable future for all Texans. As a community, we have a unique opportunity to shape our collective future. I urge you to preserve the integrity of the congressional districts and protect the voting rights of all Texans regardless of race, ethnicity.

Together, we can create a brighter future for our state and uphold the principles of democracy. One thing I remember is Abe Lincoln mentioned that the government is of the people by the people for the people. And I'll add this part. It's not for a political party. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Chair calls Amythest James. Now, how do I pronounce your last name?

AMETHYST NWAONICHA: Nwaonicha.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Perfect. I show you registered to testify on behalf of yourself --

AMETHYST NWAONICHA: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: -- on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

AMETHYST NWAONICHA: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

AMETHYST NWAONICHA: Okay. So my name is Amethyst James Nwaonicha, and I live in Congressional District 7, which borders CD 9. I serve on the executive board of HOPE AFSCME Local 123. That's the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees. The union representing the frontline public workers across Houston - 311 operators, solid waste collectors, nurses, custodians, park rangers, librarians, and so many more who keep this city functioning every day.

I'm here because what happens in CD 9 doesn't just stay in CD 9. These proposed redistricting efforts would directly impact communities like mine, working-class black, brown, and immigrant neighborhoods that share services, schools, and issues. When communities are represented -- are represented by electeds who are

from the community and who are chosen by the voters like Congressman Al Green, who spent his time in office to address issues of our communities. Who is -- who is -- I'm sorry about that. Who is -- who responds to the community needs.

We need -- we in the community feel heard and seen when we have members like this who represent us. My union brothers and sisters and siblings, many of whom live or work in CD 9, deserve to have a representative who understands their value and defends their dignity. Without seeing these proposed redistricted maps, communities could be broken up. Redrawing this district in a way that divides our people and weakens our voices does real harm.

In conclusion, I urge this committee and all lawmakers to reject any map that weakens the power of communities of color or undermines the right to fair representation. Texas belongs to all of us, and the maps we draw must reflect diversity, dignity, and democratic voice of every Texan.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Ma'am, what's your name?

ANDREINA KELLER: Andreina Keller.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Okay. Chair calls Andreina Keller. I show you register to testify on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

ANDREINA KELLER: That is correct.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

ANDREINA KELLER: Hi. My name is Andreina Keller, and I live in Texas 18th Congressional District. This is my first time testifying for anything, and I'm really nervous. But there's nowhere else I'd rather be today.

I was born and raised in Texas. Growing up like in junior high school, one of my favorite topics was Texas history, and I used to love to spit out little Texas facts like, did you know that the word Texas comes from the indigenous word that means friend? I believe that name stuck for a reason, that Texans do good by one another. That we stood up for what is right, even when it was hard. That is the Texas I believe in, but that is not the Texas I see before me.

The nearly 800,000 people of the Texas 18th, including myself, have been without a voice, without a friend in Congress. Governor Abbott could

have called a special election much sooner, but he didn't, and now we have no one to speak for us on critical legislation or advocate for us in times like this hurricane season. That isn't just a delay. That's a denial, and it's not very friendly.

Now you have been asked to redraw our congressional maps mid-decade, which will further silence my district and other communities of color as part of an unfair, undemocratic power grab. That is not Texas.

Texans deserve a process that honors us, and that means a transparent process with ample opportunity for community input and also an independent redistricting commission and fair maps that reflect all Texans, including communities of color, who make up 60 percent of our state. Texas should be drawing more districts that empower a community of color -- communities of color, not fewer. Every Texan's voice matters, and it should count equally. Thank you for your time and for choosing to be a friend to all Texans and a defender of democracy.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Panel, stay right there.

Chair calls Julie Marinucci. Julie Marinucci. Chair will show her registered to testify on behalf of herself on revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying.

Members, any questions for the members of this panel? Chair hears none.

Thank you for your testimony. The panel is excused.

Chair calls Michael Knight, Latoya Jarrett, Tanya Rollins, and Kiran Pashikanti. Please come up to the front.

Our next panel is going to be Elizabeth Winston Jones, Ayaan Melodina, Corisha Rogers, and Deddrick Wilmer. Please be ready.

Okay. I show you registered to testify as Kiran Pashikanti on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

KIRAN PASHIKANTI: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

KIRAN PASHIKANTI: Thank you for accepting my testimony. I've been sitting here since about 10:00 this morning, and wondering why we're here, as most of this room is. And I think the

simple -- the answer is very simple. It's because congressional Republicans are afraid. They're afraid of their own actions and want Texas to help them blunt the consequences of their actions.

If Republicans are so proud of their historic victory with minority voters in 2024, why does anything need to change? Certainly, National Republicans need no help with their -- with all their historic success, unless they think that cheating is the only way that they can retain their majority.

Fair redistricting must be transparent, nonpartisan, and must comply with the Voting -- Voting Rights Act, to protect communities of color from being split apart and packed into districts to minimize their influence.

The right to vote is sacred, and when maps are drawn to favor one party or to silence certain voters, it undermines our trust in elections. I urge those responsible for redistricting to prioritize fairness, not political gain, hold public hearings with meaningful community input, use independent commissions to reduce gerrymandering, and ensure the maps reflect the true diversity of Texas. Our state is growing because of minority communities. Their voices must be heard, not erased. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

And what's your name?

AYAAN MOLEDINA: Ayaan Moledina.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Okay. Ayaan, I do not have you -- go ahead and take it in. Chair calls Ayaan Moledina. I show you registered to testify on behalf of Students Engaged in Advancing Texas and yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

AYAAN MOLEDINA: That's correct, sir.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

AYAAN MOLEDINA: Good afternoon. My name is Ayaan Moledina, and I'm a 16-year-old high school sophomore from Austin. I'm extremely concerned that the legislature is choosing to redraw our congressional maps after just a few years using the same census as before. Texas students who aren't of voting age also deserve accurate representatives who are truly representative of the community in which they come from. That means similar identities, similar values, and people who will listen to their constituents, no matter if they agree with you 100 percent or not.

My concern is that when we start to unnecessarily redraw maps that are already drawn in favor of one side, we are going to end up with candidates who are picked by those who draw the maps and feel that they don't have to conserve their constituents at all. These congressional representatives are in charge of case work to ensure that the needs of their citizens are met, not just on policy issues but on non-partisan cases involving federal agencies.

When I worked in the district office for my congressman, I received calls from people desperate to get their passports expedited, to visit dying relatives, or to be present for the birth of a grandchild. That's the kind of work congressional offices do every day - case work that doesn't depend on politics, only on compassion. But if we elect officials who feel invincible because of unfair maps, what happens to those families when their representative just doesn't care to help?

As Texans, we believe in fair play and doing what's right, not just what's politically convenient. I urge you to uphold your duty to all Texans, especially the next generation of voters like myself. Redrawing maps without updated census data

undermines the principle of equal representation guaranteed by the Constitution and threatens compliance with the Voting Rights Act. Any good political party would want more seats in Congress, especially with the slim majority now, but America is a democracy.

Backroom dealings and dirty politics are not how we achieve these goals. Hard work and winning over voters in non-politically drawn districts is the way to ensure that. I respectfully urge you to vote against any attempts to redraw the congressional districts outside of the regular decennial process is guided by the U.S. census. We have to keep the fire of democracy alive, not let it blow out. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Chair calls Michael Knight. I show you registered to testify as Michael Knight on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

MICHAEL KNIGHT: Yes, sir. Please give us your testimony.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice Chairman, and members of the

committee. I really appreciate you guys giving up your Saturday to perform this additional service. I'm a Houston native. I'm a lifelong Republican. I'm a business owner, and I'm a leader of my community. I reside in House District 38.

My message today is that I care far more about protecting the cohesiveness of my community and it being properly represented than I do about trying to marginalize anyone I might disagree with, so that one party or another can exert disproportionate influence. And I have a solution to propose to you.

I am proud to live in one of the most diverse cities in America. My neighbors and I may have diverse ideologies, but we are all neighbors. And as soon as you try to predict who might vote for whom and attempt to jigger districts along those lines, you defy common sense, encourage divisiveness, and erode the foundations that make our country strong.

I am tired of gerrymandering at all political levels, and it needs to stop. We'd all do well to take a lesson from bees, arguably one of the most successful species on earth. There's a reason their hives are arranged in neat little hexagons.

The further you get from round, the less efficient you are. Only circles don't pack well, so the hexagon is the best possible compromise. I always tell my managers, when in doubt, do the math. And I'm sure the engineers among you will appreciate this.

When you next take up redistricting, I propose you establish a rule that the perimeter of any district not exceed the square root of its area by more than a factor of five. Now I know that's a little wonky, but if anyone is wondering, the ratio for a perfect circle is 3.54, for a hexagon is 3.72. The closer you get to those numbers, the better. For some of the gerrymandered districts we have today is probably 15 or more. Monkey around with this limit all you want. But if it goes beyond five, you best have a good reason for it, and it better not have anything to do with how much or how little anyone resembles you or how you think they will vote.

Just as bees instinctively build efficiently for the health of the hive, democracies function best when political boundaries are drawn with the health of the electorate in mind. If you want to make the world better, make sure our perimeters aren't longer than the folks in the area

inside can make sense of, benefit from, or support. Better symmetry and simplicity will absolutely lead to better outcomes for everyone. Please keep this in mind as you consider redistricting. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Chair calls Latoya Jarrett. No. Latoya Jarrett.

TANYA ROLLINS: Tanya Rollins.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Chair shows Latoya Jarrett was registered to testify on behalf of herself on revised congressional redistricting plan but did not testify.

Chair calls Tanya Rollins. Ms. Rollins, I show you registered to testify on behalf of yourself --

TANYA ROLLINS: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: -- on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

TANYA ROLLINS: That's correct.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

TANYA ROLLINS: Sure. My name is Tonya Rollins. I am the daughter of a retired sergeant -- Army Sergeant Major. I am the daughter

of a retired civil servant, and I myself am a retired state employee. I've been taught to respect the government. I've been taught to respect the flag. I'm sitting here today because most importantly, I've been taught to do what is right, and I question what is being -- what is going on currently.

On July 12, 2025, the State filed the State's defendant's (audio cut out) Western District of Texas El Paso Division in the League of United Latin American Citizens et al., plaintiffs v. Greg Abbott et al., defendants. This is a direct quote from the filing. "The Texas legislature did not racially discriminate in drawing the current congressional electoral districts full stop." This statement is consistent with Texas's assertions in previous lawsuits that Texas redistricting actions are race blind. Yet Governor Abbott added redistricting to the special session, essentially contradicting previous race blind assertions.

The only thing that appears to have changed in the State's apparent desire is the State's apparent desire to act as a co-conspirator in the current federal administration's power grab. Or the State is now admitting that black and brown communities have, in fact, been disenfranchised in

the voter process. So here we are, participating in hearings under the guise of fairness, participating in hearings without published drafts of the proposed lines, limiting our ability to craft arguments based on the evidence.

Perhaps the legislator's times would be better used dealing with the infrastructure issues so that Texans can stop wondering if the power grid will hold out during winter storms and hurricanes, and making sure children don't go hungry and ensuring that state retirees get cost-of-living raises. Yes. I stuck that in there for myself.

The list would be longer, but I only have two minutes. Since it is not likely that the governor will shift focus to issues pertinent to the well-being of Texans, I'm asking that this committee to commit to holding a public hearing after the maps have been drawn but before they pass through the committee. You must also give the public a minimum of five days -- I see the red light.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please complete the testimony.

TANYA ROLLINS: -- notice and capability to review the maps before this hearing. I also want the legislators who draw the maps to

explain the rationale chosen. I like yours. Thank you. I am strongly opposed to these redistricting actions. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Members, questions for the members of this panel?

Chair recognizes Representative Rosenthal -- Vice Chair Rosenthal to question the panel.

VICE CHAIR ROSENTHAL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Michael. So as far as I know, I'm the only engineer on this panel. I'm the only mechanical engineer in the state legislature career oil field worker. My dad was a mathematician, so thanks for bringing the math. Is it your --

MICHAEL KNIGHT: Dennis Paul. Representative Paul, I believe, was an engineer.

VICE CHAIR ROSENTHAL: So he's a civil engineer? We build weapons. They build targets.

So is it your contention that -- so while I would love to use geometry, the constitutional language around redistricting says,

collect communities of common interest along geographic boundaries. Does that make sense to you?

MICHAEL KNIGHT: Certainly.

VICE CHAIR ROSENTHAL: I agree with you about the perimeter to area ratio though. We should be making these fat little blobs instead of long stringy spirally, whatever, you know. My district looks like a sea dragon. So thank you again.

MICHAEL KNIGHT: Please, thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Members, any other questions for the members of this panel? Chair hears none.

Thank you for your testimony. This panel is excused.

Chair is going to call our next panel - Corisha Rogers, Elizabeth Winston Jones, Deddrick Wilmer, and I'm going to add Sara Jacobson. Sara Jacobson, please go ahead and join them. Sara, we'll wait for you a little while. We'll do you last, so you have a little time to get over here.

Our next panel after this one's going to be Janae Branch, Arnetta Murray, Toy Halsey, and Allen Pro -- Allen Provost. Actually, Allen and Toy

are not testifying, so we're not going to call them. Let me add two more here. And Jennifer Hernandez and Richard Gilmore. You'll be on the next panel. Please be ready.

Okay. Chair calls Corisha Rogers. I show you registered to testify as Corisha Rogers on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

CORISHA ROGERS: Correct.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

CORISHA ROGERS: All right. Good evening -- good afternoon, Chairman and members of the community. My name is Corsha Rogers. I'm a lifelong Houstonian. I'm a resident of Third Ward and OST South Union. I'm a community advocate, and I'm working to build power in my district.

I'm here because the priorities of this body are completely disconnected from the reality that Texans are facing. You're holding this hearing in a district that's been left without real representation for nearly a year because of political games. And now, instead of focusing on flood recovery, housing, or the everyday needs of our communities, you're fast-tracking redistricting in

the middle of important issues we face. To us, the people, that feels intentional.

So yes, we're upset and we're ready to hold you guys accountable, because let's be honest about this, it's not about fair maps, it's about clinging to power.

Texans are tired of backroom deals and power grabs. Redrawing lines in mid-decade just because one man in Washington doesn't like the change that's coming as a result of his own doing, it's a direct -- direct threat to our democracy.

And I want to be very clear, I strongly advise against redistricting our current congressional maps unless it can be done in a truly nonpartisan matter. I was in this Capitol -- I was in the Capitol building in the 2021 and 2023 legislative sessions alongside a handful of the members of the board, and I saw firsthand how this body operates.

That's exactly why I and so many members of this district being targeted do not have confidence that this legislator will produce fair and equitable maps.

So let me be crystal clear about this. If this body chooses to ignore the will of the

people, we will use every bit of power we have to vote you out. Our power is growing block by block, voice by voice, and we'll use it to remove anyone who makes redistricting a priority over the needs of its constituents. We deserve better, and we're not going anywhere. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Chair calls Elizabeth Winston-Jones. Elizabeth Winston-Jones. Chair will show her registered to testify on behalf of herself on the revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying.

Chair calls Sara Jacobson. Sara Jacobson. Chair will show Sara Jacobson registered to testify on behalf of herself on revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying.

Chair calls Deddrick Wilmer. Mr. Wilmer, I show you registered to testify on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

DEDDRICK WILMER: That's correct.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

DEDDRICK WILMER: Good afternoon, Chairman Cody Vasut, also to Vice Chairman John Rosenthal, and members of the committee. My name is Deddrick T. Wilmer. I reside in Harris County. I'm a father, a community leader, and currently serve as director and board secretary of Harris County Municipal Utility District 248. And also, I'm a candidate for Congress for the Texas 9th District.

I'm here today because redistricting is not just about maps and math; it's about people. It's about whether we draw lines to reflect today's Texas or to protect yesterday's politics. Houston is the most diverse city in this country and the last of middle-class America. We are black. We are white. We are Hispanic. We are Asian. We are immigrants. We are working families. We are entrepreneurs, and we're everything that between, as Texans, as always Americans. We're also not confined to just the inner city anymore.

The idea that minorities and working-class voters only live in urban areas is outdated. Many now live in suburban districts in places like Katy and Cypress, which have dramatically changed their makeup. If I was running in a redistrict area that includes Katy and the Cypress-Fairbanks

independent school districts, likely voters today will be approximately 44 percent Democrat and 39 percent Republican, and 17 percent independently -- independents. Racially, that population is a 34 black and Hispanic mix combined with 24 percent white. That is a clear reflection that this is not a monolithic community, and it deserves representation that reflects its true diversity.

But redistricting has too often been used to secure seats, not serve the people. But we ignore -- ignore these Democrat shifts, we silence emerging communities and deny -- deny the voters the right to competitive and responsive representation.

I say this firmly, change is always good. Texas is evolving, so should our districts evolve as well. Representation should be based on the people, not party, but on neighborhoods, not nostalgia. I urge this committee to draw the lines that reflect who Texas truly are today, not who we were decades ago. Thank you for your time away from your families. And again, thank you for your service for this process.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Members, any questions for the members of this panel? Chair hears none.

Thank you for your testimony. The panel is excused.

Chair calls Janae Branch, Arnetta Murray, Jennifer Hernandez, and Richard Gilmore.

The next panel, be ready - Sameeha Rizvi, Carmen Maria Montiel, Nabila Mansoor, and Bernadine Gatling.

Chair calls Richard Gilmore. I show you registered to testify as Richard Gilmore on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

RICHARD GILMORE: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony

RICHARD GILMORE: Chair, members, I'm Richard Gilmore. I live here in the Second Ward in U.S. Congressional District 29. I'm fortunate to only be two miles away from this hearing. I come today to voice my opposition for this redistricting process. There's been no published maps to make comment on. It's not appropriate to now redistrict using data from the census five years ago. And most importantly, there's a gross lack of public

engagement as we rush through three public comment sessions for the entire state.

Like I said, I'm fortunate enough to be able to be here today, but those who live further out and with such short notice have no chance to ensure their voice is heard in this process. With only five hours allocated into perfect two-minute blocks, that's 150 speaking blocks. If it's allocated into perfect 32nd blocks, that's 600 speaking blocks for public comment. Houston alone has over 2 million people. Five hours of public comment from hopefully a few hundred folks is not sufficient. I'm lucky to have representatives such as Sylvia Garcia and Jolanda Jones who advocate for me and issues that are important to me. Redistricting my community will damage representation. Thank you for your time.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony. Chair calls Jennifer Hernandez. I show you registered to testify on behalf of the International Union of Printers and Allied Trades DC 10.

JENNIFER HERNANDEZ: That's Painters --

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Painters.

JENNIFER HERNANDEZ: -- and Allied Trades.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: International Union of Painters and Allied Trades, DC 10.

JENNIFER HERNANDEZ: Yes, sir. Mr. Chair, I'd also like to add to that, testifying on behalf of myself.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: And on behalf of yourself. And I show you're on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

JENNIFER HERNANDEZ: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

JENNIFER HERNANDEZ: Thank you. Good afternoon, Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee. My name is Jennifer Hernandez with the IUPAT. We represent glazers, painters, and trade show workers in Houston and throughout the state. I'm here today not just as a labor leader, but as a proud Houstonian and as a community advocate who's been on the ground walking our neighborhoods, organizing workers, and standing with families after floods, blackouts, and attacks on our rights.

Today, I speak for the working people of Houston, the backbone of this city, and I speak

out against this dangerous proposed redistricting process that threatens to divide our communities and deny us a voice.

Let's be clear, this proposed redistricting is not about fairness; it's about power. Houston has three congressional districts up for possible redrawing, and the lines being considered would fracture brown, black, and working-class neighborhoods, splitting us apart just to protect political careers that don't represent us.

People deserve to elect leaders who come from our communities, who know our schools, our streets, and our struggles not -- excuse me -- not politicians, forcibly drawn in. That's gerrymandering, and it violates the Voting Rights Act, plain and simple.

We need representatives who understand Houston because they live in Houston, because they've knocked on doors here, because they've stood in food lines during storms and marched alongside us when our rights were under attack, time and time again.

Governor Abbott is using the special session to push Trump's agenda, focusing on political control instead of recovering from catastrophic floods, funding our schools, rising housing costs,

and failing infrastructure. While Texas families are still rebuilding, our governor is proposing to redraw maps that lock us out of power. This isn't just political. It's personal. And when you silence a district, you silence its future.

And in Houston, we're not going to be silent. We take care of each other when the system fails, and we will fight for districts that keep our communities together and make sure our votes count.

Texas belongs to the people, and we demand maps and policies that reflect us, not repress us. So today, don't erase our voices. Stand with Houstonians and stand with Texas. Stand for fair maps and put Texans first. I'm a constituent of CD 18, and I don't need redistricting. I need representation. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Panel, stay right where you are.

Chair calls Arnetta Murray. I show you registered to testify as Arnetta Murray on behalf of herself on the revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying. She told me she's driving home.

Chair calls Janae Branch. Janae branch. Chair will show Janae Branch registered to testify on behalf of herself on the revised congressional redistricting plan but did not testify.

Members, questions for the members of this panel? Hearing none.

Thank you for your testimony. Panel is excused.

Chair calls Bernadine Gatling, Nabila Mansoor, Carmen Maria Montiel, and Sameeha Rizvi. That's going to be our next panel.

The one after that, please be ready - Serena Arzu, Ruben Salazar, Al Castillo and Graciela Saenz.

We'll start on this end. And what's your name, ma'am?

BERNADINE GATLING: Bernardine Gatling.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Okay. I show you registered to testify as Bernadine Gatling on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

BERNADINE GATLING: That is correct.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

BERNADINE GATLING: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair, and members of the committee. My name is Bernadine Gatling, and I thank you for this opportunity to speak. I am here to express strong opposition to the redistricting of Congressional Districts Texas 9th and Texas 18th. First, I want to emphasize that our communities deserve to be represented, not erased. I sincerely hope that our state representative have already draft a congressional map that protects our voting power and ensures our voices -- and ensures our voices are heard in any future debates or discussion around redistricting.

Splitting our community across different districts strips us from the collective power of our vote. It undermines the integrity of our representation and further diminishes what remains of the Voting Rights Act, particularly Section 2, which was designed to protect minority voting strength. District 18 has already suffered a devastating loss with the passing of Representative Sylvester Turner earlier this year.

During this fragile time when jobs, education, and healthcare hang in the balance, the majority chose to pass a legislation without input

from our community. This not only violates the spirit of fair governance but also echoes past injustices. In the landmark case, Baker vs Carr (1962), the United States Supreme Court declared that unequal representation is unconstitutional. Yet that is exactly what would happen if these districts are divided and weakened.

Texas 9th is a community of interest, and Texas 18th, Texas -- I'm sorry. Texas 9th is a community of interest. We share neighbors, schools, churches, and struggles. We do not want to be moved outside the bonds of the people we know and who understand our needs. To quote Barack Obama, "Real power is not in domination, but in compassion." I ask you to show the compassion today and not just in word but in action. Do not dilute our vote. Do not divide our voice. Protect the integrity of Texas 9th and Texas 18th. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Ma'am, what's your name?

CARMEN MONTIEL: My name is Carmen Maria Montiel.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: I show you register to testify as Carmen Maria Montiel --

CARMEN MONTIEL: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: -- on behalf of yourself --

CARMEN MONTIEL: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: -- on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

CARMEN MONTIEL: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

CARMEN MONTIEL: Good afternoon, panel. As is said, my name is Carmen Maria Montiel. I'm here today as a legal immigrant, concerned citizen, mother, and U.S. Congressional District 18 candidate. I'm for it as I am against gerrymandering. I believe the new lines should truly represent the reality of Texas as Texas have changed.

Let's be clear with the demographics in Harris County and Houston. They are as follow: Latinos represent between 43 to 45 percent, white between 24 to 27 percent, blacks or African Americans between 18 to 22 percent, Asians 7 percent, and the rest a little bit of everything.

For far too long, Latinos has been disenfranchised. In fact, conservative Latinos has been disenfranchised. Today, Latinos are the

majority in the city of Houston and Harris County, and we will keep on growing in the future. However, we're not represented well in government.

For example, District 18 became majority Latino with 45 percent after the census in 2020. However, it has been impossible to change the representation of the district, and the same faces do nothing and still control the district, city, and the county, with no action taken for the betterment of the people in our community. For 30 years, District 18 has been neglected. Latinos were conservative. Our values are faith, family, love of country, economic opportunities, and better education.

The few and very few people that represent Latinos in this town do not represent our values. Also, Latinos are another culture. We're not another race. The Democrats keep on trying to put us in a black -- I mean, a brown box. When they put us in a brown box, they're discriminating against 80 percent of us because we're black, brown, white, yellow, copper, and red.

It is time the district lines in Texas truly represent the values and interests of all of us.

Little history. The Republican Party of Texas was founded by the black community. When people represent us, they should represent us to not disrupt. If you go to office to disrupt, you're working for yourself, not for the people. My name is Carmen Maria Montiel, and I love Texas. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Ma'am, what's your name?

SAMEEHA RISVI: Sameeha Rizvi.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Chair calls Sameeha Rizvi.

SAMEEHA RISVI: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: I show you registered to testify on behalf of the Council of American Islamic Relations Action --

SAMEEHA RISVI: Uh-huh.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: -- and yourself as well.

SAMEEHA RISVI: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: On the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

SAMEEHA RISVI: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

SAMEEHA RISVI: Chairs and members, my name is Sameeha Rizvi, and I'm the Texas Policy and Advocacy Coordinator for the Council on American Islamic Relations Action. I'm testifying on behalf of Care Action and as a Texan deeply concerned by the direction this body continues to take.

I may be one of the few South Asian Muslims testifying today, but I've only felt more connected and seen because of those who've come before me and spoken in front of you. Our diversity is our strength, especially when we come together to unite our power.

This past legislative session caused real harm. Muslim and Palestinian voices, along with so many others, were dismissed, ignored, and silenced. Muslim voter participation in Texas is already low, and actions like these only deepen that disenfranchisement. The Trump administration's decision to block the Middle Eastern and North African, also known as MENA category, in the 2020 census led to an undercount of these communities. Although the Biden administration approved the category, it will not be implemented until the 2030 census. That means the data you're using to redraw maps is flawed, and the Trump administration's

proposed changes will only worsen representation for Muslim and MENA Texans, especially in Houston.

I've submitted maps showing mosque locations in Congressional Districts 9 and 7. In District 9, where our communities are concentrated, representation reflects that reality. But in District 7, my own district, my community, while strong, is politically invisible. And this is more -- this is about more than just maps. As Palestinians are starved before our eyes and public support shifts towards justice, Congress ignores its constituents.

Gerrymandering is part of a broader pattern of hoarding power at the expense of black, brown, Asian, many of whom are Muslim here and abroad. Mid-decade redistricting is unjust and unnecessary. Rather than caving to Donald Trump's demands, I urge you to put Texas lives over party lines. If you continue down this road, you risk forfeiting both public trust and your seat. Ultimately, fair representation is judged at the ballot box. I hope you choose to earn it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Panel, stay right where you are for a second.

Chair calls Nabila Mansoor.

SAMEEHA RISVI: She's not here.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Yes. I show her registered to testify as Nabila Mansoor on behalf of Asians, Texans for Justice, on the revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying.

Members, any questions for the members of this panel? Chair hears none.

Thank you for your testimony. This panel is excused.

Chair calls Graciela Saenz, Al Castillo, Reuben Salazar, Serena Arzu to come up to the front here.

Our next panel is going to be Stephanie Wilkins, Jo Ann Foster, Chrishian Thomas, and Nicole Orellana.

Real quick. Chair is going to call two that he's been advised they're not here.

Is Jo Ann Foster here? Jo Ann Foster? Chair will show Jo Ann Foster registered to testify on behalf of herself on the revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying.

Chair calls Stephanie Wilkins. Is Stephanie Wilkins here? Chair shows Stephanie Wilkins registered to testify on behalf of the Pure Justice Action Fund and herself on the revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying.

Okay. Let's go to our panel here. Ma'am, you're all alone. What's your -- what's your name?

SERENA ARZU: Serena Arzu.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Hey, got you right up here. I show you registered to testify as Serena Arzu on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

SERENA ARZU: That is correct.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

SERENA ARZU: Beautiful. So, hello. I am here today to testify against the racist order of redistricting our districts that mainly contain black and brown folks. This is blatant racism and is not legal. Let's start there. I am appalled at what is happening right now. I am appalled that Republicans in the Texas legislature lack a backbone. Trump can tell you all to jump, and you'll just say, how high.

These policies are so unpopular that you are actively trying to help turn our next congressional election into a sham. I am urging you to stand up for all Texans. Texans in these districts that are targeted did not ask for this. No one, not one constituent, asked for this. There isn't even a map to look at, which I personally think is ridiculous. That's bananas, okay. You all need to start standing up for Texans. And when I say that, I mean everyone, not just your base.

And one could argue that some folks don't support what's happening right now with Trump, and they voted for you all, right. They voted for Texas Republicans, but that doesn't necessarily mean that they agree with everything that Trump is doing or with everything that Greg Abbott is doing. They expect for you all to represent the people, okay, not Trump.

Hispanics are the majority in this state, and you all are actively trying to silence their votes. Again, if these policies are so popular, leave these districts alone, right. And allow for these folks to vote how they vote. Stop trying to silence the black and brown community. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Members, any questions for this witness? Chair hears none.

The witness is excused.

Chair calls Ruben Salazar. Ruben Salazar. Chair shows Ruben Salazar registered to testify on behalf of himself on the revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying.

Chair calls Al Castillo. Al Castillo. Chair shows Al Castillo registered to testify on behalf of himself on the revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying.

Chair calls Graciela Saenz. Graciela Saenz. Chair shows her registered to testify on behalf of herself on the revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying.

Chair is going to call up our next panel - Nicole Orillana, Chrishian Thomas, Slate Lawson, and Tina Brady. Please come up to the front.

The next panel after that is going to be Zoe Cadore. We're going to assume Meochea Money. Could be Meochea Money. Anybody with the last name of Money, just be ready. Amanda Edwards and Jennifer Finch, please be ready on the next panel.

Okay. All right. What's your name down here on the end?

CHRISHIAN THOMAS: Oh, me?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Yes.

CHRISHIAN THOMAS: Chrishian A. Thomas.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Okay. I show you registered to testify as Christiana.

CHRISHIAN THOMAS: Chrishian. A Thomas. I think I misspelled it. Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Okay. Do I have permission to correct your registration to be, is it C-h-r-i-s-h-i-a-n?

CHRISHIAN THOMAS: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Okay. And then delete the extra n. Pretend we never saw that. And then an A for your middle name, and then Thomas.

CHRISHIAN THOMAS: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Okay. We've adjusted your form. I show you registered to testify on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional districting plan. Is that correct?

CHRISHIAN THOMAS: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

CHRISHIAN THOMAS: I'm a young advocate in Congress District 7. I'm a sophomore in high school and shouldn't be spending my Saturday pleading to have representation in my own district. I'm represented by the Congresswoman Lizzie Fletcher. The most disturbing thing about this proposed districting isn't about the drawing of the lines or the vague language of past gerrymandering, but I'm personally deeply disturbed with the circumvention of democratic practices and the erosion of every single rule made to keep America in check.

Democratic values shouldn't be upheld, but in the status quo. They're consistently being threatened by the idiots at the GOP and current president and the Republicans that continue to bow to him. This is a genuine concern. I ask the committee and the people today to not make people, students, and young people inherit this bad political agenda, but this culture is encouraging radical action from both sides.

The redistricting battle has already proved to me that no side is willing to stay by the Constitution in order to meet their goals. But the fact of the matter is that Republicans are the main people pushing it. If you ignore what I have to say,

like the majority of partisans in Texas, stop handing Texas to Greg Abbott and Donald Trump on a silver platter.

When we prioritize partisans to color lines where they see fit, when we allow Republicans to abuse their power simply -- simply because they want to have more seats, it distorts representation. It erodes the core values that this country was built on, and it sparks a vicious cycle when people of your age come to us, young people for hope. You perpetuate that by making equitable, ingrained policies that makes your representation happens all across the vote -- all across the board, and voting. Voters should be chosen -- voters should choose and not be chosen.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

What's your name, ma'am?

NICOLE ORELLANA: Nicole Orellana.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Okay. Chair calls Nicole Orellana. Registered to testify on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

NICOLE ORELLANA: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

NICOLE ORELLANA: Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Nicole Orellana. I'm a rising junior at Cypress Creek High School. And just about a month ago, I had never even heard of gerrymandering. But once I learned it, I couldn't unsee it. Redistricting isn't just about the lines on a map; it's about power. It decides who gets a voice and who gets ignored. Young people are paying attention. And what we see is that these maps aren't being drawn for fairness. They're being drawn for control.

In a recent interview, when Donald Trump was asked about redrawing the Texas congressional map, he said, no, just a simple redrawing. We'll pick up five seats. But it's not simple. Not simple for the communities being split. Not simple for our voters being silenced, and not simple for our black and brown Texans whose districts are being carved up so their voices matter less.

When you break apart majority of black districts, you're not just shifting boundaries. You're gutting out our representation. And that's why this moment matters, because an American, it's

just not about where you're born. It's about believing in the idea that everyone deserves a voice. Former President Obama once said, "What makes someone an American is not just blood or birth, but allegiance to our founding principles and the faith in the ideas that anyone from anywhere can write the next great chapter of our story."

I believe the next great chapter of our story belongs to us, the youth. No matter where you come from, find your voice and speak up because these maps shape everything - our school, our healthcare, our safety, and our votes. To those in power, don't be the generation that steals from the next. Keep our communities whole, draw maps that tell our story and not ones where we're erased, but where we're finally seen and heard and belong. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Ma'am, are you -- are you Tina Brady?

(No audible response)

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Okay. Chair shows you registered to testify as Tina Brady on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional (audio cuts out) testimony.

TINA BRADY: Hello. Good afternoon, redistricting committee members. My name is Tina Brady. I'm a Houstonian and live in Congressional District 29. I'm opposed to the redistricting Governor Abbott has added to the special session agenda. Governor Abbott approved the current congressional district map less than four years ago, October 2021.

He's calling for redistricting now because President Trump ordered him to find five more Republican seats. I'm asking you not to spend your time and our money redistricting in 2025 when we'll be required to do it again after the 2030 census. I'm asking you that you not rush redistricting on us with no advance notice, no explanation of the reasoning, and no review of proposed district maps. At the least, take a moment to think about the people you represent.

I'm also asking that you help us to build a system that hears us and where our votes matter. There are better methods than to redefine districts than gerrymandering. Your constituents are being cheated by a system in which our votes don't count. We feel it, and you all know it. I thank you for your attention today.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Hold one sec. Panel, stay where you are. Is Slate Lawson here? Chair calls Slate Lawson. Oh, please come on up.

SLATE LAWSON: I couldn't tell if you called me (indiscernible).

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Oh, you're -- you're just fine. That's why we're going to do it again. I show you registered to testify as Slate Lawson on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

SLATE LAWSON: Yes, sir. That is correct.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

SLATE LAWSON: My name is Slate Lawson. I'm a student here at the University of Houston. I am a resident of Texas' 7th Congressional District. I'm claiming my right as a citizen of this country and state to express my dissent against this highly irregular redistricting agenda. I do apologize. I soiled my shirt as soon as I got here. Didn't expect to be up here in a sports bra.

While Kerr County is still recovering from the horrific loss of life due to the Guadalupe River flood, and the federal agency, ICE, invading our state, disappearing people in our communities as we speak. You are here today with the goal of continuing to disenfranchise Texans that you believe will vote against the Republican Party. One convicted -- or excuse me -- one worse, you attempt to do it all on the behest of a convicted felon.

Now, I know a certain flag we hold very dear to this state, and that flag says don't tread on me. This legislative body and our governor seem to have forgotten this core value of Texas culture. Over 100 people have died, dozens of children have died. Mothers, fathers, grandparents, and children are being snatched off the street, given zero due process, and yet here you all are on a mission to redivide a voter district map. Also, the map you seek to redraw is still an active state of judicial contention.

An opinion on that map's constitutionality has still not yet been provided, and we know damn well that the changes saw are not to make it more fair to anyone besides the GOP.

You still have the opportunity to not allow that puny man in the White House to tread on our state. Texans deserve better representation than that facilitated by our current legislative body. Do not try to play coy. We, the people of this assembly are not foolish. We were raised and educated while critical thinking was still something our government wanted us to be taught.

Our state district's map already looks like an Etch A Sketch on psychedelics, and you are so eager to get on your knees for Trump that you seek to twist it even further.

I do not approve of the racially based gerrymandering the state has historically engaged in, and I do not believe this gerrymandering venture to be proposed today, to be any different. This mid-decade redistricting is highly partisan, highly rushed, and an act of hollow character. Continuing with this redistricting indicates a severe lack of moral character, and anyone who votes in favor of it, it is sinful.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please complete your testimony.

SLATE LAWSON: To top everything off, just two days ago, you chose to arrest Texas Congress

-- congressional candidate, Isaiah Martin, within the Capitol's chambers, reminding you that history will not remember you kindly, if at all, for what you're attempting to do.

We, the people, will not stand for this grotesque impropriety. We do not -- we demand you not allow this new map division to move forward and get back to the immediate matter at hand, taking care of everyone in Texas equally.

To close my testimony, I'd like to direct a statement to the Republican on -- the Republicans on this panel. If you're able to exhibit any genuine humanity, you would not need to gerrymander your way into office. Thank you all for your time.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

VICE CHAIR ROSENTHAL: Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Mr. Vice Chair for what purpose?

VICE CHAIR ROSENTHAL: I have questions for this panel.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: You're so recognized.

VICE CHAIR ROSENTHAL: So first, thank you all for coming. We have a high school sophomore and a rising junior. Is that correct?

SLATE LAWSON: Yes.

VICE CHAIR ROSENTHAL: You literally should be able to just do something else with this day, this Saturday afternoon, but you chose to use your time and bring your voice here to this room and bring some of the most powerful testimony we've heard today. So I just want to say, you all give me hope. Thank you for sticking it out and -- and bringing, really, great testimony today.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Members, any other questions for this panel? Chair hears none.

Thank you for your testimony. The panel is excused.

Chair calls up Jennifer Finch, Amanda Edwards, Meochea Money, and I apologize if I mispronounce that, and Zoe Cador.

Our next panel after that -- so these four, please be ready - Obes Nwabara, Meg Barnes, Joel Abramowitz, and Carly Durham.

Ms. Cador on this end? Nope. Okay.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Ms. Edwards.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Ms. Edwards.

AMANDA EDWARDS: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: I show you registered to testify as Amanda Edwards on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

AMANDA EDWARDS: That is correct.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

AMANDA EDWARDS: Good afternoon, and thank you all for having this opportunity for us to speak. My name is Amanda Edwards. I have served as an at-large Houston City council member and also, am running to serve as the next congresswoman for the 18th Congressional District. As I had an opportunity to do, I spoke in Austin this past week and offered testimony regarding the tragedy that has taken place within the 18th.

You see, we've lost Congressman Sylvester Turner and Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee within less than one year of each other. But what we also know is that the 18th Congressional District is a district that has stood on the shoulders of giants like Barbara Jordan, like Mickey Leland, Craig Washington, Sheila Jackson Lee, and Sylvester Turner, all of whom who fought for people and for justice.

We have this moment in time where our seat, the 18th Congressional seat that is now representing the area in which we are now having this meeting, is now vacant. And what we are choosing to do with this moment is to kick it while it's down. And I implore you not to be an example of what not to do with power.

There's an adage that goes like this, If you're not at the table, you're what's on the menu. And right now, with this hearing, with this special session to seek redistricting, we are placing the 800,000 people of the 18th Congressional district on the menu. And to do so in a moment where we have no voting representation, to do so in a moment when we have not had voting representation. And it will be a year and a half before that special election runoff is resolved. That's unconscionable. That's unacceptable.

John F. Kennedy has a book, and it was about profiles and moral courage. I encourage each and every single one of you, when you're thinking about this special session and what to do with the redistricting, let us not lead by fear. Let's not lead by political convenience and expediency. Instead, let us lead with courage to do the right

thing, no matter what the consequences. That is my charge to you all today. Please stop the redistricting of the 18th Congressional District.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Ma'am, what's your name?

ZOE CADOR: Cador. Zoe Cador.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Okay. I show you registered to testify as Zoe Cador --

ZOE CADOR: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: -- on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

ZOE CADOR: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for coming. Please give us your testimony.

ZOE CADOR: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. My name is Zoe Cador. I am the daughter of an immigrant. I'm also a fifth-generation Texan, a resident of Third Ward, an attorney from the University of Houston, a former Ms. Houston, and I am also a congressional candidate in District 18.

I believe in the promise of democracy when it is allowed to function fairly. Today, I

speak not just for myself, but for the thousands of Texans who show up, speak up, and still wonder why their communities are pushed to the margins when maps are redrawn. Make no mistake, America and Texans see this process for what it is - a desperate, partisan attempt to hold onto power.

The Republican Party is increasingly unpopular, and this panel exemplifies that. If your party focused more on improving life for working-class people, instead of firing government workers, eliminating FEMA, terrorizing immigrant communities, detaining innocent citizens, increasing the deficit by trillions, attacking reproductive freedom, and stripping healthcare from the poor, you wouldn't need to rely on lies to justify racist gerrymandering to hold power in 2026.

Let me be clear, we do not need this redistricting, but if this committee insists on moving forward, you have a responsibility to do no harm. Redistricting should be about ensuring that every Texan, regardless of race, zip code, or party, has access to equal power. But too often it becomes a tool to preserve power instead of sharing it, and the people who pay the price are communities like mine, black, brown immigrant, working-class Texans,

who are more than just voting blocks. We are the heart and the soul of this state.

So I urge you to keep communities of color intact, to keep our district intact, and not divide us just to dilute our power. That means that maps that reflect Texas should reflect them as it is, not as it once was or as some wish it to be. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Panel, stay right there.

Chair calls Jennifer Finch. Jennifer Finch. I show her registered to testify on behalf of herself on the revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying.

Chair calls, again, it looks like an M to me, Meochea Money. Meochea Money. I show her registered to testify on behalf of herself on the revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying.

Members, any questions for the members of this panel?

Dean Thompson.

DEAN THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I just want to make a statement.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Chair recognizes Dean Thompson for a brief statement.

DEAN THOMPSON: Nobody -- none of us have seen the -- seen what the map look like. We're still trying to find out what it is that we're supposed to be holding a hearing on. So I don't (indiscernible).

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you, Dean.

Members, any other questions for the members of this panel? Hearing none.

Thank you for your testimony. The panel is excused.

AMANDA EDWARDS: Thank you.

ZOE CADOR: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Chair is going to call up Carly Durham, Joel Abramowitz, Meg Barnes, and Obes Nwabara.

The next panel is going to be Lillian Jeanette Sexton, Andrew C. Burks Jr, Timothy White, and Isaiah Martin. Please be ready, those last four.

Okay. Sir, on the end, what's your name?

JOEL ABRAMOWITZ: My name is Dr. Joel Abramowitz.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Okay. I show you registered to testify as Dr. Joel -- and how do you pronounce your last name?

JOEL ABRAMOWITZ: Abramowitz.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Abramowitz, on behalf of yourself, on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

JOEL ABRAMOWITZ: That's correct, sir.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

JOEL ABRAMOWITZ: Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for allowing this testimony. My name is Dr. Joel Abramowitz. My wife and I live in the Museum District of Houston, Lizzie Fletcher's District number 7.

As a doctor, I'm appalled. Our rich state already has the worst healthcare access and affordability in the nation, along with some of the worst maternal and infant mortality rates.

The big ugly bill will now make healthcare worse for Texans, especially for rural Texans. Cowardly and cynically, your colleagues in Washington had the healthcare changes start after the midterms. Really? Do they think that Americans are stupid? President Trump orders Texas Republicans to

redistrict in between census, and you immediately acquiesce.

He is clearly afraid, as many people have said here, that the Republican Congress will no longer have a majority, so he wants to stack the deck. Republican congressmen didn't care about Texans' health then. Why would electing more of them help Texans now? You ask us to make comments about redistricting without even seeing the proposed maps.

We all suspect that these changes, due to blatant gerrymandering, will further disenfranchise many of our citizens whose healthcare will already be affected by the big ugly bill. What's the rush? Why can't we see the maps before you ask for public comments?

We know that you all went into politics because you wanted to serve Texans. Please do the right thing and serve them all. Serve Texans and not Trump. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Carly Durham?

CARLY DURHAM: Yes. I'm Carly Durham.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Okay. I show you registered to testify as Carly Durham on behalf of

yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

CARLY DURHAM: Correct.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

CARLY DURHAM: Hi. I'm Carly. Thank you all for your time. I see you all are fading. So I'm going to try to be quick. I live in District 22. I'm a nurse practitioner. I'm a disability advocate, and most importantly, a proud mom of three. My husband and I are raising our multiracial family in a state we were born and raised in and love, but lately, guys, it doesn't seem like it loves us back.

I have a 12-year-old with Down syndrome, and he's on the Medicaid waiver wait list since 2016. And you all are going to think this is made up, but he's number 56,034. It does not line up for him to get services in time when he's 18.

I also have an 11-year-old daughter with Down syndrome, autism, and a stroke survivor that we adopted through Texas DFPS. And then our youngest is seven, bright, helpful, but already knows how hard our family has to fight in this state for access, education, and dignity.

You've heard so much about the legal arguments, the census data, and the contradictory DOJ letter, and I'm not an expert in those areas. I'm an expert in my story, and my story is about access. And today I saw in real time disability access fail and what it's like for communities to not be represented.

We had a deaf and hard-of-hearing constituent here today to participate, who did not have ASL interpretation. Two volunteers stayed behind after the rally to help her participate in this event. That should, according to ADA, which today is also the 35th anniversary of, have that ability to participate in without having to provide her own interpreters.

So this is an example of how, in real time communities without representation get impacted. Their access, their needs, and their voices, that's important, guys. If they're not at the table, they don't get seen, and they don't get served.

So I'm asking you to remember that when you're drawing these lines, that having your stories heard is not just about your story, it's about access. And please remember families like mine as you make these decisions.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: The Chair will note that we did not receive a request for that. The notice, I think, had information to be able to request those services. We're happy to provide those. I'm just not aware of that request being made. But let's talk offline.

And so, Chair -- your name is Obes Nwabara; is that correct?

OBES NWABARA: It's Obes Nwabara.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Obes Nwabara.

OBES NWABARA: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: I show you registered to testify on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan? Is that correct?

OBES NWABARA: Yes, that's correct.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

OBES NWABARA: Hello. My name is Obes Nwabara. I'm running to be your next Houston City Council member in At-Large Position 4. And I live right here in Congressional District 18.

Normally, I'd say good afternoon, but it isn't a good afternoon when the state seeks to remove my agency as a voter. It's not a good

afternoon when the state governor walks in lockstep with our so-called president to steal congressional seats. And it's definitely not a good afternoon when the good people of CD 18 have gone months without congressional representation. This is wrong.

It was bad enough when the governor delayed the special election in this district to maintain a slim Republican majority in the House of Representatives. Now you're talking about making so our voices can never be heard again. And for what? to satisfy the giant ego of a tiny little man. It's downright un-Texan.

But there's good news. You can say no. You can tell the president that Texans will control our own destiny and our own representation. We're at a crossroads. We can fall deeper into chaos and madness. We can push back, turn back, and reclaim the ideals that we claim to hold so near and dear. I implore you, each and every one of you, to choose wisely. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Is Meg Barnes here? Meg Barnes? Chair will show Meg Barnes registered to testify on

behalf of herself on the revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying.

Members, any questions for the members of this panel? Chair hears none.

Thank you for your testimony. This panel is excused.

Chair calls Isaiah Martin, Timothy White, Andrew Burks, and Lillian Janette Sexton. Please go ahead and come up to the front.

Our next panel after that, if these four will be ready - going to be Karla West, Chelsea Erickson, Charlene Shafer, and Callton Halt.

And then, actually, if Kevin Joachin can also -- or Joachin can also be ready for the next panel, I'd appreciate it.

Okay. Chair calls -- want to go left? What's your name, ma'am?

LILLIAN SEXTON: Lillian Janette Sexton.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Okay. Chair calls Lillian Janette Sexton. I show you registered to testify on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

LILLIAN SEXTON: Correct.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

LILLIAN SEXTON: Good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. This mid-decade redistricting scheme was dreamed up in Washington, DC. The president is terrified that the One Big Beautiful Bill Act is so unpopular with Americans. Irrespective of political affiliation, the Democrats stand a good chance of regaining control of the U.S. House in the midterm elections.

I am on Social Security and Medicare, and the bill triggered the statutory Pay as You Go Act of 2010, which is designed to ensure that new spending or tax cut legislation does not increase the federal deficit. It requires that any legislation increasing mandatory spending or reducing revenues must be offset by spending cuts or revenue increases elsewhere. The bill will cut Medicare provider payments, which could lead to reduced access to care for us beneficiaries. Medicare will be cut by 535 billion, which will weaken the program and cause an earlier collapse of the safety net.

I repeatedly called my U.S. representative, a Republican, but he ignored my pleas to vote no on the bill. It is important to allow

voters to choose representatives who have their values rather than to allow politicians to choose their voters.

My concerns are that this process is too rushed. The 2021 maps are still being litigated. There is limited opportunity for public participation. The process disadvantages communities of color. If redistricting passes, we will need five days to review the new maps, and all comments and public records must be retained. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Chair calls Isaiah Martin. I show you registered to testify as Isaiah Martin on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional districting plan. Is that correct?

ISAIAH MARTIN: That is correct.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

ISAIAH MARTIN: I'm Isaiah Martin, and as I was saying a couple of hours ago, you Republicans tried so hard to silence me. You had me thrown in jail, and I wanted to come here to look every single one of you in the eye and let you know

personally that you failed. You tried and you failed. Just like you will try and fail when it comes to this gerrymandering scheme that you're about to pull off.

It's amazing to me how, more than 36 to 40 hours later, you're still here singing the same song, pretending like you don't know why you're here. You're here because Donald Trump told you to be here. You are desperate for his endorsement, which is why you are still sitting here singing the same song that you were a couple of hours ago.

But as a result of what you have done, millions more are now talking about this sham that you guys are perpetuating. More states have come forward saying that they are going to gerrymander Republicans out of their seats. That is the cost of what you have done.

So I look forward to more people joining in on that momentum. I look forward to more states making sure that your failed, see now, dilapidated, out of shape, nobody listens to, president, fails again when Democrats take back the House very soon. And I look forward to every single one of you looking at this state rising up unapologetically against your failed policies that

have destroyed this economy, that have destroyed this state, because the people will rise up whether you like it or not.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Chair will -- Chair calls -- the panel will stay right there. Chair calls Timothy White. Is Timothy White here? Chair shows Timothy White registered to testify on behalf of himself on the revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying.

Chair notes -- this is a special one.

Chair notes under the House Policies and Procedures manual, an employee of a member of the House may not register to testify or testify before a committee except by leave of the committee. Chair is a strong believer in the First Amendment. I believe everybody ought to be able to testify. It's the Chair's intention at this time to move to permit Timothy White to be able to register to testify. Is there objection? Chair hears none.

Timothy White is recognized to testify, but did not testify today. Thank you very much.

All right. Is Andrew Burks here? Andrew Burks. Chair shows Andrew Burks registered to testify on behalf of himself on the revised redistricting plan but not testifying.

Members, any questions for the members of this panel?

Just so the record reflect that when we -- I did that without objection on, works for State Representative Charlene Ward Johnson, according to the form. I don't know that for sure, but that's the one I gave.

All right. Any questions? Chair hears none.

Thank you for your testimony. The panel is excused.

Chair calls --

REPRESENTATIVE WU: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Mr. Wu, for what purpose?

REPRESENTATIVE WU: May I be recognized for a statement while the next group is coming up?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Chair recognizes Mr. Wu for a brief statement. Before you start, let me read these names.

If Kevin Joachin can come up, Callton Halt, Charlene Shafer, Karla West, and Chelsea Erickson. Please go ahead and make your way up to the front.

Chair recognizes Mr. Wu for a brief statement while they come up.

REPRESENTATIVE WU: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And for the audience out there, we strongly believe in your right to come testify and have your peace and make your statements about your communities. I know that our time is almost up. We only have maybe like 10 minutes left. But to know that we will be having a people's hearing, a people's meeting, after this. We will continue to hear your voices and record it and to save it, and to bring it to others so they can watch it as well.

We will be walking over to Wheeler Baptist Avenue Church after this. If you want to drive, feel free to drive, but we'll be heading over there, and you will have your two minutes to say and explain what's happening in your community. Thank you.

VICE CHAIR ROSENTHAL: Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Mr. Rosenthal, for what purpose?

VICE CHAIR ROSENTHAL: May I follow that with a brief statement?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Chair recognizes Mr. Rosenthal for a brief statement. Chair will also add two minutes on the timer because I forgot to pause. So we're going to add two minutes to that.

Mr. Rosenthal.

REPRESENTATIVE WU: It's going to be at the gym of the church. It's going to be at the gym of the church.

VICE CHAIR ROSENTHAL: At the gym of the Wheeler -- at Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church. At the gym is where we're going to be.

Here's what I want to say right quick. You all, thank you for being here. Well over 700 people signed up to testify in this place today. So many people came to testify that we literally ran out of forms, and they had to print more. So while Houston was ready for this committee, the committee was not ready for Houston.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask if we can get an official count for the number of people

that's registered and registered to testify, and all that.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Absolutely. That will be in the minutes that will be posted. I don't have it in front of me. We've got the stacks here that we'll have to go through, but yes, absolutely. They'll be in the minutes, Mr. Vice Chair.

VICE CHAIR ROSENTHAL: Very good. So if we just did the math and everybody had two minutes and we were perfectly efficient and there was no breaks, you would have had 24 hours of testimony. And that's why we are prepared. I'll stay all night. Anybody that comes over there to speak, I will stay to listen to you. We'll record it, and we'll show it to others. Thank you again.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you, Vice Chair.

Okay. Chair is going to restart the timer. Go back to public testimony.

Ma'am, what's your name on the end?

KARLA WEST: Karla West.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Okay. Did I see you in the hallway earlier?

KARLA WEST: Yes, you did.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Oh, good. I'm glad to have you. I show you registered to testify as Karla West on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

KARLA WEST: That is correct.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: And you can get closer to the mic?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Yes, it -- it. Yeah. I apologize. That one's a little finicky. Just speak.

KARLA WEST: Is that better?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: That's perfect. Thank you, ma'am.

KARLA WEST: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Go for your testimony.

KARLA WEST: Distinguished ladies and gentlemen of the committee. First, thank you for your public service. As stated earlier, I am Minister Karla West, and I serve as Precinct Chair of 16, which is -- I am proud to say, which is in Congressional District 18. I come today with good vibes. I do not believe that there's anything that I

could say that you haven't already heard, other than the fact that I think that out of all this testimony, there may be something that I might say that you have not heard.

I know that a mandate has been issued that many people deem not only unfair but unnecessary. The President does not seem to care about wasting taxpayer money to promote his own agenda. What I will say is this: I urge you to remember the oath that you took to serve in government office, to serve in a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. Therefore, I ask you to remember us, the people.

Remember that in a democracy, us, the people, expect fair representation, honest representation, and just representation. You are well capable of doing so. I believe that. So be fair, be honest, and be just.

I do not agree with redistricting of any congressional maps at this time, and certainly not the ones that are in question. Doing so is not fair. It is not honest, and it is not just. Stop wasting our time and taxpayer money. Just because the DOJ asks you to do something does not mean you have to deliver. Just say no.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

And what's your name, sir?

KEVIN JOACHIN: Kevin Joachin.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: I show you registered to testify as Kevin Joachin?

KEVIN JOACHIN: Joa like H-w-a, and then Chin like Cheeto.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Exactly what he said. So you registered to testify on behalf of the Workers' Defense Action Fund. Are you registered to testify on behalf of yourself as well?

KEVIN JOACHIN: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Okay. All right. On behalf of yourself as well. On the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

KEVIN JOACHIN: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: All right. Please give us your testimony.

KEVIN JOACHIN: Hello, my name is Kevin Joachin from Workers Defense Action Fund, an organization that organizes predominantly Latino people. I would first like to mention that in District 7, I have visited families whose doors was knocked down by ICE and police collaboration without

a judicial warrant, without prior conviction, zip tying some of the women in the family, and arrest and deportation of their loved ones. That is what's going on in my district, and we are wasting time here today.

Just to add another part, I wouldn't necessarily like to listen to appeals to ordinary voters, reducing Latinos to taco trucks on every corner. But what is happening on every corner are that essential workers and day laborers are being rounded up.

Working immigrants are being hunted by police. I'm speaking on behalf of community members who live in Congressional District 7 and 8, who just went to go get their Uber, but I told them to come back. So hopefully they make it for the rest of this. And I'm testifying in response to the legislature's attempt to redistrict our congressional districts mid-census.

This move would take away representation from communities of color. Our residents, like those I'm speaking on behalf of today, who are already subject to inequity, racism, would see every area of their lives impacted, from their finances to their health to their children's

education at a time when they are subjected to low pay, skyrocketing costs for groceries, lights, and attacks based on color of their skin. Our parents are being hunted and deported. The last thing they need to worry about their congressional representatives taking away their voice.

Having public hearings hosted by both the House and Senate Redistricting Committee without visible maps only builds public distrust from the government. If you're going to make drastic changes with severe consequences for communities of color, then you need to make the public input process valid. One where you listen and take our feedback into account. If you say you don't have the intention of discriminating against our communities, then show it in your actions. Do what's right. Let the current court case play out, hold fair and transparent hearings after the maps have been drawn and before they pass through the committees --

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please complete your testimony.

KEVIN JOACHIN: -- and visit all regions of Texas. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Chair -- if the panel will stay right there, Chair calls Chelsea Erickson. Is Chelsea Erickson here? Chair will show Chelsea Erickson registered to testify on behalf of herself on the revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying.

Chair calls Charlene Shafer. Charlene Shafer. Chair will show Charlene Shafer registered to testify on behalf of herself on the revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying.

Chair calls Callton Halt. Callton Halt. Chair will show him registered to testify on behalf of himself on the revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying.

Members, any questions for the members of this panel? Chair hears none.

Thank you for your testimony. This panel is excused.

Chair is going to call up our next panel - Deborah Harris, Alverna Austin, Lizette Fernandez Prestwich, Christina Valentine. If those four will make their way up.

The panel after that, which I -- we will for sure get to this panel that I'm going to call out, and then we're going to evaluate in a

second - Barbara Mckinney, Kathy Hughes, Claudia Schneider, and Solomon Ni. If you will please be ready, we'll come to you. Okay.

Ma'am, what is your name?

ALVERNA AUSTIN: Alverna Austin.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Okay. I show you registered to testify as Alverna Austin --

ALVERNA AUSTIN: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: -- on behalf of yourself on the revised congressional redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

ALVERNA AUSTIN: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you very much. Please give us your testimony. And if you would just pull that microphone just a little bit closer to you.

ALVERNA AUSTIN: Thank you so much, committee. Everything has been so eloquently said by everyone that has come before you today. I am a graduate of Texas Southern University and University of Houston. I attended Jack Yates Senior High School, I attended Cullen, I attended Lockhart, I attended Turner, I attended Pleasantville, and Nacu Henderson.

I wasn't raised to be prejudiced, so for me, it's all, you know, as I -- as I get older, it's mind-boggling to me. My mother raised me that we are all God's people. So when you use people's lives as a chessboard and manipulate for power, God help us all. I want to read something if I have time. "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free. The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest, tossed to me. I lift my lamp beside the golden door." Now that's what's on our Statue of Liberty.

Do we have integrity? Are we going to stand up? Are someone's bank accounts overflowing right now? I don't know, but it's sad. It's scary, but I put my faith in God. He's in control. Everything is happening for a reason. We have the present leadership to wake us up because some of us will sleep, but we are not asleep now. We're not asleep at all. We are the people of the United States of America.

I don't know how much time I have left. We, the people of the United States. This phrase establish that the Constitution's authority comes directly from the citizens of the United

States, not from the states individually. In order to form a more perfect union. This highlights the desire to improve upon the existing system of government under the Articles of Confederation, which has seen us -- has seen as too weak.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please complete your testimony.

ALVERNA AUSTIN: Establish justice. This emphasizes the importance of fairness in the rule of law in the new nation. Provide for the common defense. This underscores the need for a unified military to protect the nation from external threats. Promote the general welfare. This expresses the attention to improve the well-being of all citizens --

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please complete your testimony. Last sentence.

ALVERNA AUSTIN: -- and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our prosperity. This signifies the desire to protect individual freedoms from both the current generation and future generations. Do ordain and establish this our constitution for the United States of America.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony, ma'am.

Oh, if you hold for one moment, I want to make sure -- members, any questions for this witness? The Chair hears none.

Thank you, ma'am. You're excused. I'm going to go through these three.

I don't know if they're here. Chair calls Deborah Harris. Deborah Harris. Chair will show her registered to testify on behalf of herself on the revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying.

Chair calls Christina Valentine. Christina Valentine. Chair will show her registered to testify on behalf of herself on the revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying.

Chair will call Lizette Fernandez Prestwich. Lizette Fernandez Prestwich. Chair will show her registered to testify on behalf of herself on the revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying.

We're going to go to our next panel, I think, based off of our time. This will be our last panel, and I'll have some notes for you. If we could have Solomon Ni, Claudia Schneider, Kathy Hughes, and Barbara McKinney, please come forward. I'd love to receive your testimony.

Okay. And ma'am, what's your name?

CLAUDIA SCHNEIDER: My name is Claudia Schneider.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Okay. I show you registered to testify as Claudia Schneider on behalf of yourself and -- on the revised congressional redistricting plan. Is that correct?

CLAUDIA SCHNEIDER: That's correct.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Please give us your testimony.

CLAUDIA SCHNEIDER: Thank you. I'm a native Houstonian and a native Texan. I'm Congressional District 18. And no -- I say no to this special session redistricting. Redrawing while current maps are under litigation -- active litigation undermines judicial oversight. It reinforces vote dilution. It denies the pending plaintiffs a remedy, and it erodes public trust.

And we all know this redistricting push is unprecedented and dangerous. In fact, it echoes the democratic backslides from the post-Reconstruction South to 1930s Germany and 2017 Myanmar. And it's not just another attempt to dilute minority representation and a coordinated power grab. It is an extending pattern of racial discrimination

that we have been seeing happening consistently since Trump's inauguration. Advancing Project 2025 as well, which is, as we all know, an extremist agenda drafted by racists outside operatives at the Heritage Foundation.

At a time when Texas should be healing, Trump aligned operatives are unleashing a deliberate deluge of harm, meant to drown our voices out, erase political expression, erode equal protection, and de facto nullify the Voting Rights Act. These same officials just suspended two months of federal legislative work, not to help the people, but allegedly to shield perpetrators of child sexual abuse.

Meanwhile, Texas flood survivors still need help, and many lost everything due in part to failed leadership. Now, even their voices are shut out of this process that will determine their political power for years.

Yet we have some elected officials, clearly in lockstep with an administration that is dismantling FEMA's disaster recovery role, weakening our weather, climate and disaster protections, consistently spreading lies and misinformation, beholden to billionaire interests, and is now

diverting relief funds to expand detention centers, yet this is the priority. While Texans suffer, democracy gasps for breath. And as you know, our votes are our voice.

This is no benign act. It's part of an escalating pattern of constitutional violations. But I see you all clearly know that this, because I heard the questions asked about which firm had been engaged and to whom the scope of representation for this committee extends. And as you know, local officials are not shielded when they knowingly violate our constitutional rights.

This is striking us deep in our hearts. This shows us there are some who want to drown us again, but we won't. And they won't. Come elections, come hell or high water, we, the people, will be the flood. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Thank you for your testimony.

Members, any questions for this witness? Chair hears none.

Thank you for your testimony. The witness is excused. I'm going to check in on these three we have here on this last panel.

Is Barbara Mckinney here? Barbara Mckinney. Chair will show Barbara Mckinney registered to testify on behalf of herself on the revised congressional redistricting plan but did not testify.

The Chair calls Kathy Hughes. Kathy Hughes. Chair will show Kathy Hughes registered to testify on behalf of herself on the revised congressional redistricting plan but not testifying.

Chair calls Solomon Ni. Solomon Ni. Chair shows Solomon Ni registered to testify on behalf of himself on the revised congressional redistricting plan but did not testify.

Members the time --

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Before you move to --

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: I will. Yes.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: All right.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: You have my word.

Members, the time of public testimony at today's hearing has concluded. Thank you for all who testified today. The electronic portal for today's hearing will close right after we adjourn, but just so everybody knows, the electronic portal for Monday's hearing is still open. And so I want to

make sure you understand you got two ways, just sitting here right now to submit your written comments and testimony, and the committee will receive those.

First, if we were unable to reach you today or you had more to say than time allowed, we would welcome you to provide a written copy of your testimony. If you'll turn it into our assistant clerk right over here, we'd love to receive that. We will provide that to every member of the committee. We also will have the registration forms with your contact information if we have any questions.

You can also go and provide comments. I always want to make -- make sure we have that link correctly. You can provide comments, electronic comments for the next hearing in Arlington at comments.house.texas.gov. I encourage you to do that.

Of course, our next hearing will be in Arlington at 5:00 o'clock p.m. on Monday. The posting is online.

I want to thank you all for being here. I appreciate you working with us, and I appreciate really the panels, I thought did an

excellent job of moving very, very efficiently through that. Thank you for that.

Thank you for the University of Houston for hosting us. And I thank you, Houston, for having us. We got the Astros playing here in about a half hour. Let's hope that they win. That may be selfish for some of us on the panel who like the Astros over the Rangers.

Is there any further business before the committee?

Chair recognize --

VICE CHAIR ROSENTHAL: Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Mr. Rosenthal, for what purpose?

VICE CHAIR ROSENTHAL: I'd like to -- to make a statement

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Chair recognizes Mr. Rosenthal to make a statement.

VICE CHAIR ROSENTHAL: Very good. Thank you.

So first, as you know, we're going to walk over to Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church to the gymnasium for anybody that wants to be heard. I want to hear you. And I'm going to invite all of my colleagues, whether you're Republicans, Democrats, or

however you identify. If you want to listen to these people that are willing to stay, not all -- not just all day, but walk over the church with us, you are more than welcome to join us for that.

We have -- pizza has been sponsored by state Senator Molly Cook, and I believe Rodney Ellis as well. And I will -- and Borris Miles.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: It is his church.

VICE CHAIR ROSENTHAL: It's Borris Miles church.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: He made the arrangements.

VICE CHAIR ROSENTHAL: And Borris made the arrangements for us. So I do want to thank our state Senator, Borris Miles, for that.

And with that, I will be objecting to the motion to adjourn because I would love for you all to be able to keep going here for a little while. And I'll ask for a record vote on that --

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Understood.

VICE CHAIR ROSENTHAL: -- objection.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Members, at this time, the Chair moves that the House Select Committee on Congressional Redistricting stand adjourned subject to the call of the Chair, and the Chair has

heard an objection. Under the rules, this is a non-debatable motion. We will proceed to a vote. The clerk will call the roll.

THE CLERK: Chair Vasut.

CHAIRPERSON VASUT: Aye.

THE CLERK: Vice Chair Rosenthal.

VICE CHAIR ROSENTHAL: Nay.

THE CLERK: Representative Garcia.

REPRESENTATIVE GARCIA: Nay.

THE CLERK: Representative Garen.

(No audible response)

THE CLERK: Representative Gervin-Hawkins.

REPRESENTATIVE HAWKINS: No.

THE CLERK: Representative Guerra.

(No audible response)

THE CLERK: Representative Guillen.

REPRESENTATIVE GUILLEN: Aye.

THE CLERK: Representative Hefner.

REPRESENTATIVE HEFNER: Aye.

THE CLERK: Representative Hickland.

REPRESENTATIVE HICKLAND: Aye.

THE CLERK: Representative Hunter?

REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER: Yes.

THE CLERK: Representative Manuel?

REPRESENTATIVE MANUEL: No.
THE CLERK: Representative McQueeney.
REPRESENTATIVE MCQUEENEY: Aye.
THE CLERK: Representative Metcalf.
(No audible response)
THE CLERK: Representative Moody.
(No audible response)
THE CLERK: Representative Pierson.
REPRESENTATIVE PIERSON: Aye.
THE CLERK: Representative Spiller.
REPRESENTATIVE SPILLER: Aye.
THE CLERK: Representative Tepper.
REPRESENTATIVE TEPPER: Aye.
THE CLERK: Representative Thompson?
REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON: No.
THE CLERK: Representative Turner.
(No audible response)
THE CLERK: Representative Wilson.
REPRESENTATIVE WILSON: Aye.
THE CLERK: Representative Wu.
REPRESENTATIVE WU: No.
CHAIRPERSON VASUT: There being -- there being 10 ayes, 6 nays, the motion is carried.
Crystal Jordan, we're leaving your credit card with the University Police Department.

And on that -- after that, the House Select Committee on Congressional Redistricting stands adjourned subject to the call of the Chair. Thank you.

(MEETING ADJOURNED)

CERTIFICATE OF TRANSCRIPTIONIST

I certify that the foregoing is a true and accurate transcript of the digital recording provided to me in this matter.

I do further certify that I am neither a relative, nor employee, nor attorney of any of the parties to this action, and that I am not financially interested in the action.

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO under my hand and of office on this 17th day of September, 2025.

Julie Thompson, CET-1036
Integrity Legal Support Solutions
9901 Brodie Ln.,#160-400
Austin, Texas 78748
(512) 320-8690
www.integritylegal.support

State Defendants' Response to Plaintiff-Intervenors' and TXNAACP Motion for Preliminary Injunction

Exhibit AH

Senator Alvarado, Senate Special Committee on Congressional Redistricting, Video Recording July 25th, 2025: 23:27-27:57

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TRANSCRIPTION OF VIDEOTAPE

SENATE COMMITTEE ON CONGRESSIONAL

REDISTRICTING, SPECIAL

Friday, July 25, 2025

****

P R O C E E D I N G S

4 hours, 20 seconds recording transcription, as follows:

THE CHAIR: (Gavel struck) The Senate Special Committee on Congressional Redistricting will come to order. The Clerk will call the roll.

THE CLERK: Senator King.

SENATOR KING: Here.

THE CLERK: Senator Creighton.

THE CLERK: Senator Alvarado.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Here.

THE CLERK: Senator Hinojosa.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: Present.

THE CLERK: Senator Hughes?

(Silence.)

THE CLERK: Senator Miles.

SENATOR MILES: Here.

THE CLERK: Senator Parker.

SENATOR PARKER: Here.

THE CLERK: Senator Paxton.

SENATOR PAXTON: Present.

THE CLERK: Senator Sparks.

SENATOR SPARKS: Here.

THE CHAIR: Being eight present, a

quorum has been established.

First, I want to welcome everyone to our first regional hearing of this Senate Select Committee on Congressional Redistricting. My name is Phil King. I am grateful to Lt. Governor Dan Patrick for the opportunity to chair this important committee.

I also want to introduce our Vice Chair, Senator Brandon Creighton, and our members, Senator Chuy Hinojosa, Senator Boris Miles, Senator Brian Hughes, Senator Carol Alvarado, Senator Angela Paxton, Senator Kevin Sparks, and Senator Tan Parker.

And members, I will give each of you a few minutes to speak here in a bit before we start public testimony.

As posted, we will focus on the South Texas and Central Texas region today, including Bexar County and Travis County and the Rio Grande Valley regions. If you are interested in another part of the state, you're still certainly welcome to participate here today.

This is the first of four scheduled regional hearings. Please note that the registration for this hearing -- not to watch it online but to testify -- has closed, and the Registration will close 12 hours in advance of the upcoming hearings.

Those dates and focus areas are posted on the committee website, but will include Saturday with a focus on North Texas and the DFW region, Monday, East Texas, including Harris County, Greater Harris County region, and Tuesday, West Texas, including the El Paso and Panhandle regions. There will be additional public hearings if and when a bill is considered by the committee.

Please note that we will still be working off of the 2020 census data, as is required in redistricting. And when we think about it, hearings actually on that data and on the demographics within it date back to 2019, when the Senate and the House also began to have regional hearings. And then hearings, of course, began in 2021. Those were generally virtual at the time, and then again in 2023.

And of course, the House is having hearings as -- during this special as well. So, there's a lot of public hearings that have been held on the census data and the demographics, and there will be a lot held during this special session, both in the Senate, both virtual as well as in-person here at the Capitol when we begin to get -- if we begin to consider a bill, which I anticipate we will. But, again, everyone is welcome here today, regardless of if your

testimony focuses on South Central, South and Central Texas, or another region.

Please bear with us throughout these regional hearings as we collect public testimony via this video conference. And I know that sometimes, particularly 'till we get in a rhythm, there may be some technical difficulties that can come up. We'll just work through those.

Also note that members may have to walk in and out periodically throughout the meeting. So, if you haven't spent a lot of time watching Senate committees before, if we're going to be here for six or eight or 10 hours -- however long it takes -- just like you, we need to get up and take a quick break at times or grab a cup of coffee.

So, please know that if anyone walks out and they walk into the back: one, they still have staff here monitoring. They also can hear all the testimony and have monitors in the back. So, just because they walk out, please don't take that as any indication of a lack of interest on their part.

I do also want to point out that there are other options for members of the public to provide input if they are unable to testify today or at the future hearings or just didn't make the registration

cutoff for today.

You are welcome to register for another regional hearing and provide testimony at that time. The other three hearings are still open for registration and again will be until 12 hours before the hearing begins and again later there will, of course, be hearings here at the Capitol.

You are also able to submit written comments at any time throughout the special session in the public input portal that can be found on the committee website. The portal will remain available throughout the redistricting process.

Submitted comments -- and you can also add attachments to those, and you can frankly provide your own map or anything else you wish to -- but those submitted comments are shared with the senators and are posted on the committee's website for public viewing.

So, please take advantage of that portal. We've already had some people using it. This hearing is also live-streamed and will be archived for public viewing on the Senate's website indefinitely. Members, before we get started and get into more detail on why we are specifically here today, I would like to lay out for consideration the committee rules for the 89th legislature.

The committee rules are identical to what the redistricting committee passed in 2021 and again in 2023, with updated references and in the name of this committee. We dropped off a physical copy of the rules to your office on Tuesday and sent it via email and a copy is also available currently in the committee drop box.

Are there any questions regarding the committee rules? I think they're pretty boilerplate.

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: If not, Senator Creighton moves adoption. Is there objection?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Hearing none, the committee rule...

(Indicating gesture.)

THE CHAIR: Oh, I'm sorry. Senator Alvarado, yes, as well.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Registering my "no" vote.

THE CHAIR: All right. Why don't we go ahead and just take a public vote on that? The clerk will call the roll.

THE CLERK: Senator Alvarado.

SENATOR ALVARADO: No.

THE CLERK: Senator Hinojosa.
SENATOR HINOJOSA: Nay.
THE CLERK: Senator Hughes.
SENATOR HUGHES: Yes.
THE CLERK: Senator Miles.
SENATOR MILES: No.
THE CLERK: Senator Parker.
SENATOR PARKER: Yes.
THE CLERK: Senator Paxton.
SENATOR PAXTON: Aye.
THE CLERK: Senator Sparks.
SENATOR SPARKS: Yes.
THE CLERK: Senator Creighton.
VICE CHAIR: Aye.
THE CLERK: Senator King.
SENATOR KING: Aye.
THE CHAIR: I first recognize that Senator Hughes is with us -- and there being six "ayes" and three "nays," the rules are adopted. Thank you, members. And Senator Alvarado. I'm sorry. Please, anyone speak up if I'm not seeing them today.

Why are we here today? The Governor has added the subject of congressional redistricting to the special session call, and we are here today in response to that charge.

The legislature will be looking at all the issues Governor Abbott has placed on the call, including, of course, as we are here today, congressional redistricting.

I cannot speak to what the outcomes will be with redistricting, but I do know that hearing from Texans is a critical part of that process. We want to hear from Texans in all parts of the state about your local communities and what you believe we should take into consideration as we take up this issue of congressional redistricting.

I believe these regional hearings provide meaningful opportunities for input and discussion about communities of interest and other matters critical to the subject of redistricting. My hope is that this online format will allow for more people to participate without having to travel to a hearing. For example, if we were today in Dallas/Fort Worth, people having to drive from counties far away from Dallas/Fort Worth. I hope that this format will avoid that need for travel, need for childcare, need to miss a full day of work, the expenses of travel, et cetera.

In other words, I hope this proves to be more convenient to the public, and I hope it provides

more input than we would otherwise had.

I want to thank everybody here today, online and in person, for your participation. Please note that since we are on a video conference, we are unable to hear in-person testimony today in-the-building testimony as stated in the posting for this hearing. Again, there will be opportunity for in-person testimony in the future if and when a bill, a map is heard. And there is always the opportunity to submit written comments at any time through the online portal.

Just some quick logistics. I'd like to give everybody a brief overview of the process for today's video conference testimony. Everyone that registered to testify -- and we have over 100 -- and has signed onto the video conference link should be in the Zoom waiting room.

You cannot view the hearing from the waiting room, so you should continue to view the livestream that's available on the Senate website via the link that is visible in the waiting room so you will know when you have been called to testify.

For those in the waiting room, please make sure your screen name matches the name you used to register. When we begin public testimony, I will call the witnesses in small groups. When I call your name,

committee staff will admit you from the waiting room into the video conference.

Until your name is called, you will remain in the waiting room and you will have to watch the livestream in a separate browser to follow along with the hearing. Again, this can be found on the Senate website, and a link to that website is visible in the waiting room. If you need to step away from the hearing, for any reason, you may leave the waiting room and rejoin when you are able, as long as the hearing, of course, is still underway.

When your name is called and it is your turn to testify, turn off your video, but keep yourself muted until I recognize you to speak. The mute unmute button can be found at the bottom of your screen.

Remember, when you're called on to testify, you should mute or close your live stream player. If you leave the live stream going, there will be an echo. It's kind of like you've probably seen before. Someone's being interviewed on a radio news show and they still have the radio on in the background, so you're hearing it twice. The same thing would happen.

So, when you're actually testifying with the committee, just mute or turn off your live stream so

that you're not hearing that -- that echo.

Once recognized, you may unmute your microphone. Your audio and your video will be heard and seen by both the committee members and the public. Once I call your name, you will have an opportunity to provide your testimony to the committee.

The committee members are certainly available to ask questions. So, please be aware they may ask questions. I will have you state your name and whether you're testifying on behalf of just yourself or an organization, or yourself and an organization.

So, everyone has an opportunity to participate, and that is very important to the senators sitting here. I asked the witnesses to limit their testimony to two minutes. That seems very short, but two and three minutes is very common for us to use during the hearing processes for all our committees.

And, of course, the senators can ask you questions, and that time will not be counted against your time. Although I don't want to cut anyone off, we want to be mindful that other witnesses are still waiting. So, let's all try, if we can, today to be very concise because we really want to hear from everybody and we want to do it in an efficient manner. There will be a timer on the top-right corner of your screen so

that you can see how much time you have left.

And, and if you run over, I'll just ask you to politely stop at that point. If a witness before you has input similar to yours, there's nothing wrong with just referencing their testimony and saying that you agree if that's what you wish to do. We're also glad to hear from you as well.

Again, Senators will have the opportunity to ask questions which will not count against your allotted time. When you're finished with your testimony, you will be released from the video conference and of course, can continue to watch the rest of the hearing on the live stream. The live stream link, again, can be found on the Senate's website.

Also note that if you are having technical difficulties with your video or audio, committee staff will -- you may be breaking up or something of that nature -- the committee staff will move you back into the waiting room and give you an opportunity to troubleshoot the issue, and we can call you back in the room with the next round of witnesses.

If you need technical assistance, you can contact Zoom Customer Support. You can visit: Zoom.US/join, or call Zoom customer service at 1-800-799-9666. 1-800-799-9666.

You can also call our committee office at 512-463-0030, 512-463-0030, if you're having issues, and we'll try to help you get worked through that.

Someone suggested that if you're having a lot of trouble, just find the youngest child in your home or office, and they'll be able to figure it out for you. That's the way it is at my house anyway.

Members, if there are no questions, I would like to give an opportunity for each of you to address the public, and then we'll jump right into public testimony. Senator Creighton.

SENATOR CREIGHTON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm thankful for the Lieutenant Governor appointing me to the Senate Special Committee on Congressional Redistricting. I'm looking forward to serving as your vice chair and with all the members on this dais and very capable members that I respect very much.

I'm very thankful that every member of the public will have their opportunity to testify through the process, and I'm eager to get started. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Senator Hinojosa.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: Thank you,

Mr. Chairman.

And I've been on the redistricting committee numerous times, I guess, and regular sessions and special sessions.

For me, this work that we will be doing is very important. But I must point out that we just did redistricting in 2021, and those districts are now being challenged in a federal court in El Paso. My opinion and my take is that this special session where they place on the call redistricting issues are not necessary, are not needed, for the simple reason that when we drew this district in 2021, they were supposed to be race blind.

In addition to that, it just took, as a factor, the common interest of communities. But the reality is that if you look at what's happening here, we have a letter from the Department of Justice singling out four congressional districts. The congressional districts are all minority coalitions or majority minority, and they are represented by minority -- either African American or Hispanic congressional representatives -- and they're being targeted that they are unconstitutional.

And, from my perspective, they are being targeted for simple reason that they want to do away

with minority representation and it's a race-based type of targeting is unconstitutional.

One more point, Mr. Chairman and members, and I think that this is very important: That is that the letter from the Department of Justice did not say that coalition districts, which are made up of Hispanics or African Americans are unconstitutional.

The issue, really, was whether Article 2 of the Voting Rights Act applied to coalition districts. That is where you have the Hispanics and African Americans get together to create a majority district. There was nothing in that opinion, Petteway v. Galveston where there was any mention of minority coalition districts being unconstitutional as stated in the DOJ letter.

For those reasons, I think this redistricting committee hearings are not needed, but we're moving forward based on the Department of Justice letter. To me it is unconstitutional to target minority districts and based on race. Thank you. Mr. Chairman and members.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Senator Miles.

SENATOR MILES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I want to apologize to all of those that have suffered, not only the floods of Kerrville, but all

of those citizens across the state of Harris County, the City of Harris County, all the way down to the Panhandle. Because instead of focusing on flood mitigation, disaster recovery, we're here talking about redistricting maps that we haven't even seen yet.

Second, I want to apologize to all of you who are going to be watching us on computers from your public library because it's the only way you can have your voices heard. I know that myself and Senator Alvarado requested there be a personal testimony option so that we could hear from the widest swath of people, especially those that may not own computers and be fortunate enough to have broadband Internet access. Mr. Chairman, I quite frankly, think it's irresponsible to ignore that there is a digital divide in the State of Texas now for the reason that we're here today, to further gerrymander Texas more than it's already been gerrymandered.

Mr. Chairman, we cannot pretend that this mandate from President Trump is not about race. The DOJ letter is a hit list, and we all know that. It is a hit list targeting opportunity districts in the State's congressional districts with strong black and brown representation. This is voter suppression. This is not about census or population changes or constituent

or the Constitution at all.

This diminishes, dilutes, and destroys the votes of black and brown as more important than we could be attacking and addressing. This body should focus on, instead of punishing, the racist agenda and pushing the racist agenda of the sitting president, Donald J. Trump.

All regular session, members, we heard bill after bill, debate after debate, of how DEI programs were no longer needed and how far we've come. And yet, on July 25, 2025, just a couple of months later, we are here in this hearing in a mid decade redistricting, and it's all about race. Black and brown folks can't even vote in the State of Texas in peace.

You know, I've often said, members from the Senate floor, our strength of Texas is in our diversity. And until we embrace it, we will not be as strong as we possibly can be. It's not redistricting. This is not about redistricting. As I said before, this is rigged districting. It is quite frankly disrespectful to every black and brown citizen of this State, quite frankly, Mr. Chairman.

(Clapping in the audience.)

THE CHAIR: Thank you, Senator. And I know there's a lot of emotion in this, and interest.

But we would prefer people not clap or something during a hearing. And that's just true in any hearing. But we're so glad you're here today. Senator Hughes.

SENATOR HUGHES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I'm glad to be on this committee. Thank you for taking the helm. You have a lot of experience, maybe as much as anybody in the legislature, if not more, with the law and appropriate fair processes. And so, I'm looking forward to the testimony at each of the hearings and also all the public input we receive. And, and once the process of looking at maps begins, I'm looking forward to participating in that, and I'm glad to be on your committee. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Senator Alvarado.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me again return to the question that I asked when we were on the Senate floor: Why are we here? And I know you, y' all have answered this in different forms and different platforms. We're here because the Governor put this on the call.

Well, you know, usually when things are put on the call for special session, it's something left over from the regular session, maybe a bill that needed to be tweaked, maybe just something that needed to be

amended on a bill.

But we didn't have anything to do with redistricting in the regular session. Nobody said a word about the congressional maps, the congressional lines. Why are we undertaking the highly-unusual process of redistricting five years early without a court order, without a law that was passed in the regular session, or new census data that requires us to do so?

The current congressional map was drawn in 2021 following the 2020 census. That's the way it goes. The census is done, and then we do redistricting. The census gave Texas, not one, but two new congressional districts.

Due to explosive population growth, 95 percent came from minority communities, communities of color, with the majority of that 95 percent being Latino. So, we contributed to that growth. But that growth did not translate into increased representation. Instead, the number of Latino majority districts -- it was reduced from 8 to 7.

So, just to be clear, again, we were responsible for the growth, but then our representation was reduced. While White Texans, just 40 percent of the population growth, control 74 percent of Texas's

districts. That's 28 out of 38.

This map is already being challenged in court for diluting minority voting power and now based solely on a letter from the DOJ which is riddled with errors, and that is putting it lightly.

The Governor has called a special session to make that map even worse. The DOJ letter may makes claims that certain majority/minority districts were drawn based on impermissible racial reasons and must be dismantled. But since 2021, state leaders have insisted they did not consider race when they drew the map. We heard this on the floor time and time again, over and over.

In fact, if you combine the number of times that it was said that the maps were legal, they were constitutional, and that they were race blind, 34 times, and y' all voted for these maps. Nobody had concerns about those maps, and nobody has said anything since then. And Adam Kincaid -- and I talked a little bit about him on the floor the other day -- he is the Virginia, non-Texan Virginia resident who drew the current map.

He testified, in court, last month, as recent as last month, that the maps were drawn "race blind." So, I can't help but ask the question: Did he

commit perjury?

The DOJ letter makes claims at certain majority-minority districts must be dismantled based on a complete misstatement of the Petteway case. And I'm glad that Senator Hinojosa referenced that. It's unclear whether this is an intentional misstatement to provide a pretext.

Regardless, the DOJ falsely concludes those districts are unconstitutionally drawn. In addition, the DOJ letter includes Congressional District 29, something I happen to know a lot about, a district I am very familiar with because I was a very young college student advocating for this district to be a Latino opportunity District.

I also worked in Congress as a staffer for this Congressional District. It has always been a Latino opportunity district or Latino majority district since it was created in 1991. It has never been a majority/minority district. And now the DOJ itself is demanding that race be used to dismantle districts precisely based on their racial composition. This is an intentional racial discrimination, pure and simple.

The Supreme Court has said, "dismantling districts based on race, especially when they elect minority preferred candidates, violates the

Constitution."

I don't know about y' all, but I don't want to be involved in anything that is unconstitutional. We are being asked to reverse engineer the racial composition of legally-drawn Congressional Districts 9, 18, 29 and 33, and target them for elimination. This is not compliance with the Voting Rights Act. In fact, it's a clear violation of it.

Let's not kid ourselves here. This is not just about partisanship. It's about undermining the minority voting strength yet again. This legislature must not be complicit in this unconstitutional and racially discriminatory scheme. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, Senator. Senator Paxton.

SENATOR PAXTON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Committee members. I also just appreciate the opportunity to serve on the committee. I appreciate the Lieutenant Governor appointing me, and I look forward to working with all of you. I look forward to hearing the public input that we'll hear today, and then, of course, working through the process as the committee continues to do the work on this important

matter. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Senator Sparks, I guess, would be next.

SENATOR SPARKS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members. Yeah, I too, this my first opportunity to actually be a part of the redistricting process. I look forward to that, and I'm thankful for the confidence the Lieutenant Governor put me on this committee. So, thank you.

THE CHAIR: Senator Parker.

SENATOR PARKER: Well, thank you, Chairman King, for your leadership. I'm very grateful to the Lieutenant Governor for putting me on the committee. I look forward to the conversation and the process and to hearing the feedback from the people of Texas, and working with each of my colleagues here on the dais. So, again, thank you for your leadership, Chairman King, and look forward to working with everyone.

THE CHAIR: Thanks, Senator Parker. I think we can now, if anyone -- does anyone have any other...?

SENATOR ALVARADO: Yes, sir.

THE CHAIR: Senator Alvarado.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you. I do have

a question for you.

Mr. Chairman, I sent a letter earlier this week asking for some legal experts to testify. And thank you for accommodating that. I appreciate you and your team helping to coordinate that.

I did want to follow up on a specific individual that I asked about. Will Mr. Harmeet [sic] -- I'm sorry, Ms. Harmeet, Dhillon, the DOJ attorney who wrote the July 7 letter be called to testify in front of the committee at today's hearing or any of the following hearings?

THE CHAIR: Thank you. And, yes, we're happy -- for any of the members -- if you have anyone specific that you would like to have testify, we'll -- if they want to register, we'll be happy to accommodate and put them up early.

She has not. I have not invited her. I do not know her and have not had any Contact with the DOJ before or since that letter was issued. And I have not issued a specific invitation to her. Frankly, I'm not sure how to approach that. My only -- the only thing I know about the DOJ letters, I read it just as you did. I do not know any of the -- I haven't seen any of the facts or data that purports to support it. And though I've read the litigation team, the attorney for

the Office of the Attorney General of Texas, I read their response to the Court that was written and that was filed in response to that letter.

And, of course, I read the Court's order, and I have not had any other role and have no other knowledge of that. And, at this time, I don't have any intention to invite her to testify. I think that's -- that's something that's before the courts and something that needs to remain there.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Well, respectfully, I would disagree with that. Because that is what sparked this whole thing. Well, one of the things that sparked this whole reason why we're here -- and I think it's important that we be able to ask questions of the person that wrote that letter that then triggered Governor Abbott to calling -- putting this on the call for special session. So, I want to just make that request.

The second question is: Senator Miles and I, and he references earlier, sent you a letter asking whether or not in-person testimony would be allowed. And I just want to ask again, will we be able to hear from these constituents in person?

THE CHAIR: We certainly will have public hearings, in person hearings, if a bill is taken up or considered by this committee, which I expect one

will be at some point.

And those will be conducted in the normal manner for any bill being considered by any Senate committee. And, of course, public testimony is always allowed at those.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And just one last thing. I don't recall if this was -- if we talked about this offline or before or after the meeting started, but yesterday the House Redistricting Committee limited the testimony to five hours. And that was, I think, problematic for, for many. So, I just wanted to reconfirm. You did say that that will not happen here. We're going to continue until everyone who signed up has the opportunity to speak. Is that correct?

THE CHAIR: Yes. And, again, one of the reasons that I thought it would be good to use virtual testimony is because I thought it would be easier for people to participate from all around the state. And I thought we could probably hear more witnesses in that way.

Like I said, we've got a little over 100 that have registered today. I would really like us to work all the way through that. I will say to anyone that's online, if you signed up, and maybe it's 3:00 or

4:00 o'clock and you haven't been called yet and you've got to go pick up kids or something like that, know that you can register for tomorrow's hearing up until 10:00 p.m. tonight.

And so, if for some reason you have to leave and we haven't gotten to you yet today, please know that you can sign up until 10:00 o'clock tonight for Saturday's hearing. And, frankly, if you'll call our office and let us know what happened, we'll try to move you up to the front of the line for Saturday.

But I want us to get through everyone today. And if that means we go pretty late, we'll go pretty late. But I'd also like us to be as expeditious and efficient as possible. Because I know people have other things to do wherever they're at, and I would like to -- I'm hoping, if we have 100 witnesses and it's two minutes a piece -- and the math is pretty simple, and I know that we'll have a lot of questions -- but I'm hoping we can finish up here tonight by, at the latest 6:00 or 7:00 o'clock.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Members, any...

SENATOR MILES: Mr. Chairman...

THE CHAIR: Senator Miles.

SENATOR MILES: Mr. Chairman, I'm not -- I'm a little confused. Because the rules that y' all just voted in, that my colleagues and I voted "no" against that were brought in, and I read Rule Number 16, I read it as -- as if it's to say that Ms. Dhillon could be subpoenaed by this committee. Did I read that wrong?

THE CHAIR: Yes, the committee --

SENATOR MILES: Did I read that wrong?

THE CHAIR: -- the committee has the power to propel [sic] -- to compel the attendance and testimony of witnesses at committee meetings by a record vote of not less than two thirds of its members.

SENATOR MILES: And that's the rules y' all just voted in?

THE CHAIR: Yes, sir. That is the committee rules.

SENATOR MILES: So, respectfully, you stated that it would be a little awkward. Awkward, if we just subpoena her? I mean, that's what we just voted on to do, y' all just voted on to do.

THE CHAIR: Well, it would take a motion and a two-thirds vote to subpoena any witness to testify.

SENATOR MILES: But we just voted a rule in that says we can subpoena. We have the subpoena

power. You just did that just five minutes ago.

THE CHAIR: Yes, we do. But, unless I'm reading the rule wrong, the committee shall have the power to compel the attendance and testimony of witnesses at committee meetings by a record vote of not less than two-thirds of its members as provided in Senate Rule 11.20(a).

SENATOR MILES: Respectfully, then, is it okay if I make a motion from the dais for this -- for this body --

THE CHAIR: We...

SENATOR MILES: -- this committee to subpoena Ms. Dhillon?

THE CHAIR: Yes, certainly. We would certainly, if you wish to make that motion --

SENATOR MILES: Yeah.

THE CHAIR: -- you can bring it up at this time.

SENATOR ALVARADO: And I'll second it if you need a second.

THE CHAIR: You second. Let's --

UNIDENTIFIED SENATOR: Can we get some discussion on that before we -- I understand -- I didn't want to interrupt you. I have a question. Before we vote, I just have a question. I don't

interrupt. I'll wait to be recognized. I'm sorry.

THE CHAIR: Just that -- Just...

UNIDENTIFIED SENATOR: Is it -- is this appropriate time, Mr. Chairman, to?

THE CHAIR: All right. So, we've had them -- we've had a -- so could you formally state your motion?

SENATOR MILES: My motion is that we, this body, this committee, subpoena, issued a subpoena for Ms. Dhillon to appear before this body.

THE CHAIR: Ms. Dhillon being the -- the signer of the DOJ letter --

SENATOR MILES: Correct, sir.

THE CHAIR: -- that was discussed previously --

SENATOR MILES: Yes, sir.

THE CHAIR: -- in the case, that's the motion before the committee, and a second?

MS. ALVARADO: I second it.

THE CHAIR: And we have a second. Is there any discussion on that motion, Senator Hughes?

SENATOR HUGHES: Mr. Chairman, thank you. And I -- and I have a question. I don't know the answer to this -- but it might be relevant for us to know -- I do know that the Committee on State affairs

has used this subpoena power recently.

The power is there. It's important. And it's important that we have that as a tool. This is a question -- and maybe legislative counsel or somebody can tell us -- I don't know if our Subpoena power extends beyond Texas. At least in the case of state affairs, we've -- and it may. I just don't know the answer. It may. But I just want to throw that out there as we have this discussion.

SENATOR MILES: And we won't know unless we subpoena her.

SENATOR HUGHES: What I mean is that it's probably -- it's probably in the law. It's probably in the rules or in statute. I just don't know off the top of my head whether we have subpoena power for folks beyond Texas. We may. I generally don't know, and someone may know. That's all I wanted to -- that I wanted to point out. Thanks.

(Indicating gesture.)

THE CHAIR: Senator Hinojosa.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I -- maybe a better way to do it, I'm just suggesting, is send an invitation. Give her a time limit, and then if she refuses to respond, then...

SENATOR MILES: Well, that's what we

requested earlier.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: Okay.

SENATOR MILES: That was our first request that wasn't followed through with. So, at this time, I'm asking that we make please subpoena. Because we did, Senator Hinojosa, asked for an invitation to be sent to her.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: Have we sent that invitation?

SENATOR MILES: Mr. Chairman?

THE CHAIR: I'm -- I'm sorry?

SENATOR MILES: He's wanting to know if you sent the invitation for her to appear.

THE CHAIR: So, we certainly discussed that. I -- what I would like to do with regard to the motion is...

SENATOR MILES: No. Senator Hinojosa was asking if you sent an invitation for her to appear per our request earlier.

THE CHAIR: I have not sent one. That is correct. And I would prefer not to send one. Because I think, again, we're stepping into the litigation that's going forward, and I just think we're confusing two different issues. We're here today simply gathering, taking public input, on the topic of

congressional redistricting, not specifically on the DOJ letter.

And that, as I understand, is a matter that's currently before the court. And so, I would be very reluctant to invite her.

There is a -- I would also would ask that -- I don't want to call the question on the motion because I would like the opportunity to consult with parliamentarian because there is some suggestion on our rules that we cannot do this -- at least not where we're at today.

So, with your permission, if you would not mind withdrawing that motion, and then give us time to consult with the parliamentarian with regard to the subpoena power and of the committee. What's been pointed out to me is that.

SENATOR MILES: Well, why don't we table this motion for us to discuss --

THE CHAIR: Yeah.

SENATOR MILES: -- maybe on a break?

THE CHAIR: What I believe I'm reading is the fact that we don't have any power to --

SENATOR MILES: Where you reading from, sir?

THE CHAIR: -- issue a subpoena. And

so, if you wouldn't mind not...

SENATOR PAXTON: Mr. Chairman, where are you reading from?

SENATOR MILES: Where you reading from?

THE CHAIR: All right. In SR5 that we passed on Monday, in Rule 2, Subsection F, states [reading] the committee may not consider or take formal action on a specific bill, resolution, or other nonprocedural matter during a regional hearing, except for the adoption of permanent rules and at an initial meeting held in the Capitol.

So, your motion could be made at a future time, but not during the regional hearings, which we're conducting over the next four days.

SENATOR PAXTON: Okay.

SENATOR MILES: Future times as...? Can speak to what the future time may be?

THE CHAIR: Yeah. And I need to consult with the parliamentarian, but I think that probably...

SENATOR MILES: So, why don't we just table this motion until we get all that worked out --

THE CHAIR: That's what -- that's...

SENATOR MILES: -- respectfully?

THE CHAIR: That would be my request.

SENATOR MILES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Mr. Chairman, and that -- that is fine. I'm -- I'm agreeable to that. How about in the meantime? Can we take up what Senator Hinojosa suggested that we send --

SENATOR HINOJOSA: A letter.

SENATOR ALVARADO: -- a letter invitation asking her to appear in the meantime while we try to figure out the subpoena part? And I know Senator Hughes asked about inviting someone that was out of state. Is that right? Didn't the State affairs committee invite the CEO of BlackRock, Mr. Larry Fink.

SENATOR CREIGHTON: So, we so we -- the way State affairs did it, once the decision was made in the right setting, invitations were issued, and then for those folks who said -- who didn't want to come that way -- then the threat of subpoena was there. So, whether we have the authority to subpoena someone out of State, I said, "I don't..." that's what I said, "don't know the answer to." But that's -- that was our experience over in State affairs.

SENATOR MILES: So, to move it along, why don't we...

THE CHAIR: I think I can clean it up here real quickly.

SENATOR MILES: Yeah.

THE CHAIR: I think I am fine with sending an invitation.

SENATOR MILES: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: I do wish to consult legal counsel about that.

SENATOR MILES: Okay.

THE CHAIR: Because I am concerned that -- that we do have the cases Senator Hinojosa referenced going on in El Paso. They are in the post trial briefing stage. This letter was written. There was a -- that generated a motion by the -- by the plaintiffs to reopen for additional testimony.

The court, the AG's Office, the litigation team, filed a response to that, which I have referenced. And then the court issued an order on that. So, right now, this letter is now, as I see it, a part of that litigation. And so we, before I issued an invitation, I would want to consult with legal counsel.

SENATOR MILES: All right. So, I'm confused. You said that you would go ahead and issue the invitation, and then as we're doing that...

THE CHAIR: I said, I think -- I said, "I think I'm fine with, with issuing an invitation."

SENATOR MILES: Okay.

THE CHAIR: But I want to consult with

legal counsel.

SENATOR MILES: On the subpoena?

THE CHAIR: At the same time, I don't want -- I don't want us to get drug in or to get that lawsuit drugged in, drug into what we're doing here today.

And so, I just want to talk to legal counsel about that. But I think issuing an invitation, if that's what the committee desires, I think that's something we could do.

SENATOR MILES: Thank you, sir. So, we're going to issue an invitation, and then you're going to consult with...?

THE CHAIR: I'm going to consult with legal counsel. And, unless there's a really good reason for not doing that, then I'll come back to the committee and ask the committee if that's what you wish me to do. And if you do, then I'll -- we'd be would be happy to issue that invitation.

(Indicating gesture.)

THE CHAIR: Senator Alvarado.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Mr. Chairman, do you have legal representation now?

THE CHAIR: I -- I hope I will by the end of the weekend. We...

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay.

THE CHAIR: I've interviewed some firms, and -- and some individual attorneys -- and we have, in some cases, run into conflicts. It's a very small universe of people that do redistricting law. I am talking with someone right now. And I hope by the end of the weekend to have -- to be able to say that I have counsel for the committee chair.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Well, I wish we were doing this -- that we could follow through with the subpoena. And I'm going to remind everybody that the DOJ letter does include a deadline for the proposed maps by August 7th. So, time is of the essence. This is the letter that this individual that we're trying to hear from wrote.

So, I think we have to keep that in mind. If we're going to send an invitation, I think there has to be a very quick turnaround for that person to respond, Ms. Dhillon, and then followed by a subpoena if that is not answered. But, again, I mean, we're talking about August 7th. That's right around the corner.

THE CHAIR: It is. I'm not sure what happens after August 7th.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Well, we don't know.

Because we haven't been able to talk to this person.

THE CHAIR: Okay. Well, again, I want to move on to the witnesses, if we can. I think we've established that we cannot do a subpoena at this point in the process. I said that I was certainly open to a letter --

SENATOR MILES: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: -- of invitation, if that's what the committee desires. But I want to consult with legal counsel in advance of that, and I should be able to do that pretty quickly.

SENATOR MILES: So, we look forward to the letter of invitation going out.

THE CHAIR: We'll try to get there.

SENATOR MILES: Mr. Chairman, that's -- I think we're getting a play on words here.

THE CHAIR: Well, I, I, I -- I, again, I want to say, I don't have any objection to issuing an invitation. I think that's fine.

SENATOR MILES: But can we -- we will issue an invitation?

THE CHAIR: I just want to make sure. Because that's now gotten all pulled into the litigation, and there's been an order, a court order regarding that or in response to it.

There's been filings and a motion to reopen and the trial. And I just would like to talk to the legal counsel before...

SENATOR MILES: Issuing a Subpoena or issuing a letter?

THE CHAIR: Issuing a letter would be my -- I think would be the first step, don't you? It's hard to speak to someone if you hadn't invited them first.

SENATOR MILES: So you want to -- I'm confused, sir. I just want clarification. I'm not trying to belabor this. You need to talk to legal counsel to just issue an invitation?

THE CHAIR: So...

SENATOR MILES: "Yes" or "no?"

THE CHAIR: I said I think it's reasonable to issue an invitation --

SENATOR MILES: So...

THE CHAIR: -- and I agree that that's reasonable.

SENATOR MILES: Okay.

THE CHAIR: And I'm happy to do it --

SENATOR MILES: All right.

THE CHAIR: --if that's what the committee wishes.

SENATOR MILES: That's what...

SENATOR ALVARADO: Sure. Do we need a motion?

SENATOR MILES: Do we need a motion?

THE CHAIR: Not just yet.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay.

THE CHAIR: But I want to talk to legal counsel first simply because when that letter was written, it generated a lot of activity in the lawsuit that Senator Hinojosa referenced in El Paso before the three-judge panel.

And I just want to make sure that having testimony from that invited witness would not create collateral issues that we're not thinking of here right now.

SENATOR MILES: Right.

THE CHAIR: But the general concept of inviting the -- I believe it was the director of the Civil Rights Division -- to come and testify, I have no objection to that at all --

SENATOR MILES: All right.

THE CHAIR: -- and -- if that's what the committee wishes -- but I just want to talk to counsel first. And I will do that very expeditiously.

SENATOR MILES: And, in summation,

Mr. Chairman, keep in mind, that letter is what got us right here today.

THE CHAIR: I understand.

SENATOR MILES: Okay.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Mr. Chairman, a clarification though, I -- I'm trying to understand how the El Paso issue, how that would have relevance on us issuing a simple invitation. Because the judge already ruled on that and denied to reopen the case.

THE CHAIR: At this time, if I remember the way it was written, "at this time."

SENATOR ALVARADO: So, how...

THE CHAIR: And so, I -- I think you're probably right. I just -- allow me the courtesy --

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay.

THE CHAIR: -- of checking with counsel to make sure there's not something we're not thinking of in -- at 11:00 a.m. on Friday morning.

SENATOR ALVARADO: And how long do you think that will take? Again, I'm just -- I'm concerned about the August 7 deadline that Ms. Dhillon put on us.

THE CHAIR: Okay. Well, I don't feel any pressure from that deadline. I feel like we're following up on the charge. The charge did not mention a August 7th deadline.

We're going to operate under the 30-day special session and all the time frames that are within it. And, hmm -- but I'm thinking I'll be able to answer you by tomorrow, if that's okay.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay.

THE CHAIR: Yeah.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. And, in the meantime, we're gonna table the motion? Is that right?

SENATOR MILES: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Yeah, I think -- did you -- I believe the motion was --

SENATOR MILES: Tabled.

THE CHAIR: -- withdrawn.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay.

SENATOR MILES: No. We're tabling it.

THE CHAIR: Okay.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Yeah. Thank you.

SENATOR MILES: Thank you, sir.

THE CHAIR: All right. Everybody good?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Anything else?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Okay.

SENATOR MILES: Sorry about that, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIR: No, no. That's a good discussion, and I'm glad we had it.

Let me go ahead, and I'm going call three witnesses, and we will take them in the order that I call. So, we now are open for public testimony.

As a reminder, the public testimony will be limited to two minutes. The Chair calls -- and think of this as being moved into the bullpen -- The Chair calls Sylvia Garcia, Congresswoman Sylvia Garcia, Ellen Katz and Gary Bledsoe. Now, Congresswoman Garcia will be the first to testify. And then after that we will go to Ellen Katz, and then to Mr. Bledsoe.

Again, just as a reminder, Ms. Katz and Mr. Bledsoe, if you would keep your -- you'll be muted at this point, and you'll need to unmute when you're formally called to testify. So with that, Congresswoman, are you with us?

CONGRESSWOMAN GARCIA: Hello.

THE CHAIR: Hey. Good morning. Thank you. I hope there wasn't any difficulty in getting online there, and although we...

CONGRESSWOMAN GARCIA: No. There wasn't. Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry. I just didn't hear you call my name.

THE CHAIR: Well, that's fine. Can you

hear me okay now?

CONGRESSWOMAN GARCIA: Yes, sir. I can. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: All right. And everyone knows who you are. But, just for the record, would you please state your name and your title and who you're representing today, yourself or an organization?

CONGRESSWOMAN GARCIA: I am Sylvia Garcia. I'm a congresswoman in District 29, one of the district said as cited in the DOJ letter. And I'm here testifying in my own behalf, and it's good to -- to see everybody.

I remember sitting in that -- those very chairs when I was on the Special Select Committee on Redistricting back in 2013 through 2014. So, good to be home again.

THE CHAIR: Well, welcome, and we're happy to hear your testimony. I did listen to your testimony in the House Committee yesterday as well.

CONGRESSWOMAN GARCIA: Well, then you'll see that there was a familiar ring. And I'll be ready to start whenever you suggest.

THE CHAIR: Proceed, please.

CONGRESSWOMAN GARCIA: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and to the Vice Chair and to all my

colleagues, many of them former colleagues.

It's good to be in the Senate, even though it's by video. I would have preferred to be there in person as I was yesterday in the House hearing. And I'm going to answer the question that my senator asks is like, "why are we here?"

Senator Alvarado, you're absolutely right. We should not be here today. We should be working on legislation to support families in the Hill Country after the devastating flooding, to provide resources for families who lost everything, for new warning systems to prevent future tragedies, and doing what is best for the safety and well being of Texans.

Instead, we are today playing political games to appease the felon in the White House in his lust to keep power. We are pretending that the Governor did not approve the very maps, the very maps he is now insisting must be changed. This political theater will hurt communities in my district, and it's just plain shameful.

And what do -- why don't we even have a map? Where are the maps? Why are we proceeding on a hearing when we don't even have maps to comment on? Are we committing today that once maps are in place, are put on the table, that we're going to have future hearings

so that those districts impacted can have a say?

Well, I'm waiting for that answer, but here we are. So, let me tell you about the 29th District, which I'm honored to represent. Our shared values and culture far outnumber our differences. We're a community that values faith, family, hard work, and service. From Lindale to Alding to Pasadena to Galinda Park to Jacinto City or South Houston, we are community, and we stick together. Ripping up the 29th District will silence the voice of these communities, and it would be a travesty.

The population growth in Texas is because of the Latino population growth, plain and simple. Ask any demographer. The Voting Rights Act protects districts like the 29th with common interests, priorities, and background.

Given this, I urge you to reject this partisan gerrymanding of Texas, reject the map from the felon in the White House, and do what's right for Texans. Texans want a map that they put together. We don't need a politician from the White House putting our map together. Thank you. And I yield back.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Members, are there any questions?

SENATOR ALVARADO: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Senator Alvarado.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Congresswoman, can you hear me?

CONGRESSWOMAN GARCIA: Yes, I can. Thank you.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. Thank you for your testimony. You and I have a lot of history with the 29th Congressional District. As I said, I was a student at U of H (University of Houston), and I attended hearings and participated in advocating for that Latino Opportunity District.

And then, if I recall, you ran for that office back in the first race for the Congressional District 29. Is that correct?

CONGRESSWOMAN GARCIA: I did. I came out third. And I always tell everybody, "I didn't win the gold, but I did get the -- did get the bronze."

SENATOR ALVARADO: You got there eventually. It has -- would you say that the 29th District is a coalition district or a Latino-majority district?

CONGRESSWOMAN GARCIA: Well, it's a Latino-majority district, but it's also, I would say, a coalition district. Because it does have a fairly -- I think it's about 20 to -- close to 25 percent African

American population. It's got a little around five percent mostly Vietnamese community population.

And so, you know, it's not race-based in the old sense of the word. You know, remember, it is an opportunity. And, obviously, I sought that opportunity in '92, and I didn't win. We didn't get a Latino in that seat until I won seven years ago. So, I think it's important to make note of that only because it doesn't always assure that a district will go to the community that's given the opportunity, you know.

And I think we need to underscore that. Because that's all they are. It's not based on race. It's based on just putting the minorities together. And, you know, and -- and Senator Miles, you're absolutely correct. Those districts that are listed in that letter, they're all minority urban districts, pure and simple.

Some -- someone can argue that, "no, we're not talking about race." Well, but if you just targeted four districts that are minority urban districts, what can anyone conclude from that?

SENATOR ALVARADO: Uh-huh. And I want to also point out that the 18th Congressional District has been without a representative for quite some time. I know there were other vacancies in Congress, and those

elections have already been held. Is that correct?

CONGRESSWOMAN GARCIA: Yes. Yes, ma'am.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Anyone else?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Congresswoman, thank you again for being here with us today.

CONGRESSWOMAN GARCIA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and best of luck to y' all.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. The Chair calls Ellen Katz. Ms. Katz, are you with us? There you are.

ELLEN KATZ: Yes, sir. Yeah. Hi.

THE CHAIR: We can hear you fine. And, again, I watched your testimony yesterday as well. So, please proceed, and if you would, just -- I know you know the drill -- but tell us your name, who you represent, and -- and please limit your testimony to two minutes.

ELLEN KATZ: Okay. Thank you. My name is Ellen Katz. I'm a law professor and Associate Dean at the University of Michigan Law School. I'm speaking here on my own in my personal capacity, not on behalf of the school. I'd like to thank the committee for the opportunity to be here and to Senator Alvarado for the invitation.

I'll be discussing what you've already been discussing, which is the July 7th letter from the Justice Department, the formal notice it gave the State of Texas of serious concerns about these four districts that it calls "coalition districts."

"Coalition districts" which it doesn't define, but are generally districts in which the combined population of two minority groups constitutes a majority of the district. I'm going to make three, I hope, quick points today.

First, the letter asserts that the districts violate the Voting Rights Act. They don't. There's a recent judicial decision that you've already mentioned that holds that the effects based prong of the Voting Rights Act -- that's Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act -- doesn't require Texas to draw these districts, but there's no authority whatsoever.

There's no claim that the very existence of these districts violates the Voting Rights Act. The second claim the letter makes is that the districts are unconstitutional. And here, the gist of that claim, is that the districts were drawn or otherwise reflect impermissible race-based considerations.

They don't -- again, Attorney General Paxton's letter on July 11, it cites the sworn testimony

from the prior litigation -- of an ongoing litigation that race was not considered whatsoever in drawing these four districts. They can't be unconstitutional, racial gerrymanders, or otherwise involved unconstitutional discrimination for that reason.

And my last point is -- and I want to say is, what I think, is the most important one -- and that is what this letter is instructing Texas to do. We're Texas, and to do, it would be illegal. The letter targets what it understands to be effective coalition districts, and then it calls on Texas to alter their racial composition to render them ineffective.

The Supreme Court has made clear that dismantling districts in this manner is constitutionally problematic. And were Texas to do what this letter instructs, it would not only be injecting race-based considerations into what it says was a race-neutral process. But, in so doing, it would be intentionally drawing district lines to destroy effective coalition districts. It amounts to intentional race-based discrimination, and I urge Texas to refuse to take such action.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Members, any questions?

(Indicating gesture.)

THE CHAIR: Senator Hinojosa.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you very much for your testimony. I do have a couple of questions as it relates to the Voting Rights Act and the Petteway v. Galveston City case by the 5th Circuit.

And, as I understand, the ruling just applied to Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, and it only dealt with an issue of whether or not coalition districts could make a claim that the voters were being diluted by redistricting. Is that your understanding of the case?

ELLEN KATZ: Yes. I think that's exactly right. The claim, the holding of the court in overruling circuit precedent, was that Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, the "effects-based" or what we call the "results-based prong" of that provision, does not require Texas to draw in the other states within the jurisdiction, within the 5th Circuit, to draw coalition districts in the first instance.

They don't. There's no obligation to do so. That's all it holds. It doesn't hold that coalition districts independently, the ones that exist, violate the Voting Rights Act. That's a -- that's an astounding proposition.

The mere fact that there's a district in which there are two minority groups with a population that -- that is a majority, that's just -- there's nothing problematic about that.

And, in fact, there are hundreds and possibly thousands of such districts throughout the country in which jurisdictions, applying neutral, traditional districting principles, draw districts and the resulting districts have populations of this sort.

The VRA has never -- never prohibited that. And the DOJ letter is flatly incorrect in suggesting and stating otherwise.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: And in the ruling itself, anywhere in the body of the ruling. Did the 5th Circuit declare coalition district as unconstitutional?

ELLEN KATZ: Yeah. No. It didn't reach that question at all. I mean, and it didn't read the question whether the failure to maintain a previous coalition district would be unconstitutional. My understanding is the district judge didn't rule on those issues because he initially found a violation of the Voting Rights Act.

And so, that's the issue that went up, and that's the issue that the Court found or held didn't require the drawing of the districts.

Which, again, is a very different question than whether the districts themselves are independently a violation of the statute.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: And the Court did not address the issue of violations of the 14th Amendment or 15th Amendment of the Constitution as I understand --

ELLEN KATZ: It did not.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: -- the opinion.

ELLEN KATZ: It did not. I mean, and it's worth enough -- if the committee's interested -- we can spend some time on what the DOJ letter is saying about constitutional violations and why these four districts are, in its view, unconstitutional.

These are -- I mean, they are not. They are unequivocally not. The claims the DOJ are making are simply, simply wrong.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: And the ruling, pretty narrow, narrow just to the claim on the dilution of the vote under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, and that's as narrow as it was.

ELLEN KATZ: Yes.

THE CHAIR: And as I read the letter from the DOJ, it seems to me that they have completely misrepresented and distorted the opinion and are now targeting only minority coalitions, and even minority

majority congressional districts.

Those, in your opinion, are those blatantly illegal under the Constitution?

ELLEN KATZ: I just want to say two things: No. They're not. The letter's assertion that these districts are unconstitutional is, in my view, fair, flatly wrong. The letter is strange in that one would think -- the claims are not even close. It's not like, "oh, we could have a debate about this; they are not unconstitutional."

And one of the critical reasons is the attorney general of the State's letter confirming that no race was -- that race was not taken into account in the drawing of these specific four districts.

The letter, nevertheless, the DOJ letter, nevertheless, relies on the mere racial composition of these districts, looks at their composition, and says, "oh, there must be something wrong." "They're unconstitutional." And, in fact, calls them unconstitutional racial gerrymanders. They can't be unconstitutional racial gerrymanders for the very reason Attorney General Paxton said they were not drawn based on race.

And, racial gerrymandered definition, definitionally, it requires that the jurisdiction

allowed race to predominate over traditional districting principles. That didn't happen here. These districts cannot be unconstitutional in that sense.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: One more question, and that is: The DOJ letter actually targeted Congressional District 9, 18, 29, and 33, which all those congressional districts are either minority coalition districts or majority minority districts. Is that targeting of those congressional districts unconstitutional?

ELLEN KATZ: I think it is. And I think your word "targeting" is exactly right. And it's why I think that for Texas to do what the Department of Justice is presently insisting that it does would be, to itself, violate the Constitution to inject race into what has, on the State's representation, been a race-neutral process.

And to dismantle effective coalition districts, coalition majority-minority coalition districts, in which, precisely because they are effective coalition districts, the letter -- I mean, and we talked about this a bit yesterday at the hearing yesterday -- the Supreme Court has told -- has said, "don't do this." And this is the Bartlett v. Strickland letter.

And we can get a little bit into the weeds talk decision, and we can get in the weeds talking about the difference between crossover districts and coalition districts. But the, the gist of that opinion, or on the relevant point of that opinion, was the Supreme Court, in talking about, what the Voting Rights Act requires of jurisdictions, also said the following -- and I'm just going to read the Court's words.

They said [reading] whatever Section 2 might require, if there were a showing that a state intentionally drew district lines in order to destroy an otherwise effective -- and they're talking about crossover districts, and you can sub in coalition districts here -- that would raise serious constitutional questions.

And that's precisely what the DOJ letter is asking, or instructing, rather, instructing Texas to do, to do what Bartlett said, "don't do." It targets what it understands to be an operational coalition district, and it calls on Texas to alter its racial composition so as to destroy them, to dismantle them and make them ineffective as coalition districts. And the Supreme Court has signaled that that is unconstitutional behavior.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: Thank you, Mrs. Katz, for your testimony.

THE CHAIR: Senator Miles.

SENATOR MILES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Attorney Katz, I want to thank you for making this plain and clear. Having three partially or wholly in my district of these congressional districts that are targeted by DOJ, you made it -- in the Supreme Court case of Bartland and Strickland -- and you've made it very simple to understand and how it applies to this particular incident. So, I want to thank you for that, ma'am.

ELLEN KATZ: Thank you.

SENATOR MILES: Thank you.

(Indicating gesture.)

THE CHAIR: Senator Alvarado.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ms. Katz, we appreciate you attending both hearings, both in the House and here. You mentioned the Bartlett/Strickland court case. And, you know, I said this earlier, that I don't want to be a part of anything that is unconstitutional.

And we have, you know, court cases. We have the Supreme Court telling us there's precedence for this being unconstitutional.

So, with that, and let's look back to what took place in the 2021 redistricting process, where it was said many times -- whether it was in hearings or on the Senate floor -- that the maps were legal, constitutional, and in compliance with the voter -- with the Voting Rights Act.

Even if the DOJ letter were correct, the State claimed here and at the trial, which was very recent, that the current maps were drawn without regard to race and the maps were adopted in 2021, changed the districts listed in the DOJ letter substantially.

What significance does that have?

ELLEN KATZ: I think it's entirely dispositive. There cannot be the violations that the letter is suggesting if the state drew these districts without consideration of race.

The Constitution requires intentional, race-based, intentional discrimination to be a violation, it requires that. The State has insisted that's not what it has done. There's no evidence, at least with regard to these four districts, that race was considered in any way when they were drawn. We have sworn testimony on that effect. They can't be unconstitutional or race-based unconstitutional conduct for that reason.

And the same for the Voting Rights Act. It can't. I mean, the intentional discrimination will also violate the Voting Rights Act. It cannot be the case here because of the way the districts were drawn.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Do you have any idea why the DOJ would send such a letter and target those particular congressional districts?

ELLEN KATZ: Yeah, that's not something I can speak to. I have only read the letter. Like you, I read that letter. If my students wrote that letter, I would give them a bad grade. Because it's a bad assessment of what the Voting Rights Act requires. It's a bad assessment of what the Constitution requires. The facts that we know make the claims that, the conclusions it's asserting, to be wrong. It's not close. It's not.

There's not like, oh, we can have a debate about that. There is -- given the representations from the State, the legal claims that the letter makes simply do not hold up. And, instead, I think, forces us to look at what the letter is, in fact, instructing Texas to do. Whatever its intent, what the letter is instructing Texas to do, is to dismantle these districts that were drawn as Texas has said, in a race-neutral manner. And to do precisely what the Supreme Court in Bartlett v. Strickland said, that raises a huge

constitutional problem. And that was not what they were talking about in Bartlett. That was not what they were talking about in the 5th Circuit of the Petteway case. It's something else entirely.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Well, and you hit some core points, is that, you know, I wish the leadership in this State -- and we have, you know, an Attorney General, and we have many lawyers in this building that should have nipped this in the bud and said, "stop, we're not going any further because what you're asking us to do is unconstitutional" -- but yet, here we are. Thank you.

SENATOR MILES: Mr. Chairman, one question, just one question.

THE CHAIR: Senator Miles.

SENATOR MILES: Ms. Katz, you stated that doing a map now would be illegal. Can you expound on that one more time for us?

ELLEN KATZ: So, I think I have to say something more precise than that. Leaving aside doing the map for any other reason, doing them -- redrawing these districts for the reasons the DOJ letter instructs -- would be, in my view, illegal. So, that's the claim I want to make.

THE CHAIR: Okay. Members, any other

questions?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Just one quick one, Ms. Katz, were you -- did you provide testimony in the El Paso case?

ELLEN KATZ: I did not.

THE CHAIR: Were you part of the plaintiff's team or one of the plaintiff's attorneys?

ELLEN KATZ: No. No.

THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you.

ELLEN KATZ: No anyone.

THE CHAIR: There's no other questions members?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Thank you for being here with us today, ma'am.

ELLEN KATZ: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: The Chair calls Gary Bledsoe. And, Mr. Bledsoe, you've testified many times before. I see you're here with us on the screen. Would you please state, just for the record, your name, title and the organization that you represent?

GARY BLEDSOE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My name is Gary Bledsoe. I'm president of the Texas NAACP. And great idea to bring Dr. Katz onto our team.

THE CHAIR: Well, welcome, and please proceed with your testimony. And we would ask you to keep it to two minutes.

GARY BLEDSOE: Thank you. To the Chair, Vice Chairs, and Members of the Committee in the legislature, the highly unusual mid-decade redistricting, like every other one before it, reminds us of the long unbroken history of efforts to silence and diminish the political powers of black Texans.

We need to remember that this is not just about political parties. It is about the systematic efforts to restrict the influence of people of color in this state. At this nation's founding, the Constitution enshrined the three-fifths compromise, counting black people as only three-fifths of a human being for the purpose of legislative representation.

And while our bodies were counted to inflate the power of slaveholding states, we had no vote, no real voice, and absolutely no ability to shape who represented us, even at the subhuman level. That compromise dehumanized my ancestors, turning them into tools to strengthen the political interests of those who would keep them in chains and set the foundation for centuries of racially-discriminatory laws and practices.

With this mid-decade redistricting,

Texas is moving back to that era and that system. The DOJ letter to Governor Abbott specifically targets three of the four African American opportunity districts where African American voters are able to elect their candidates of choice directly and one Latino district where Latinos are able to elect their candidates of choice directly.

Importantly, the 4th African American District may have been added for the hearing in Arlington next week. So, it seems as though there may be an effort to wipe out the slate in terms of African American representation in Congress and reinstitute the three-fifths compromise. The 9th, 18th and 30th are not just any districts. These are opportunities, each protected under the law as confirmed by both the DC Circuit and panels right here in Texas, as well as being admitted to by the State of Texas even in the current litigation.

The 29th is also a protected seat and was originally drawn by the court, as was the 30th, 9th and 30th. I have two minutes. I'll jump to the latter part of my testimony. Some important things for you to note:

Senator Huffman testified under oath that the map was drawn blind to race. Number two. The

map was drawn by individuals from the Governor's own political party who initially foreclosed attempts to form an already input in the process. Then after they provided limited opportunity, they did not respond to what they heard.

Number three, Senator Huffman said that the Attorney General of Texas reviewed the map and ensured the map did not violate the Voting Rights Act of the Constitution before they went forward with the map in question.

Fourth, whites are 40 percent of the Texas population, but controls 73 percent of its current congressional districts. And if they succeed in eliminating five districts that are now targeting the four in the letter, and one more, whites will control 87 percent of our districts.

Since 1980, Texas would have lost seats if the state only used its white population growth to determine the number of seats in which it was entitled -- to which it was entitled. Texas had 24 seats at the time, and has 38 now.

And all 14 new seats can safely be said to be due to Latino, African American, and Asian population increases. The message from history from the three-fifths rule to the present day is that counting

bodies alone does not mean granting people power or voice.

Our current process risks repeating those old sins by drawing lines that pack, split, and silence communities of color. I'm not here to call anyone a racist, but the actions we are viewing are racially discriminatory. At the critical moment we face now, I urge you to reject any plan that diminishes opportunity for our communities to participate in the political process.

You can stand with Jefferson Davis or you can stand with Abraham Lincoln. The choice is yours. Please reject this idea of engaging in mid decade redistricting now, honor the legacy of the Voting Rights Act, and let the court decision from El Paso come forward. Do draw maps in the future that recognize the true value and agency of every Texan. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Members, any questions? Senator Miles.

SENATOR MILES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Bledsoe, I want to thank you for your testimony here today and all of your testimonies and work that you've put in, in the past, for the great citizens of the State of Texas.

GARY BLEDSOE: Thank you, sir.

SENATOR MILES: I've just got one question: Can you recall of any victories that the State of Texas has had in courtrooms as it relates to redistricting in the history of Texas in the past?

GARY BLEDSOE: Well, Senator, that's a great question. Let me give you a little history on that because I think it's very important. Number one, our State has a real history of discriminating against black and brown voters, and that that occurred even when we had Democratic control. Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson famously testified to that during the last decade. But what we what we have seen is that there's always been a continuation and a history. In Texas, the white Texans went to the United States Supreme Court five times in 26 years, from Nixon v. Herndon to Turi v. Adams, to try to prevent African Americans from being able to vote in Texas. That last case was only in 1953. So, it's really, in many ways, not that long ago.

But what we have seen is, ever since the Voting Rights Act was adopted in 1965, after every decade's redistricting, people of color have challenged the efforts by the Texas legislature to redistrict. And every single time, African Americans and our Latinos, have been found to be victorious, and the state has been held to have discriminated against African Americans and

our Latinos.

And I must say that that includes panels, like in recent years, that are majority Republican panels. So, it's not a partisan issue. That just seems to be a predisposition to discriminate against African Americans and Latinos. And so, that's occurring even to the present day. I don't know what this court will hold now, where the case is now pending.

But, indeed, the last decade, the map was found to have discriminated against African Americans, Latinos, as well as in every single other decade. At some point, we hope, that the legislature is, hopefully, going to do right towards Latinos and African Americans so we don't have to go to court to vindicate our rights.

But this has gone beyond the pale, Senator. Because when you already control 73 percent of the of the seats, and you want to move that to 87 percent? I think yesterday Dr. Valenzuela called that apartheid, and I would probably agree with her.

SENATOR MILES: Thank you for that answer, Mr. Bledsoe. One more thing. You're familiar with "jingle factors?"

GARY BLEDSOE: Yes, sir. I am.

SENATOR MILES: Can you explain to this

body how those jingle factors would apply to sitting district, I mean, Congressional District 18 and 9 --

GARY BLEDSOE: Well...

SENATOR MILES: -- and explain what "jingle factors" are to my colleagues.

GARY BLEDSOE: Well, the "Gingles factors" are when you're trying to create a Section 2 district. There are Gingles prongs that you have to meet. And one of those is about whether or not you have numerosity, whether you can get 50.1 percent of the citizen voting age population in the district that would be of one particular group. Previously, the rule was if you could show various requirements in the 5th Circuit that you could put black and brown together.

So, that was the issue that was put together in the Petteway case. So, you're looking for 50.1, but then you're looking for cohesion. And so, you have to show that they can vote together. And, thirdly, that if they vote together that they would have some success, some electoral success.

But you must also show that white voters are polarized and white voters have, traditionally, frustrated those voters from being able to elect their candidate of choice. What occurred in Petteway was the 40-plus years of precedent, you know, that we had in the

5th Circuit by great litigators like Jose Garza and Rolando Rios that brought those issues forth where you could put black and brown together -- if you could show various socioeconomic commonalities and political cohesion between the groups -- that they could be joined together.

And that's occurred until even recent years with litigation in Baytown and other places where that continued to be the rule. And, in fact, in the case now pending before the panel in El Paso, that three- judge panel had ruled prior to Petteway that that was a law in Texas, and they had refused to dismiss claims that many of us had made in reference to -- in reference to coalition districts.

Because until that decision, Petteway last year, that was a law in the circuit. But in terms of -- the Supreme Court has not acted upon that issue, but there are a number of circuits that actually still hold that black and brown can be joined together for purposes of creating a district or requiring a district be created under Section 2.

And so, we're hoping that at some point the Supreme Court does entertain that issue, and that when they entertain that issue, they'll resolve it in the affirmative way and say what we think the law is

that you should be able to join black and brown together.

You know, we attempted even, the last time, to join black, brown and Asian together in Fort Bend County, and we won that initially. We ended up losing it, and the court gave us an encouraging comment in the opinion about the need to continue with the electoral outcomes in the Asian community before we could join all three. But anyway, that has not been decided by the Supreme Court that you can't join more than one group together. That's only now law in the 5th Circuit.

SENATOR MILES: And, lastly, the ugly truth of the matter is the State of Texas has systematically and historically tried to depress African American and Latino vote in the history of Texas, the ugly truth. Is that correct?

GARY BLEDSOE: There's a 100 truth to what you're saying. I mean, we didn't have a Latino in Congress despite the large Latino population in this state until Henry B. Gonzalez. That was what? The late 50s, early 60s, sometime in that. But the great, the lion, Henry B. Gonzalez was elected, and the incomparable Barbara Jordan was there in 1973.

But that was after the legendary case,

the important case, White versus Regester, that brought us to have the type of single member districts that allows many of you now to be there in the Texas legislature. So, that was 1972, you know, when great lawyers like Dave Richards, George Corville, and others, brought that case forth and required that.

So, Texas has continued to fight, you know, that it's just like taking teeth from a chicken. It's really kind of hard. You've got to fight every session. You know, Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson, when -- as state senator, she had to go to court and vindicate the rights of African Americans. They did the same thing with the 29th in the 1990s. So, minorities have had to go to court to get the district tree created, or whether they're -- and so, even when the legislature created some, they didn't create them in ways that really empower the African American community.

So, that's why people like Eddie Bernice Johnson, Sheila Jackson Lee, and others, went to court to vindicate their rights to fully establish those districts and make them into true Section 2 districts. And so, it took a fight for those things, and so that fight continues.

SENATOR MILES: And, lastly, do you view this letter from the DOJ as another ugly attempt to

suppress and to downtrod black and brown votes, the letter that's gotten us here today? Is that just another ugly attempt to do the same thing that Texas has been doing historically?

GARY BLEDSOE: There's zero question about that. It is actually an incredible letter. I think we heard Professor Katz, and she really kind of nailed it. This letter is basically saying that you can't have a district that black and brown people together constitute a majority. So, you have all these other districts around Texas where maybe you have, you know, black and white, or brown and white, or what have you; or you have some -- some combination. So -- but that letter chose to focus on -- on districts where minorities are able to elect their candidate of choice.

And so, you -- we don't need to get into all the Gingles issues and things of that nature. Because the courts have made it very clear that without regard to current statistical numbers, the 9th, 18th and 30th are protected African American opportunity seats, and the same thing with the 29th and the 33rd was court-created.

And, clearly, the African American community and the 33rd has been able to directly, without coalition -- though there is a coalition

there -- if you peel out the numbers from the coalition, the African American community would still be able to elect their candidate in the 33rd.

SENATOR MILES: It's pretty open and obvious and blatant, wouldn't you say? Pretty open and obvious and blatant, wouldn't you say?

GARY BLEDSOE: It's clear. I mean, it couldn't -- I mean, you don't have to be the sharpest tool in the drawer to understand what this is. This is an act of racial discrimination and bias. And it's saying that we need to go out and where -- and you find. It's like creating an amoeba to go out and find black and brown districts and go out and eat them up and eliminate them.

And, so that's what that says. We found this district, these districts that we just don't like, because black and brown people join together. And so, they're going to destroy them. It's completely illegal, and it is race-based. And so, they're inviting this legislature to engage in an overt act of discrimination. So, if the legislature does what's requested in that letter, they have engaged in intentional discrimination --

SENATOR MILES: Gary, I want to thank you for all...

GARY BLEDSOE: -- and intentional gerrymander.

SENATOR MILES: I want to thank you for all the hard work you've done for this Great State of Texas for both black, brown, and everybody included in this State. Thank you, my brother.

GARY BLEDSOE: Thank you, Senator. I Appreciate it. I Always say the same for you, and I look forward to continuing to work with you.

THE CHAIR: All right. The Chair recognizes Senator Hinojosa.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: Thank you. Mr. Chairman. Just a point of clarification: On the issue dealing with minority coalition districts, the ruling by the 5th Circuit pretty much was narrow in point that under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, a minority coalition district could not make a claim of voter violation on redistricting. Is that ruling applied only to the 5th Circuit jurisdiction or is that nationwide?

GARY BLEDSOE: That only applies in the 5th Circuit? I think there's a split in the circuits. I think before that decision there were more circuits that held that you could join black and brown together. But now I think, with that, I think it's, apparently,

evenly split. I haven't looked at it lately, but I think it's something like two and two, or something along those lines.

Not every circuit has addressed that issue for different reasons, but I think that there are as maybe at least one other circuit where this newfound 5th Circuit law is the law, but that's only the law from that opinion as to this circuit.

So -- and again, you have to draw the distinction, Senator. Because they were talking about whether you mandated to draw it under Section 2 by joining black and brown together. But the two big issues they did not address were about, you know, naturally-occurring districts and talked about in Bartlett, that we have a right to have black and brown naturally occurring districts, just like any other.

And, number two, even if not naturally occurring, if it's a district that has been a functioning coalition district that was properly created in the past, can you dismantle that?

And those decisions were not up before the 5th Circuit. And so, those things are still pending. And that's exactly what they're trying to do. Though, again, I'm going to say 9, 18, 29 and 30 are absolutely African American/Latino opportunity seats and

are not coalition seats.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: And one last question: The 5th Circuit opinion in the Petteway v. Galveston County case, they did not address any claims dealing with the 14th Amendment or the 15th Amendment?

GARY BLEDSOE: They did not. They did not. They did not. It was only a Section 2 case. It was not about the 14th Amendment or the 15th Amendment. And I'm glad you said the 15th, Senator, because I think some of the courts don't like it when we raise 15th nowadays and maybe dismiss those out of hand. But I think it is the 14th and 15th. And so, where that came from in the letter from DOJ about these being unconstitutional, I don't know. But those -- those districts are absolutely constitutional.

And you can look at the opinions that are already in the the books that have upheld those, upheld them. And even the State's expert in the 2011 round acknowledged that those districts were protected opportunity seats. And even, if you recall, on the Senate floor during debate and discussion, there was some acknowledgment by State leaders. Even I remember the interchange, I think, between -- I think it was Senator Miles and Senator Huffman, where she pretty much acknowledged that on the floor. So, I think everybody

knows those are protected seats.

SENATOR MILES: Thank you very much, Mr. Bledsoe, for the testimony.

THE CHAIR: Members, Any other questions?

SENATOR ALVARADO: I'm on?

THE CHAIR: Senator Alvarado.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. Mr. Bledsoe, thank you for joining us. What was the process the State said it used to draw the previous maps?

GARY BLEDSOE: Well, what -- the sworn testimony from Senator Huffman was that the -- obviously the -- there was a group that was secured. That's already been testified to by Congresswoman Garcia, I think. And that that group, I think, drew up the map, and at point -- some point, they were in consultation with the Senate leaders on that.

And that once they had come up with a map, that map was reviewed by a team, put together by the Attorney General of Texas, and that group did a review to make sure that the map was constitutional.

So, you had Attorney General Paxton that was responsible for reviewing the map -- and I think she even said that many times on the Senate floor -- where you guys were asking her questions. And she continued

to say that there's this -- this lawyer that she sends questions to, and while you were discussing things on the floor, they would get information back.

Well, it turns out, in that litigation, it was the Attorney General's Office that was actually doing that. So I -- you would have to believe in the DOJ letter that somehow, if it's drawn race, race blind, and if it's reviewed by Attorney General Paxton, that somehow they decided to put in illegal maps that would advance African American and Latino interests. And I think that kind of begs this heart kind of -- it is a bridge too far for me to -- for me to cross.

SENATOR ALVARADO: So, the Attorney General weighs in. The committee had lawyers. There was this group. There were a lot of lawyers that weighed in on the 2021 maps, correct?

GARY BLEDSOE: That is true. They had a private law firm. I think he had different representation in the Senate and in the House. And I think that the representation during court was, well, the minority can actually get there, get a lawyer, too.

So, we were interested in that. I forget which one of the -- was it a Senator or Rep. that testified to that, "well, you guys could have had a lawyer as well," from the Attorney General's Office.

But no. They -- there were private law firms involved in the drafting and the consulting and all that. And even the Attorney General was involved in that process at that stage. And I think even, Senator, there was apparently a law firm that was on site when the congressional map was debated on the House floor.

In fact, I think Congresswoman Jasmine Crockett talked about how she had to get their permission before her amendment could go forward and be discussed on the floor.

SENATOR ALVARADO: It seems like if the -- if these maps back in 2021 were not legal, were not in compliance with the Voting Rights Act, they were not constitutional -- that the Attorney General, or somebody in his office being the lawyer for the State, would have said something. Do you agree?

GARY BLEDSOE: That's absolutely true. You know, in our opinion, they were unconstitutional, but not because they did too much for black and brown. It's because they did too little for black and brown. So, they were also unconstitutional for another reason. And, I think -- I'm not a gambler, Senator -- but if there was any stretch of the imagination that they gave unfair advantage to black or brown, they would absolutely have spoken up.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. There were plenty of opportunities for all of these lawyers to say otherwise. Is there a map in the Houston area you have supported or in the Dallas and Fort Worth area?

THE CHAIR: If I could just interrupt just a second? And I want to make sure, Senator, you get to ask every question you wish to ask, and -- but I would just want to remind us all that we don't have any map before us today. Today is simply about gathering information from the public.

And although we're delighted to have expert witnesses here, the main purpose of the hearing is to gather from the general public. We've got a lot of people in the queue that I know are waiting. We will have, I promise, ample time, if there's a map before the committee, to go into great detail over that map with all the experts that anyone wishes to bring.

And so, it might be better to wait for those kind of detailed questions to a different day. But I'll let you proceed at your discretion.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. Again, it's not my choice to be here. Nobody on our side asked to be put in this situation. So, anyway, back to my question: Is there a map in the Houston area you have supported, or in the Dallas and Fort Worth area?

GARY BLEDSOE: There absolutely is. And I will say with one, with one caveat, because of the rules that were adopted in the Senate the last time, and the -- the rules that were allowed, you really could not put forth a map that had opportunity districts.

Because with the growth in the Latino population, there should have been at least one new Latino congressional seat, if not two. But the -- the way things manifest themselves, you -- the obstacles were too great, and you could not tender maps that provided for that. That being said, there is a map in the Houston area that I think was agreed to by Congresswoman Garcia, Congresswoman Jackson Lee, and Congressman Green, C2131, I think. And that was something, I think, that Senator Miles's office might have been involved in helping to -- to draw C2131 because it was all -- it was so little need to change those three districts that traditional redistricting principles would say, "you make those modest changes" because they were all three near perfect size.

And so, you just give some from the 9th and 18th to the 29th that needed a little population. And so, that's what, what we did. And they -- and so that was the one in the Houston area because it adhered to traditional redistricting principles.

And C2177 in the Dallas Fort Worth area, but only as to Congressional District 30, the changes there to 33 are not changes that we support or propose, but in terms of -- because Congressional District 30 should be a majority African American district, but the State decided to diminish it by two and a half points or so in terms of the African American population. But so that C2177, that was tendered on the House side, but it was not adopted. It was tendered by Congresswoman Jasmine Crockett when she was in the State House.

So we -- we support those two, but we -- we say there needs to be at least one Latino opportunity district, and maybe two. Dallas/Fort Worth had the largest growth of any metropolitan area in the United States of America. And the Houston area was only about 50,000 behind.

So, there's tremendous growth in both those areas. And the huge growth that Texas received was 50 percent Latino. And so, I think that the Latino community definitely deserves additional representation.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Is there anything inconsistent with the position taken by Governor Abbott in the recent trial with what President Trump is saying today?

GARY BLEDSOE: After they can't both be

telling the truth. You know, they were race-based or they were race-blind. You can't be race-based and race-blind, right? And so -- so one of them has got to be as to fundamental untruth.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay.

GARY BLEDSOE: They can't be -- they can't be -- they can't be both true. They were race-based or race-blind.

I would like to say just, Senator, for the record, you know, even Chief Justice Roberts, I think in the Milligan case, he talked about how you need to look at race, but you don't -- race shouldn't dominate, but you want to avoid discriminating against African Americans and Latinos. And, in fact, the legislature is advised of that in the 2021 manual put out by the legislature counsel, though I know -- I think Senator Huffman said that they didn't really desire to follow legislature counsel's direction --

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay.

GARY BLEDSOE: -- on that issue.

SENATOR ALVARADO: I'm interested in what you have to say about the three-fifths rule. Can you explain that to us?

GARY BLEDSOE: Well, that's when you use bodies that have no political power to get more

districts. And so, when my ancestors were enslaved here in Texas, you know, up in Falls County area, or what have you, where my folks were enslaved, they were counted for numbers, but they had no political power.

And so, Texas was able to get additional seats. That was a big issue in Congress at the time. And there was a big debate about whether to continue that. Because what happened was that the three-fifths rule gave disproportionate power to the Southern States, and that helped lead to, no doubt, the Civil War.

But the -- so, you can say you have a million slaves, and even though they have no vote, you can count them as 600,000 people for purposes of getting new districts. So, you have all these new districts. So, that gives white Texans greater power than what they would have otherwise, as a multiplier, as to their power simply because of their being able to use people who were enslaved.

And I think that parallel exists today. You know, you have such a large immigrant population, an immigrant population that one can honestly argue was really kind of invited by business to come here and to be part of our State. And so, that population is used to drive up the numbers of seats that Texas is permitted to have under the Constitution, but they can't vote and

things of that nature.

But what happens here is that you get the marginalization, you know, people can't vote. But what makes matters worse now, when they can vote -- as they're still trying to do the same thing as before -- to draw districts where African American/Latinos would have no influence, not be able to elect their candidates of choice. That's exactly what the DOJ letter says.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Uh-huh.

GARY BLEDSOE: It's upset that black and brown can get together and elect their candidate of choice, but that's what the three-fifths rule is, that you simply use people for numbers but disregard them otherwise. And I feel that that's what's actually happening, as has happened in our State. And if we adopt what the President's recommending here and go to 87 percent of the districts being controlled by white voters, I don't think we can even argue that point at that time.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. One last question: This process of mid decade redistricting, will it potentially put some Republican seats at risk?

GARY BLEDSOE: There's no doubt. I think we saw what happened in 2018, Senator, with the changeover to Congressional District 7 and Congressional

District 32. Those were considered to be safe seats for a decade, but that didn't work. And so, this time what occurred was, instead of just using the suburban areas -- which are now diverse -- and so, because of whether it's financial gains or whether it's just people moving in from the outside who chose to go to the suburban areas, our suburban areas now are very diverse.

And so, that's why you have a Congressional District 7 and Congressional District 32, that can upset what had thought to be an effective racially gerrymandered map. And I think that's the concern that many have here. You know, the New York Times reported that many of the members of the Republican delegation who met with President Trump on this were not in favor of it -- and they were unnamed sources for the New York Times article -- but I think they can see what happened.

Because what happened this time is they went about as far as you can, in my mind, although I think one of the witnesses said they could go further. But when you start doing things like Congressional District 13, going like over 400 miles from one point in the district to another, including 38 counties, where you now add the rural areas, and you -- you cut up the -- you cut up the minority areas, and you pack them

into a limited number of districts, and then you crack out the rest of the minority community in the urban areas, and you extended all the way to rural areas now so that those rural districts can then control the vote along with the sympathetic voters from the suburban and urban areas.

And so, that's the ploy that's taken here. But, you know, it can definitely backfire like it did last time. And I think what that's what those lawmakers understand. Because they -- even the current one that's there, could backfire at some point where they've only taken 73 percent of the districts.

But if you take 87 percent, I think that's going to be quite volatile. But the only problem with that from our viewpoint is we still want to have black and brown opportunity districts, which you'll probably end up with, is a whole lot of potentially Democratic districts because they're trying to grab too much.

And so you have to stretch the white voters so much and so thin. And you can't do that, Senator, without involving yourself in racial gerrymandering. They're going to have to use race as the means to draw a new district. So, it's going to be a textbook example of racial gerrymandering.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you, sir.

THE CHAIR: Senator Hinojosa.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just one question, Mr. Bledsoe. What -- could you just -- what is the difference between an "opportunity district" and a "coalition district?"

GARY BLEDSOE: An "opportunity district" is where your group can elect a candidate of choice without having to go to another group for coalition. So, for example, if the African American voters -- even though they may have a coalition with Latino voters or Asian voters -- if you look at the African American vote and if they're able to elect their candidate of choice, then that would be an African American opportunity district. Now, for the first creation of such a district, you've got that 50.1 percent numerosity requirement there.

But districts have continued to function that way, and the courts have ruled that they continue to be, even if they drop below the 50.1 percent because they continue to function in that way. A coalition district is when you need to join with another group that would be needed in order to get the majority.

So, those seats, you could have black and brown, brown and Asian. You could have whatever

minorities to have a minority coalition seat in whatever combination that could do, as they were doing in Galveston, where, you know, that lawsuit brought by, I think, three NAACP units and a LULAC chapter, along with an incumbent commissioner, challenged that.

But you -- but they had a coalition, and they were able to get the candidate of choice over time. And so, that's a coalition district. Now, either one -- neither one had the ability to do it on their own, but where they can do it together. And you have that other district that we saw Professor Katz talk about, that's a crossover district, but that's where you have sympathetic or in line, in sync, white voters, and you have to add them to the quotient. So, when you add white voters, it becomes a crossover district. And that's the one that was talked about in Bartlett. And they said, "well, there's not a constitutional right to preserve, to create a crossover district."

SENATOR HINOJOSA: Let me just stop you there and get back to the opportunity district. I understand the other two, crossover and the minority coalition districts. The opportunity districts, do they combine? Does it have to be 51 percent or 50 percent plus minority?

GARY BLEDSOE: For the initial creation

under Gingles, that is the requirement, 50.1 CVAP.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: And that would be an opportunity district?

GARY BLEDSOE: That would be an opportunity, for the initial creation, but what I've said, the courts have held the districts that have fallen below that and still function that manner are still opportunity districts -- even if they drop below -- as long as they continue to function as they were prescribed to function.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: And that would be without any type of coalition with another minority group?

GARY BLEDSOE: Right. And it doesn't mean you can't have a coalition, but the question is whether you could, without the coalition, elect your candidate of choice.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: Got it. Thank you very much, Mr. Bledsoe.

GARY BLEDSOE: Thank you, Senator.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Bledsoe. I appreciate you being here today.

GARY BLEDSOE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIR: Ladies and gentlemen, I know it's noon, and we still have a lot of people in the

queue. I'm going to continue to call people up in groups, and then if you'll just, once you're kind of moved over into the waiting area, I'll call you one at a time.

The next group is Mendi Tackett, Mendi Tackett, Craig Nazor, Ricardo Villarreal, Ernesto Moran, and Emily Amps. Mendi Tackett, Craig Nazor, Ricardo Villarreal, Ernesto Moran, and Emily Amps.

And, Ms. Tackett, will go with you first. And I think we're going to go with Ms. Tackett first, Mr. Moran.

Ms. Tackett, are you with us? I'll give you a separate second to connect there. Yeap. Okay. So -- okay. All right. Ms. Tackett's audio is in the process connecting. So, Emily Amps, why don't we go ahead and start with you. And, again, please keep your testimony to two minutes.

If you would state your name, who you represent, and whether -- if you're testifying on behalf of someone other than yourself.

MS. EMILY AMPS: Sure. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, my name is Emily Amps, and I'm the director of Politics and Policy at the Texas AFL-CIO, the State's labor federation with over 250,000 affiliated members across the State, and I'm

here to testify on their behalf and also for myself.

Texans, including many of our members, your constituents, are facing serious challenges right now. We have the highest rate in number of uninsured. Wages aren't going up, even though prices are. Workers are dying in the heat of the summer because they have no state or federal protections to ensure they're given a break or some water.

And right now, first responders and volunteers are cleaning up and rebuilding communities after a tragic weather event that took the lives of over 100 of our neighbors, including many young Texans. But here we are talking about redrawing congressional map, something no Texan asked for, spurred by political pressure, and aimed at dismantling communities of color and [distorted audio] candidate of their choice. And bowing to this pressure would further silence Texans, including workers, adding to the many voices already muted by the current district lines.

And what makes Texas so special? It's the people who build our State, who teach the next generation, who keep our State government running. It's the vibrant border communities of the Rio Grande Valley, El Paso, Laredo, the beaches in the coastal Bend, the Piney Woods of East Texas, the weirdness of Austin, the

history of San Antonio, and industries in DFW and the Gulf Coast, the oil fields of West Texas. These communities are all unique, and their differences are not limited to just geography. These communities have unique needs and challenges, and they need unique representation in Washington D.C.

However, already many of these communities have been severed and neighborhoods divided. For example, fast growing suburban communities like mine in Buda, Texas, in Congressional District 21 has been sliced and diced and put into a district with rural communities that have little in common with my community.

And now you've been asked to double down and divide communities even more. So, I urge you, as you move forward, please remember that your actions during this special session will have a real impact on real people and there are real issues that need to be addressed.

And also, remember that you do not have to draw a map. And if the 4th of July tragedies taught us anything, this is a time when Texans need to come together, not be further divided. So, please don't forget that. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Members, any

questions?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Thank you for being with us here today. The Chair calls Ernesto Moran. Thank you, and welcome. If you would, please tell us, just for the record, your name, whether you representing yourself or an organization.

MR. ERNESTO MORAN: Yes, my name is Ernesto Moran. I'm here just representing myself. I'm a native US-born citizen and a resident of Texas for more than 30 years. I want to acknowledge that I am testifying from land and ceded and shared by the Tuacani, Kickapoo, Wichita, Comanche, and Germanos nations.

Without even getting into how revolting it is to be doing this when 135 people lost their lives in Texas floods, this is not about doing what's best for Texans.

The justification is flimsy at best. But, if we're being honest, it's hollow. The Department of Justice cites race-based considerations and says they have to be rectified. But Attorney General Ken Paxton, just weeks ago, argued the very opposite, under oath, in open court.

He said, "there was no racial

gerrymandering in the maps as they are currently drawn." But let's not kid ourselves and insult each other's intelligence. Okay? We know this is about one person and his desire to ram through the rest of his agenda in the second half of his term as president, not to mention protect himself from possible consequences of his actions thus far in his time in office.

He even came out and said so. This is solely about preserving power that is slipping away. We saw the same thing already happen on the Tarrant County Commissioner's Court, which just approved a mid decade redistricting map. And all it's going to do is cost taxpayers millions of dollars in lawsuits.

And if you go through with this, you will put into motion a nationwide domino effect that you have no control over. Governors in California and New Jersey have already indicated as much.

In the words of a great American, your poll tax and Jim Crow and greed have got to go. All you fascists are bound to lose. I say peace be to you if you're willing to fight for it. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Members, any questions?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Thank you for being here

with us today.

Craig. The Chair calls Craig Nazor.

MR. CRAIG NAZOR: Can you hear me?

THE CHAIR: I certainly can. If you would please just state, for the record, your name and your title, and if you're representing any organization here today.

MR. CRAIG NAZOR: Hello, my name is Craig Nazor of the Sierra Club. We support the Sierra Club comments submitted by Dr. Cyrus Reed outlining the negative effects that gerrymandering has on environmental advocacy.

Here's how political redistricting worked for me. One morning in 1995, at the local HEB, a tall-lanky man approached me and said, "hello, my name is Lloyd Doggett, and I represent you in the US Congress." "Do you have any questions for me?"

From then on, about twice a year, Congressman Doggett was at that HEB for me to talk to. In 2003, this legislature redrew District 10 into the shape of a python that swallowed an elephant with a head west of Austin and the tail just north of Houston, represented by Michael McCall.

I never met Congressman McCall, although I many times tried to make appointments with him. I

never spoke to him, although I called his office frequently. He lives in Westlake Hills, yet he never appeared at any public events in Austin where I could meet him or ask him any questions or get any answers.

He didn't represent me because he didn't have to. By your design he knew that he could completely ignore me and still be re elected.

When this is done for political or racial reasons, this makes people angry. As we witnessed at the House hearing yesterday, there is really no clear distinction between racial or political gerrymandering. One simply covers for the other.

Either one can leave people dealing with deadly environmental issues without a voice. Now you want to double down again without a census in the middle of the decade? Why? Because a president who never won the popular vote at any election is demanding it, further polarizing our already highly-polarized nation. And because of this, Texas is not the representative democracy it has always claimed to be. Sad.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, sir. Members, any questions?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Thank you for being here with us today. The Chair calls Mendi Tackett.

MS. MENDI TACKETT: Can you hear me?

THE CHAIR: We certainly can. Thank you. You were able to get on.

MS. MENDI TACKETT: Okay.

THE CHAIR: Please --

MS. MENDI TACKETT: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: -- just for the record, if you would, state your name and if you represent any organization, any title that you wish to state, and please hold your testimony to two minutes.

MS. MENDI TACKETT: All right. Thank you very much. I'm Mendi Tackett. I'm here today testifying on my own behalf. I'm up in Tarrant County, but I can't make tomorrow's meeting. So, I decided to do that today. I'm going to reiterate what others have already said, "Texans do not want this." "Trump wants this."

Mid decade redistricting is a blatant power grab, and it undermines fair representation and rigs the rules to erase the voices of black and brown communities in order to keep politicians who support white Christian nationalism in power.

This is no different than what we have been fighting up here in Tarrant County. The County Commissioners here in Tarrant County, just like our

Tarrant County Commissioners, were afraid that they might lose power here. Trump and national-level Republicans are afraid that they might lose some power.

So, they're turning to states like Texas to try to ensure that they have enough Republican seats. And y' all are going to squash black and brown voices in order to do that. There's really no polite way to say this. Republicans, we see you. We see you for who you are, and we see you for what you're doing. You're shameless, power hungry bootlickers, and you're only serving Trump, not the people of Texas. Thank you very much.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Members, any questions?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Chair calls Ricardo Villarreal.

MR. RICARDO VILLARREAL: Good afternoon. My name is Ricardo Villarreal. I'm an Army veteran, and represent veterans in the State of Texas through the nonprofit organization Common Defense. I was also a candidate who ran for Congressional District 21 in 2022. So, I'm keenly aware of the expected outcomes through the creation of gerrymandered maps.

Today, I'd like to discuss the topic of

"redlining." Redlining was a discriminatory practice denying or limiting financial services to residents of neighborhoods based on their race or ethnicity. This practice was particularly directed towards black and other minority communities, hindering their ability to build wealth and perpetuating racial segregation.

Redlining emerged in the 1930s with the establishment of the Homeowners Loan Corporation, which created residential security maps that graded neighborhoods based on perceived risk and desirability for lending. These maps categorized neighborhoods with best and good areas associated with white communities, declining and hazardous areas primarily populated by black, Latino, and other minority residents, regardless of their economic status. Although redlining was outlawed in 1968, its legacy continues to impact communities today.

The effects of past discrimination are still evident in disparities in wealth, health, and access to opportunities between historically redlined areas and neighborhoods. Even to this day, redlining has made it easier to gerrymander districts along racial lines as historic discrimination has helped --has shaped residential patterns.

Redlining and gerrymandering, while

distinct practices, both contribute to systemic inequality and have lasting negative impacts on communities and political representation. The reality is that partisan gerrymandering is this century's equivalent to racial discriminatory redlining. I ask that you reconsider the redistricting of new congressional maps and allow courts to settle the validity of the 2021 maps or their remedy. Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony and input.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Members, any questions?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Thank you. And all the witnesses are doing great on their two minute time. Thank you.

The next group will call up will be Kathleen Thomas, Denisce Palacios, Savant Moore, Kiersten Zundel, and Alfredo Arellano.

Let me say that again: Kathleen Thomas, Denisce Palacios, Savant Moore, Kiersten Zundel, and Alfredo Arellano.

Kathleen Thomas, are you there with us? If you could unmute your mic.

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Okay. Let's go ahead and go

to Savant Moore. Mr. Moore? Savant Moore.

MR. SAVANT MOORE: Yes, sir.

THE CHAIR: There. Glad to see you. Please, just for the record, tell us your name and if you're representing any organization and any title you would like us to know of. And please hold your testimony to two minutes. Thank you.

MR. SAVANT MOORE: My name is Savant Moore, a resident of the historic Fifth Ward in Houston, Texas, a trustee in HISD, and a proud constituent of Congressional District 18. I came to speak truth, not just for myself, but for generations who were counted out, cut out, and redlined out of decisions made in rooms like this.

THE CHAIR: This district, CD18, was born from the struggle drawn in 1972 as a direct Result of the Voting Rights Act. It gave black Houstonians a voice in Congress when the system tried to keep us invisible. That voice became Barbara Jordan, Mickey Leland, Craig Washington, Sheila Jackson Lee, Erica Lee, Carter, Sylvester Turner. It became a movement, and it's still speaking. So, why are we here again? We're not here because of new data. We're not here because the courts asked for it.

We're here because some people are

uncomfortable with the strength of our leadership, with the fact that communities like mine still have the power to send someone to Washington who looks like us and fights like us. This isn't about compliance. It's about control. It's not a coincidence that the same communities you've already stripped of local control and education are the ones now being targeted for redistricting. Let me be clear. We reject any map changes of CD18 until all litigation is resolved and the 2030 census is complete.

Because if this body truly believes in Democracy, you will protect the districts that were created to correct generations of injustice, not erase them. We're not just fighting for fairness. We're fighting for memory, dignity, and power. But not on our watch, because we deserve more. God bless you, and God bless Texas.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Members, Any questions?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Thank you, sir, for being here. Let's go with Kathleen. Chair calls Kathleen Thomas. Kathleen, are you there with us?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Kathleen, you might try to

turn your video on and unmute yourself because we show you're there with us.

MS. KATHLEEN THOMAS: Can you hear me now?

THE CHAIR: Yes. There you are. Thank you.

MS. KATHLEEN THOMAS: Okay.

THE CHAIR: Sorry for that.

MS. KATHLEEN THOMAS: I had the wrong cord plugged in.

THE CHAIR: That's all right. Would you please, just for the record, tell us your name, if you're representing any organization, and if there's any title you would like us to be aware of, and please try to hold your testimony to two minutes.

MS. KATHLEEN THOMAS: I'm Kathleen Thomas, representing myself. I live in the Hays County part of CD21, and my roots in Texas go back to before Texas was Texas. When my fifth great grandfather fought in the Revolutionary War and then the Texas War for Independence, he was fighting against despotic rulers and this descendant of his doesn't want his service to have been in vain.

In the unprecedented 2003 redistricting by what was a new Republican majority in the Texas

legislature, then U.S. House Majority Leader Delay argued that our Congressional delegation should reflect the percentage of votes that President Bush received from Texans.

I was here for all of those hearings with my two year old daughter [distorted audio]. Under Delay's formula, Republicans are already grossly overrepresented in Congress. If aligned with how Texans voted in the latest presidential election, that delegation would have 21 Republican seats and 17 Democratic ones. Instead, 28 districts were drawn to benefit mostly white Republicans, ignoring the majority of growth that came from people of color. And now you want more?

The current maps are already in a lawsuit, and I have no faith that this would be any more fair. If Republicans want to have more elected, come up with better policies, policies that actually help people instead of hurting them, rather than cheating us out of the representation we've clearly shown we want by our Presidential voting.

Instead, if you do this highly-unpopular President's bidding in his desperation to destroy our constitutional government and turn us into a dictatorship with no balance of power, you will be held

responsible. If only Republicans can win and they continue to refuse to show any moral courage, we're doomed.

Absolute power corrupts absolutely, and we're seeing this here and now. For those of us who claim to be Christian, Micah 6:8 is a scripture we'd all do well to follow. "Do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God." Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Members, any questions?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Thank you for being with here with us today. Chair calls Denisce Palacios.

MS. DENISCE PALACIOS: Good morning. My name is Denisce Palacios, and I'm the Texas State Lead for Climate Cabinet testifying on the revised redistricting plan.

I would like to note that these hearings and public testimony on the nonissue of redistricting have come before any kind of disaster prevention, disaster relief, or recovery legislation while Texans are still sorting through the rubble of our most recent climate catastrophe.

I was born and raised in the Rio Grande Valley, and I have lived here my whole life. Ahead of

the creation of these maps, I asked that the legislature consider that the culture and the experiences of people here in the Rio Grande Valley are vastly different than those of folks outside of the checkpoints.

Cuero cattle ranchers and sixth generation families in East Texas face very different issues than binational first and second generation families in Brownsville with a deeply personal relationship to the Mexico border.

And yet, prior to 2021, we were in the same Congressional District 34. As a former congressional and district staffer, I know firsthand that stretched out gerrymandered congressional districts make it extremely difficult for members to visit and consult with their constituents. They strain district staff resources, and they further weaken civic engagement.

Should we continue this process, a congressional member split across the State could have to decide between visiting a community hit by a hurricane or cattle ranchers hit by the epidemic of screw worms since these two communities are eight hours away from each other.

Texans deserve proper representation and attentive representatives that have the ability to meet

with all of their constituents. But our Governor prefers to entertain the whims of the president looking to squeeze out five partisan seats, instead of prioritizing the needs of Texans devastated by floods only an hour away from the Capitol.

I ask that this committee take the time to create a fair process truly inclusive of all Texans with citizen input, review, and approval. Because legislators shouldn't be selecting their voters. Voters elect their legislators.

I will conclude by saying that I hope that you will soon return to focusing on what truly matters in this moment, supporting Texans whose lives have been devastated by the floods and tackling the climate crisis that caused this disaster. And I also commend you for providing Zoom access today, and I look forward to the provision of online testimonies for future bills and hearings. Thank you so much for your time.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. Members, are there any questions?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: All right. Thank you again for being here. And chair calls Kiersten Zundel. Kiersten Zundel.

MS. KIERSTEN ZUNDEL: Yeap.

THE CHAIR: There you are.

MS. KIERSTEN ZUNDEL: Can you hear me?

THE CHAIR: Great.

MS. KIERSTEN ZUNDEL: Okay.

THE CHAIR: We sure can. Welcome. And again -- you've probably heard -- just state your name and if you're representing anyone, and please try to hold your testimony to about two minutes.

MS. KIERSTEN ZUNDEL: Okay. My name is Kiersten Zundal. I live in Travis County in Congressional District 35, and I'm testifying on my own behalf. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

I'm not here just to oppose a map, but to call out a betrayal of our democracy, our communities, and the people who make this State run.

Across Texas, people are struggling, working multiple jobs, caring for families, surviving floods. And, through it all, we're told to just keep going. But instead of drawing maps that represent us, this government draws lines that silence us. This redistricting push ordered by Trump and carried out by Texas Republicans isn't about fairness.

It's about fear, fear of a multiracial

working class majority that's growing stronger. Fear of a public that's tired of being shut out while billionaires and lobbyists call the shots.

Texas is nearly 60 percent people of color, yet these maps dilute their power to protect a shrinking political elite. Who benefits? Not the workers, not the teachers, not the people still waiting for flood relief, but corporate landlords and oil billionaires.

Angela Davis reminds us, "the idea of freedom is inconceivable without the power to reshape society, and that power lies with the multiracial working class, not the politicians and corporations rigging the system." Noam Chomsky exposed how this rigging works, a manufactured consent that turns stolen land, stolen labor, and stolen votes into policy, these hearings, these maps, their tactics.

Representation should serve the people, not protect the powerful. You may not fear today's testimony or tomorrow or yesterday, but you should fear the movement that's coming. Because this is not your State to rule. This is your State to build. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Members, any questions?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Thank you for being here. Chair calls Alfredo Arellano.

MR. ALFREDO ARELLANO: Yes. My name is Alfredo Arellano. I am representing myself. I'm currently a resident of Maverick County. I'm 24 years old, and I understand the importance of politics. With that being said, I would like to emphasize and stress I'm in strong support of redrawing the Congressional District maps because it is time that Hispanic Republicans, in particular, have the representation that I feel they desperately deserve, need, and wanted.

When we look at the results of the last presidential election, we saw that, based off exit polls, President Trump won about 55 percent of the Latino vote. Senator Cruz won about 52 percent of the Latino vote. But yet, when we look at the maps and how many congressional Republicans that are Hispanic represent Hispanic districts, it is significantly low, particularly in the Valley area, because there's a lot of people that are talking right now that this is going to dilute the minority vote, the Hispanic vote, that Hispanics don't want this. Nobody wanted this. Nobody asked me until right now.

And I think it's time that we draw the maps to look like us. Because, under the Voting Rights

Act, we actually saw that we can go ahead and make minority conservative districts, especially if there is a specific area of Hispanic individuals that tend to vote the same, which in this case would be Republican. Because a lot of people say that Hispanics vote Democrat. My county is the exact opposite of that. We're 58,000 in population. Our CVAP is 94.1 percent. And the top three Federal Republicans, Tony Gonzalez, Ted Cruz, and Donald Trump won 57 percent of the vote here in 94.1 percent Hispanic Maverick County.

And so, that's why I believe that we need to redraw the maps to look like us. And that is what we are doing as Hispanics. We are shifting more in wanting to vote for the more conservative candidate. Even with the Democrats that are elected, they tend to be Blue Dog and conservative Democrats. And so, that's why redrawing the maps is very important.

And, you know, like I said, in our county, for our congressional race, the only candidate, out of all the parties that we have, the two political parties, Tony Gonzalez, the Republican, was the only candidate that won all 16 of our precincts.

And, again, we're 94.1 percent Hispanic. So I urge this -- the Texas Senate and the Texas House -- to go ahead and redraw the maps to look like

our communities, not just create Hispanic majority districts, but Hispanic conservative districts. So, thank you to the Texas Senate Committee for your time and God bless.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Members, any questions?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Sir, thank you for being here today. I'm going to call up, the next list would be Heidi Bray, John Sheppard, Josh Robbins, Sheryl O'Briant, and Ryan Cook.

Let me say that again. Heidi Bray, John Sheppard Josh Robins, Sheryl O'Briant, and Ryan Cook. Mr. Shepard.

MR. JOHN SHEPPARD: Good morning or afternoon. I appreciate the time to testify. My name is John Sheppard. I live in Representative Lloyd Doggett's district, probably the most redistricted man in Congress.

THE CHAIR: Okay. Are you representing an organization today or just yourself?

MR. JOHN SHEPPARD: On behalf of myself and the people of South Austin and Central Texas.

THE CHAIR: All right.

MR. JOHN SHEPPARD: I won't take the

full two minutes. I just wanted to express my -- my dismay and disappointment at the expense and time being wasted on such an unnecessary action. The census is the time to redistrict the State. And, in between the partisan gerrymandering helps no one other than those that it unrightfully helps. And I wish that we would devote more time to the necessary problems that, that need to be addressed, flood control being foremost among them.

I wish that this would be reconsidered by the Governor as a special charge and that you guys wouldn't have to be there wasting your time. But, more importantly, like I mentioned, the expense of carrying on a special session for reasons that aren't really important to the majority of Texans. But the gerrymandering that's occurred in the past has allowed it to wear a small minority has taken over the control of the State to the detriment of the majority's wills. I appreciate the time to testify. And, again, I hope you guys can wrap this up quick and get to work on things that are really important.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Sheppard. Members, are there any questions?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Thank you again for being

here. Heidi Bray. Chair calls Heidi Bray.

MS. HEIDI BRAY: Here I am. Hold on one second. Getting my start -- starting my video. Can you see me?

THE CHAIR: We can see you.

MS. HEIDI BRAY: Hello to the Senate committee. Thank you for hearing my voice today. Yet none of us should be talking at all about redistricting. We should be...

THE CHAIR: Ms. Bray, forgive me for interrupting, but just to make sure we've got the record correct, are you representing yourself or an organization today?

MS. HEIDI BRAY: Myself.

THE CHAIR: Great. Thank you. Please proceed. I'm sorry for interrupting you.

MS. HEIDI BRAY: That's okay. Sorry for jumping in.

Yet none of us should be talking at all about redistricting. We should be talking about the disastrous flooding that has cost 139 people's lives and $18 billion -- it makes me cry every time I have to say this -- and damages and economic loss.

Texas just received $11 billion in reimbursements from the Federal government for our

border's penny. The legislature did not appropriate or count on this money.

So, why not give these funds to all those who are affected by the horrific disaster. Greg Abbott has millions appropriated in the most recent budget bill for discretionary use. Which means he is deciding not to spend that on flood warning systems. That is what we should be also talking about today.

What he and all the Republicans are doing is kneeling to -- I feel, my personal opinion -- A king and a felon. You are following orders to pick up five seats through redistricting. Does that not sound exactly like the phone call that the felon made to the Georgia Secretary of State Board to find 11,780 more votes. At least the Georgia Secretary stood strong for democracy. Abbott -- and it seems like all of you -- no longer stand for our democracy.

You stand for this phallus fascist regime, a regime that only knows how to win, is by cheating now. You could not wait 10, a normal 10 years, period, for before you begin gerrymandering as you did in 2021. At least then you let all districts have a voice.

Now, you're only letting Austin, Dallas, and Houston have one, and rushing through it in 30 days.

Not allowing the 1.4 million in the Rio Grande or in the San Antonio area, Jefferson County. They are not being represented. You want to pass a map that we haven't seen yet. My main question is: Why has there not been a map shown? Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Well, thank you for being here. Members, are there any questions?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Thank you, again, for being here.

MS. HEIDI BRAY: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Josh Robins, Chair calls Josh Robins.

MR. JOSH ROBINS: Hello, can you hear me?

THE CHAIR: Yes. If you would, just please state your name, sir, and if you're representing any organization or just -- or representing yourself.

MR. JOSH ROBINS: My name is Josh Robins, and I'm just representing myself. I'm going to keep it short. Because I, honestly, don't think I have anything to say here that anyone else has not said, especially Ms. Alvarado, who I applaud for her -- her words this morning.

I will share my story that I live in

Austin, and I -- but I grew up in Cleburne and -- which is up in Johnson County south of Fort Worth -- and when I moved down here to Austin, I was very excited to not live in a place that was so rigid and not to -- not to sound partisan here -- but very conservative, not necessarily in the political sense.

I got all the way down here, a three-hour drive, moved into my new apartment, and found that I was being represented by a representative in Cleburne, Texas. So, I'm all for redistricting, but maybe not in the way that this agenda item is calling for.

That's all I've got to say. Thank you. I hope you all will do the right thing and drop this thing, and get back to working on things that serve the citizens of Texas, not just Donald Trump. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Members, any question?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Okay. Next, the Chair will call Ryan Cook.

MR. RYAN COOK: Hello. Can you hear me?

THE CHAIR: We can barely hear you. Mr. Cook, we can barely hear you.

MR. RYAN COOK: Oh, can you hear me?

THE CHAIR: Yes. That's better. Thank

you.

MR. RYAN COOK: Okay. Good afternoon -- Or, I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Do you need me to state my name and all that?

THE CHAIR: Yes. Please state your name and your position on the legislation, and if you represent yourself, please indicate so.

MR. RYAN COOK: Yes, sir. My name is Ryan Cook, and I'm just representing myself today. So, may I begin?

THE CHAIR: You can begin.

MR. RYAN COOK: Okay. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice Chairman, and members of the committee. My name is Ryan Cook, and I serve as a Republican precinct chair in Nacogdoches County. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak with you today.

I'm here to raise a concern About Congressional District 17, which is current -- which currently includes Nacogdoches County. With today's hearing focused on Central Texas, I felt it was the right time to share my perspective on a district that, quite frankly, does not reflect our community's geography or identity.

I support the redistricting plan and

appreciate the work this committee is doing to create a new map for our State. I offer this recommendation as a good faith suggestion to improve the current map that we have.

As it stands, District 17 stretches from Nacogdoches to Waco, and then all the way down to Round Rock in Williamson County. That's a span of 211 miles and a four-hour drive.

I have great respect for Congressman Pete Sessions who works hard to serve as constituents, but it's unreasonable to expect effective representation in a district that covers such a broad and disconnected region.

The district also fails the basic redistricting principle of compactness. Stretching across vastly different parts of our State, from the Piney Woods of East Texas to the suburbs of Austin, this district lacks geographic cohesion.

It simply doesn't make sense for Nacogdoches, a deeply-rooted East Texas community, culturally, economically and historically to be placed in the same Congressional District as part of Austin's outer metro. An East Texas county should be in an East Texas district.

Furthermore, I want to emphasize

historical precedent. For three decades, Nacogdoches County was part of Texas's first District. That alignment made sense. By placing Nacogdoches back in the first District, we would not only ensure more consistent representation with our neighboring East Texas counties, but we would also contribute to a cleaner, more logical map.

This change would reduce the burden on our congressmen, better reflect our regional identity, and strengthen the integrity of the map overall. Thank you everyone --

THE VICE CHAIR: Thank you.

MR. RYAN COOK: -- for your time and --

THE VICE CHAIR: THAT would be your time.

MR. RYAN COOK: -- consideration. I appreciate your work.

THE VICE CHAIR: Thank you very much, sir. Members, any questions for Mr. Cook?

(Silence.)

THE VICE CHAIR: With no further questions, thank you, Mr. Cook, for your testimony.

Next, members, we have an entirely new panel, and first the chair will call Carol Philipson, Monique Stallings, Antonio Holverstott, Amy Liebert,

also George Patrin.

MR. ANTONIO HOLVERSTOTT: Hello.

THE CHAIR: Please state your name, sir, and you have one minute to testify -- two minutes, Excuse me, sir. Two minutes.

MR. ANTONIO HOLVERSTOTT: Thank you. Hello. My name is Antonio Holverstott, and I am speaking on behalf of myself. I want to say that partisan gerrymandering and other forms of gerrymandering have been and are a plague upon local, state, and federal politics. Partisan and other forms of gerrymandering have led and does lead to sociopolitical political marginalization, ostracization, violence, and repression of other political viewpoints and groups that can help bring reform, and parson and other forms of gerrymandering contribute to electoral authoritarianism. Thank you.

THE VICE CHAIR: Thank you for your testimony. Members, any questions?

(Silence.)

THE VICE CHAIR: If not, we will proceed.

AUDIO REPLAY: (Previous audio being replayed)... lead to sociopolitical political marginalization, ostracization, violence, and repression

of other political viewpoints and groups that can help bring reform...

THE VICE CHAIR: Yes, please, for this panel, could you please mute for any background noise. Thank you very much.

Carol Philipson.

(Audio replaying in the background, audio stopped.)

Monique Stallings.

THE VICE CHAIR: Yes, please, for this panel, please mute.

THE CLERK: Carol, we're going to place back in the waiting room.

THE VICE CHAIR: Ms. Philpson, we are going to place you back in the waiting room.

MS. CAROL PHILPSON: Hello. Can you hear me? Hello.

THE VICE CHAIR: Yes, Ms. Philipson, we can hear you.

(Simultaneous cross-talk.)

THE VICE CHAIR: We're going to place you -- Ms. Philpson, unfortunately, your background noise is preventing us from hearing your testimony at this time. We're going to place you back in the waiting room, and we'll call you again on the next panel.

Please be sure to mute any background noise.

And, for future witnesses that are in the waiting room, please address this as well, for expediency with the committee and for those that are waiting to testify.

Ms. Stallings, please proceed with your testimony. Thank you. Please unmute and then proceed with your testimony, Ms. Stallings.

(Silence.)

THE VICE CHAIR: George Patrin, if you can hear us, please proceed with your testimony.

MR. GEORGE PATRIN: Yes, thank you to the special committee on Congressional redistricting for this opportunity. I'm a colonel retired army, Dr. George Patrin. I spent over 23 years in the military representing health care for military families, and I'm now on retirement.

I represent all citizens to try to improve health care processes. I represent myself first and foremost. Secondly, those who live at my residence in the ZIP code 78218, Bexar County, Northeast San Antonio, my wife and my mother in law.

I am an independent. I've always been so for 50-plus years of voting. This means I have always voted for the best person possible for the

position or office under consideration. I have never voted along strict party lines. I represent myself first, until now, of those who live at my residence in ZIP code 78218, Bexar County, Northeast San Antonio. My wife [distorted audio]. I'm hearing an echo. Is there a reason for that?

THE VICE CHAIR: It should be good now, Mr. Patrin. Please proceed.

MR. GEORGE PATRIN: Oh, okay. Thank you. [Distorted audio] ...years of voting. This means I have always -- I'm still hearing myself talk. I've got everything muted.

THE VICE CHAIR: For anyone else waiting to testify, please mute for background noise. [Distorted audio background echo]. Ms. Stallings, that continues to be you. Please continue to mute.

MR. GEORGE PATRIN: Okay. It looks good. Again, I've always been an independent, and they haven't voted party lines. But I cannot, in good conscience, vote for any Republican running today under the current circumstances. The current Republican Party doesn't represent any of my interests or values. None. And that includes this current issue.

Texas is already a severely gerrymandered State and does not need it to be done

again at five years out in this power grab to get even more conservatives in office. I really appreciate the three senators, Alvarado, Miles, and Hinojosa, who spoke earlier in introducing themselves to be clearer on their concerns on this.

I've been educated by this session. So, thank you, Committee, for allowing those of us citizens, who you work for, to be able to be -- to find out what it means to be race blind and the three-fifths rule. We're already severely gerrymandered. I'm not in favor of a new special redistricting plan at the present time. Unless, like my -- like the prior witnesses -- we make it so that it really represents the people of the geographic area. As a white-privileged male, I am embarrassed to be in that category, because I see people I've represented in retirement not being represented to be able to get their needs met.

So Republicans currently representing me in the House and Senate do not represent me. When I write to them or call them, I get no response at all, and they continue to vote 180 degrees the opposite from the way I feel and what I'd like to see happen.

THE VICE CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Patrin. Your time is expired. I appreciate your testimony. It's very much appreciated. Members, any questions?

(Silence.)

THE VICE CHAIR: Thank you, sir. Monique Stallings, please proceed with your testimony. Thank you.

(Silence.)

THE VICE CHAIR: Amy Liebert, please proceed with your testimony. Thank you.

MS. AMY LIEBERT: Hello, can you hear me?

THE VICE CHAIR: I can. Thank you.

MS. AMY LIEBERT: Okay. Hi, my name is Amy Liebert. I'm representing myself. Thank you chairs, senators, and members of the committee.

I'm here not as a political operative or legal expert, but as a concerned citizen and proud Texan to express my strong opposition to redistricting efforts and the special session that aims to gerrymander our districts even further for political gain.

The United States Constitution guarantees each citizen the right to vote and to equal representation. The 14th and 15th Amendments make clear that this right cannot be denied or diluted. But when political leaders manipulate maps to protect their power instead of reflect the people, that right is violated.

Senate Bill 1 passed in 2021 made it

harder for Texans to vote by banning drive thru and 24 hour voting methods that supported participants participation by working families, the elderly, and communities of color.

Now, instead of expanding access and fairness, we are trying to redraw maps that further suppress the popular will. Texas has 38 congressional seats. Republicans hold 25 of them. Democrats hold 12. And yet 46.5 percent of Texan voters identified as Democrats compared to the 38 percent as Republicans.

This is not fair representative representation. It's political engineering, and it's wrong. As the late Carl Sagan wisely said, "in a democracy, disagreements are welcome, but they must be honest disagreements." This process is not honest. It is designed to silence disagreements by distorting the people's voice.

In the words of James Madison, "the people are the only legitimate fountain of power." And if we believe that to be true, then let us ensure our redistricting process honors that power, not diminishes it. Thank you for allowing me to speak and be part of this democratic process. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, Ms. Liebert. Ms. Stallings, we'll proceed with you if you're able to

unmute. There you go. And please proceed. Thank you very much.

MS. MONIQUE STALLINGS: Thank you. My name is Monique Stallings, and I am with the Bexar County Democratic Party, but today I'm representing myself. And I'm here today, basically, to speak on, basically, reiterating what everyone has been saying about the redistricting as well as the gerrymandering.

And I want to start with a scripture from Ecclesiastic verse 7, it says the time -- there is a time to speak, and there's a time to be quiet. And right now, I am speaking among other people in reference to this redistricting.

Since the foundation of these United States, there has always been a thing dealing with racial bias. Regardless of what the President of this United States is saying, regardless of what other leaders are saying, it is not so.

I have a degree in psychology, a BS in psychology, as well as a graduate certificate in our healthcare management, and I say this to say this:

Statistics are always being done, and based on statistics that now the population is the Latino community, they are the majority nationwide. Then it is the black African American multicultural

race, which is the next. Then we have the Anglos and the Europeans. And we know that they are the minority.

Yet, and I'm not being racial about this, but we have to bring equality, and we have to be honest that they are the minority, but yet, they are the ones that are ruling everything.

And it's a time that this has to change. So, by the President of this United States that has brought this to Texas, it has also brought up the cries and the tears of everyone in this Texas state to start speaking up and to take the law that states that -- I'm sorry -- that the 15th amendment to the United States Constitution prohibits racial voting discrimination. But yet, we have had this, and we see this time and time and time again.

THE VICE CHAIR: Thank you, Ms. Stallings. That would be your timeframe on the clock.

MS. MONIQUE STALLINGS: I'm sorry.

THE VICE CHAIR: I appreciate your testimony --

MS. MONIQUE STALLINGS: Thank you for your time in listening to what I had to say.

THE VICE CHAIR: -- and your time today. Thank you, Miss. Members, any questions for

Ms. Stallings?

(Silence.)

THE VICE CHAIR: Thank you. At this time, we will call Carol Philipson. Rachel Preston. Chair calls Ashley Jones, Teresa Hall, Norma Laird, and Whitney Rowlett. Thank you.

MS. CAROL PHILPSON: Is that what I need to press?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: If you want to turn on your video...

THE VICE CHAIR: At this time, Ms. Philipson, you can begin.

MS. CAROL PHILPSON: It's not working.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: They may have control of it from their side.

MS. CAROL PHILPSON: Hello.

THE VICE CHAIR: Yes, Ms. Philipson, we can hear your -- we can hear you now. Go ahead.

MS. CAROL PHILPSON: Oh, good. Okay. All right, my name is Carol Philipson, and I'm representing myself, and I live in Austin, Texas. Please do not redistrict. How can this be done when the 2021 redistricting plan is -- oh, okay. My name is Carol Philipson. I'm representing myself. Okay. Good. All right. Thank you. All right.

THE VICE CHAIR: Ms. Laird, if you would proceed while Ms. Philipson works out her connection difficulties.

MS. CAROL PHILPSON: Okay. Is that better? [Muted]...

MS. NORMA LAIRD: Hi, my name is Norma Laird, and I'd like to take a second to introduce myself. My father was an Air Force retiree, and he retired to Austin, Texas. He taught at the University of -- actually the St. Edwards University, and I grew up in Travis Heights. I went to UT. I got my Master's at Texas State. I love Lady Bird Johnson and wildflowers.

I'm currently a retired teacher. I'm a mother, I'm a grandmother, and I have concerns about Central Texas. The Uvalde shootings really made me cognizant of the need to really look at, you know, having stronger control over firearms.

It's important to me that we have a strong FEMA to handle things like our flood situation. The Austin Airport is in real need of air comptrollers, and we need to strengthen that system. We need to strengthen FEMA. We need -- these are concerns of Central Texas.

In other words, every community has needs that are near and dear to their heart. You know,

as a teacher, special needs students, you know, there's a huge need for federal support. I need representatives who stand for what is near and dear to my heart.

You know, the environment, beautiful Central Texas, safe skies, FEMA, education, the environment, and being physically responsible, not throwing our country into trillions of dollars of debt.

And I'm concerned about that. I'm the ninth out of nine kids. I have worked since I was 14 years old. I paid my way through school. You know, every community and every person needs to be able to strengthen their community, and we should be able to do that through our representatives. Cutting up the district...

THE VICE CHAIR: Thank you for your testimony. That would be the end of your time.

MS. NORMA LAIRD: Cutting up the districts...

THE VICE CHAIR: Thank you very much.

MS. NORMA LAIRD: Okay. Thank you.

THE VICE CHAIR: Thank you so much. Ashley Jones, please unmute and provide your testimony. Thank you.

MS. ASHLY JONES: Hello, I'm Ashley Jones. I am a Texan who's testifying on behalf of

myself. Good morning. Thank you for taking the time to hear me. I want to begin by stating that I think that this is a gross misuse of time, attention, and the public trust that's been placed in this body.

The fact that Texans are facing real challenges right now, flood recovery being one of the most urgent, I would much rather see my elected representatives focusing on rebuilding communities than spending your time and energy granting political favors to President Trump.

You know, at the beginning of these hearings, Senator Hinojoso rightly pointed out that redistricting was already completed in 2021. There's been no new census, no new demographic data. So, there's really no justification for redistricting now. The only clear explanation for why we're sitting here, why we're having this conversation, is a partisan one.

This process appears to be designed to entrench power even further by disenfranchising minority voters. We've heard so many people speaking before this body today saying the same thing. I've heard almost no one who wants this to happen.

I think there was maybe one person who testified in support out of everyone who you've heard so far. This is not only unethical. It's

unconstitutional. The current maps are already being challenged in court, and I feel that this process is actually trying to sort of double down on the mistakes that Texas has already made with its redistricting and gerrymandering.

I know that many of you, most of whom aren't sitting in your chairs right now, but hopefully you'll hear what I have to say anyway, are ethical public servants, people who care about both our state and our country.

So today, I hope that you know I'm appealing not just to your legal duty under the Constitution, but also your conscience, that you know this is the wrong thing to do. A recent poll by Z to A Research found that 63 percent of likely voters -- 41 percent of who are Republicans -- believe that redrawing is unnecessary...

THE VICE CHAIR: Thank you, Ms. Jones. That would be your timeframe.

MS. ASHLY JONES: Thank you.

THE VICE CHAIR: I appreciate your testimony very much. Members, any questions?

(Silence.)

THE VICE CHAIR: Thank you so much. Whitney Rowlett, please proceed. Please state your name

and your position on the legislation and your -- who you represent if anyone other than yourself. Please proceed.

MS. WHITNEY ROWLETT: Great. Thank you so much. My name is Whitney Rowlett. I'm representing myself. And thank you to the committee chair, vice chairs, and all the committee members for this opportunity to speak.

I live in Representative Lloyd Goggett's district in North Austin, and this is an area that is continually in danger of being redistricted. I have been a member of multiple districts during my tenure in Austin, and every time that we've changed districts, it's been purely for partisan purposes. I am appalled that we're even speaking about this unprecedented redistricting during a time when we should be discussing both disaster recovery and preparation in the face of continued climate change and instability.

This is an unprecedented attempt at mid decade redistricting without updated census data, without demographics, without being shown the proposed redistricting map. And all of this is going to be at expense of representation of people of color.

Many of my fellow Texans have spoken in a far more eloquent way today on the details of why this

particular proposal is so abhorrent.

And I, wholeheartedly, support measures that are being taken that are for the benefit an accurate representation of the people of Texas. Voters across the State are being disenfranchised in multiple ways. And this attempt at blatant partisan gerrymandering further exasperates voter access to our opportunities for fair representation. Thank you so much for your time today.

THE VICE CHAIR: Thank you. Sorry, forgot to turn my mic back on. But thank you for being here today. Members, are there any questions?

(Silence.)

THE VICE CHAIR: Seeing none, Chair calls Rachel Preston.

MS. RACHEL PRESETON: Thank you. Are you able to hear me?

THE VICE CHAIR: We sure can. Thank you. As you know, just please state your name, and if you're representing any organization, and please try to hold it to two minutes. Thank you.

MS. RACHEL PRESETON: Yes, sir. Thank you. My name is Rachel Preston. I'm a public school teacher in the Austin area testifying on my own behalf against redistricting efforts. I live in Congressional

District 37. I would also like to thank you for the opportunity to testify. Even though I was at the Capitol for 10 or 11 hours yesterday, I was not permitted to testify in person at the House Committee because of the imposed time limit.

THE VICE CHAIR: Well, we're glad you're here today.

MS. RACHEL PRESETON: I'm here today so you hear me when I say...I'm sorry?

THE VICE CHAIR: I said, we're glad you're here today.

MS. RACHEL PRESETON: Thank you. I'm here today so you hear me when I say I'm against even exploring redistricting. And I'm outraged that my state is taking these actions to strip legally elected representation from Texans and erase the outcome of fair elections.

My vote is my voice. It's the most powerful way I can shape the world around me because it's the only way I can directly affect the policies enacted by my government at all levels. I'm here today because I want Texas to be a place where all voices are heard.

I want us to stand up and say that we are not going to change our districts on a whim, we're

not going to change our districts to dilute or take away the voice of minorities. Instead of changing the rules to trample on the rights of Texans, I want my government to expand access to the polls to encourage more of us to lift our voices and participate in the process.

Because government should empower the people, not disenfranchise and silence them. At a minimum, government should do no harm. But when done right, it makes lives better by working for the people.

I'm also here today as someone who grew up proud to be a Texan. I'm proud of all my roots. But I always felt a different kind of pride knowing that my family has lived in this state for eight generations. I want Texas to set a positive example for the rest of the country by taking care of our community. We are in a time of crisis, and we should be focused on helping our neighbors recover, rebuild, and start moving on from the horrible flooding this month.

I, therefore, implore you to listen to your constituents. Early redistricting on a political whim of the president is callous, calculated, and a blatant partisan effort to diminish or take away the power of my vote, to silence my voice, and to suppress my rights as a citizen of the United States and resident of Texas.

This is tyranny of the worst kind rather than democracy. My neighbors and I, regardless of the color of our skin, regardless of our background, deserve a chance to raise our voices and vote in fairly drawn districts.

As your constituent, I respectfully ask you this service. Show the world that we do have integrity and respect for our community by rejecting the changes to our current district maps. Thank you for your time and attention.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Members, any questions?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Thank you for being here today.

MS. RACHEL PRESETON: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Chair calls...

MS. RACHEL PRESETON: Thank you. And thank you to Senator Creighton and Senator Paxton. I've had the pleasure of testifying before you before in the Education Committee.

THE CHAIR: Good. Good. Chair calls Teresa Hall. Teresa Hall.

MS. TERESA HALL: Hi there. Hi there. Sorry. I had to unmute. Thank you [Zoom froze]...

THE CHAIR: It looks like, Ms. Hall, you're having some technical difficulty. I'm going to put you back in the waiting room for just a minute. Your screen froze, and I bet it's an Internet issue. We'll call you back up in just a few minutes.

I'm gong to go ahead and call the next panel, and I'll include Ms. Hall again so that we can get her back up. The next group will be Danielle McClleland, Idona Griffith, Michelle Venegas Matula, Joan Carney, and Dwain Aidala.

I'll say that again: Dwain Aidala, Joan Carney, Michelle Venegas Matula, Idona Griffith, and Danielle McClelland. [Echo feedback] And, if everybody could -- if everybody could please make sure that you're muted. Otherwise, we're gonna hear it in the background here. And Theresa Hall.

So, let's go first with Danielle McClelland, [audio replaying echo]. Folks, someone that's in the waiting room with us has their -- doesn't have their system muted. If you would not -- if you would please mute that.

All right. Let's go ahead and start with Danielle McClelland. Ms. McClelland, are you there?

MS. DANIELLE McCLLELAND: I am. Can you

hear me?

THE CHAIR: We sure can. And if you would just tell us your name and if you're representing any group...

MS. DANIELLE McCLLELAND: Thank you. Hello, my name is Danielle McClelland, and I live in the Claremont neighborhood in Dallas Congressional District 32. I'm here to strongly oppose the legislature's attempt to redraw congressional districts mid census. Let's be honest about what this is. It's not about population changes or good governance. It's about power, shifting representation away from communities of color, to protect political interests.

It's a deliberate and deeply undemocratic move that echoes Texas's long history of racial gerrymandering.

The way districts are drawn determines whether we get leaders who represent our interests or who ignore them. And we are already seeing the consequences when elected officials no longer answer to the people they serve. And that's exactly why redistricting matters.

We also know that access to health care is under threat. Dallas County has one of the highest uninsured rates in the nation. The recent federal tax

bill passed by the narrowest margin could kick even more Texans off Medicaid. That bill reflects a Congress that does not reflect us.

If our communities had real representation, that bill might not have passed. And now this legislature is holding redistricting hearings without even releasing the maps to the public. That is not how a democracy is supposed to function.

I'm calling on this committee to do its job on behalf of all Texans, not on behalf of party leaders, lobbyists, or outside influences.

You work for the people. We expect a transparent, inclusive, and fair redistricting process. And so, I'm asking for the following: Make sure to hold public hearings after the maps are released, but before they're passed out of committee.

Provide at least five days' notice so the public has time to review those maps. Require that lawmakers and whoever drew the map explain how and why the maps were drawn and preserve all records and communications related to redistricting. No deleted files. No hidden conversations.

Again, this is your opportunity to break from Texas's discriminatory past and to do what's right for everyone. The public is paying attention and will

remember how you choose to handle this process. Thank you for your time.

THE CHAIR: Well, thank you. And I noticed you're testifying from your car, which I think is great because I wanted this to be convenient for everybody, so -- and it came across fine. Thank you so much. Members, are there any questions?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Well, thank you. Let's try Theresa Hall again. Theresa Hall.

MS. THERESA HALL: Hi. Can you hear me now?

THE CHAIR: We sure can. Welcome, and --

MS. THERESA HALL: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: -- please proceed.

MS. THERESA HALL: Thank you. Sorry about that earlier. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Vice chairs, and members of the committee. My name is Teresa Hall. I'm in Representative Lloyd Doggett's district. I'm a proud resident of Austin, Texas. I'm representing myself.

I spent decades working in health care, serving in my community, and advocating for the well being of others. That work was deeply personal and

meaningful to me until life took an unexpected turn. After contracting COVID-19, I developed long COVID and Dysautonomia, chronic conditions, that completely changed my daily reality.

I went from being a full time health care worker to navigating an exhausting maze of medical appointments, treatments, and limitations. My health challenges have reshaped my life, but they've also made me even more passionate about speaking up, especially when our democracy is under threat.

Today I'm here because I am deeply concerned about the push for mid decade redistricting in our state, a move that is clearly designed to serve a national agenda, specifically that of Donald Trump, not the people of Texas. Redistricting is supposed to happen every 10 years after a census. That's the standard and for good reason.

It's a process rooted in fairness and population data, not political maneuvering. The redraw of the lines mid decade because the political winds have shifted is not only unethical, it's a direct attack on democratic representation.

As someone who has had to fight just to be seen and heard in the healthcare system, I know what it's like to be ignored by those in power. I also know

how critical it is for all of us, especially people of marginalized communities, to have our voices count at the ballot box.

Mid decade redistricting threats, silences black and brown voters, working class families, people with disabilities, and anyone who doesn't fit neatly into a partisan power map. Texans deserve leaders who focus on what truly matters, public health, education, affordability, and equity, not backroom redistricting games to serve a political figure who no longer holds office.

We deserve transparency, consistency, and fairness, not moving the goalposts every time the scoreboard changes. I urge you to reject the blatant power grab -- this blatant power grab -- stand with the people, not party politics. Say "no" to mid decade redistricting. Texas deserves better. Thank you for your time.

THE CHAIR: Thank you for being here, and thank you for your patience in getting --

MS. THERESA HALL: Sure.

THE CHAIR: -- that worked out. Members, do you have any questions for the witness?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Seeing none, Chair calls

Idona Griffith. Idona Griffith.

MS. IDONA GRIFFITH: I'm here.

THE CHAIR: There you are.

MS. IDONA GRIFFITH: I'm here. There I am.

THE CHAIR: Please, if you would please state your name, and if you're representing any organization.

MS. IDONA GRIFFITH: Thank you. My name is Idonna Griffith. I live in Austin, Texas, 78750, and I'm representing myself on this issue. I'm a woman, a mother, a retired teacher, and I've been a proud Texan for nearly 75 years. But right now, I'm not very proud. In fact, I'm disgusted and angry and ashamed. Four years ago, this body adopted new congressional maps, which at that time, the majority of the members claimed were drawn fairly and without racial prejudice.

I believe that colorblind is the term that was used. Now, the DOJ is claiming that four majority minority districts were racially gerrymandered at that time and that they must be withdrawn so that the Felon-in-Chief can pick up more votes from Texas. This is not what democracy looks like.

In fact, this redistricting effort is taking place without even having maps that are visible

to the public. The people of this state are not being fully represented in this process. Texans should know that this whole thing is not just about redistricting to gain more seats for a single election. It is about voting rights, and it is an attempt to further dismantle our democracy.

And here, in Texas, where we claim to be strong and independent, our Governor is following orders from the Felon-in-Chief with this body meekly complying at a time when the legislative work of this State should be about adequate flood relief and disaster mitigation, this body is playing political games. I am ashamed. Thank you for your time.

THE CHAIR: Thank you for being here. And it looked like you were outside. Is that right?

MS. IDONA GRIFFITH: I am, sir. Our granddaughter turned 16 this week. So, my husband and I -- I took her to lunch, and I'm going to have to explain to her why I bolted from the table.

(Laughter.)

THE CHAIR: Well, we're just glad you were able to still carry on your day today. Thank you.

MS. IDONA GRIFFITH: Thank you, sir.

THE CHAIR: Members, any questions?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Well, thank you. And tell your granddaughter happy birthday. I'd sing, but that'd be a little too much, I think, so...

MS. IDONA GRIFFITH: (Laughs) Thank you, sir.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Chair calls Joan Carney. Joan Carney.

MS. JOAN CARNEY: Can you hear me?

THE CHAIR: We certainly can. Welcome.

MS. JOAN CARNEY: GOOD. I am Joan Carney from Lago Vista Hill Country, and I'm representing myself. I'm here, like others, to ask, why are we even here today? Just three weeks ago, floods killed 135 Texans. Instead of redistricting, why aren't we looking for solutions to the floods that left so many families grieving?

I was going to talk about some of them, but then I changed my mind. Instead, some serious questions have been raised today about constitutional issues regarding the July 7 DOJ letter and whether what they are asking the Texas legislature to do is unconstitutional.

I support Senator Alvarado's request to bring the DOJ letter writer in to explain and to do that, even if a subpoena is necessary. This should be

done as quickly as possible given the DOJ deadline of August 7 and its implied threat. We don't even know what that is because the lawyer hasn't said. I thank you for your time.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, ma'am. Members, any questions?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Seeing none. Chair calls Michelle Venegas Matula.

MS. MICHELLE VENEGAS MATULA: Hi.

THE CHAIR: Hi. How are you?

MS. MICHELLE VENEGAS MATULA: Good. Thank you for having me.

THE CHAIR: Thanks. And if you just tell us your name for the record and if you're representing any organization today.

MS. MICHELLE VENEGAS MATULA: Yeah. So, I'm Michelle Venegas Mutula, and I'm representing myself as well as Texas Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry, where I serve as the congregational organizer and acting director for the statewide faith rooted network representing Unitarian Universalists and non EU friends across Texas, where we're committed to equity, democracy, and justice for all people.

AND protecting democracy and voting

rights is an issue that we're very concerned about. So, we strongly oppose using the special session on redistricting. Texas just redrew its maps in 2021, and we're still waiting for the outcome on those maps that were challenged on racial discrimination.

Redoing the process now with no public maps, limited notice, and restricted testimony is not normal. In fact, it's morally indefensible.

Let's be honest about why we're here. This redistricting session is not about fair representation. It is being pushed by a federal political agenda that wants five more seats in the U.S. house by breaking apart our black, Latino, and Asian communities, a direct attack on the Voting Rights Act and the voices of Texans of color. Politicians should not get to pick their voters.

Voters should be the ones picking and choosing our politicians to represent us. And, in the meantime, Texas is still recovering from catastrophic floods, a mass casualty event made worse by years of underfunded emergency preparedness. Even our youth camp is in the same area, and it was just sheer luck that we had wrapped up camp just the week before.

Families are deeply grieving and trying their best to rebuild. Yet our leaders are spending tax

dollars on political power grabs instead of saving lives. And while this is happening, this the so called Big Beautiful Bill, threatens to cut health care and food assistance for hundreds of thousands of Texans, including in rural areas.

Rural hospitals are already on the brink. Even in Washington County where my in laws live, the labor and delivery unit is, again, possibly closing. The birthplace of Texas will have no place for Texans to give birth. So, why aren't we addressing these real crisis?

THE CHAIR: All right, I'm gonna need to cut -- cut you off.

MS. MICHELLE VENEGAS MATULA: So, we just call for transparency, fair maps, and independent redistricting commission that reflects the dignity and diversity of all Texans.

THE CHAIR: All right. Ma'am?

MS. MICHELLE VENEGAS MATULA: Thank you so much for your time.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. Members, are there any questions?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Thank you for being here today. Chair calls Dwayne Aidala.

MR. DWAIN AIDALA: Aidala.

THE CHAIR: Aidala. Thank you. Welcome. If you just tell us your name and if you're representing any organization.

MR. DWAIN AIDALA: Thank you. My name is Dwain Aidala. I'm a resident of San Marcos, Texas, District 21, and speaking for myself.

I'm also a United States Marine. I asked to speak today because I believe that the actions under consideration by this committee violate the oaths that both you and I took as elected representatives and as a member of the armed services.

I expect, under our Constitution, that I, as a citizen, have the right to choose my elected representatives and not to have those who have been or want to be elected get to choose who can vote for him to elect him or her.

I have with me a cap that I wear on national holidays celebrating the history of this country. It identifies me as a Marine Corps veteran. The cap also says, "earned, never given." I believe this body should consider that statement.

It appears to me that the action being considered is really close to, quote, stolen, not really elected. I strongly request that you, as elected Texas

senators, look to your sworn oaths and not further expand the disenfranchisement of a large portion of Texas citizens. If anything, you should be working to get us back to the intended meaning of one person, one vote.

Finally, the Marines -- in the Marines there is a hand to hand combat term of weapon of opportunity. The Texas Republican Party may think that this abnormal redistricting being considered is such a weapon. I would ask and warn you to consider that this action may be turned back against them.

The current federal administration's actions over the past seven months, combined with its insulting gerrymandering of an already unfair District map, it has a high probability of turning your recent supporters into enlightened citizens who realize that they are being played instead of being supported. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, sir. Thank you for your service as well. Members, any questions?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Hearing none. Let me call up the next panel. Alicia Butler, Jane Chamberlain, Santiago Hernandez, Jr., and Lauro Zuniga.

Let me say that again: Alicia Butler,

Jane Chamberlain, Santiago Hernandez, Jr., Lauro Zuniga. Alicia Butler, do we have you?

MS. ALICIA BUTLER: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Can you hear me?

THE CHAIR: Yes. Great. Please state your name and if you're representing any organization.

MS. ALICIA BUTLER: My name is Alicia Butler, and I'm here on my own behalf. I'm a fifth generation Texan, and a licensed Texas lawyer that I've been for nearly 29 years. And I'm here to speak in opposition to the proposed redistricting that's in direct response to President Trump's publicly reported request that you create five more Republican congressional seats in Texas. Where I live in Austin we have been bounced back and forth over the years between congressional districts in some of the most cynical gerrymandering in the whole United States.

And I am absolutely furious that anyone is preparing to try that again to create safe seats for the President's "yes men" by silencing Black and Hispanic voters. And I've been around long enough to know that some of you, and you're the ones that I'm speaking to right now, don't care about unfairly diluting anybody's votes.

In fact, that's what the Governor's goal

is for this redistricting. As you know, many Texans are outraged by this Congress who just voted to give us a 2 -- a $3.4 trillion deficit and kick 10 million people off of health insurance at President Trump's request. And Governor Abbott has proposed redistricting to make sure that we get more of the same.

Governor Abbott and President Trump rightfully fear the pendulum swinging back. And redistricting is a desperate plan to rig this game to adapt the electorate to President Trump's blatantly white supremacist political agenda instead of developing a Republican agenda that serves the will and the benefit of all Texans. It's completely obvious to anybody watching this process that it's nothing more than an effort to hand more power to President Trump and further erode his accountability.

So, I'm not going to talk process or data. Because, frankly, I don't think it matters to some of you. I'm going to instead encourage you, as you prepare your votes, to ask yourselves in your heart of hearts, do I want to tie my name and my fate to Jeffrey Epstein's buddy? Do I want to keep carrying water for someone foolish enough to sue Rupert Murdoch, the owner of Fox News?

Because we, the people of Texas, will

remember if you stuck with the child predators and the white supremacists and the billionaires, or if you stood with the hard working decent people of our State. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Members, any questions?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Thank you for being here. Chair calls Jane Chamberlain. Ms. Chamberlain, are you with us?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Let's try Santiago Hernandez Jr.

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Mr. Hernandez?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: How about Lauro Zuniga.

MR. LAURO ZUNIGA: Yes, hello. Can you hear me?

THE CHAIR: We can, please. Thank you for being here. Please proceed.

MR. LAURO ZUNIGA: Yeah, of course. My name is Lauro Alberto Zuniga, and I will be representing myself.

Hello committee members and fellow Texans, my name is Lauro Alberto Zuniga, and I am a

social worker representing myself in Congressional District 34 in the State of Texas.

I live in La Paloma, a beautiful predominantly Latino neighborhood, nestled right next to the Rio Grande -- Rio Grande in San Benito, Texas. I come here to voice my concerns about the lack of transparency and rushing of redistricting congressional maps and how it could directly impact my neighborhood and my life.

As a gay Latino, many of the issues discussed in Congress impact me directly, both as a person and as a caretaker for my aging parents. For the Texas legislature to engage in mid decade redistricting efforts to appease a destructive President has real consequences for real taxpayers such as myself. I asked the Texas legislature to wait until all litigation is settled and more accurate census data is provided to redraw maps with the assistance of an independent commission.

If these illegal maps come to pass, I and many others around our district and state will be feeling the evil effects of course cruel policies for the rest of our lives by never seeing an end to student loan debt, worrying about health care costs with Medicaid being cut, economic uncertainty due to the

attacks on our social safety nets, and worse, not having appropriate representation in Congress. All because politicians cannot win fairly and solely on their policy positions.

I want real representation in Congress, not an imposed congressperson who votes against my well being. Is cruelty the point of all this? Is the function of government to squash the life out of its citizens? My guess is, yes, considering the deprioritization of relief for flood affected families and the hyperfixation on gerrymandering. Shame on you. However, I believe in a government that prioritizes its most vulnerable and one that is focused on enhancing well being and ensuring all Americans prosper. That's what's at stake with these redistricting efforts, and I hope my fellow Texans continue to raise their voice against this unjust power grab. Thank you for your time.

THE CHAIR: Thank you for being here. Members, any questions?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Seeing none. Chair calls -- I want to try again Jane Chamberlain.

MS. JANE CHAMBERLAIN: Hello.

THE CHAIR: There you are. Welcome.

MS. JANE CHAMBERLAIN: Can you hear me? Yeah.

THE CHAIR: If you would please tell us your name and if you're representing any organization here today.

MS. JANE CHAMBERLAIN: My name is Jane Chamberlain, and I'm in District 37. I'm an Austin grandma representing my family.

THE CHAIR: Welcome. Please proceed with your testimony.

MS. JANE CHAMBERLAIN: Thank you. I've learned a lot from the expert witnesses here today. Thank you so much. I keep hearing the question: Why are we here? And I think the answer is that this country is undergoing an unprecedented and unbelievable assault on our rule of law, our citizens and immigrants, and the very structure of our government.

And we're here because the increasingly unpopular leader who's directing this travesty is afraid somebody might be mad at him. We've watched Republicans. Now, this assault on democracy hurts everybody. We've watched Republicans who represent small towns or rural areas fighting to keep control of their public schools, which is the principal community center for a small and scattered population.

Some of you resisted heroically the push to exchange that autonomy for a profit based education system until your Governor showed you what happens when you persist.

And, if we want Christianity to be in charge of Texas, from now on let's at least use Jesus's crucial update to the old Commandments from Matthew 22, "thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind." "This is the first and great commandment." "And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

And y' all learned in Sunday school that your neighbor's, not so much the guy who wears your same hat, as those others who are most in need. We've tried to build a consensus of decency and respect for others that, with the rule of law, helped protect our pursuit of happiness.

In this special session, I ask you to think deeply about what you could possibly gain from consenting to the loss of this precious legacy. And, please, don't ever forget to love your neighbor. Thank you for your attention.

THE CHAIR: Thank you for being here. Members, are there any questions for the witness seeing?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Seeing none --

THE CLERK: We need to do them again.

THE CHAIR: Let me try Santiago Hernandez, Jr., one more time.

MR. SANTIAGO HERNANDEZ, JR.: Yes. I am here.

THE CHAIR: There you are. Great. Please tell us your name for the record, and if you're representing any organization, and then begin your testimony.

MR. SANTIAGO HERNANDEZ, JR.: Yes, my name is Santiago, Jr., and I'm just representing myself today. Chairman King and members, thank you for the opportunity to testify against the proposed redistricting efforts, which I believe will dilute the voice of communities like mine.

As I prepare for these remarks, I kept asking myself, how can I convince them, you know, in two minutes to reconsider this which jeopardizes fair representation? I mean, should I mention that this process is rushed and does not give every text and the opportunity to voice their position?

Maybe I can mention that we're still puzzled as to why we need to redistrict our current maps, if there are race blind, and yet, nobody has

provided a clear explanation as to why this is necessary, or doesn't know the contradictions and a lot concerns that we have with this process.

As people before me have testified and people afterwards will reiterate, we don't need this, and we don't want this. I mean, what more do we, as your constituents, have to say to make it clear that we don't need this, and we don't want this?

Like I said, I can't help but feel frustrated that it feels that you all are hearing, but not listening to us. Mr. Chair, while you introduced Senate Resolution 5, you said, and I quote, "well, I'm not sure that there's anything to rectify to begin with." I've watched and re-watched Senate floor debate from July 21. I listened to testimony yesterday in the house committee. Respectfully, Mr. Chair and committee members, much of what I heard feels like there's a struggle to rationalize this decision to start this committee.

I'm sure many of you are good-respectful people. I've heard as much during floor debates, and perhaps some of you even agree with me behind closed doors. But intentions and quiet agreement don't matter if, when it comes to voting, you still choose to support maps to help your party and -- despite harming our

communities.

Mr. Chair, members, some people change their party for the sake of their principles, others their principles for the sake of their party. Who will you decide to? Who will you decide to be? Thank you for your time, and I welcome any questions.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, members. Any questions?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Seeing none. Let me call up -- do we...

THE CLERK: We're moving to the next panel.

THE CHAIR: Let me call up the next panel. Michelle Vallejo, Jason Hale, Etienne Rosas, Emily Christy, Sarah Searcy. Give everyone a minute to get fired back up. Emily Christy.

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Okay. Mr. Rosas, if you will go ahead and go, and tell us your name and if you're representing any organization, and then begin your testimony, please.

MR. ETIENNE ROSAS: Thank you. Chair and members of the committee, my name is Etienne Rosas, and I'm representing myself. I'm a proud Mexican-

American from Brownsville, a researcher, a musician, and a candidate for US Congress in District 34. I hold a PhD from RAND and a post doc. from Princeton where I specialized in democratization and institutes...

[Background audio echo noise]

THE CHAIR: All right. If you'll just mute your live stream there.

[Background audio echo noise]

THE CHAIR: There you go. Try again.

[Background audio echo noise]

THE CHAIR: What I'm going to do, sir, is, while you figure that out, we're gonna mute you for a second, and we're going to go on to the next witness, and then I'll come right back to you. Chair calls Emilie Christy.

MS. EMILIE CHRISTY: Hi there.

THE CHAIR: Hi. How are you?

MS. EMILIE CHRISTY: I'm good.

THE CHAIR: Please --

MS. EMILIE CHRISTY: Good afternoon.

THE CHAIR: -- just state your name and if you're representing any organization, and then begin your testimony.

MS. EMILIE CHRISTY: Good afternoon. My name is Emilie Christy. I'm representing myself, and

thank you for the opportunity to speak. I have lived in Travis County since 2001. I am currently privileged to be able to spend this afternoon on Zoom with you. And yesterday I was in the House for, you know, seven and a half hours or so, fruitlessly, but, you know, there we are.

Now, many of my fellow Texans are not able to skip work or find childcare and transportation to gamble on the possibility that you, our elected officials, might listen to our voices and take us into account.

I would like to remind the legislature that your actions and inactions, the laws you pass, for example, these currently still undisclosed boundary lines that are being used to further silence our underserved communities, they affect every facet of life for Texans -- education, housing, health.

I would also like to remind our representatives, even though this is the Senate, that that word is isn't just a title, even for those people across the hall. It is a job description. You are responsible for representing the people of Texas.

This is our state government, and one that shouldn't be run like a corporation where people are exploited for profit and gain. We demand that our

government use the resources of this great State for all those who call Texas home.

And after the recent flooding in the heart of the Hill Country, it was private citizens who led the way through the devastation with mutual aid, with disaster relief, and grieving. We need lawmakers to prioritize people and communities, not political power plays that divide us. Thank you for your time.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. And I'm glad you were able to be with us today. Members, any questions?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Seeing none. Chair calls Jason Hale.

MR. JASON HALE: Can you hear me?

THE CHAIR: We certainly can. Go ahead.

MR. JASON HALE: Awesome. Thank you Chairman and Vice Chair.

Good afternoon to the honorable members of the committee. My name is Jason Hale, and today I am representing myself. I live in the beautiful City of Corpus Christi. I was born and raised here in Texas, and I am a lifelong Texan.

I oppose mid decade redistricting for districts 9, 18, 29, 33, and all of the districts in Texas. It is unnecessary. It is a waste of resources.

We have more important issues to focus on like disaster recovery and preparedness, and this rushes the redistricting process which limits public participation.

In 2021, legislators and citizens put a lot of effort into this plan. The Governor signed it into law, and it was a race neutral process. So, I believe there's no legitimate reason to engage in mid decade redistricting.

The DOJ's statement is incorrect, and if we follow it, we may violate the Constitution and the Voting Rights Act, and it may open up all seats for redistricting. If you do choose to redistrict, I request that you provide ample time for meaningful participation. That means maps, hearings, and revisions based on input. I also request that if redistricting happens, that it enhances the representation for people of color, not diminish their voices.

In summary, my Texas Senator said it best, "voters should elect their representatives, not representatives cherry picking their voters." I'm asking that you do what Texans want by protecting our rights, rejecting redistricting, and rejecting Washington's bid to control our elections. And that's it. Thanks.

THE CHAIR: And thank you for being with

us here today. Members, any questions?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Seeing none, Chair calls Michelle Vallejo.

MS. MICHELLE VALLEJO: Good afternoon, Chair and members of the committee, my name is Michelle Vallejo, and I'm here representing myself.

I am a small business owner, a nonprofit board member, and mother from the Rio Grande Valley. I was the Democratic nominee for Texas 15th Congressional District in 2022 and 2024 and won over 50 percent of the vote in the RGV both times.

I know firsthand how gerrymandering has harmed my community. Texas 15 was redrawn to split our region and dilute Latino voting strength, stripping working class families of real representation.

Our district, like much of South Texas, is nearly 90 percent Latino. We are young, bilingual, rooted in family and faith, and we deserve to be fairly represented, not further drawn out of power. Let's be clear, this is not a routine redistricting process as we've heard all day today and yesterday.

It's a rushed mid decade power grab being forced through without proper transparency or public input. Most of the people I thought to represent

are working right now. They can't be here to testify. But they matter, and they see exactly what's happening.

South Texans are not as ignorant as some politicians would like to think we are. We know this is happening under direct pressure from Donald Trump who's terrified of losing control of the House because of his failed, harmful policies and growing unpopularity.

He's dodging accountability at every turn, including disturbing ties to Jeffrey Epstein. And now he's trying to rewrite the rules in Texas to protect himself.

I'm here today, not as a candidate for office, but as a mother holding my son in my arms because I believe in fighting for the dignity of all Texans and especially for our children. They deserve to grow up in a Texas where their voices count, their communities are valued, and their futures are protected, not sacrificed to partisan fear and political manipulation. Thank you.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: I have a question.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Senator Hinojosa.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, Michelle, for testifying before the Redistricting Committee. But I did have one

question, and that is: You were a candidate for Congress in the 15th Congressional District, and you lost that race. And do you feel that it was gerrymandered to the point that -- and we call it the Fajita District, right? -- because it runs all the way from the Valley all the way up to just south of San Antonio.

Do you think that that had an impact on the results and outcome of your campaign?

MS. MICHELLE VALLEJO: It most definitely did, especially the first cycle when the map was first redrawn to represent the Fajita District, which runs from the border of South Texas and the Rio Grande Valley in McAllen up to Guadalupe County, and it gets a sliver of New Braunfels even. And people were confused. They felt hopeless.

They felt robbed of who their true representative is and can be, and we heard this from voters every time we talked to them at the doors, all the public events that we hosted and attended, and this is why -- or this is a very big reason why a lot of Latino voters in Texas don't come out to vote because they feel like their vote doesn't matter.

And the redistricting that we experience going into the 2022 election, we saw that, and we're

going to continue to see that if these maps are continued to be drawn and belittle the Latino vote.

SENATOR HINOJOSA: Thank you for your testimony. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIR: All right. Your son was perfect. What's his name?

MS. MICHELLE VALLEJO: He is watching out and taking notes.

THE CHAIR: All right. How old is he?

MS. MICHELLE VALLEJO: He's six months on Monday.

THE CHAIR: Well, congratulations. He did great.

MS. MICHELLE VALLEJO: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Bring him back anytime. And you can testify again, too. So...

MS. MICHELLE VALLEJO: We'll do. We'll do.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Chair calls -- Mr. Rosas, are you still there with us?

MR. ETIENNE ROSAS: I'm here. Yes.

THE CHAIR: I was trying to get to you.

MR. ETIENNE ROSAS: Probably exhorted.

THE CHAIR: That's all right. Go ahead.

MR. ETIENNE ROSAS: Thank you so much.

Thank you, Chair. Thank you members of the committee. Well, my name is Etienne Rosas, and I'm representing myself. I'm a proud Mexican American from Brownsville, Texas, a researcher, a musician, and a candidate for US Congress in District 34.

I hold a PhD from RAND Corporation and a post doc from Princeton, where I specialize in democratization and institutional corruption, and I can tell you that what's happening in Texas right now is not democracy. It's a classic case study of Democratic backsliding.

This redistricting proposal isn't about fair representation. It's about carving up Latino communities, like my own, to engineer more Republican wins, even where Latinos are a clear majority. Latinos are now 40 percent of the Texas population, but hold just 24 percent of congressional seats.

At the national level, we're 20 percent of the people, but only 10 percent of Congress. And that's, shamefully, the highest that it's ever been.

But instead of fixing this disparity, these maps aim to drown the voice of Latinos even further, cracking the Rio Grande Valley, splintering districts like my own, and erasing our growing political voice.

But this isn't anything new. In 2006, the Supreme Court ruled that Texas violated the Voting Rights Act by dismantling a Latino Opportunity District. And that same playbook is being used again, just with weaker federal oversight.

But the consequences here go beyond the maps. When our communities are politically marginalized, it opens the door to gross institutional corruption.

Just look at what's happening with SpaceX. Elon Musk came to the South Texas because he knew no one would stop him. He exploited weak regulations, gutted environmental protections, and used our own region as a launchpad, not to reach Mars, but to reach Washington and help Donald Trump get back into the White House.

So, this is what Democratic disfigurement into an oligarchy actually looks like, not the tanks in the streets, but zoning boards, redistricting maps, and billionaires buying silence from both parties.

And we're not just talking about lines in a map. We're talking about whether families in Harlingen and San Benito and Brownsville McAllen get to participate in American democracy or remain collateral

in someone else's power grab.

But the world is actually watching. Idea calls us now a backsliding democracy. The Economist calls us flawed. V Dem puts us on the autocratization watch list. And this is an emergency.

As Dr. King once said, "so long as I do not firmly and irrevocably possess the right to vote, I do not possess myself." "I cannot live as a democratic citizen observing the laws I have helped to enact." "I can only submit to the edict of others."

So I urge the committee to reject these maps that fragment Latino majority communities, to center public input on those directly affected, and to comply fully with the Voting Rights Act and the Constitution. And, remember, the assaults on democracy anywhere are assaults on democracy everywhere.

So, thank you so much for your time, and glad to be here. Thank you for the opportunity to rectify the technical issue as well.

THE CHAIR: Well, thank you for being here. Members, any questions?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Seeing none. Do we have anybody left from that panel?

THE CLERK: Yes, that's Sara.

THE CHAIR: Chair call Sara Searcy. Sara Searcy, are you with us?

MS. SARA SEARCY: Yeah. Can you hear me?

THE CHAIR: We sure can. Go ahead.

MS. SARA SEARCY: Okay. Thank you. My name is Sara Searcy. I'm a resident of District 37 in Texas, and I'm speaking for myself. As many previous speakers have established, there's no legitimate reason to undertake redistricting at this time. The reason we're all wasting our time here is that President Trump is afraid he won't be able to hold the House in the midterms.

So, in typical fashion, he's trying to cheat and lie and bully so he can continue to destroy our country and enrich himself.

It is a disgrace, but not a surprise, that Texas's Republican legislators are facilitating yet another corruption of democracy. So, a lot of people have covered details about the redistricting. I want to talk about just who President Trump is, this person whose very fictive water you're carrying.

Recently, an episode of the Howard Stern show from 2006 resurfaced. This was because of all the recent revelations about Trump's close friendship with

Jeffrey Epstein.

In 2006, Trump was 59 or 60 years old, and married to Melania. I'm reading a story. I'm reading an Excerpt from a July 21 story posted on an online publication called The Rap. And I'm going to read the excerpt now.

"Do you think you can now be banging 24 year olds?" Stern asked in the 2006 interview. "Oh, absolutely," Trump responded, "I have no trouble." Would you do [voices overlapping].

THE CHAIR: Ma'am, ma'am, if I could? We're so glad you're here today. But please keep your testimony to the subject of redistricting.

MS. SARA SEARCY: This is the subject. This is the subject. President Trump is the reason we're here. It is perfectly legitimate to talk about his character.

THE CHAIR: Well, I...

MS. SARA SEARCY: If you don't like what you're hearing, then think hard about why you're supporting him. I -- I can close there. That's -- that's enough.

THE CHAIR: All right. Thank you very much.

MS. SARA SEARCY: That's more than

enough.

THE CHAIR: Members, any questions?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Thank you. We finished with that panel?

THE CLERK: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Let me call up the next panel, please. Jennifer Larrew, Cathy Fulton, Jodi Eckberg, Letitia Torres, Jacqueline Baez-Lugo, Carol Philipson.

Let me say that again: Jennifer Larrew, Cathy Fulton, Jodi Eckberg, Leticia Torres, Jacqueline Baez-Lugo, and Carol Philipson.

MS. JENNIFER LARREW: Hello.

THE CHAIR: Jennifer, it looks like -- are you Jennifer?

MS. JENNIFER LARREW: Yeap.

THE CHAIR: All right. Jennifer Larrew, please -- please proceed.

MS. JENNIFER LARREW: Hey. Hi. My name is Jennifer Larrew, and I represent myself. I'm a stay at home mom and volunteer advocate from Lakeway in the 10th Congressional District.

As a Texan, I wish this legislature was focused on the real issues like the flooding and

disaster preparedness in my county, not redrawing congressional maps mid decade without new census data.

UNIDENTIFIED ZOOM PARTICIPANT: Hello.

MS. JENNIFER LARREW: In my community, I'm active in my church, my local moms group, and my son's school. When disasters like winter storm Yuri or the recent flood floods hit, we support each other. These are the people I live beside and rely on.

I should share a representative with them, and not with a community in College Station where I've never even been. I have visited Mike McCall's office many times. He's never at the Austin office, and his staff says he spends a lot of time in College Station. He won't even hold a town hall. That's not representation. And I don't want that any new district to experience that.

Texas has a long history of gerrymandering communities of color. The districts being targeted in this process are once again minority districts. That's unacceptable. I appreciate the chance to testify in Austin. I didn't get to testify yesterday, but there also should be hearings in places like El Paso, Amarillo, and San Antonio. And this process should take weeks, not rushed in five days. At the very least, wait for the courts to rule on the 2021

maps. I urge this committee to be fair and transparent. Transparent. Texas deserves competitive representative districts. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Well, thank you for being here today, and we're glad you were able to get to testify today.

MS. JENNIFER LARREW: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Members, any questions?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Chair calls Cathy Fulton. Cathy Fulton.

MS. CATHY FULTON: Okay. Hello. Can you hear me okay?

THE CHAIR: We certainly can.

MS. CATHY FULTON: Okay. Thank you very much. Hello. And I want to say thank you. My name is Cathy Fulton, and I'm in Port Aransas, Texas.

I want to say I oppose this rush mid decade redistricting. In answer to Senator Alvarado's question, the reason all of you are here is because of one man in the white House who wants to gain five seats, five congressional seats for the Republicans. This, by definition, is gerrymandering, and I mean it. Please, and I hope everybody understands. That's what it is.

I do not vote along party lines. I vote

for a candidate, not a party. In my opinion, these hearings violate our own TOMA laws because the public has not seen any data or maps. So, we can't form an educated opinion.

To tell the truth, I am angry that Governor Abbott has allowed the orange man to control our special session when what we really need is to be worrying about Texas problems like, obviously, what's happened in the Hill Country. And water. We still have more issues to do with water.

I urge this committee to say "no" to this farce of redistricting, and that all of you should just walk away from this and stop any further hearings. I do appreciate the comments of Senator Alvarado, Senator Hinojosa, and Senator Miles. And I question why others on this committee are being quiet as a mouse. It's almost like this committee was gerrymandered also by the lieutenant Governor. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, ma'am. And may I ask, are you representing an organization today or just yourself?

MS. CATHY FULTON: I am representing myself, but believe me, a lot of other people are buzzing in on me right now saying thank you.

THE CHAIR: Okay. All right. Thank you

for being here with us.

Chair calls Leticia Torres. Leticia Torres.

MS. LETICIA TORRES: Hi. Good afternoon.

THE CHAIR: Hi. How are you? [Voices overlapping] Just please state your name if you're representing any organization. And thank you for being here.

MS. LETICIA TORRES: Okay. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, Vice Chairman, and members of the committee, my name is Leticia Torres. I'm representing myself, and I thank you all for the opportunity to testify. Donald Trump didn't elect the Texas legislature. Texans did. So, I have a question for the majority party members, What do you -- what do your CMS stats show? And based on those numbers, whose interests are you fighting for?

We're here discussing changes to a map that your own colleague testified, under oath, was draw on race blind. Every motion that was filed, every signature that was signed, it was an affirmation of just that. Yet, now the DOJ is claiming that race was improperly used.

So which one was it? If nothing was

wrong, why are we here? If something was wrong, is Texas now admitting that it misled the courts? Somebody is lying. Somebody likely committed perjury, and Texans are paying that price.

While we sit here today, right now, two people are still missing in the Hill Country. HEB is providing more visible relief than the State. Children are going without food after Governor Abbott vetoed a $60 million summer meal assistance program.

Elderly Texans aren't turning on their AC just to afford their electricity bills. Some public schools in Texas don't have a single guidance counselor. 1.7 million Texas may lose health insurance, and 710,000 people, right now in Congressional District 18, have no voice in Congress because that seat is vacant. And I don't see Governor Abbott rushing to call a special election so that these people can have representation.

God forbid disaster strikes in that region. Who would be fighting for them? Somebody always loses in redistricting. But this is not that. This feels dangerously close to what we saw after the regular session, an obvious collusion between Texas and the current administration, that shows no interest in Texas outside of ensuring that it stays red.

This state obsesses over alleged voter

fraud, but now we're unnecessarily complicating things for voters. Last night witnesses were turned away before they could testify. That member -- or sorry. Those members who stayed late into the evening to hear these people out were not from the party that are asking for this.

I ask that this committee not redistrict in this way, listen to Texans, and give them the accountability and transparency that we deserve. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Members, any questions?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Seeing none, the Chair calls Jodi Eckberg. Jodi Eckberg, are you there with us?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Jodi Eckberg.

MS. JODI ECKBERG: Yes, I am. Can you hear me?

THE CHAIR: We sure can. Please proceed.

MS. JODI ECKBERG: Thank you. And thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Jodi Eckberg and I am representing myself.

I live in the US Congressional District

10. I strongly oppose the attempt to redistrict our congressional districts mid census. And I, like others here today, also wish we'd actually be able to see the maps in question.

Regardless, this brazen move by the Governor and the DOJ to increase Republican representation in the U.S. House by taking it away from communities of color is shameful, and its blatant racial discrimination.

Redrawing legislative maps outside the normal census cycle is not only unnecessary, it's deeply harmful to our democratic process. Mid decade redistricting undermines stability and trust in our elections. It gives those in power the chance to manipulate district lines purely for political gain rather than to reflect the will of the voters.

This kind of gerrymandering silences communities, especially communities of color, by diluting their voice -- excuse me -- by diluting their voting power and weakening fair representation.

Texans want accountability, not more backroom deals and, frankly, not more bathroom bills either. Voters should choose their leaders, not the other way around.

Instead of spending time and taxpayer

dollars on rigging maps and terrorizing women, people of color, immigrants, and the LGBTQ community, this legislation should focus on the real needs of Texans, education, healthcare, equality for everyone, and upgrading disaster infrastructure with flood warning systems, emergency communications, natural disaster prep, and relief funding for all impacted areas.

Redistricting should happen every 10 years, fairly, transparently, and based on accurate census data. Anything else threatens the integrity of our democracy and erodes public trust.

I am asking this committee to commit to holding a public hearing after the maps have been drawn, but before they pass through committee. And that you give us a minimum of five days, but weeks would be even better, to notice, to review the maps before this hearing.

I also want those who draw the maps to explain why they drew them as such and to not hide any communications that they have had regarding drawing the maps. This is an opportunity for Texas legislature to finally get this process right and avoid millions of taxpayer dollars and years of lawsuits. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Members, any questions for the witness seeing?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Seeing none. Chair calls Carol Philipson. Carol Philipson.

MS. CAROL PHILIPSON: Hello. Can you hear me?

THE CHAIR: We certainly can. Go ahead.

MS. CAROL PHILIPSON: Oh, good. Sorry for that problem before. I'm not good with computers, and I actually had two of you up at one time. So, I've got it straightened out now.

So, anyway, so my name is Carol Philipson. I'm representing myself. I live in Austin, Texas. Please do not redistrict. How can this be done when the 2021 redistricting plan is still tied up in courts? What is the reason for this urgency? How can this be done when there's no map to draw drawn to show the changes?

How can this be done when documents, written communication, emails, texts have not been made public? Your constituents need transparency. What are you hiding? We've all read the US Constitution, more so recently, but do you remember the first Texas Constitution?

"All political power is inherent in the people, and all three governments are founded on their

authority and instituted for their benefit."

Yes, founded on the people's authority and for the benefit of all Texans, not a political party, Republican or Democrat.

You were elected to represent the best for all Texans of all colors, but we put our trust in you. Please do not turn your backs on us. Say "no" to redistricting. Thank you so much.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. And I'm sorry you had a little trouble earlier.

MS. CAROL PHILIPSON: Oh, we got to squared away. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Great. Members, are there any questions?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Seeing none, Chair calls Jacqueline Baez-Lugo. Are you...

MS. JACQUELINE BAEZ-LUGO: Hello.

THE CHAIR: Hello. How are you?

MS. JACQUELINE BAEZ-LUGO: Oh, fine. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Go ahead and proceed with your testimony.

MS. JACQUELINE BAEZ-LUGO: Oh, hi. Good afternoon. My name is Jacqueline Baez-Lugo. I live in

Edinburgh, Texas, which is the Rio Grande Valley, Hidalgo County. I'm a proud Republican conservative, and I do support this redistricting because we have many conservative Republicans that live in the valley also, and we don't feel represented by the local Democrat control.

The Democrat has been in charge of the Valley for more than 200 years, and it's kind of like a one-party system around here. Even me speaking in favor and talking about the Republicans is going to look like we are some people. But, guess what, we do exist too. And we do believe -- I do believe we live in a country where we have a two-party system, and I believe we should have some kind of good competition affair. We have very good candidates for the Republican party here. They always have a hard time to reach out to the people because their voices have been silenced.

So, why can't we have also a fair competition between Republicans and Democrats? What are they afraid of? I can tell you what they are afraid of. The Democrat party system here -- they've been in charge for more than 200 years -- and let me tell you, sir, and I'm pretty sure you know, Hidalgo County is one of the most corrupt counties in the whole state of Texas as far as the elections are concerned.

So, yes, give us a chance so we can have a seat at the table. We would like to reach out to the people, too, and tell about us. We do exist. We are Republicans and we are conservative, and we support. And thank you so much for allowing me to speak. I'm very proud to be here supporting my Republican party, and also my conservative friends. Thank you so much. And by the way, I'm Puerto Rican. I'm a Hispanic woman, and I'm a conservative woman, too. And I vote Republican top to bottom. Thank you so much for allowing me to speak. I'm very proud to be here.

THE CHAIR: Well, thank you. We're glad that you're here as well. And, by the way, I'm sorry, but you're representing yourself today. Is that correct?

MS. JACQUELINE BAEZ-LUGO: Oh, I'm representing myself. I'm a Puerto Rican woman, Republican, conservative, living in Rio Grande Valley. Thank you so much for allowing me to speak.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Members, any questions?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Seeing none, we're going to call up the next group. Lauren Miller and Haley Landry. Lauren Miller and Haley Landry. Are either of you with

us?

THE CLERK: Haley is.

THE CHAIR: Haley Landry. Would you like to go ahead?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Haley Landry, would you like to go ahead and testify?

MS. HAYLEY LANDREY: Hello. Good afternoon.

THE CHAIR: Hi. How are you? If you would just please state your name and if you're representing any organization, and then please proceed with your testimony.

MS. HAYLEY LANDREY: Good afternoon, Chair and members of the Committee. My name is Haley Landry, and I live in Fort Bend County District 9.

I work in the travel industry, and I'm here today representing myself, but I'm speaking for my neighbors as well. Fort Bend isn't just where I live. It's home to one of the most diverse counties in the country, where you can hear dozens of languages at the grocery store, the churches, mosques and temples all on the same block. And find neighbors who treat each other like family, even if we don't all look or worship the same.

I've been tested before. During Hurricane Harvey, neighborhoods across Fort Bend flooded, and I saw firsthand how people didn't wait for government aid to help one another. Strangers became lifelines, delivering food, sharing generators, checking on the elderly. And during the 2021 winter storm, it happened again. Because in Fort Bend, resilience isn't just a word, it's a way of life.

But that shared strength is at risk when the community is sliced up on a map, even though the proposed redistricting maps haven't even been released yet. So, this process feels rushed, closed, and unfair. And we've seen it before where maps divide Fort Bend, dilute our voices, and make it harder for our communities to elect leaders who understand us. When we are divided, it's often the minority groups, immigrant voices, and the working class residents that are left behind.

Small business owners, recent arrivals, parents working two jobs to keep up with rising costs, these are the people who need their vote to mean something, not to be scattered across districts where no one is truly accountable to them. So, I'm asking you, keep Fort Bend whole. We want fair, nonpartisan maps that respect the reality of who we are. Don't silence

our community for political convenience. Let us choose leaders who reflect our values, not have leaders choose their voters.

In closing, please draw fair and competitive maps that recognize the richness of Texas's diverse communities. Stop dividing us for political gain. Keep Fort Bend together, and ensure all our voices, not just some, are heard in the elections ahead. Thank you for your time and your service.

THE CHAIR: Thank you for being here today. Members, are there any questions for the witness?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Seeing none, Chair calls Lauren Miller.

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Lauren Miller.

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Okay. I'm sorry, I don't believe she's -- is it?

THE CLERK: Yeah, I let her in, but I don't have her.

THE CHAIR: Lauren Miller. I'll try one more time.

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: All right. Do we have anyone else?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Why don't you ask him if he wants us to wait a few minutes? Ladies and gentlemen, we're standing at ease for just a moment. We can have her in tomorrow.

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: Ladies and gentlemen, there's -- and members -- there is no one else in the waiting room. So, there's no one else still waiting to testify. With that said, is there any other business to come before this committee today?

(Silence.)

THE CHAIR: There being no further business, the Senate Special Committee on Congressional Redistricting will stand in recess subject to the call of the Chair. Thank you, everyone.

(Strikes gavel.)

[End of Video Recording File]

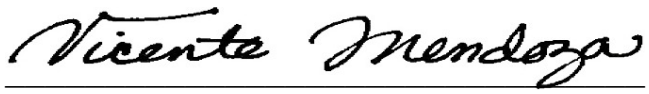
REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

TRANSCRIPTION OF VIDEOTAPE

I, Vicente Mendoza, the undersigned Certified Shorthand Reporter in and for the State of Texas, certify that the foregoing pages are a true and correct transcription of the videotaped recording to the best of my ability to understand and decipher the words and identify the speakers based on information provided.

I further certify that I am neither attorney nor counsel for, related to, nor employed by any parties to the action in which this testimony is taken and, further, that I am not a relative nor employee of any counsel employed by the parties hereto or financially interested in the action.

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO under my hand and seal of office on this 13th day of September, 2025.



Vicente Mendoza, CSR, RPR, LCI
Certified Shorthand Reporter
CSR NO. 6918 - Expires 04/30/2027
INTEGRITY LEGAL SUPPORT SOLUTIONS
9901 Brodie Ln, Ste. 160-400
Austin, Texas 78748
www.integritylegal.support
512-320-8690; Firm #528

State Defendants' Response to Plaintiff-Intervenors' and TXNAACP Motion for Preliminary Injunction

Exhibit AI

Sen. King, Senate Committee on Congressional Redistricting, July 30th, 2025: 00:53:57

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TRANSCRIPTION OF VIDEOTAPE

SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON REDISTRICTING

WEDNESDAY, JULY 30, 2025

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P R O C E E D I N G S

CHAIRPERSON KING: Everybody settled?

(No audible response.)

CHAIRPERSON KING: The Senate Special Committee on Congressional Redistricting will come to order. The Clerk will call the roll.

THE CLERK: Senator King?

CHAIRPERSON KING: Here.

THE CLERK: Senator Creighton?

VICE CHAIR CREIGHTON: Here.

THE CLERK: Senator Alvarado?

SENATOR ALVARADO: Here.

THE CLERK: Senator Hinojosa?

SENATOR HINOJOSA: Present.

THE CLERK: Senator Hughes?

SENATOR HUGHES: Here.

THE CLERK: Senator Miles?

SENATOR MILES: Here.

THE CLERK: Senator Parker.

SENATOR PARKER: Here.

THE CLERK: Senator Paxton?

SENATOR PAXTON: Here.

THE CLERK: Senator Sparks?

SENATOR SPARKS: Here.

CHAIRPERSON KING: Thank you.

There being a -- nine present, a quorum has been established. Members, we have two -- I guess two -- that's okay -- we have two motions in writing before us from -- one from Senator Miles, I believe the other from Senator Alvarado.

Let's take up Senator Miles' first. And will the Clerk please read the motion for the Record?

THE CLERK: The motion by Senator Miles.

I move that the Senate Special Committee on Congressional Redistricting of the State of Texas under the hand of the Chair of the Committee and as the Chair deems appropriate in accordance with Texas Government Code Section 103.024, Senate Resolution 5, Senate Rule 11.20, issue one or more subpoenas to compel the Assistant Attorney General, Harmeet Dhillon; Deputy Assistant Attorney General Michael E. Gates; or any other relevant employees of the United States Department of Justice to appear before the Committee at the time and location specified in the subpoena.

CHAIRPERSON KING: Thank you.

Senator Miles, would you want to elaborate any on the motion?

SENATOR MILES: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chair.

Members of the Committee and Chairman, thank you. This is a subpoena added for AG Dhillon or Deputy Assistant Gates, AG, who both signed on the DOJ, what we call the hit list letter, or any other DOJ employee. Members, you know

I've tabled my motion time and time over again in the last week. We've tried to do -- not do this at all.

I want to thank Chairman King who wrote a letter to Ms. Dhillon and asked her -- asking her to voluntarily testify. We know the letter was successfully received because Chairman King indicated to all of us that he had received an automatic response from Ms. Dhillon's office. That was last Friday.

Today is Wednesday and we have not heard back. For something of this magnitude, which is such a tight deadline of August 7, I think we all deserve and want to hear a quick response from Ms. Dhillon, therefore the subpoena is necessary.

Texas has never been afraid to set legal precedents. The DOJ has threatened this state directly. Let's dispense with caution and issue a subpoena if needed. The court -- if need be, the courts can sort this out if we have to. I urge all of my members for -- to vote in assurance of the subpoena so that we can have our questions answered and so we can be as deliberate as possible as a body.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, members.

CHAIRPERSON KING: Thank you.

Members, I have some comments, but first would anyone else like to speak in regard to the motion?

(No audible response.)

CHAIRPERSON KING: Okay. Let me say I've really given this a lot of sincere thought, I know it's something that's come up several times in the Committee process all stemming from the letter from the DOJ. I actually sat down last night and just -- finally just sat down and wrote out my thoughts on it. So I want you to know that these are sincere and not -- and they weren't predetermined or anything of that nature.

I think in considering whether or not we should compel -- or should issue a subpoena for Ms. Dhillon, if we did that, obviously it's because of the letter that was submit -- that was written and delivered to the Governor and to the Attorney General. I'm going to oppose the motion. Of course everyone on the Committee is free to vote as they judge best.

I have several reasons. One, I think first the letter is of no impact on the Redistricting Committee. As I said, the Senate is -- as I've said before, the Senate is able to move forward with Congressional redistricting irrespective of the accuracy or inaccuracy of the DOJ letter and irrespective of the reason why the Governor gave for adding redistricting to the call.

Once redistricting was on the call, the Senate then determines the how and why of all items on the call. So I believe really the letter has no impact and is really

superfluous to the Committee's actions.

Second, the letter was not directed to the Senate. The letter, as I mentioned earlier, was directed to the Attorney General and to the Governor. The Texas Attorney General has sent a letter of response, that I believe everyone has, to the DOJ disagreeing with the legal conclusions expressed in the DOJ's letter. And I've mentioned publicly in hearing that I disagree with the conclusions laid out in the DOJ's letter.

Also, the attorneys representing the state in the redistricting litigation on behalf of the Attorney General, they have already filed a response with the court. If you remember, there was the plaintiffs filed a motion to reopen testimony due to the DOJ letter, the attorneys representing -- or acting on behalf of the Attorney General and representing the state have filed a very lengthy response to that letter and to the motion of the plaintiffs in that case. The court has considered the Attorney General's litigation team's response and has denied the motion to reopen the case.

And of course that OAG's response, the litigation team's response has been made available to the Committee as well. So I think that the Attorney General, through a personal letter to the DOJ and through the actions of his counsel with the court, have responded to the letter.

It was also addressed to the Governor. I think the

Governor has responded to the letter, at least in my opinion by placing the issue of Congressional redistricting on the call. And once again, the letter was not directed to the Senate, it was only directed to the Attorney General and to the Governor, so I don't really think it applies to us and to the work of this Committee.

Also, at least from what I can gather, in terms of Senate precedent I'm not aware of any time that the Senate has issued a subpoena to a federal law officer, and certainly not one of such a senior position. Further, to do a subpoena I think it has to obviously be relative for a specific date, time and place. We have no hearings scheduled at this time and so the subpoena -- any vote to go forward would be without the specificity of knowing when we want them to appear.

Also, as of today, July 30 -- you know, we sent an invitation -- this issue first came up I guess last Friday at our first hearing. I suggested rather than doing a subpoena that we invite Ms. Dhillon. That late that afternoon I wrote a letter, we emailed it. I know it was received as Senator Miles said, because I received a response. And although we have not had a response back as yet to that invitation, in fact, it's only been three business days since that invitation was received. So I think we're a little premature in that regard to considering a subpoena as well.

We've also had I think four days of hearings. We've

heard from approximately 200 witnesses who testified. Many mentioned the DOJ letter. And the Committee has discussed this letter at length. Again, my position is it has no import to the work of the Committee. The Governor has placed redistricting on the call, and we can choose as a Committee and then as a body, Senate body to go forward or not with Congressional redistricting. The letter itself is of no impact on that.

So for all of these reasons -- I know that alleged counsel placed an opinion out suggesting that the Senate might not have the authority to issue a letter to a federal officer. I am also aware that there's other case law out there that might speak in a different direction. I don't want to get into the legal issues of that and I don't want to take up whether or not we have the authority to subpoena a federal officer, and I don't think we need to bring that up for the purposes of considering this motion. So based on these other more pragmatic points that I've tried to make, I am going to vote no on the motion.

And with that I'd be happy to again ask would anyone else like to speak with regard to the motion?

Senator Miles.

SENATOR MILES: Chairman, I just want to be clear. You're voting no on the motion or you are going to leave it to the will of the body and that's just going to be your no vote?

CHAIRPERSON KING: So the motion as I understand it is to authorize the Chair to issue a subpoena --

SENATOR MILES: To vote -- do we have to -- and isn't that -- isn't that a decision to be made by the body of this Committee?

CHAIRPERSON KING: And that would be the vote. It does require a two-thirds vote --

SENATOR MILES: Correct.

CHAIRPERSON KING: -- of the body, and the questions specifically would be on the adoption of the motion as it was read by the Clerk, and again, it would require two-thirds. But what it actually does is authorize the Chair to issue a subpoena.

SENATOR MILES: Okay. And you have that right as the Chairman, Mr. Chairman. I understand the vote no on the motion. But I can't -- respectfully how can it be -- have no impact. You know, at the time this was included in the official call and it had enough impact to make the call. And I think that's completely disingenuous that this letter from the DOJ is what started this train of redistricting, and we wouldn't be here if not for that letter.

And it's my understanding, and I could be wrong, I'm not, you know, an expert in anything, but this redistricting would have been illegal had we not received that letter. If we -- like you said on our meeting, we could have a

redistricting meeting any time we want. But as I understand it, had we not had that letter from the DOJ and we had called this particular redistricting meeting, that it would have been illegal. I'm not an expert, but that's how I understand and been advised.

Again, I close with, you're the Chairman, you have the right to vote no on the motion. I just hope that -- I'm happy that you're going to leave it up to the will of this Committee.

CHAIRPERSON KING: Thank you. My understanding, and we've read the Governor's call several times during the hearings, but the core of the Governor's call was for the legislature to take up the issue of Congressional redistricting irregardless of the DOJ letter. Once he places Congressional redistricting on the call, then we can interpret that in whatever light we wish. And we can take it up for that purpose if we wanted to, for the purpose of dealing with that letter, or we can take it up because we, as a body, determined that it would be in the best interest of Texas to attempt to redraw the Congressional map.

SENATOR MILES: But correct me if I'm wrong, this is not a case of which came first, the chicken or the egg. We know that this letter from the DOJ came before he put this on the call. Is that correct?

CHAIRPERSON KING: That's correct. Now we don't

know whether he would have put it on the call otherwise or not obviously.

SENATOR MILES: Right.

CHAIRPERSON KING: But --

SENATOR MILES: But we do know that this came first.

CHAIRPERSON KING: -- but historically the way the Texas legislature -- the Texas Senate specifically has dealt with the call, that once the subject matter is placed on the call, then it's up to the Senate to determine the scope of that subject matter. And my understanding of it is that once he put the words Congressional redistricting on the call, then we can take it up irregardless of the letter.

SENATOR MILES: No dispute in that. But just for the Record, we know that this letter from the DOJ came first.

CHAIRPERSON KING: It's dated prior to the call, that is correct.

SENATOR MILES: Before the call. Thank you, sir.

CHAIRPERSON KING: Thank you, sir.

Members, anything else?

SENATOR ALVARADO: Sure. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON KING: Senator Alvarado.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just to hit -- reemphasize a few points my colleague made. You said Step 1 was the letter. Well, actually Step 1 was Trump saying that he wanted five more Congressional

districts out of Texas, Republican Congressional districts. Step 2, some time after came the DOJ letter. And that letter has everything to do with why we're here.

Mr. Chairman, respectfully when you've been asked why we're doing this, you've said -- you've been very consistent and you've said we're here because the Governor put it on the call. Not only did the Governor put redistricting on the call, included in that was the DOJ letter that was very specific to four districts, targeting four districts, majority minority districts.

Mr. Chairman, you yourself has said that you did not agree with the conclusion that the DOJ letter -- or the insinuations that it made. So I too agree with that. I don't see -- see it the way that Ms. Harmeet sees it. Even more reason why she should appear, she or somebody in the DOJ should appear to explain the reason that they have targeted those four districts.

This letter is what started this whole process. And now here we are and we cannot get our questions answered because quite frankly I don't think she's going to show up. Right? I mean it's been three days, something of this importance that's been in the national news, I mean unless they're too busy dealing with the Epstein files or whatever, I'm sure there are attorneys who can respond, but they have chosen not to. So they put all this out there, but then

they're not here to -- wanting to show up to answer the questions that we have.

I mean we are -- we're here because the Governor put it on the call to answer the Constitutional issues raised by the DOJ. So, you know, bear with us because we feel pretty strong about this, that Ms. Harmeet should be here at some point. And I don't think, unless you have other -- you know, something in writing that says that it has to be time and date specific, because I think that that can be specified at a later time.

We know that we do have another hearing, at least one. Is that correct?

CHAIRPERSON KING: If we consider a map, we would have obviously at least one hearing.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. So that time could be specified later. Any thoughts on that?

CHAIRPERSON KING: Well, I mean obviously at some point if we have a hearing, that's -- I wouldn't want to -- I would not call a hearing just for someone to come and testify. We would -- we probably will not have another hearing until we have a bill before us.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. Well, and then let me get to the -- to the legislative counsel and what they -- the opinion that they had.

CHAIRPERSON KING: Can I respond to --

SENATOR ALVARADO: Sure.

CHAIRPERSON KING: -- what you just said though? I want to go back and say even if she came and testified, it has no impact on whether or not the Committee goes forward with redistricting. We can do that -- if the author of the letter believes that the Texas maps are illegal in some manner, violate the Voting Rights Act in some manner, and she comes and testifies to that, that still has no impact on whether or not we do Congressional redistricting.

And so from my perspective the letter is irrelevant to the purpose of the call. I understand it's a side issue that's out there and it -- I don't -- I haven't talked to the Governor and obviously it had some impact in whether or not he put this matter on the call. But once Congressional redistricting was put on the call, the letter doesn't matter because it's on the call, and then it's our job to decide as a Committee and then later as the Senate whether we want to go forward and try to design a new Congressional map.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Well, the fact that during a regular redistricting period we're redistricting for the whole state, but this DOJ letter specifies for Congressional districts. So I think it has a lot to do with what we're doing. I've never known a time when a federal agent or somebody in federal government sends a letter to the Governor, or to the AG, or both, requesting redistricting targeting four

specific districts.

CHAIRPERSON KING: But I think there's been innumerable times that a senior federal officer has publicly stated and put in writing that they did not agree with what Texas was doing on one matter or another. But that doesn't mean that we're required to respond to that, it doesn't mean that we're required to take action on that, any more than we are to this letter. And I just think the letter -- I don't want to use the word irrelevant, but the Committee can go forward with redistricting regardless of what the DOJ letter says or what their author has, in their mind, concluded.

And I'm not criticizing the author in any way. You know how redistricting is, there's a lot of discussions and court cases and everything else trying to figure out maps. They apparently came to the conclusion that there were some issues under the Voting Rights Act. I don't think there is, but it doesn't matter because we're going to pursue Congressional redistricting irregardless of the letter.

So I think trying to issue -- I'm going to vote no because I think trying to issue a subpoena just -- I think it's a distraction at best and I think it creates unnecessary conflict at worst. And so I am going to vote against it, and if the Committee agrees, then we'll continue with our work just as we had planned to do.

SENATOR ALVARADO: I believe Ms. Harmeet in her

letter, and I don't have it here in front of me, but I think she threatened to sue us?

CHAIRPERSON KING: Well, the last sentence, and it's a little bit -- the calendar date's a little interesting, but it -- I think you can read it that it expected a response. But the state has responded. The letter was not to the Senate, it was to the Governor and to the Attorney General. They have both responded, at least the Attorney General has formally responded to the letter, and I guess the -- I think you could presume that the Governor has responded by putting the issue on the call.

But we're -- the Senate isn't mentioned in the letter, the legislature's not mentioned in the letter, any request for a response is not directed to us.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Well, it's -- I mean indirectly because it's addressed to the Governor and then he in turn directed this legislative body in the House to take up redistricting. I don't recall anything in the history of Texas, of the legislature in a redistricting where a federal agent is threatening the legislature with a lawsuit.

CHAIRPERSON KING: Oh, I think previous DOJs, particularly Democratic DOJs, when Republicans were doing redistricting have often inserted their voice into what the Committee and what the legislature, the Senate and the House were working on.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Yeah, I don't quite recall a letter from the DOJ or any kind of directive that included a threat of a lawsuit if we did not take up redistricting with -- in regards to specific Congressional districts, you know.

CHAIRPERSON KING: Well, no, but I think the previous DOJ actually intervened in the lawsuit. That's --

SENATOR ALVARADO: That -- well --

CHAIRPERSON KING: -- pretty direct.

SENATOR ALVARADO: -- I think that was different, there were already some lawsuits in place, there were VRA issues and -- okay.

CHAIRPERSON KING: The point is, at least from my perspective, and I certainly understand where you and Senator Miles are coming from, but I don't think the letter has any bearing on our responsibility to respond to the call. I think the call says take up Congressional redistricting, and for all the reasons I listed I think it's -- it's just better that we not issue a subpoena to the author of the letter.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. I know you mentioned the legislative counsel and their opinion that we cannot subpoena a federal agent. Is that correct?

CHAIRPERSON KING: Yeah, that was citing a 1930s -- so there's 1930, maybe '36 case out of Pennsylvania where a legislative body was attempting to issue a subpoena and gather

information from a federal authority. The court ruled that that was a violation of federal sovereignty. Then the Fifth Circuit had a case come up in maybe 1967 if I'm remembering, and the Fifth Circuit adopted that legal reasoning, adopted that case in dealing with a similar issue within the Fifth Circuit states.

And so -- and it makes a very good argument that we don't have the legal authority. I don't think it's a final authority and I don't want to get into that because I don't want to ever say that Texas doesn't have the authority to do that without a lot more research in jurisprudence. So I'm not making my recommendation based on alleged counsel's opinion, although I very much appreciate it and respect it, and I think it's well written.

But I don't think it's definitive and I really don't think it's the time or place for us to try to decide whether or not Texas -- whether the legislature has that authority. I think -- I don't -- I think we can move forward without going there. And frankly I'm not sure that you could make that decision without not just a lot of research but maybe some additional jurisprudence to figure all that out.

SENATOR ALVARADO: And the cases that you referenced, are those the Alex McLeod?

CHAIRPERSON KING: Yes.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. Well, the cases that they

are citing are clearly distinguishable from the facts at hand and should not be read as categorical bars to legislative inquiries of federal agents in all cases. In both those cases state authorities were investigating the operations and policies of federal agencies. This is a sharp contrast with that -- what the Committee's doing today.

Unlike the legislative committees in both of these cited cases, we are not investigating the US Department of Justice. Rather we are simply seeking testimony from an assistant Attorney General who sent the letter to Texas officials threatening litigation if the state legislature did not take action. So I don't think it --

CHAIRPERSON KING: I'm not -- I'm not disagreeing with you. I think there's a lot of room for discussion there and that's why I didn't take that case law into consideration in coming to my conclusion. I think for the other more pragmatic reasons that I mentioned, Senate precedent and the fact that the letter's been responded, the letter doesn't have any impact on this Committee.

The call is very clear, the subject matter of the call as far as Congressional redistricting, the other just courtesy fact that we've, at this point, only given the DOJ three days to respond, three business days, I just think for all of those reasons that I'm going to vote no on the motion. And of course it's up to each Committee member how they wish

to vote. If there's a -- if two-thirds of the members vote to authorize the subpoena, then I'll have the authority to do that, and we'll continue forward.

SENATOR ALVARADO: I can guess how this movie ends right here, but one thing I'll just say about it, the last thing on this motion, but this is not an intrusion into federal agency. This is in response to an intrusion by a federal agency. The DOJ entered into our legislative sphere and demanded an action on a purely state matter drawing our Congressional lines. Having done so, they have subjected themselves to appropriate legislative oversight consistent with the 10th Amendment and the principles of federalism.

CHAIRPERSON KING: Again, not getting into the legal issues because I think you can argue both sides of that, you did it well, the pragmatic principles lead me to say that we should not do a subpoena at this time.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Yeah.

SENATOR MILES: Mr. Chairman, I just have one question before we call for the vote.

CHAIRPERSON KING: Yes, sir. Senator Miles.

SENATOR MILES: Yeah. Again, it's just not a coincidence, that letter from the DOJ, that we're not going to subpoena the person who wrote it or anybody from that agency. It's not a coincidence that those four districts are on that letter. As I stated on the floor, that you and I had the

conversation on the floor, it's not a coincidence.

But what I would like to know is what reason without that letter would we have a mid-decade redistricting that has nothing to do -- they have no different census information, for what reason would we have met, that we would have had a redistricting --

CHAIRPERSON KING: Senator, I can't speak for the Governor or for his reasoning in placing it on the call. I know that we did what everyone called mid-decade redistricting in 2003 and we had three special sessions then. We've done redistricting in special sessions for different reasons, but it was always because the Governor placed it on the call and that's why we're here now, because the Governor has placed Congressional redistricting on the call.

I can't speak to his reasoning, and I hadn't talked to him, but we are here and we have the authority to decide if we want to produce a new map, we have the authority to consider all the issues surrounding Congressional redistricting as to redistricting --

SENATOR MILES: It's not a coincidence. As we know what it is, it's called rigged districting.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to the call of the vote.

CHAIRPERSON KING: Thank you.

Members, any other comments?

(No audible response.)

CHAIRPERSON KING: Thank you.

So, Members, the question is on the adoption of the motion previously read by the Clerk. Please note that under Senate Rule 11.20 this motion would require a record vote of not less than two-thirds of the Committee's members to be adopted.

Will the Clerk please call the roll and please show the Chair voting no.

THE CLERK: Senator Alvarado?

SENATOR ALVARADO: Aye.

THE CLERK: Senator Hinojosa?

SENATOR HINOJOSA: (No audible response.)

THE CLERK: Senator Hughes?

SENATOR HUGHES: Respectfully, no.

THE CLERK: Senator Miles?

SENATOR MILES: Aye.

THE CLERK: Senator Parker?

SENATOR PARKER: No.

THE CLERK: Senator Paxton?

SENATOR PAXTON: No.

THE CLERK: Senator Sparks?

SENATOR SPARKS: No.

THE CLERK: Senator Creighton?

VICE CHAIR CREIGHTON: No.

THE CLERK: The Chair is reflected as a no.

CHAIRPERSON KING: Thank you.

There being three ayes and six nays, the motion fails. And I thank everyone for their time and discussion on that.

We have one more motion. And is this one by -- are you laying out this one --

SENATOR ALVARADO: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON KING: -- Senator Alvarado? Okay. Great. The Clerk will read the motion for the Record.

THE CLERK: The motion by Senator Alvarado.

I move that the Senate Special Committee on Congressional Redistricting of the State of Texas under the hand of the Chair of the Committee and as the Chair deems appropriate in accordance with the Texas Government Code Section 103.024, Senate Resolution 5 and Senate Rule 11.20 issue one or more subpoenas to compel Mr. Adam Kincaid, National Republic Redistricting Trust, to appear before the Committee at the time -- at a time and location specified in the subpoena.

CHAIRPERSON KING: Senator Alvarado, would you like to discuss the motion?

SENATOR ALVARADO: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

I think we've talked a little bit about Mr. Adam Kincaid and the fact that he drew the maps in 2021, and from

what I understand drew the map that was filed today. Mr. Kincaid is with the National Republic Redistricting Trust. We need to know what guidelines he used to draw these maps and if he drew the latest following the instructions of the DOJ to target districts based on race.

As I mentioned before, we have recent Senate precedent with the Senate State Affairs Committee. I've talked about that, now I think this is my third time referencing, but the Committee, the State Affairs Commission -- Committee issued subpoenas, and I want to reemphasize issued, not enforced subpoenas to BlackRock in 2022, and a number of social media companies, Alphabet, Meta and TicTok in 2024, these individuals out of state.

We're in a similar situation where the Committee needs critical information to meet its charge. We need to know how these maps were drawn. In addition the TLC letter, it doesn't say anything about whether a subpoena we issue can be registered in DC and served there in DC with DC authorities holding the power to enforce the subpoena.

Mr. Chairman, and again, we've had a couple of conversations about the role that Mr. Kincaid has played in the 2021 redistricting. In fact, he was -- he testified in the recent court case, defended the 2021 maps that he drew, and has been very consistent that they were drawn without regards to race. They were race neutral, VRA compliant and

constitutional.

So, you know, I've said this before, either he was lying, maybe he committed perjury because he was -- did a pretty good job of defending those maps that he drew in 2021. So I would like to hear what he has to say now with this -- with recent events and ask him about the guidelines and the data that he used to draw the maps this year.

CHAIRPERSON KING: Members, any discussion?

(No audible response.)

CHAIRPERSON KING: So I thought a lot about this one too today after -- after you had mentioned early this morning that you'd be bringing this one in. A couple of things, one, I can't think of any time that, at least in the 27 years I've been in the legislature, that I've seen a subpoena -- someone who wrote a bill to determine its legality or its appropriateness. We usually look at the bill itself and analyze it.

I know that the House has filed a bill today. I've already asked counsel that we've engaged, that I've engaged to take a look at that map and let me know if it does or does not in all ways comply with the Voting Rights Act, 14th Amendment and any other appropriate law. And it doesn't seem that it would matter what the motives were for the document, or the methodology used to construct it.

It really seems that all that matters is what --

what is in the four corners of that document, what are within the parameters of each district on that map. And so I don't really see any purpose that his testimony -- I don't see any -- how his testimony would provide any relevant information to the Committee's decision of do we like that map. First off, is it legal, and do we like the way it's drawn?

Also, I would note that there's a lot of discussion about whether or not we could ever compel somebody who lives out of state to attend. I will certainly say this, that I'm happy to issue him an invitation as we did Ms. Dhillon, and I'd be happy to do that tomorrow. But it is my understanding that he is -- that he lives I want to say Virginia, but I'm not sure, but I think --

SENATOR ALVARADO: I believe so.

CHAIRPERSON KING: -- I think that's correct. I think you told me that actually.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Uh-huh.

CHAIRPERSON KING: And -- but without getting into our authority to do it, because I want to be careful that the Committee doesn't ever do anything to detract or establish any precedent taking away from a committee's authority to issue a subpoena, so without getting into the legal issues, I just see no benefit or no necessity for him to testify while we're going to look at his -- the map and we're going to make sure

that it has a proper analysis so that we know that if it -- that it complies, that it's legal, it complies with all applicable law. And then we would look at it from a policy perspective and determine if it's something that the Committee wants to support or not, or amend or not.

So I guess my question is, regardless of his methodology, what difference would that make in the Committee's determination?

SENATOR ALVARADO: Well, I think what we're doing here is unprecedented. I think it's -- you know, it's not a usual redistricting process. And since he drew the maps in 2021 and recently was defending them in the court case, and now he's drawing a different set of maps, I -- one of the questions I probably want to know, aside from what guideline or data he used is -- he just said that the maps he drew for 2021 were fine, they were legal, they were VRA compliant. And now he's drawing -- he drew some different maps.

CHAIRPERSON KING: And I understand that completely, but I guess just for my reasoning, whoever -- I mean we may have other maps filed, there may be -- everybody on this Committee may file a map, and I would never see any benefit to bringing in whoever was the actual map drawer and saying, Why did you do this and how did you do that?

I would want to look at the map, determine if it -- have someone take a -- give it a good legal scrub and

determine if it is legal in all respects, and then we would want to look at it as policy makers and determine if it's the best policy for the state of Texas. It doesn't matter to me who drew it. Again, it's certainly up to the will of the Committee. I'm going to vote against the motion, but it's going to be completely up to the will of the Committee.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Well, again, I know how this movie will end. I guess this is the sequel to the first vote and a sequel's never as good as the first one. But --

CHAIRPERSON KING: And if I could clarify something? There is no map, I have not filed any map. I am aware of the map that -- obviously that the House has filed. I know there's a possibility that that map may work its way over to the Senate. I have asked for the attorneys that -- the Committee's hired, that I've hired as Committee Chair, I've asked for them -- I asked them this evening if they would take that and put it through all legal analysis so that if that map makes it over here, I'll know and be able to represent to the Committee whether or not it meets jingles and all the other appropriate reviews.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. Mr. Chairman, again, you brought up the issue about subpoenaing somebody from out of state, and I'd like to know what is the difference if the State Affairs Committee has done that as recent as 2024 inviting people or subpoena -- issuing a subpoena from out of

state, what is the difference with what I'm asking?

CHAIRPERSON KING: Oh, sure. I mean I think -- I think we could -- I think we have the -- I think we can issue a subpoena for Mr. Kincaid.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON KING: I think whether we can enforce that if he declines to come is a whole big different deal. I think, and I don't want to speak for Senator Hughes' committee, but I think the situation in that case was they were subpoenaing an organization that had a presence in Texas, or organizations that had a presence in Texas, and so Texas had the authority to compel the leadership of that organization to respond to the subpoena.

I think it's a legal discussion that we don't need to have in this Committee as to how you enforce legislative, or if you can enforce legislative subpoenas outside of the state of Texas. I don't think that's really relevant for us to decide today. But I mean you can issue a subpoena -- a committee I guess could issue a subpoena to anybody. Whether or not you can enforce it is a question for a different day.

SENATOR ALVARADO: So do we know for a fact that the National Republic Redistricting Trust does not have a presence in Texas?

CHAIRPERSON KING: To my knowledge it doesn't.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. Which troubles me, and I

know the way because we've got an individual and a group that is redrawing a map for Texas and they're not even Texans so.

CHAIRPERSON KING: Yes and no, and I understand that too. But I mean historically I think the way it's always happened is, you know, the House and Senate, we kind of draw our own -- the House draws its own map and sends it over to us to start as a template. The Senate draws its map, sends it over to the House, they start with ours as a template. And generally the Congressional delegation submit their map, and I'm assuming they usually draw those in DC, or somewhere that the delegation is operating out of.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Yeah. Well, and you mentioned about having somebody who drafted a bill come before. But we have often had people that draft bills to come before our Committee voluntarily, and one of the recent examples maybe was, sorry to keep using Senator Hughes's committee, but on Senate Bill 31 we had Mr. Bresin and Lisa Kaufman who helped draft the bill, and they came and testified voluntarily. So, you know, I'm not buying that argument.

CHAIRPERSON KING: Well, I guess that's true. I guess, you know, if -- I guess you're right because -- in that sense because if Corporation ABC was trying to push a bill and got someone to file it, they would -- they usually do the first draft and then come in and testify on the bill and to the reasoning for it.

So, okay, I'll concede that point, yeah.

SENATOR ALVARADO: I just don't see the harm in inviting somebody who drew a map and asking how and why they drew the map.

CHAIRPERSON KING: Well, if the point is to determine their methodology and their thoughts behind it and all that, I just -- I just think those are irrelevant in the unique situation of a redistricting map, because what really matters to us is first determining independently is it legal in every respect, and then determining ourselves is it good policy for the state of Texas than what their mental state was in drawing the map or their methodology. I don't think it really matters because I think the methodology gets wiped out by our legal scrub and the mental state gets knocked out by our policy decisions.

SENATOR ALVARADO: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON KING: Senator Miles.

SENATOR MILES: Mr. Chairman, one clarification. You just stated that we don't have a map. Is it your intent -- just for clarification -- is it your intent to use the House map after you've had them scrub it?

CHAIRPERSON KING: I honestly haven't decided --

SENATOR MILES: Are you going to file an additional map, as a point of clarification?

CHAIRPERSON KING: Okay. I haven't decided. I want

to watch -- I think there's several things for us to do, and I don't think there's a rush. I'd like to understand -- the House just posted a hearing from Friday -- for Friday. I'm assuming they've already begun a legal analysis of the map.

I'm really eager to hear all the testimony on the map with regard to its legality and policy implications and see how their hearing goes. I want to see if it looks like it's moving forward and going to get out of that committee soon, and then when they might begin to bring it to the floor, because we could just wait and see if the House sends a map over and then take up that map when it arrives.

I might also decide they're moving a little slowly, I might -- if we get a good report on the map from counsel, then I might take that map and file it. But at the same time other members of the Committee or the Senate may file other maps as well that we need to take a look at.

So again, I looked at the map for probably 20 minutes today, pulling it up on the screen and just overlaying the new lines with the old map, and there's a lot of adjustment in a lot of districts. And I don't know initially if they're -- I have no idea what the legal implications are, if they -- if it meets the VRA and other requirements. I suspect it does and -- but I want to check that before I look at it. And also I am just going to have to spend a lot of time, as everybody else will, trying to decide

if it's good policy the way the maps are drawn.

So I don't know if I'm going to file that bill or not. I don't know if I'm going to file another bill, I don't know if other members are going to file bills, bills being maps. And -- but I -- certainly I'm not going to make a decision until I kind of see how things are moving in the House.

Members, any other discussion? Senator Alvarado or Senator Miles, anything else?

(No audible response.)

CHAIRPERSON KING: All right. Thank you.

Members, the question is on adoption of the motion previously read by the Clerk. Please, again, note that Senate Rule 11.20 -- that under Senate Rule 11.20 this motion would require a record vote of not less than two-thirds of the Committee's members to be adopted.

Will the Clerk please call the roll?

THE CLERK: Senator Alvarado?

SENATOR ALVARADO: Aye.

THE CLERK: Senator Hinojosa?

SENATOR HINOJOSA: Aye.

THE CLERK: Senator Hughes?

SENATOR HUGHES: Respectfully, no.

THE CLERK: Senator Miles?

SENATOR MILES: Aye.

THE CLERK: Senator Parker?

SENATOR PARKER: No.

THE CLERK: Senator Paxton?

SENATOR PAXTON: No.

THE CLERK: Senator Sparks?

SENATOR SPARKS: No.

THE CLERK: Senator Creighton?

VICE CHAIR CREIGHTON: No.

THE CLERK: Senator King?

CHAIRPERSON KING: No.

There being three ayes and six nays, the motion fails.

And, Senators, I want to thank you both for bringing the motions, and I want to encourage you to bring -- let me know any time that you have any issues you want to bring up before the Committee and we can certainly sit down and talk about another quick hearing to address those.

You have also asked me on a number of occasions who the legal counsel is that we were pursuing. We actually talked to a number of firms. I mean normally you would have -- I would have done this earlier but we didn't get to get started till a couple of weeks ago. We interviewed a number of firms that had already been hired by other parties and then we ran into some conflicts.

As of this evening we have hired Baker -- the firm

of Baker Hostetler. Their I believe home office is out of DC, but they have offices in a number of locations including Texas. They have a very good background in redistricting and similar issues. And I have, as I mentioned, already asked them to take a look at the map that was filed in the House today, and to just do an independent review of it and let me know if they believe, as I suspect it does, that it complies with the requisite legal requirements.

And then we'll consider -- I'll consider whether to move it forward as a bill I file or whether to wait for the House to send something over. And again, the Committee is certainly open to any member of the Committee or the Senate that wishes to file their own map, and we'll sure take a hard look at that too.

Is there any other business to come before the Committee?

SENATOR MILES: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON KING: Oh, Senator Miles.

SENATOR MILES: I just want to note that we have three Democrats on this Committee, all of which are minorities. And we couldn't -- we've spoken out about this over and over and over again, and this letter from the DOJ. But yet we couldn't garner enough respect from our colleagues to just question the person who wrote the letter that's attacking our districts and attacking our communities.

I just want to note that, Mr. Chairman. I just want to note that, Colleagues. There are three minorities on this Committee, all three of which are Democrats. We call ourselves colleagues. You all know what this is going to do to our districts. People have come -- like you said, 200 people have come and commented and testified. We've testified.

But yet we couldn't garner enough respect from what we call our colleagues, that we stand with each other daily, to get the respect to just question the person who wrote a hit letter from the federal government, to question them on the purpose of that letter. Note it.

CHAIRPERSON KING: And thank you for your comments. And I understand them and appreciate them. But I would just say again, I've already stated publicly numerous times, and I suspect if you polled the Committee, I bet everyone on the Committee would agree that with me that I disagree with the conclusions reached by the author of the DOJ letter. I haven't seen their background data that they've used, but just on having kept up with the court pleadings, having been there when the maps passed and just personal knowledge of redistricting law, I disagree with the conclusions reached.

The Attorney General has responded with a very firm statement of disagreement with the conclusions reached. And also filings made in the court on the current redistricting

case have clearly said that the state of Texas's position is that the letter was incorrect.

And so I hope we've made that -- I hope that helps that we have all at least publicly spoken up, both me as the Chair of the Committee, the Attorney General personally, and the attorneys representing the state in the litigation have all spoken up and said that we disagree with the letter and disagree with its legal conclusions, and I hope that that at least helps some in that -- in your concerns.

And, Members, is there any other business to come before the Committee?

(No audible response.)

CHAIRPERSON KING: There being no further business, the Senate Special Committee on Congressional Redistricting will stand in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

(Adjourned.)

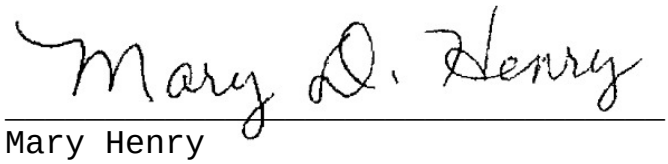
CERTIFICATION PAGE FOR AUDIO RECORDING

I, Mary Henry, certify that the foregoing is a correct transcription from the audio recording of the proceedings in the above-entitled matter.

Please take note that I was not personally present for said recording and, therefore, due to the quality of the audio provided, inaudibles may have created inaccuracies in the transcript of said recording

I further certify that I am neither counsel for, related so, not employed by any of the taking parties to the action in which this deposition was taken, and further that I am not financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO under my hand and of office on this 15th day of September, 2025.



Mary Henry
Integrity Legal Support Solutions
Firm Registration No. 528
9901 Brodie Ln.,#160-400
Austin, Texas 78748
512-320-8690
www.integritylegal.support

State Defendants' Response to Plaintiff-Intervenors' and TXNAACP Motion for Preliminary Injunction

Exhibit AJ

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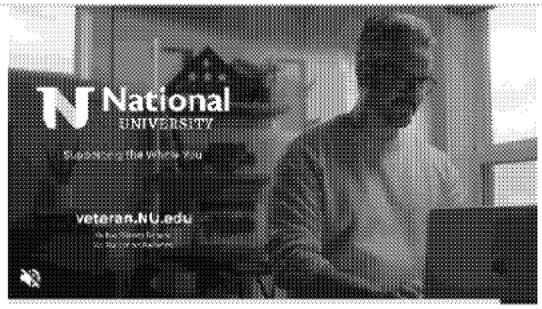

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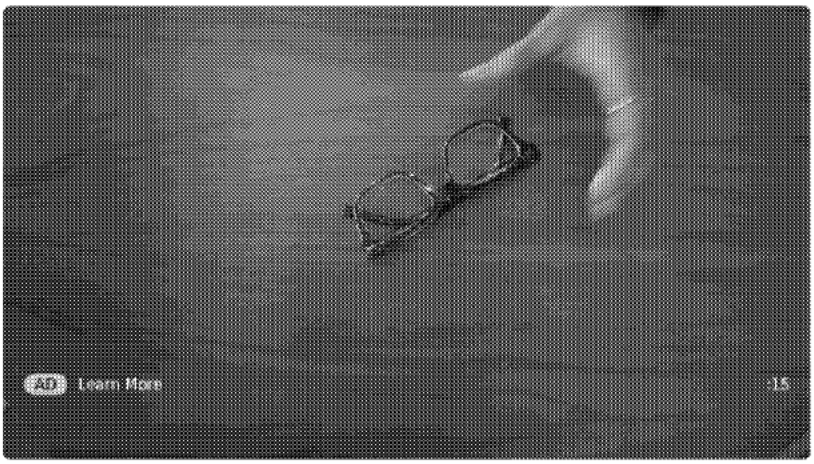
Eric Holder backs Democratic response to Texas redistricting plan

The former attorney general called the plan by Republicans "authoritarian."

By Nicholas Kerr
August 3, 2025, 3:24 PM



'Democracy is threatened' by TX GOP push to redraw Congressional maps: Holder ABC News' George Stephanopoulos interviews former Attorney General Eric Holder on "This Week."

Eric Holder, chair of the National Democratic Redistricting Committee, called Texas' attempt to redraw its congressional maps for the second time in less than a decade "an authoritarian move" by the White House.

Holder, attorney general under President Barack Obama, has led the charge among Democrats to eliminate gerrymandering for years. But speaking with "This Week With George Stephanopoulos" on Sunday, Holder said that Texas' plan means Democrats need to "do things that perhaps in the past I would not have supported."

"I think that responsible Democrats in other states have to take into account the threat to our democracy, the need to preserve our democracy, so that we can ultimately try to heal it," Holder said. "And I would hope that they will take steps that are, again, as I said, temporary but responsible."

"And we're seeing talk about that in California, we're seeing talk about that in New York, as well.

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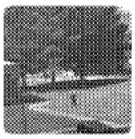
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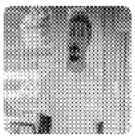
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"And we're seeing talk about that in California, we're seeing talk abo
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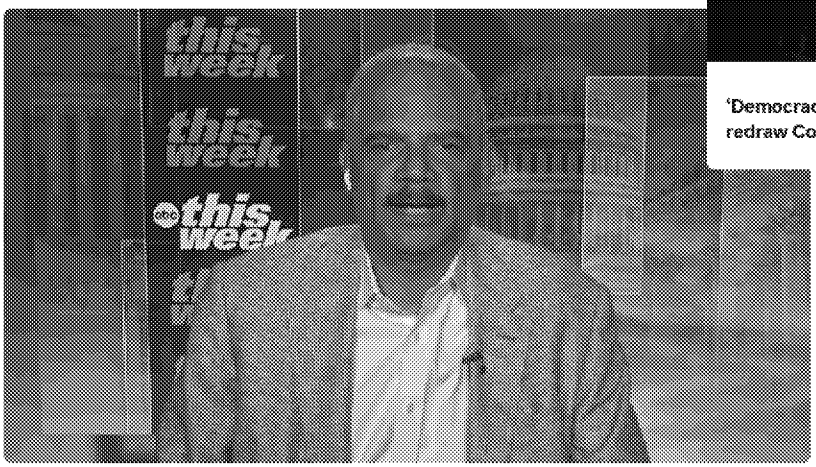

Former Attorney General and Chair of the National Democratic Redistricting Committee Eric Holder appears on "This Week With George Stephanopoulos" on Sunday, Aug. 3, 2025.

ABC News

'Democracy is threatened' by TX GOP push to redraw Congressional maps: Holder

"But those attempts are more longshots, aren't they?" Stephanopoulos asked, referring to laws on the books in those states that protect against partisan gerrymandering.

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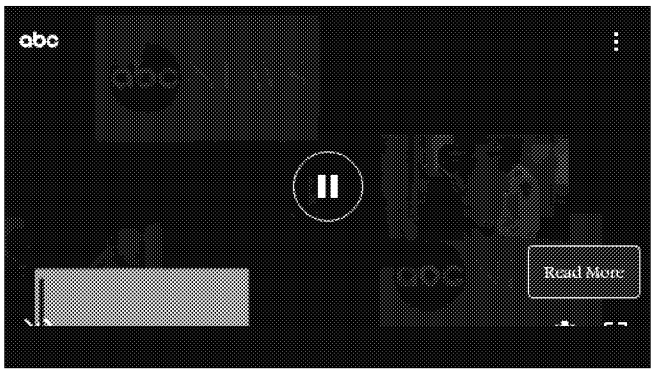

While Holder conceded that the actions Democrats could take would ultimately depend on each state, he argued that those protections are an advantage.

"What they're trying to do in Texas is simply impose a new map on, an unpopular new map, on the people of Texas. To do it in California, you actually have to go to the people and ask them to suspend that which they have in place, which is a really well-functioning, independent redistricting committee," Holder said. "So the people will have a voice in what California does. The people do not have a voice, a meaningful voice, it appears so far in Texas."

Trump's political operation floated the prospect of redistricting in June in

Texas."

Trump's political operation floated the prospect of redistricting in June in efforts to shore up the GOP's fragile House majority. Trump said his party could pick up five seats if Texas redraws its congressional map. He suggested that there "could be" other states that follow suit but didn't identify them.

The Department of Justice told Texas in a letter in July that four majority-minority districts represented by Democrats needed to be redrawn, arguing they were "unconstitutional racial gerrymanders."

Here are more highlights from Holder's interview:

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On changing his views on gerrymandering

Stephanopoulos: You've been leading an effort to stop gerrymandering. Now, you say it's time to fight fire with fire. Why the turnaround?

Holder: Well, I think we have to understand that the nature of the threat that has been put upon the country through what they're trying to do in Texas has really increased the danger to our democracy. And as a result of that, we've got to do things that perhaps in the past I would not have supported.

On stopping Texas redistricting

Stephanopoulos: Is there any way to stop it?

Holder: Well, I think there are a number of ways in which we can try to stop it. If you look at the people who have testified at the hearings, 100-to-1 people have testified against it. Editorial boards in the media in Texas have opined against it. The polling shows that the people in Texas are, in fact, against it. So, I think that's one of the ways in which you try to stop it from actually happening.

On when to release the Epstein files

Stephanopoulos: So, the -- so, finally, you would release the files if you were attorney general right now?

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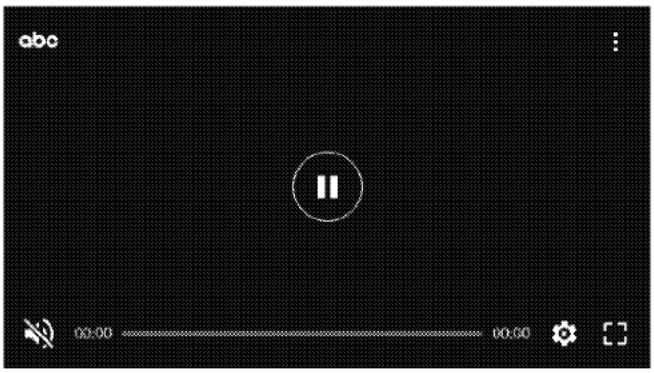

Holder: Yes. I mean, take into account, you know, the privacy interest of various people, certainly of the victims uppermost. But there is investigative material that can certainly be released, that should be released. The focus shouldn't be on grand jury material because there are a whole bunch of problems with respect to the release of grand jury material. But with regard to investigative files that are in the possession of the Justice Department and the FBI, those materials should be released.

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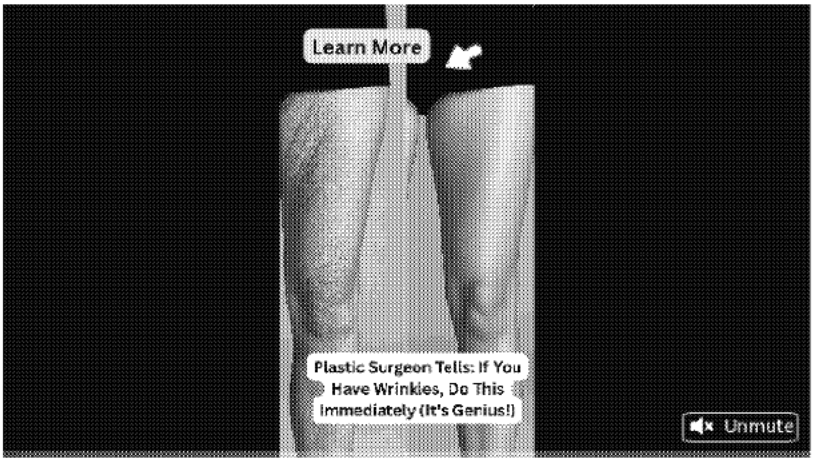

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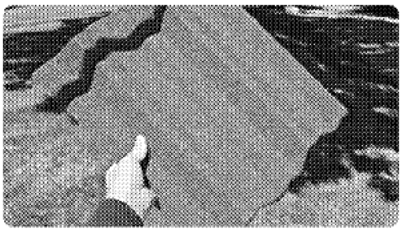

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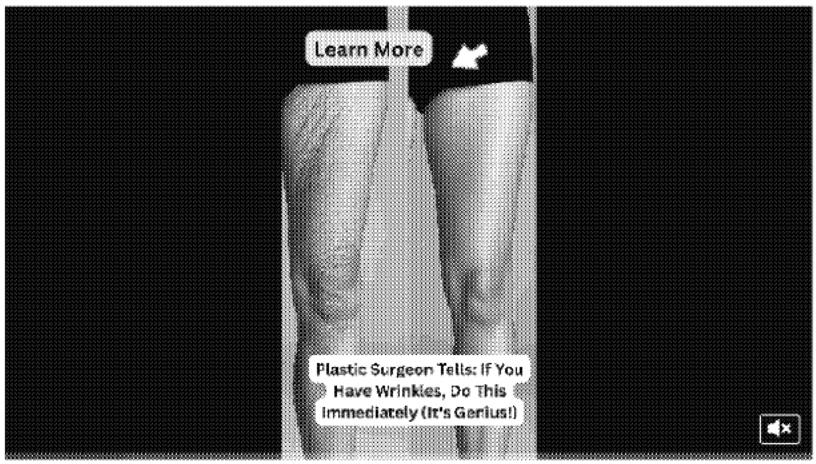

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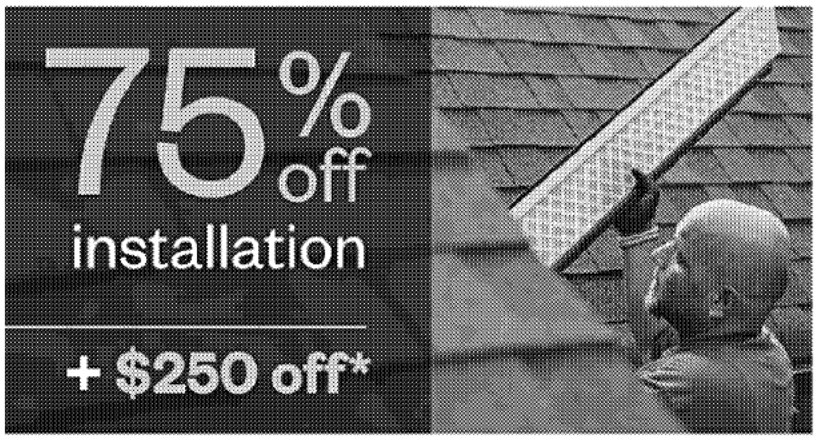

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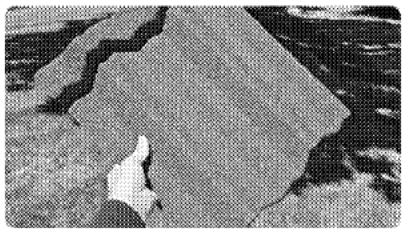

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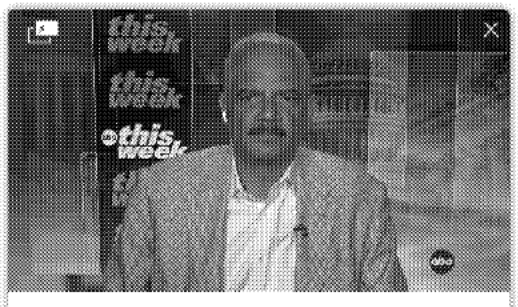

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State Defendants' Response to Plaintiff-Intervenors' and TXNAACP Motion for Preliminary Injunction

Exhibit AK

Excerpt from Transcript of Aug. 27th Status Conference, 08/27/25 Tr. at 68:11-20

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

WESTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS

EL PASO DIVISION

LEAGUE OF UNITED LATIN AMERICAN CITIZENS, et al., Plaintiffs,	**3:21-CV-00259-DCG-JES-JVB**
v.	**9:06 a.m. to 11:26 a.m.**
GREG ABBOTT, IN HIS OFFICIAL CAPACITY AS GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF TEXAS, et al., Defendants.	**August 27, 2025**

STATUS HEARING
BEFORE THE HONORABLE DAVID C. GUADERRAMA
HONORABLE JERRY E. SMITH
AND HONORABLE JEFFREY V. BROWN

APPEARANCES:

FOR THE LULAC PLAINTIFFS:
Ms. Nina Perales
MALDEF
110 Broadway Avenue, Suite 300
San Antonio, Texas 78205
(210) 224-5382
nperales@maldef.org

FOR THE GONZALES PLAINTIFFS:
Mr. David Fox
Elias Law Group
250 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC, 20001
(202)987-5010
dfox@elias.law

APPEARANCES: (Continued)

FOR PLAINTIFF MEXICAN AMERICAN LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS:
Mr. Sean McCaffity
Sommerman, McCaffity & Quesada, L.L.P.
3811 Turtle Creek Boulevard, Suite 1400
Dallas, Texas 75219
(214) 720-0720
smccaffity@textrial.com

FOR PLAINTIFF TEXAS NAACP:
Ms. Lindsey Cohan
Dechert LLP
515 Congress Avenue, Suite 1400
Austin, Texas 78701-3516
(512) 394-3027
lindsey.cohan@dechert.com
and
Mr. David Rollins-Boyd
The Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
1500k NW
Washington, D.C. 20005
(617) 893-1322
drollins-boyd@lawyerscommittee.org
and
Mr. Carroll Rhodes
Law Offices of Carroll Rhodes
P.O. Box 588
(601) 894-4323
Hazlehurst, Michigan 39083

FOR THE BROOKS PLAINTIFFS:
Mr. Chad Dunn
Brazil & Dunn
1900 Pearl Street
Austin, Texas 78705-5408
(512) 717-9822
chad@brazilanddunn.com
gwen@brazilanddunn.com
and
Mr. Mark P. Gaber
Mark P. Gaber, PLLC
P.O. Box 34481
Washington, D.C. 20043
(715) 482-4066
mark@markgaber.com

APPEARANCES: (Continued)

FOR THE CONGRESSIONAL INTERVENORS:

Mr. Gary L. Bledsoe
6633 East Highway 290, Suite 208
Austin, Texas 78723-1157
(512) 322-9992
gbledsoe@thebledsoelawfirm.com
garybledsoe@sbcglobal.net

FOR THE STATE DEFENDANTS:

Mr. Ryan Kercher
Ms. Kathleen Hunker
Office of Texas Attorney General
P.O. Box 12548
MC 009
Austin, Texas 78711
(512) 463-4139
ryan.kercher@oag.texas.gov
kathleen.hunker@oag.texas.gov

Court Reporter:
Leticia Perez, RMR, CRR
525 Magoffin Avenue, Third Floor
El Paso, Texas 79901

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09:06 1 **PROCEEDINGS**

2 JUDGE GUADERRAMA: We're here for purposes of
3 conducting a Status Hearing on this case.
4 I'd ask for announcements, please.
5 MS. PERALES: For LULAC Plaintiffs, good morning,
6 Your Honor. Nina Perales.
7 JUDGE GUADERRAMA: Good morning, Ms. Perales.
8 MR. ROLLINS-BOYD: For Texas NAACP, David
9 Rollins-Boyd, Lindsey Cohan, and Carroll Rhodes.
10 MR. FOX: For Gonzales Plaintiffs, David Fox.
11 MR. DUNN: For the Brooks Plaintiffs, Chad Dunn and
12 Mark Gaber.
13 MR. McCAFFITY: For the Mexican American Legislative
14 Caucus, Sean McCaffity.
15 MR. BLEDSOE: For Plaintiff Intervenors, Gary Bledsoe.
16 JUDGE GUADERRAMA: Good morning to all of you.
17 MR. KERCHER: For State Defendants, Ryan Kercher and
18 Kathleen Hunker.
19 JUDGE GUADERRAMA: Good morning as well.
20 All right. So just to tie up some loose ends from our
21 trial, I guess your original complaints, there were some State
22 Board of Education districts that were challenged. We asked
23 you to present us with the claims that would be preceding the
24 trial, and there were no State Board of Education claims, so
25 I'm assuming those have been intentionally abandoned?

MS. PERALES: That's correct, Your Honor.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: So the next thing is, Mr. Kercher, if you can tell us, without violating any ethical duties to your client --

MR. KERCHER: I probably don't have a clue, but I'm happy to answer any questions the Court may have.

THE COURT: Okay. So where are we if the Governor hasn't signed the bill yet? So I guess three things could happen. He could sign the bill at some point, before the expiration of the deadline; he could veto the bill; or he could not sign it and it becomes law as a matter of law. Due course.

MR. KERCHER: That's my reading as well. In fact, it didn't even occur to me -- I was conferring with Mr. Dunn this morning. It didn't even occur to me that the Governor would not sign it immediately. I have no insight into what the timeline might be when he might do that.

Obviously there's been a lot of press and a lot of media around this, and so I imagine that there will be some fanfare when it happens. But at the latest, I would think it would be 30 days after *sine die*, which is about the middle of October.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: That -- at that point it would become law as a matter of operation.

MR. KERCHER: By default, yes.

JUDGE SMITH: So the reason that's a matter of

concern -- I didn't mean to interrupt, Mr. Dunn; you were going to say something. But the reason that's a matter of concern is the question -- and maybe both one or both sides have an answer for us -- is, do we even have jurisdiction to entertain either a Motion for Leave to File or, if leave to file is granted, is there a ripe controversy for the filing of amended complaint or other proceedings?

And the reason for that is, we obviously have an obligation on our own to examine jurisdiction. So if one or both sides have an answer to that, it would be helpful.

But again, I didn't mean to interrupt what you were going to say, Mr. Dunn.

MR. DUNN: Well, I could respond to that, Your Honor. I rose to discuss the veto deadlines since I spent some time looking at the Texas Constitutional question. And it's complicated, is the answer, but I think I have it right.

If the bill passes the Legislative Session within the last ten days of the session, then the Governor gets 40 days from the last day of the session to veto the bill. And if he doesn't, then it becomes law. If, however, the bill gets to the Governor before ten days are up, of the end of session, then the Governor has ten days to veto it or it becomes law.

So the session's still in, and we don't know -- I haven't heard any public pronouncement, anyway, as to when it will adjourn, *sine die*. So I believe, based on my math, if the

session extends past Tuesday, then that means the bill will have passed before this last ten days of the session, which would mean then we have to wait until a *sine die*. We count ten days. That's the deadline for the Governor to veto the bill or it becomes law.

He has said publicly he is going to expeditiously sign the bill and he has spoken publicly about some of the evidence we've already offered about the plan that was passed. So it seems extremely unlikely he's going to veto the bill.

But on the matter of jurisdiction, I believe there are some courts -- and we can collect some of these cases -- where courts have understood that a change in the law was coming, but, because of the election deadlines, it's scheduled a procedure.

Certainly by the time this Court would enter any judgment, the bill will have been vetoed or will have passed. And so when we get to the point of talking about scheduling today, I think, by the time the evidence is finished in this hearing, if the Court is kind enough to grant it to us, the matter of the bill having become law will have happened.

If the Governor is to veto the bill, the Court can vacate the hearing and it won't proceed. But he's given every indication that he's going to sign the bill.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: So what is your estimation of the deadline, of the farthest out?

MR. DUNN: The deadline for veto?

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: Right.

MR. DUNN: Well, it's unfortunate -- I don't know, because we don't know when the legislature's going to adjourn. And the Texas Constitution gives the governors deadlines based upon when -- first the deadline happens from adjournment.

And then, second, it depends on how long the session is as to whether or not the bill came out within the last ten days of session or not.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: So this is a special session. Doesn't it have a built-in deadline?

MR. DUNN: It does. It started Friday last, and so it has 30 days from that date.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: So that date, then after that there's another 20 -- ten days, because the bill would have passed in the first part of it.

JUDGE SMITH: But I think what Mr. Dunn is saying is that they could adjourn early, *sine die*, before the 30 days.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: I'm just trying to figure out what the --

MR. DUNN: Sure.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: -- the latest -- the farthest-out deadline for this is.

MR. KERCHER: If that math is correct, ten days -- I don't have any reason to challenge Mr. Dunn; it's been a minute

since I've looked at that portion of the Texas Constitution, but if it's ten days after *sine die* and the 30-day session lasted 30 days, then that would put us at about September the 25th.

And just for context, I believe the Governor has just added a couple of things to the call for this session. Which, they could move very rapidly, but that may suggest it may last the full 30 days.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: So then a hearing would be appropriate outside that window, the first part of October?

MR. DUNN: Well, we would ask for a hearing before. I can address that in a minute, but what I call Gaber GPT was able to pull up a Fifth Circuit here called *Choice, Inc. of Texas versus Greenstein*, 691 F.3d 710. It's an August 2012 case.

This is a quote. "Importantly, the Supreme Court has explained that one does not have to await the consummation of threatened injury to obtain preventative relief. If the injury is certainly impending, that is enough."

So on the matter of scheduling, shall I address that now?

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: Yeah, we'll get to it in a second.

MR. DUNN: Okay.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: In fact, maybe -- it may be a good time to do it now. We'll come back. But let's talk about

scheduling.

Do you have a general idea how many days of court time it would take to get this thing done?

MR. DUNN: Well --

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: Because that impacts when our three schedules could come together to accommodate.

MR. DUNN: Understood, Your Honor.

The Plaintiffs have conferred. What I'll state at the outset is the Motion to Schedule the hearing was initially filed on just some of the Plaintiff groups, but all of the Plaintiff groups joined in that motion. And all of them are ready and wanting to proceed on the Preliminary Injunction Hearing. And we'd like it to last no longer than five days. But we understand if the Court can't provide us five days because of its schedule. We'll take what we can get.

And to just be candid about it, we'll call our first witness on Tuesday. We just need time to get them here. We have been preparing to go to trial the minute this Court will let us do so. And we have -- the State at this point, at least with respect to the Brooks Plaintiffs, has had our pleadings and our expert report longer than we had to prepare them.

So we don't believe that this can't proceed in reasonable haste in order to give our clients their day in court, get a record. Ultimately this case, I think it's clear, will be decided by the U.S. Supreme Court on whatever decision

this Court makes.

What I can say is that September 15th, the week that the Court has said it's first available is, we believe, the last week that this hearing should occur. We believe the Court should rule around October the 8th. That way the Supreme Court has approximately a month before the opening of the filing period to review this Court's decision.

If it took another couple of weeks it could possibly do so because their filing period lasts until December the 8th. So, in theory, if a final ruling from the Supreme Court were to come a week or two before the end of the filing period, people could adjust their filings and there would be no other changes necessary to the election calendar.

And that said, we think that the egregious unconstitutional conduct that we've laid out in our Preliminary Injunction and that we intend to prove here at trial is of the nature that justifies this Court changing the election deadlines if it becomes necessary.

If we proceed as we proposed, we don't believe it's necessary to change the dates. We think that this is an orderly process that allows the Court to weigh the evidence and make a decision on the evidence and law.

What I will also say, though, is, if it is the State's desire to delay, the State should also not be able to claim now, in October or November or December, that it's -- our

clients can't have their day in court and get an adjudication as a result of the delay the State asked for.

That's why we're prepared to go on Tuesday. We understand the Court's unable to do that and are fully respecting of that, but we are ready to go when the Court will give us a hearing. And we will do anything -- and hopefully we've demonstrated that in the last five days -- in our power to get our clients their day in court on this map.

And the final thing I'll say -- and I'm not at all suggesting that Counsel for the State had anything to do with this; in fact, I'm fairly certain they had no idea. But one of the last witnesses the State proffered in this case testified under oath that the State was not in the process of redrawing its map.

But as you're going to hear from the evidence, the State, in fact, was working on it since the spring. And many -- and members of the Legislature were having discussions about it, and ultimately there was a conference at ALEC in Fort Worth where there were additional discussions working on the map.

But the State announced ready in this Court to try a case on a Congressional Map, and all of us spent a tremendous amount of time and resources and burden to try that case. And now it is only partly relevant. Only part of that evidence is necessary.

09:19 We're here not because of the Plaintiffs' conduct. And the Plaintiffs have been proceeding against this case, in one form or the other, for four years. We stand here hat in hand. Please give us a hearing, and give it to us in time.

JUDGE SMITH: Well, there's at least one serious problem with that, which is that some of the Plaintiffs and their attorneys, and the organizations with which they are associated, had a walk-out in the Legislature that delayed everything for a considerable period of time.

Had that not occurred and had the Legislature taken this up in the first called session as the first order of business -- which, there was every indication that would have happened -- we probably, by now, would have already had a Preliminary Injunction Hearing and we would be ready to announce the results of that.

So if part of the test for a Preliminary Injunction is that you're coming into a court of -- of equity, there are some people who are coming in with unclean hands, because the equities are not in their favor if they're urging the need for some kind of immediate action, but they were directly responsible for the delay.

MR. DUNN: Well, two responses to that, Your Honor.

First, those people that engaged in the quorum break are not parties before the Court. So they're not here with unclean hands, because they're not here at all.

09:21 But the second piece to it is, Chairman Hunter said on the floor during the House debate -- and we'll offer this evidence at trial -- that had there not been a quorum break the plan was to have 15 field hearings on the map.

And so were that to take place, the map would have passed at the same time that it ultimately did pass. And in fact, the original 30-day special session was to end Wednesday of last week and the bill ultimately passed late Friday night, early Saturday morning, two -- you know, two and a half days after the end of the session.

But, you know, there are millions of voters in the state impacted by the lines that were drawn on this plan -- and whose constitutional rights are affected, and their voting rights are affected by this plan -- who had nothing to do with any of the decisions of what legislators did during the debate. And they're asking to have it adjudicated under the constitution.

JUDGE BROWN: As far as timing goes, I have a question. As I understand it, okay, there's going to be a special election in CD18 this November.

MR. DUNN: Yes, sir.

JUDGE BROWN: And that filing deadline, I believe, is Wednesday. And I know that, you know, the lines on 18, I mean, we can't do anything about that, I guess. We can't be adverse on that.

09:22 1 MR. DUNN: I don't -- not without --
2 JUDGE BROWN: I don't know when the filing deadline
3 is. The 3rd, yeah.
4 MR. DUNN: Not without moving the election.
5 And also, unless I've missed some communication, which
6 is certainly possible, I'm not sure -- I think the election's
7 going to be run under the 2021 map. I think it has to be. I
8 mean, this -- as has been mentioned, this isn't even law yet,
9 and it has to take effect 90 days thereafter under the
10 effective clause.
11 JUDGE BROWN: Okay. That answers my question as far
12 as the effect on -- as far as how that affects this case.
13 MR. DUNN: Okay. The reason I hedge on this is
14 because, in 2021, the map didn't take effect until, I think,
15 after the filing deadline, or at least well into it. And the
16 State just proceeded with its new map even though it wasn't --
17 it hadn't taken effect.
18 So I don't know whether it's the Secretary of State or
19 whomever makes these decisions intention to just go ahead and
20 use the 2025 map. And I've not seen any public pronouncement
21 on that. But my view of the law is, is that the 2021 map has
22 to be used in November.
23 I think some of my colleagues might want to weigh in
24 on this subject, if I may.
25 JUDGE GUADERRAMA: Sure, absolutely.

09:23 MR. FOX: Very briefly on the question of unclean hands. I just want to emphasize to the Court --

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: Identify yourself for the record.

MR. FOX: Oh, excuse me. David Fox for the Gonzales Plaintiffs.

I want to emphasize to the Court there are a number of groups, a number of parties here, and certainly the vast majority of them could not have had less to do with a decision by Texas legislators as to how to exercise their legislative duties and the decision to break quorum.

Certainly our clients are individual voters in a varieties of districts around the state. They had no say. They had nothing to do with that. It wasn't their choice as to whether their legislator would leave the state for a quorum break. And so I can't imagine any basis for assigning to them the responsibility, or saying it was their fault, to the extent there was a delay.

Beyond that, I'm in full agreement with Mr. Dunn. We are ready to bring this to the Court as soon as the Court is ready to hear it, and are hopeful that it will happen quickly.

Thank you.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: All right. Thank you.

Ms. Perales?

MS. PERALES: Also on the question of unclean hands, I'd like to join what Mr. Dunn and Mr. Fox have said and simply

point out that the LULAC Plaintiffs filed the first case. Others were consolidated. But the LULAC Plaintiffs have no control over who was consolidated subsequent.

Of course the LULAC Plaintiffs, which include a number of membership organizations that have asserted associational standing, are essentially here for the individual voters who are their members, who live around the state.

Their voting rights are impaired by this new map. That's why we're here asking for preliminary relief. And it is our position that they do not have unclean hands, because they did not engage in or otherwise have a role in the quorum break in the House.

Thank you.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: Thank you.

MR. McCAFFITY: Sean McCaffity on behalf of the Mexican American Legislative Caucus.

Totally and completely agree with everything Mr. Dunn said, so I won't repeat that. Obviously we are here asking for as quick of a hearing as the Court will give us.

And with respect to the unclean hands, obviously some of the members of the Mexican American Legislative Caucus are, in fact, Democratic lawmakers that did break quorum.

The membership in MALC, however, or the caucus, however, did not as a whole. There was a split in the caucus. Not all of them went. For instance, Representative Moody did

not go. And the caucus doesn't have, necessarily -- or shouldn't be treated with unclean hands simply because some of the members determined that it was in their constituents' best interests for them to act on a quorum break.

On top of that, I agree with the scheduling issues. It may have been a cause of delay, but as far as a significant delay or what kind of delay with respect to the closeness, or proximity, to the election, it is not a material one given what would have occurred in the ordinary course anyway.

And so while there may have been an injunction hearing last week, for example, Justice Smith, or the week before, if there was no quorum break, I don't know that that's necessarily true, but if it is, having a quorum break -- or an injunction hearing next week still gives the Court plenty of time to assess this single map and -- on a Preliminary Injunction basis, and allows the Plaintiffs to put their cases forward under the constitution.

JUDGE BROWN: In the interest of a little levity, it's Judge Smith. We all know there's no justice on the Fifth Circuit.

JUDGE SMITH: But in fairness, Judge Brown used to be Justice Brown.

MR. McCAFFITY: Thank you, Your Honor.

MR. BLEDSOE: Your Honors, I would like to weigh in just briefly on the clean hands issue.

I would like to say that the parties that -- of course, as Mr. Dunn said, that did break quorum are not party to this litigation.

But secondly, I ask you to at least entertain the idea that this is, indeed, a legitimate constitutional measure that was undertaken by those individuals before passing judgment on what actually happened, because I think that's part of the legislative process.

And it's no different, for example, than the Governor not signing the bill now or not filling the 18th Congressional District way back from the last special election, where it should have been held in May.

So I think there are a lot of issues that can be discussed in reference to that, but I would say that that was something that, if we look at the case law and all that's around the quorum break, I think it's clear that what they did was legitimate, was constitutional, was contemplated by the Texas Constitution. It's a means that they use, and I don't think they should be at all harmed or held to be with unclean hands because they undertook it.

THE COURT: Thank you, sir.

MS. COHAN: Good morning, Your Honors. Lindsey Cohan for Texas NAACP.

I just want to emphasize our individual members had nothing to do with the quorum break. We are in agreement with

Mr. Dunn and the other attorneys that have spoken that we would like our day in court expeditiously and at the first opportunity that the Court can make itself available to us for that hearing.

And we appreciate the Court's attention to this and the manner in which you scheduled this hearing so quickly to be able to hear us on this.

Thank you.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: Thank you.

Anyone else?

JUDGE SMITH: Just in terms of the timing, before hearing from the State, there are obviously some difficulties in scheduling. And, you know, the judges have talked about this, and we try to be as flexible as we can.

We'll hear from the State about how many days they think it might take for a trial. We are certainly willing, as I think our -- the record will show, we've been willing throughout to allow as many trial days as folks need. And five days, or whatever it is if it's more than that, that's fine. I have to speak personally; I like coming to El Paso, but that's obviously, you know, up to everyone individually.

But just let me say, in terms of the constraints for the judges, next week, the week of September 1st, is completely out. The week of September 8th is completely out. I mean, there's no flexibility on those two weeks.

09:30 The week of the 15th is completely out because of one of the judges with a very serious, substantial trial schedule. The week -- I realize, yes, we had indicated the 15th as a possibility, so you certainly have a right to respond to that, but it's not -- it's not a reasonable possibility, particularly for a hearing that would be five days or longer.

The week of the 22nd is absolutely out because of judicial commitments that can't be changed.

So the earliest, in terms of judges' availability -- we can move things around as best we can -- would probably be approximately Wednesday, October 1st, and continuing into the week of October 6th. You know, the other judges may have some reflections on that, too.

But we're talking about hard commitments, where there's not much ability for us to -- you know, to move things around.

But I didn't mean to interrupt, though, for Mr. Kercher, whatever you wanted to say about, number one, how many trial days -- reason to believe; and number two, how much preparation time; and number three, about the calendar.

JUDGE BROWN: And before we hear from Mr. Kercher, the trial that he's talking about is mine. It starts September 8th. Four defendants, two murders. It's a Murder in Aid of Racketeering case. It's supposed to go three weeks.

There may be pleas, and I could potentially, you know,

recess the trial to come to El Paso and do a hearing. That wouldn't be ideal, have it -- I mean, it's going to be hard enough to seat a jury in that case, if you can imagine. MS 13, machetes, that kind of thing.

So that's the new wrinkle on the week of the 15th. But that's kind of the whole story on it.

Mr. Kercher?

MR. KERCHER: And I appreciate that context. That probably saves everybody a lot of time.

By way of reminder, the last time we did a Preliminary Injunction Hearing in this case, it was on one district. There was one party. Each called one expert. And we had -- the State had 60 days to prepare. And that hearing lasted -- excuse me -- four days.

Here, we got the fourth new expert report last night. That's not disparaging Plaintiffs' Counsel, who certainly have been working quickly. But if we think about the amount of time that the experts took during trial -- and of course, this time we won't have to go through all the background. We need not go through their resumés and so forth.

But if we think about the time that the experts took during trial, I think we should reasonably anticipate that if the Plaintiffs need four or five days to put on their case, that the State will likely need two, assuming we call two experts. We're still not sure on that yet, but -- if for no

other reason than because this time around we should anticipate, I think, that we will have multiple cross-examinations of each of those experts.

I also am quite certain that if the Court wants to get the most out of a hearing in this case -- and it should -- that the State should get at least two weeks. I mean, I'd love 30 days, but two weeks to respond to these expert reports.

These are obviously very complicated. Dr. Barreto is doing a new kind of analysis that, on first glance, looks a lot like Dr. Duchin's analysis. So it's not going to be just a function of cross-examining Dr. Barreto on the same things we cross-examined him on last time. He's done something like Dr. Duchin's analysis.

All of that -- and Plaintiffs will tell you that's incredibly time consuming. And I know that they have worked very quickly. But we asked, when we conferred on Friday, "Can you at least tell us what districts you're looking at?" Because I can't have my experts look at all 38 Congressional Districts. And they were reasonably not prepared to tell us that until the map went through both chambers.

I don't want to move for delay. Mr. Dunn, he's so good at talking about these procedural issues and then also wrapping up some of the merits issues. The guy's a good lawyer.

Look, the reality is that this is complicated. And we

are not insensitive to the rights of voters. It is also the case that this matter was delayed for 18 days by a Democratic caucus break. And no, that's not on all of the parties.

But I would also point out that while the House was unable to make quorum for those 18 days, the Senate did proceed. And in fact, the Senate held a hearing after the initial map was -- was filed in the Senate and invited groups, like the NAACP and MALDEF, to come and testify and talk about what that map would do and have their input in the legislative process rather than turning to a court as a super-legislature.

And in that Senate hearing voting rights groups, including some who are Plaintiffs in this case, were invited to give their input. No one showed up.

I would also point out that, although I sympathize with Mr. Dunn's heartfelt plea for a trial, this case was set to go to trial in 2022 and the Plaintiffs chose discovery. That was not because the State was using delay. That's because the Plaintiffs decided that they needed more evidence, evidence that, in large part, they largely did not get because of subsequent rulings by this Court and by the Fifth Circuit.

The Plaintiffs did not ask this Court for a trial setting. The Court set one. And had the Court not *sua sponte* set this trial we still, in all probability, would not have tried their original claims. That should weigh heavily on the Court's mind as it figures out how best to balance the equities

09:37 between the parties. Because the Plaintiffs pushed for emergency relief at the beginning of this case and then decided they did not need it.

So understanding that the Plaintiffs are telling you now, okay, there is renewed vigor -- now they want to move forward -- the State has some concerns, not just about the expertise. I think the ripeness issue does continue to be a problem.

I agree, though, with the Plaintiffs that there is a window of time between whenever the laws -- the map will become law. And I think it's reasonable to assume that it will, that the Court would have time to rule on that before the filing deadline in November, which I think is something at which we are all looking at sort of as a hard stop.

I will tell you that Dr. Trende has a deposition in a case in Mississippi on September the 17th. Dr. Alford has a deposition in that same case on September the 23rd. At a minimum, I think Dr. Trende needs to be here, particularly if we're going to have expedited discovery or no discovery, to listen to the opinions of the opposing experts in order for him to be able to properly respond.

A couple of other scheduling pieces. It makes sense, particularly if we are going to move quickly, that the answer deadline for the Defendants be pushed, and also that State Defendants get the opportunity to respond to the Preliminary

Injunction Motions in a consolidated fashion so that we're not putting together -- I think we've got four of them right now. I think that would probably be more efficient for the Court; there is a lot of overlapping allegations.

I will close this portion of my remarks by -- by saying that, while I don't doubt the sincerity of Plaintiffs' Counsel, anybody with electricity knows what has happened with these new maps.

I did not have it on my bingo card when I tried this case that we would be back here with a brand-new Congressional Map. But my bingo card has been a whole lot less useful in predicting the future since 2016. And when the president of the United States says that he wants five more Republican seats out of the State of Texas, it should come as no surprise that a Republican state like Texas finds a way to find those seats.

The notion that because Texas has redistricted in the middle of the cycle means that there is something untoward going on, or because someone dares to mention Fifth Circuit precedent in *Pettaway*, that that is evidence, much less direct evidence, of discrimination, boggles my mind.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: So Mr. Kercher, you're available anytime after October 1st?

MR. KERCHER: The State can be prepared by October 1st, yes.

09:40 JUDGE SMITH: Is it reasonable or not -- I'm inviting responses. Is it reasonable or not to say that if we were to begin -- you know, we may not decide it this way. If we were to begin on Wednesday, October 1st, and block out the rest of that week and the week of October 6th -- that would be just for weekdays -- that would be eight days of trial.

Is there anyone who thinks that is unlikely to be sufficient to get done what everybody reasonably needs to do? Again, we're gonna give you whatever days you need. Does anybody have a problem with eight trial days? Whenever they are, eight trial days?

MR. DUNN: I don't believe we have a problem with eight trial days. Our primary concern is, can the Court get a ruling done, you know, within days? Scheduling the hearing at that point, we'll need a ruling within days. So -- unless we're gonna -- I mean, you know we're just taking time from the Supreme Court. And then at some point it may alter the election dates. And, you know, the fact the State's asking for the delay ought to weigh into whether the election dates ought to move.

JUDGE SMITH: On the question of election days, of course speaking only for myself, but I think, as I pointed out during the trial, changing the election days, the San Antonio -- what I call the San Antonio trial proved it can have unintended consequences in unrelated races.

If the election days were to be changed, would that mean changing the election days throughout the state, such that there would not be primaries for any offices statewide as of the first week in March? Is that what we'd be talking about for the term "changing the election days"?

MR. DUNN: Well, I think there's kind of two things about that.

First, I believe that the filing deadline, which is set at December 8th, could be moved back a couple of weeks without changing the election otherwise. And you might recall in 2021 -- I'm pretty sure the filing period ended the second week of January, back then. So everything's sort of been moved up a little bit in the decade as the law sort of evolved. So I think there's some flexibility there.

In terms of, if it became necessary to move the primary election for Congressional races, then, you know, the Court would have options. It could either -- as it did in 2021, it could set a different primary -- I mean it could set one primary for everything.

JUDGE SMITH: You mean 2012, I think.

MR. DUNN: 2012. Sorry.

JUDGE SMITH: That's okay.

MR. DUNN: 2012. So it could set, you know, a consolidated new primary -- I believe it got moved to May, if I recall correctly, then. It could also elect to do just the

Congressional races in that later election, keep everything else in March.

And then there is a precedent, I believe, in 2003, the last sort of mid-decade redistricting, if I remember right. The Court said at least some Congressional races were what they referred to as a jungle primary, where people filed in November, top two vote-getters went to a runoff that was decided in December.

And, but we heard, Your Honor, at the prior proceedings in this case about not wanting to change the deadlines, and the Court's comment now about how that sometimes has unintended effects.

I can tell you that I would average about 22 hours of sleep have been had by this table in the last five days so that you wouldn't have to do that, so that you wouldn't have to move the schedule, so that we could be ready to put on our case.

MS. PERALES: I may be the only counsel who didn't really follow, or understand, the Court's discussion of its availability. I just wanted to ask if September -- the week of September 8 is the week that the machete trial starts.

JUDGE BROWN: Yes, that's the -- yeah. Yes.

MS. PERALES: And so --

JUDGE BROWN: And it's supposed to go for three weeks.

MS. PERALES: For three weeks.

JUDGE BROWN: And this was -- the trial date was

promised to them a long time ago, and the defendants -- I'm getting way too deep into the weeds on this. Moving that trial exposes these four defendants -- the DOJ has not decided whether to seek or not seek the death penalty yet, and the defendants don't want to give them any more time to do that. And so I promised them that we would start the trial on September 8th. And that effectively gives DOJ a deadline. So that's why it's not just a trial, you know, it's -- but --

MS. PERALES: And so if there were pleas -- if it was me, I might be seriously considering a plea, not that I actually have used a machete for those purposes. But I'm just wondering, if there was a last-minute change in the Court's availability, as Mr. Dunn has articulated, we can be ready. Mr. Dunn has said we could be ready next week.

You know, we're willing to take on the work of preparing even if we're not sure until the final moments if the Court is available in September. We will do that. We've worked very hard to get us to where we are today, and we would do that. And I just wanted to mention that to the Court.

JUDGE BROWN: We appreciate that.

MS. PERALES: Thank you.

MR. DUNN: One question about that, Your Honor, that I don't know, if the Government decides to pursue the death penalty, does that reset your case?

JUDGE BROWN: Oh, yeah.

09:46 1 MR. DUNN: It does?
2 JUDGE BROWN: Just like that.
3 MR. KERCHER: The only thing that I think I'll add,
4 following along Mr. Dunn's latest remarks, which are all fair,
5 is the issue of remedy. The Plaintiffs are pushing very hard
6 because they say they need to have a remedy here. The remedy,
7 though, as I understand it, that they would be asking for is
8 that the maps they just spent four weeks telling the Court are
9 grossly discriminatory and unconstitutional would remain in
10 place. If that is the quality of their remedy, that should
11 speak to the degree of expediting to which they are entitled.
12 JUDGE SMITH: Well, just so we're not confused -- and
13 maybe I'm confused, so clarify for me. Interesting that you
14 brought up "remedy." So we're talking about a Hearing on
15 Motions -- a Motion or Motions for Preliminary Injunction,
16 which, of course, tests, among other things, the likelihood of
17 success on the merits. And if the Court agreed to grant those
18 motions, then it would enjoin the implementation of the 2025
19 Congressional maps, as I understand it.
20 Whether or not -- I mean, whether we granted or denied
21 a Motion for Preliminary Injunction after a hearing, would
22 there still not need to be, after that, a trial on the merits
23 of that issue? We only would have decided there is likelihood
24 or there isn't likelihood, but then there would be a trial on
25 the merits and then a remedy if a remedy were to be ordered.

But if I'm confused procedurally, please -- I'm not the trial judge here, so, you know, you can clarify.

MR. KERCHER: No, that's exactly right, Your Honor. But I guess that's my point, is, if the Plaintiffs get the ruling that they want in a Preliminary Injunction Hearing, all that means is that the maps that they -- that is -- that the Congressional Map that they also think is racist and discriminatory and violates Section 2 of the VRA, is still in place.

JUDGE SMITH: The '21 and '23 maps.

MR. KERCHER: Yes, Your Honor.

MR. DUNN: Well, I guess I'll take this in two parts.

The first part is, if the Court were to grant an injunction against House Bill 4, the measure that adopted this new map, it would also, therefore, enjoin the repealer provision in it, which would have the effect of reinstalling the 2021 map, which the State is able to administer because all of the counties in the state have already assigned ballot styles to every voter in the state, as registered under that map.

So the Plaintiffs are trying to live in the world of reality here in terms of the timing, without -- and trying to offer the Court options that don't require adjusting the schedule.

What do we think ought to happen? What we think ought

09:49 to happen is the 2025 map ought to be enjoined, the trial we had on the 2021 map should then be adjudicated, struck down for the reasons we offered evidence, and then there should be a remedy put into place.

That's what we think that the evidence and the law otherwise requires. But the Court already issued an order last week saying that it was holding off on ruling on the Voting Rights Act claims given matters before the U.S. Supreme Court. So we tried to fashion our remedy requests within the confines of the reality that we were hearing from the Court, which is that it wasn't gonna rule on our 2021 claims.

And so between two unconstitutional and illegal maps, the 2021 map, when you balance the equities, is a reasonable remedy given the timing that the Legislature has left us with.

JUDGE BROWN: It's the lesser of two evils.

MR. DUNN: Exactly.

JUDGE SMITH: So again, in terms of timing and preparation -- I didn't mean to cut off anyone else that wanted to speak on this. So there's been talk about the filing complaint, answering a complaint, what -- Motion to Dismiss, I assume.

But the expert reports, there's been discussion about that. What other preparatory matters are there, if any? Are there depositions? Are there Requests for Admissions, interrogatories, the usual sort of things in preparation for a

trial?

I'm just trying to iron out any of the complications that number one, take time; and number two, complicate the process. We need to -- what are both sides saying about that? I'm sure you're short-circuiting things as much as you can, but -- and there's been some discussion about the inability to subpoena some witnesses and those sorts of things. So anyway...

MR. DUNN: So the Plaintiffs have conferred on that, on those very matters, Your Honor. From our perspective, especially in light of the recent development of the law around legislative privilege and attorney-client privilege with regard to legislators, we don't -- we don't view discovery as necessary in moving on the Preliminary Injunction.

It also is the case, as you can see in the papers that we filed, that many direct statements were made in public. We have those available, and we're ready to play them as part of our evidence in this case.

We see discovery as just delaying things. The State, of course, has access to all the information, so they're not at a disadvantage by not doing discovery. It's the Plaintiffs that would be at a disadvantage by not having an opportunity to do discovery, and we've decided we'd rather get our hearing and get a decision and get this resolved by all the courts that are gonna look at it in as early a time as possible.

09:51 In terms of the deadlines, I think the deadlines we would like to have is a deadline to disclose witnesses for the trial with some description generally of what they will say. You know, the standard Rule 26 disclosures.

And then some deadline to disclose exhibits with the understanding that, as there was in the May/June trial, some exhibits are going to come to light as we proceed. But roughly, you know, everybody can disclose their exhibits.

Obviously the State's going to want to respond to our expert reports, which we expect. We may need to reply to those. And, you know, if the State wants depositions of our experts, then we would want to do that reciprocally, but we also don't think that's necessary.

These experts have testified. They've all been deposed. It is true that Dr. Barreto is doing some simulations like Dr. Duchin did, but, you know, there's already been hours of testimony about what that looks like in this case. They can obviously cross-examine him about it.

But again, if we can find time for the depositions, even if that means taking them at a lunch break or in the evening during a trial break...

But our view is that we have what we need to meet our burden of proof, and we don't need any delay for discovery that ultimately, as Mr. Kercher just argued, didn't result in a whole lot of material information, you know, that changed the

09:53 1 calculation.

2 MR. KERCHER: Yeah, I don't think there will be a need
3 for a lot of written discovery, to answer the first question.
4 And we have already conferred a little bit on working together,
5 as we did for the trial on the merits earlier this year, in
6 terms of getting the legislative record before the Court. I
7 think the legislative record is going to be, in large part,
8 what the Plaintiffs are relying on. I think it will be
9 important to us, too.
10 I also agree with Mr. Dunn that getting a deadline for
11 exchanging witnesses and exhibits will be important. That will
12 probably drive further decisions about depositions. Look, I
13 would love to be able to say, "Oh, yeah, we need at least five
14 depositions per side." I'm candidly not sure that that's
15 actually true. I would reserve saying we don't need any
16 depositions until I see their witness list. Or they may find
17 somebody on our side who surprises them.
18 I very much -- having gone through the challenges of
19 Dr. Murray's deposition during trial, I would like to avoid
20 that if we can. That was not ideal for a variety of reasons,
21 not least of which is the manner in which that testimony had to
22 be sort of laboriously presented to the Court.
23 I'm not sure that expert depositions will be
24 necessary, and I'm not particularly pushing for those. What
25 matters to me is that my experts get the opportunity to

09:54 evaluate what it is that the four Plaintiffs' experts are doing and have the opportunity to respond meaningfully to them. And if Mr. Dunn says they want to reply, then have at it.

MR. DUNN: One other comment I failed to mention is, you know, the Preliminary Injunction rule, as the Court, especially the trial judges of the Court know, you know, is more flexible in terms of evidence. And indeed, as you know, many Preliminary Injunctions are just decided on papers and affidavits. So we have been talking about ways that we can shorten directs, you know, amply giving the State whatever cross-examination time it wants, and ways that we can shorten things from the May/June trial.

And although I agree -- because I was here for it, the four-day trial we had on the Senate District map, on the Preliminary Injunction. But that was also the first proceedings in the case. And it's true it was on one district. But it was on one map, and that's what this hearing is going to be over, is one map.

There are some different districting issues, but as you've seen from our papers, our overarching arguments apply to the map as a whole. So, you know, certainly that's why we thought we could get this done in five days.

MR. KERCHER: And I'll add, I think, two pieces. One is, Judge Smith, you referenced a Motion to Dismiss. I think that -- again, we're still -- we are still processing some of

these papers that have come in.

Our plan right now is, we have only seen one claim that looks new under the law. The Gonzales Plaintiffs are arguing that the mid-cycle redistricting is, per se, violative because it violates the one-person one-vote rule because the mid-cycle districts are drawn using the 2020 Census, and, of course, those populations have changed since then.

I think we will be moving to dismiss that claim. I'd be interested to see whether the Elias Law firm files a similar suit against California in a mid-decade redistricting cycle. We'll see.

The other thing is -- and I hesitate to say this, because it is speculation; I have no firm information one way or another. But because of the considerable press and politics around this redistricting effort, it seems that there is a possibility there could be Intervenors. I don't know what that would do to the scheduling. I'm not arguing that it should do anything to the schedule, but it is something that the parties and the Court should perhaps consider.

MR. FOX: David Fox for the Gonzales Plaintiffs.

Two points on that. One is, on the claim Mr. Kercher referenced, I think one of the -- the thing I would just highlight about that claim is, I do think the facts are undisputed. I think it's a question of law. I don't think it needs to delay any aspects of this Court's schedule.

09:57 MR. KERCHER: I agree with that.

MR. FOX: The second is, in terms of Intervenors, certainly --

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: Mr. Fox, speak just a little bit more slowly, if you would.

MR. FOX: My apologies, Your Honor.

In terms of Intervenors, we would urge the Court to deny any motions to intervene that would require a delay in this matter. We are well, well into this four years in. There is a huge trial record, much of which is extremely relevant to what is still before the Court.

The idea that new parties would try to join now and slow things down, I think, would -- there is ample reason for the Court to deny any motion that would require that.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: So procedurally, you-all are gonna get together and come up with deadlines for the witnesses and exhibits list? You-all will --

MR. DUNN: Well, once we know the trial dates, I suspect that will be the case.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: And so --

MS. PERALES: Your Honor, could we have a moment?

(*Sotto voce* discussion off the record.)

JUDGE SMITH: If you need to meet and confer, it's perfectly okay; we'll be glad to take a break. We understand you have a large group of people, so it's only fair you're able

09:58 1 to talk about this if you wish to.
2 MR. DUNN: I think we can share the information. What
3 Ms. Perales was suggesting, but I agree with -- and folks can
4 nod if they disagree, but we're going to prepare to go on
5 September 8th in the event that the trial pleas or the
6 Government seeks the death penalty or something else happens.
7 And we'll be ready to offer evidence then. And if the Court
8 ultimately, you know, issues an order at a different date and
9 time, then we'll obviously do whatever the court orders.
10 JUDGE SMITH: Well, I'm gonna interrupt you, if you'll
11 excuse me. Let me just make it clear what I said earlier. The
12 week of September 1st is absolutely out because of unmovable
13 commitments. The week of September 8th is absolutely out
14 because of unmovable commitments. The week of the 15th, we've
15 discussed about Judge Brown's trial. The week of
16 September 22nd is absolutely out of the question.
17 The week of the 29th would be available beginning on
18 Wednesday, October 1st. And again, all three judges available
19 from October 1st through Friday, October 10th, which would be
20 eight days of trial, just counting weekdays.
21 So we needn't talk about the week of the 8th, because
22 that isn't gonna happen.
23 MR. DUNN: And I shouldn't have presumed to discuss
24 the Court's schedule. I guess we just wanted to communicate to
25 you.

10:00 JUDGE SMITH: That's perfectly okay. We're here to work it out.

JUDGE BROWN: We understand that if something comes up, if the Court sets a date for the injunction hearing and the -- and earlier -- and things change and we're able to get to you sooner, that you'll be ready to go. That's what you're saying.

MR. DUNN: Yes, Your Honor. We need 48 hours just to get people here.

JUDGE BROWN: Yeah.

MR. DUNN: But we'll be ready.

JUDGE BROWN: We understand that, and we appreciate it very much.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: So if the United States makes the death decision in Judge Brown's case, we possibly could start on the 15th. But the last one I had, the Government made the decision at the very last minute of the very last day for some unknown reason. That's just how they do it.

MS. PERALES: And my apologies also for saying the 8th without knowing about the Court's full schedule.

If the Government were to make a last-minute decision before the scheduled start of trial on the 8th and the Court decided that it was available on the week of the 15th, that would give more time than Plaintiffs are asking for to be ready. And so --

10:01 JUDGE GUADERRAMA: One week.

MS. PERALES: Yes. And we will proceed now, accordingly, to be ready, understanding that the Court will set a date for us but could call us earlier.

I want to reiterate what Mr. Dunn said. All we need is 48 hours' notice to physically get the witnesses here. We will be ready.

MR. BLEDSOE: Your Honor, I just wanted to comment on the trial deposition issue, since Dr. Murray was mentioned. I will admit that that did not go well, but I think that the good thing about it is, we saw how that went. And I think there are various contours, constraints, that can be put out there that would make that an effective tool where it could still be utilized in the proceedings.

I would ask you still consider that as an option, because we probably would even request that again for Dr. Murray because of his age and infirmity.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: How old is Dr. Murray?

MR. BLEDSOE: 83?

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: All right. Mr. Kercher, we -- can you be ready on 48 hours' notice?

MR. KERCHER: Likely not. Certainly not -- I certainly can't commit to being ready on 48 hours' notice at this juncture. As I say -- and not disparaging the Plaintiffs' work here, but we got the latest amended complaint last night.

I have not read Dr. Murray's expert report. I'm not sure we've even sent it to our experts yet.

On the 15th, Dr. Trende, that would present a challenge for us because of Dr. Trende's competing deposition. I understand that that may not be dispositive, but it should be a factor. Additionally, he will be unavailable, I believe it's on September the 22nd for a hearing concerning his son that is an immovable date.

I understand we all have to figure out our witness schedules, and that may be more my problem. But as the Court is weighing how best to do this I'm saying that, while I appreciate that the Plaintiffs are making themselves available at the earliest possible moment, being the responsive party, and being the responsive party to four motions, is a fundamentally different position.

And so, to the degree that we can have a date certain towards which we are working, that -- there is a sort of a reliance there, right? I mean, are we gonna have two separate dates on which we will disclose witnesses? Two separate dates on which we'll disclose exhibits? Or are we all just gonna front load that?

So it seems to me it makes the most sense -- and it does not seem like a material delay, particularly talking about some of the delays that happened in the September session -- to move from September to October. That would provide certainty

for all parties. That would give Plaintiffs the opportunity to reply to the expert reports that -- to the responses from my experts. And it would be clear, free and clear, I believe, in everyone's schedules.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: So when is Dr. Trende's deposition, and how long is that gonna take?

MR. KERCHER: It is -- it is on the 17th. My understanding is that it is set for a full day. And it is in Mississippi. As Dr. Trende learned last time he had to testify here, it is not always easy to get to El Paso from places outside the state, and so getting here can be something of a challenge.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: So -- and I'm just talking for myself -- if we started on the 15th, working five days with the Plaintiffs, that would cover the Trende deposition, give him time to give the deposition, get to El Paso, to be here on the 22nd?

MR. KERCHER: The 22nd is the -- Dr. Trende's oldest son is autistic and has turned 18, and I believe it is the 22nd when there is a hearing where Dr. Trende and his wife will become legal guardians. And so -- and I can get back to the Court with a firm date. I'm almost certain it is September 22nd. That is the date of that hearing, which, for obvious reasons, is a non-starter.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: So you're gonna have more than one

witness?

MR. KERCHER: Probably.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: Okay. So we could move Dr. Trende to the 23rd. I'm --

MR. KERCHER: I understand.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: This is not a decision being made.

MR. KERCHER: I understand, yeah. We're just trying to figure out what the flexibilities are. I appreciate that, and I don't want to be the only guy who's standing up Plaintiffs' case if there's a good reason to go forward on the 15th, but there are challenges to doing that.

JUDGE SMITH: I'm gonna short circuit this again. The week of the 22nd is out. That's Fifth Circuit *en banc* week, and that entire week is blocked out and unavailable. That's just a matter of public record. That's when we have our *en banc* court.

MR. DUNN: I think I've said what I needed to about scheduling. I just wanted to clarify, because it might not have been clear, we are proposing five days. If for some reason September 15th could work, it sounds like Dr. Trende could get here that Friday to testify, his deposition's on Wednesday, his hearing's on Monday -- I don't know; perhaps I have that wrong. But, you know, we were gonna make this happen in one week so it didn't have to roll into several.

I'm sorry?

10:07 Five days for the whole case, leaving the State time.

(*Sotto voce* discussion off the record.)

JUDGE GUADARRAMA: Okay. So that brings us back to the trial we had, and that opinion, and the findings of fact and conclusions of law.

So if we, the Court, are thinking that Congressional Maps are not something we ought to be dealing with in that opinion, because it's likely there's gonna be a bill passed that covers that, it leaves us with all the State claims. Half of those claims are VRA claims, which we're thinking the Supreme Court is thinking about -- something about that.

So if -- and I'm just speaking for myself; I'm not speaking for anybody else. If we were to consider that those things are in such flux that we don't want to touch them, that would leave us just the constitutional claims for the state maps.

Is that what we want to do, or -- I mean, because it's -- if we're gonna do the Preliminary Injunction Hearing and then worry about kicking out an opinion on that quickly, that's gonna push that back far enough that, unless we move the election dates, *Purcell* is gonna say is too late.

What do we do about all that?

MS. PERALES: We understand that it is what it is. We do -- we would not want -- I have so many things in my mind at the same time. I apologize.

10:08 First, Your Honor, as I believe we mentioned in our filing, Section 2 cases are important enough, particularly when they involve states, that they go frequently to the U.S. Supreme Court. And we don't believe that the pendency of a Section 2 case in the U.S. Supreme Court, or the possible pendency in the case of *Turtle Mountain*, is enough reason to defer ruling in a Section 2 case.

And we just had a decision from a three-judge panel, the Fifth Circuit, reiterating the standards under Section 2, as articulated in *Milligan*. We have -- and the mandate has been stayed by the request of a single judge in the Fifth Circuit. But the law is clear, and we believe that we are entitled to a judgment in our favor on the merits because of that.

However, that said, practicalities are that the Court has suspended the deadline for the submission of findings of fact and conclusions of law. It's the State's position that if that deadline were to be restored, it would have to be pushed forward because of the time that sort of pens were down.

If the Court cannot do both of these things, cannot do a Preliminary Injunction and reach a decision on the merits -- and of course, there would have to be time for the parties to submit proposed findings -- then it just seems that the practicalities of the situation are that the Congressional Map just passed, not yet signed, has essentially displaced the

ability to reach -- to conclude findings of fact and conclusions of law on the State legislative claims. It pains me to say that. We were hoping for a merits decision after the trial, but I believe we are where we are.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: Thank you.

MR. KERCHER: I don't know that I have anything to add other than what we put in our response. The PI is going to be a very heavy lift from my office doing for my team, doing the PI and doing the conclusions of law and findings of fact simultaneously. It would be, I want to say, unduly burdensome.

I am, for the record, about to lose my red right hand, who has accepted a position as Principal Deputy Solicitor General of Missouri. So I'm gonna be doing this with one arm tied behind my back, as anybody who knows how much I rely on Ms. Hunker can attest.

That is not dispositive of the Court's schedule. I tend to think that, with *Callais* having been held over *the Turtle Mountain* ban, looking like it is going to get certified, we'll see, look, it looks like the new map is going to get passed, too. I think the Supreme Court's going to have an awful lot of these issues, to think of the VRA Section 2 issues, to think about -- and I think it's unlikely that even if this Court makes a ruling, goes up to the Supreme Court, that the Supreme Court is going to rule on a Section 2 decision by this panel before it rules on *Callais* or *Turtle Mountain*.

10:12 And I think that that, just as a matter of practicality, should probably guide how we approach the findings of fact and conclusions of law. I tend to agree with the Court's comments that if we are going to prioritize the PI -- and that's what I'm hearing from the other side, I don't want to put words in their mouth -- then that means that *Purcell* effectively forecloses this Court getting an opinion out on the State claims, the state maps, prior to the *Purcell* deadline.

If that's true, then it seems like the Preliminary Injunction is what has -- is what has the most opportunity to get Plaintiffs some relief. And so that's probably where the resources, by both parties, should be focused.

MR. DUNN: Well, I'm not gonna presume to tell the Court what it's able to get done by when. I already sort of made that mistake.

But what I will say is, if the Court's ruling on the constitutional claims as it relates to the 2025, it seems like it could rule on the constitutional claims at least with respect to the House and Senate claims.

I'm thinking others probably have different -- but I'm thinking the SD10 claim, because the analysis in a lot of the -- however the Court decides to resolve certain legal issues, I think, are gonna overlap on some of those things. So that might be middle ground.

10:13 JUDGE BROWN: And as far as -- as far as our order suspending the deadline on findings and conclusions goes, and us getting a merits ruling out on -- from that trial that we had in May and June, there's three of us up here. We all have different concerns. I will tell you that the -- that the law -- the law on the Voting Rights Act being in flux is less of a concern to me than just our ability to get a ruling out.

The -- my opinion in *Pettaway* was 150 pages, and that concerned one Commissioners Court precinct. And the 2012 decision, about the 2011 -- the 2011 redistricting, I think Judge Smith said, was 400 pages.

And frankly, when we went into this trial earlier this year, I had serious doubts as to whether we could get to any relief that could be -- to any relief for the 2026 election. Even back then I thought that.

So really, the timing of it all, *Purcell*, our ability to get -- and all of that has been complicated now by the fact that we've all -- we all have to turn our attention to this Preliminary Injunction Motion, which I think the Plaintiffs are absolutely correct to seek.

So just, that's just my thinking on it, is all I'm sharing with you.

MR. McCAFFITY: Just because you did it, to add some levity on this situation, you guys just need to work harder.

MR. DUNN: He said that.

10:15 JUDGE BROWN: He was not speaking for all counsel.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: So Mr. Kercher, have you filed a response to the Motion for Preliminary Injunction?

MR. KERCHER: We have not, Your Honor.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: No? All right.

JUDGE SMITH: Has the motion actually been filed for Preliminary Injunction?

MR. KERCHER: Yes. Yes. The question caused me a moment of self-doubt, but yes, there are now, I believe, four motions for Preliminary Injunction. I believe the Brooks Plaintiffs, the LULAC Plaintiffs, and the MALC Plaintiffs consolidated their motion, and it's a doozy. We have one from the Intervenors, we have one from NAACP, and we have one from Gonzales.

MR. FOX: David Fox.

Two of those are pending rulings on Motions to Enlarge the Page Limit. The consolidated one and the Gonzales one are both longer than the 20-page limit.

MS. PERALES: I would simply add, Your Honor, that I believe Mr. Kercher is correct in observing that there's a unique claim that is being brought forward by Gonzales Plaintiffs. But the remainder of that sentence is that the four pending PI motions are very clearly focused on the same issues, the same districts, the same legal arguments.

So it does streamline -- four sounds like a lot, but

it is a streamlined presentation.

Thank you.

JUDGE SMITH: And those are two -- I just want to be sure I understand. Those motions are motions to enjoin implementation of what the legislature just passed and is awaiting the Governor's signature. Is that right?

MS. PERALES: Yes, Your Honor.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: Which affects all but one of the Congressional Districts in the state, as I understand it. Is that -- it makes changes to every district except one, except the 19th?

MS. PERALES: My understanding was it affects 34 out of 38 districts? But I --

MR. DUNN: I'm thinking just the 19th.

MR. GABER: 19th is the only one that has zero changes.

MS. PERALES: I see.

There was one district, Congressional 19, that has zero changes.

But in terms of adjudicating the Preliminary Injunction Motion, the arguments are much more focused with respect to the districts that are being challenged.

But yes, Your Honor, to answer your question, the Congressional Map that has been passed by the Legislature and is awaiting the Governor's signature is a substantial redraw

of -- because of the ripple effect and the zero population deviation permitted for Congressional redistricting. It does have an effect on all but one.

JUDGE SMITH: Okay. And again, I'm not trying to bog things down, but just trying to be sure I understand and clarify. I thought I remembered something that the State has filed recently indicating that they have not been sufficiently informed of which of the districts are being challenged as violations of either the constitution or Section 2.

Is that -- is that still a matter of controversy or is that what you're gonna cover in your response, or what?

MR. KERCHER: It is -- that time has overtaken those events since we filed that response to the motion that gave rise to this hearing. We have now, I believe, received amended or supplemental complaints from all of Plaintiffs' groups and Preliminary Injunction Motions and accompanying exhibits that identify the districts that they are now challenging.

JUDGE SMITH: Okay. Thank you for that clarification.

MR. GABER: Can I just add for the -- for Gonzales and Brooks and LULAC and MALC, the PI motions are attached as exhibits to the Motion to Enlarge the Page Limit. So if you haven't seen it, that's where we are.

JUDGE SMITH: Right. Okay.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: So you-all remember from our last trial what our electronic capabilities are. Are there any

10:19 technological or logistical things that we need to focus on?

MR. DUNN: It would be fantastic if there would be an HDMI connection on each table and one at the podium that works. And that will get rid of at least 90 percent of what we went through.

JUDGE SMITH: Would it be possible for us -- that's a technical matter, and our tech people aren't here. Would it be possible for you or both sides just to put that specific request in writing in terms of the technical needs that you think you need? I don't mean as a pleading filed in the case, but just some way that we could then give that to the local tech people and see if they could --

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: You could email us and tell us what those are. Specificity. I know -- I guess Stephen -- let's see. Stephen was -- Stephen was your guy? There he is. And Brian was the State's guy. Maybe you can get together and send us an email and tell us, you know, what we could do to improve, and we could give it to our IT people and see if they can do that. And as soon as possible, because IT takes, you know --

JUDGE BROWN: A specific wish list.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: -- they work less hard than we do.

All right. So any other issues that we should be addressing that we haven't touched upon?

MS. PERALES: Just a very quick question, Your Honor. Asking on behalf of some other folks who are interested in

being helpful here, would the Court feel that it has sufficient time to consider amicus briefs if they were filed before the start of the Preliminary Injunction Hearing? If there's an earlier date that the Court would want any amicus briefs, we can convey that.

THE COURT: Well, let's see. If that were to happen, it should be as soon as possible.

MS. PERALES: Thank you, Your Honor.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: I mean, I think we're all trying hard to get this done, but we have -- I mean, there's a lot of things going on, too.

MS. PERALES: Thank you, Your Honor.

MR. BLEDSOE: And Your Honor, just one slight clarification for one thing Mr. Kercher said in reference to the invitation to the different Plaintiff parties and other groups to present testimony to the legislature where he indicated no one showed up on that particular day.

I think the request was sent out Monday, late afternoon, for a Wednesday morning show. A number of groups, I think, did submit written testimony, and I think I know the NAACP did respond the second -- the day after the invited testimony. There was actually a public hearing and NAACP showed up and was extensively involved, entertained many questions from the panel, and provided written testimony.

So there was participation from the groups. A lot of

it was the logistics and the late notice.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: All right. Thank you, Mr. Bledsoe.

So anything else that we need to take up? We're going to take a short break here, talk about some things, then we'll come back out. If you have any other issues --

MR. DUNN: I don't think anything else from the Plaintiffs.

THE COURT: Okay. Let me see. Hold on.

So Mr. Dunn, I'll just ask you, how far out do you think the *Purcell* principle, you know, moves us to the next election cycle if we don't push back the deadlines?

MR. DUNN: Well, as somebody who teaches it and have read every one of the cases that talk about *Purcell* for the Supreme Court, there isn't a hard and fast -- there are times when the Supreme Court has said, "This isn't a *Purcell* problem," then other times at that same time in the election it was a *Purcell* problem. So I'm not sure there's a clear boundary line here.

But again, I think that if the election -- if the election, primary election for Congressional seats, is not going to move past March, then the filing deadline of December the 8th can be moved some period of time, around ten or 14 days later than it is now, without the March election changing.

So I don't know if that answers Your Honor's question.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: Well, what was the latest ruling on

Purcell? Was it the Alabama case?

MR. DUNN: No, I don't think it was the Alabama case. I think it was a 2020 case out of Michigan or Wisconsin. And what had happened is that the circuit had enjoined some mail-in ballot procedures. And at that point the mail-in ballot procedures had been advertised. Voters had been told they could turn in their ballots about three days after election day as a result of the trial court and ultimate circuit injunction, and that condition had been in place seven or ten days.

And so it went to the Supreme Court. The people that had obtained the injunction argued that *Purcell* now applied, the electorate is operating under this. And the Supreme Court disagreed and went back to the prior, prior status quo, regardless of the *Purcell* principle.

That's the last case I remember, but... Yeah.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: Well, Judge Cavanaugh had a concurring opinion case out of Alabama. Wasn't that decided three years ago, or...

MR. DUNN: That's true, about *Purcell*. But in that case they left the injunction in place. Yes. I don't recall. Perhaps Judge Cavanaugh -- Justice Cavanaugh said something to the effect of, "Since the injunction's in place it's too late to change now." I recall that generally, but I don't recall enough what it is.

THE COURT: I just seem to remember there's a

10:26 1 six-month window, six months out.
2 MR. DUNN: I'm sorry; I can't help you with that one,
3 Your Honor.
4 THE COURT: Okay. Thank you.
5 MR. DUNN: Mr. Gaber can.
6 MR. GABER: So that was Justice Cavanaugh's
7 concurrence in the stay decision in the -- I think it was
8 *Maryland versus Milligan* at that time. And that occurred in, I
9 want to say, February. And the actual primary election was
10 being held in March.
11 And so we are in the posture here where it's the
12 candidate-filing deadline that we're trying -- I think we're
13 trying to get this so that we're not -- if the Court rules in
14 the period before this candidate-filing deadline, we're --
15 *Purcell*'s just not even an issue, because nothing could
16 possibly start with respect to *Purcell* concerns, really, until
17 the end of the filing deadline.
18 And so, you know, we were trying to get this done so
19 that *Purcell* is not even something you have to consider, and
20 so -- and so that *Purcell* would be something the Supreme Court
21 would not have to consider.
22 And so that's the difference between the timing of the
23 *Milligan* case and this one.
24 JUDGE GUADERRAMA: All right. Thank you.
25 MR. GABER: And another -- the case I had, the

Wisconsin State Legislative Maps case from 2022, the Supreme Court actually reversed the Wisconsin Supreme Court's injunction in, I think, April. And there was a May deadline that the State had said it needed the maps in place. And there needed to be another proceeding in the Wisconsin Supreme Court after that April ruling by the Supreme Court.

So to Mr. Dunn's point, it's a moving target, but it's not six months. It is well -- you know, a much shorter period than that, and we are not anywhere near that zone right now.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: Thank you.

JUDGE BROWN: I'll note that in my *Pettaway* case, again, got my ruling out on October 13th, I believe. Almost immediately stayed by the Fifth Circuit. The stay got lifted within -- the stay got lifted in November. Very short window. I didn't know it was going to be a short window, and I issued my order and just got lambasted, saying it's within two weeks of the end of the filing. It was before the filing deadline had come. But that's the -- that was the Fifth Circuit, not the Supreme Court, so...

MS. PERALES: I would like to add only that I was counsel in *Purcell*, and what was at issue at that time was voter ID requirements. And so the only thing I would add is that, not only is it a moving target, but it does turn, I think, heavily on whether information has gone to voters already. For example, in a voter ID case, voters have been

told, "This is what you need to show to prove your identity at the polls," right? And the Court's concern has always been, you know, sort of whiplash for the voters.

In this type of case, even filing -- candidate-filing deadlines, that is something that affects more of the candidates who are -- or potential candidates who are closely following these matters, and I don't think raises the same issues of voters hearing sort of two different things, you know. Because this isn't a voter ID case there isn't that possibility of voter confusion until perhaps ballots start going out.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: Thank you.

MR. FOX: Your Honor, David Fox.

Just one more point on that. Somewhat uniquely among redistricting cases, this is a situation where we are trying to restore the status quo. And we're trying to avoid a change in the maps rather than impose a change in the maps. There's no need in our view for a complicated remedial process if we prevail. And I think that that does reduce, substantially, any *Purcell* issue. It's certainly probably easier for election administrators if we win than if we don't, because they don't need to implement new maps.

So I just think the Court -- and I think other courts would take into account that as well, in analyzing the *Purcell* issue.

10:30 Thank you.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: Mr. Kercher?

MR. KERCHER: Feels like undergrad again, me against the faculty.

My understanding of *Purcell* and its progeny is that what really matters is the change and the effect of change. And there is something about a reliance interest that is at issue here.

I think that the candidate-filing deadline impacts voters directly because that is when candidates need to decide whether they will run, where they will run, for what they will run.

So, for example, one of the Plaintiffs, one of the Intervenor Plaintiffs, is Congresswoman Jasmine Crockett, who testified at trial. Her district has changed dramatically, as I understand it, and there are questions about whether she will run for a new district, her old district, or whether she will run for State office.

Those things will begin to solidify when that candidate-filing deadline opens. And that happens, I believe, on November the 8th.

It's also important, if we are thinking about the change and the effect on voters -- again, this has obviously been a big deal in the media; lots of people that don't necessarily follow election law, like the folks in this room,

have seen stuff on the news about changes in Texas maps. And the sooner that voters know what changes will be in place the less confusion there will be.

So on that piece, I think, we probably agree with the Plaintiffs inasmuch as there is a need to get some clarity on what will happen in this election, which is why we are trying to be flexible as the State in moving towards an Injunction Hearing that would allow this Court to get its order out.

But I also think that that moves that *Purcell* deadline earlier. Mr. Dunn suggests that we could move the candidate-filing deadline -- I disagree that it would make sense to move the closing of that deadline rather than moving the opening of the deadline, because if you just move the closing, then you may have somebody file for District 33 that, by the end of the candidate-filing deadline, doesn't exist anymore.

I would need to talk with my client, the Secretary of State, about the practical ramifications of moving that deadline. I candidly don't know. If the Court feels that would be helpful I'm happy to make that inquiry and come back to you, but I don't know what the practical ramifications of moving that window would be.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: All right. So we'll take a short break, and we'll come back and --

Oh, I'm sorry, Mr. Bledsoe.

10:33 MR. BLEDSOE: Congresswoman Crockett testified that she wants to keep the old Congressional District 30 together, that these contemplations that are occurring in social media are simply because of what occurred at the legislature, and there are facts that have been thrust upon her.

And in reference to the time period on the back end versus the front end, one of the things I know that they talked about before -- and that was one of the defenses in the case we just finished trying -- was that they wanted candidates to know when they -- by the deadline where they would be able to file or whether they wanted to run for a particular district because of what it would look like.

And that's the problem, of course, with the 18th Congressional District, because everybody's filing in the 18th Congressional District, and now it's going to be, basically, the 29th Congressional District. So that's a problem. So I think "before" should be emphasized.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: Thank you, Mr. Bledsoe.

So, I don't know, Mr. Fox, if you -- looks like you were standing up. So just for me, if we -- would the Plaintiffs be prejudiced if we heard five days of testimony one week, and then came back to hear the State's three days of testimony a week or two later? Would that prejudice you somehow?

MR. DUNN: Well, we don't think we need that much

time, but we also don't think -- I mean, that would not prejudice us other than the fact that, given the Court's schedule reality, you know, following up on days may push it into October and, you know, that, of course, delays when the Court gets the evidence to make a ruling, but...

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: No, I'm just, in order to move up --

MR. DUNN: Right.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: -- the hearing of the case, we -- in my mind, maybe we could do part of it earlier. And then there's reasons why we can't continue and then come back when we can and finish up with the State. We'd be ahead of the game. We'd be five days ahead of the game.

MR. DUNN: I 100 percent agree. I mean, it's better than starting on October 1st and finishing eight, nine days later. Instead, we resume October 1st and maybe be done by the 3rd or the 4th.

MR. KERCHER: It's not my favorite because of the work that we need to do in order to get ready for it, but we will obviously abide by whatever schedule the Court puts in place, and the State will announce ready on the date that the Court instructs us to.

THE COURT: Okay. Let's take, let's say, a 15-minute break, and be back at 10:50.

(Recess.)

11:20 JUDGE GUADERRAMA: All right. So we had some serious and deep discussions about how quickly we could get this set. And we hear the cries of the Plaintiffs for the need to get this done sooner than later. We gave it very serious consideration, all the different options.

But the soonest date that works out for all three of us and pending matters is October 1st. So we'll schedule the trial October 1st, 9:00. We'll work 9:00 to 6:00 like we did before. We'll go through October 10th during the weekdays, and if we need a Saturday, the one in between the two weeks, the one at the tail end of the two weeks, we can add a Saturday to accommodate the witnesses.

We're asking that once we get started, that we don't have any opening statements. You just call your first witness. And we'll just go like we did during the trial, one right after the other. Make sure they're here so that we don't have any gaps in the time period.

So if there are going to be amicus briefs filed, we're going to order that those be filed by September 17th. Motion for Leave to file with the amicus attached to the Motion for Leave, and that that amicus not exceed 20 pages.

And we will have an order out shortly on the Motion for Leave to file the amended complaints and Motion to Exceed the Page Limits. We'll get that out soon.

We're gonna ask the parties to confer and then come up

with a schedule on the deadlines for the witness lists, for the exhibit lists, and, you know, any expert report deadlines back and forth. So if you can have all of that worked out and in agreement, filed with the Court.

And then finally, Mr. Kercher, before the four PI motions filed -- I'm not sure that the deadlines to respond may be different, you want to do a consolidated response. So what was your thinking on how that would work? What deadline would that be, or how would we make that happen?

MR. KERCHER: My initial thought is three weeks, but having conferred with Plaintiffs on that, we'll work -- just figure this out now, but three weeks hence.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: All right. Plaintiffs have any grave concern with that?

MR. KERCHER: That would be the 17th?

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: And maybe you-all can then talk about it once we recess and then come up with an agreement on when that would be.

MR. KERCHER: Happy to do that.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: Also --

MR. DUNN: That would put our reply to this right on the deadline of the trial starting. And we're not trying to jam anybody, but we had two days to file the motions that they're responding to, so perhaps two weeks?

JUDGE GUADARRAMA: Well, hopefully you-all can work

11:23 1 that out between you and --
2 MR. KERCHER: We'll confer, Your Honor.
3 MR. DUNN: All right.
4 JUDGE GUADARRAMA: So the other thing is the Motion to
5 Dismiss Deadline that you -- I guess you suggested you might be
6 filing that in relation to the Gonzales complaint, the new
7 cause?
8 MR. KERCHER: That's correct, Your Honor. And that
9 will be quite brief. I mean, that's not going to be a
10 20-pager; that's just going to be on the one novel claim. And
11 I think Mr. Fox and I are in agreement that that's strict on
12 the law and probably shouldn't affect the PI. So I would think
13 that filed on Saturday -- yeah, we just have ten days from that
14 Saturday. That's already well under way.
15 JUDGE GUADERRAMA: So you'll get that in ten days.
16 JUDGE BROWN: Just so you-all know, we talked about
17 this, too. Especially in light of the fact that we're not
18 getting to this as soon as the Plaintiffs want us to get to it,
19 we are going to be -- we're not making any commitment, but we
20 are -- we want to let you-all know now that we're gonna be open
21 to moving the filing period, or moving the deadline back, if we
22 need to. We're -- you know, I think we're all three very
23 reluctant to mess with election dates, but we're gonna be open
24 to any request to move that, as Mr. Dunn suggested.
25 And we also think that, even though we're not getting

to it as fast as the Plaintiffs would like us to, I think this schedule still gives us plenty of time to get a ruling out to you-all timely enough for -- if you need any -- if either side needs any more relief after that, there should be time to get it. It'll be short fused, but I think there will still be time.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: Anything else before we close?

MR. DUNN: Nothing from the Brooks Plaintiffs, Your Honor.

MS. PERALES: Nothing further, Your Honor.

MR. BLEDSOE: We have a Section 2 issue that we've raised and amended. We won't be pursuing it.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: You will not be pursuing it?

MR. BLEDSOE: Will not be pursuing it in the PI motion.

THE COURT: All right.

JUDGE BROWN: In the injunction? Is that what you mean? The injunction is just going to be constitutional claims?

MR. BLEDSOE: Right, just constitutional claims.

JUDGE BROWN: A lot of heads nodding over there.

MR. KERCHER: Nothing further from State Defendants. Thank you, Your Honors, for making this happen so quickly.

JUDGE GUADERRAMA: Thank you-all. See you soon.

(Proceedings concluded.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I certify that the foregoing is a correct transcript from the record of proceedings in the above-entitled matter. I further certify that the transcript fees and format comply with those prescribed by the Court and the Judicial Conference of the United States.

Signature: /s/Leticia Perez Date: August 30, 2025
Leticia Perez

State Defendants' Response to Plaintiff-Intervenors' and TXNAACP Motion for Preliminary Injunction

Exhibit AL

Texas Senate Chambers Aug. 22, 2025 (Part II) Tr.

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TRANSCRIPTION OF AUDIO

SENATE CHAMBERS

Friday, August 22, 2025 (PART II)

****

P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. PRESIDENT: The Senate will come to order.

Senator Blanco, for what purpose?

SENATOR BLANCO: Questions for the author.

MR. PRESIDENT: Senator King, do you yield?

SENATOR KING: Yes, I do.

SENATOR BLANCO: Thank you, Senator.

Sir, I've got some questions that are a little higher elevation, so to speak, but do you believe the Constitution legally permits one racial group to enjoy representation than other racial groups?

SENATOR KING: I think, no, of course not. I mean, equal justice -- all our laws are to apply equally to everyone in the United States.

SENATOR BLANCO: Okay. So your answer is you do not believe the Constitution legally permits one racial group to enjoy more representation than other racial groups. That's -- you do not believe that?

SENATOR KING: What equal protection is all about, if I understand your question, yes.

SENATOR BLANCO: Okay. So you mentioned equal protection. Do you mean the Equal Protection Clause?

SENATOR KING: Yes.

SENATOR BLANCO: Okay. So, can you explain what in the Constitution, other than the Equal Protection Clause,

would prohibit one racial group from enjoying more representation than any other racial group.

SENATOR KING: Senator, I really just don't want to get into a discussion at that level. I will tell you that everyone under our Constitution, the intent is that everyone be treated equally under the law. That's what equal justice, that's what equal rights is all about. There are always failures in that, but I think generally, as a nation, we try to correct those failures.

SENATOR BLANCO: Okay. So I just want to reiterate that you believe the Equal Protection Clause is there to ensure that no racial group enjoys more greater -- greater representation than any other. The Equal Protection Clause allows that.

SENATOR KING: I believe that everyone should be treated equally under the law.

SENATOR BLANCO: Okay.

SENATOR KING: I believe that's what the Constitution requires.

SENATOR BLANCO: Right. Okay. Thank you for that. Senator, you said that your goal was to provide a legal map. Is that accurate?

SENATOR KING: Yes.

SENATOR BLANCO: And as you know, our Constitution provides for equal protections that you had just mentioned.

Can you elaborate on how this map legally complies with the Equal Protection Clause from our Constitution?

SENATOR KING: So the most accurate answer I can give you is that I'm not a redistricting attorney. I'm not a constitutional attorney, but I hired very, very good redistricting attorneys with a broad background in constitutional law, and I asked them to review this map and tell me if it in any way violated 14th Amendment, any aspect of the Constitution, the VRA, anything, and they have come back and told me unequivocally, that this does not violate any applicable law.

SENATOR BLANCO: Did they cite any examples?

SENATOR KING: Well, I know that they ran a Gingles analysis and other reviews, as are typically done in the redistricting process.

SENATOR BLANCO: Did they refer to the Equal Protection Clause?

SENATOR KING: Yes, they have referred to the 14th Amendment.

SENATOR BLANCO: Can you explain how so?

SENATOR KING: Just in saying that it did not violate the 14th Amendment.

SENATOR BLANCO: I'm sorry, I couldn't hear you.

SENATOR KING: Just in saying that, it was not a violation of the 14th Amendment, the Voting Rights Act, or

any other applicable law.

SENATOR BLANCO: Did they go into detail how it doesn't?

SENATOR KING: No, and again, I didn't want to get in myself into reviewing racial data, and so what I asked them to do is bring me their conclusions of law. I also am not -- I don't have the expertise to analyze the statistical parts of a review, such as Gingles for you're doing a regression analysis or, you know, all the different things that are looked at. That's just not my area of expertise, so I just ask them to bring me their conclusions.

SENATOR BLANCO: Bring -- you asked them to bring their expertise.

SENATOR KING: Yes.

SENATOR BLANCO: And what was their expertise? What did they say?

SENATOR KING: They said that this -- that HB-4 did not violate any applicable law. That it complied with the VRA and the Constitution.

SENATOR BLANCO: Did they explain how it complied with the VRA?

SENATOR KING: Only that it did comply in all aspects of the VRA.

SENATOR BLANCO: Did you ask how it complied with the VRA?

SENATOR KING: Well, trying to think how to answer that. I asked them to do a very, very detailed analysis, and I asked them if it -- if their review had in any way shown that it violated the Voting Rights Act, and they have assured me that it does not.

SENATOR BLANCO: Okay. I ask these questions because --

SENATOR KING: And then when I say that, obviously that's with regard to race, color, minority, language group, all the things that the VRA is intended to protect.

SENATOR BLANCO: Okay. Because today, Blacks and Hispanics in Texas make up 51 percent of the population, while White Texans make up 39 percent. Would you agree with those demographics?

SENATOR KING: That sounds about right.

SENATOR BLANCO: Okay. If you agree with those demographics, can you explain how a map that results in 70 percent of Congressional Districts being majority White reflect that reality?

SENATOR KING: Well, with regard to this map, we don't know who's going to be elected. Whether they're going to be Anglo, Black, Hispanic, Asian, we don't know, and -- but I believe people are going to have the opportunity to vote for the candidates that they think will best represent their interests.

SENATOR BLANCO: We don't know, but you drew maps based on current demographics?

SENATOR KING: I drew maps based on historic voting -- of Republican/Democrat voting patterns.

SENATOR BLANCO: Regardless of race?

SENATOR KING: And actually, I didn't draw the map, but I believe that's what this map is -- reflects.

SENATOR BLANCO: Not looking at race?

SENATOR KING: Not voting on race.

SENATOR BLANCO: Okay. 45 years ago, Anglos were 66 percent of Texas population. Today, Anglos make up 39.8 percent of population, and despite that massive demographic shift, why does this map reflect the same demographics from half a century ago?

SENATOR KING: Well, I think your statement would presume that Hispanics are not voting for Republicans, and I don't think that's the case. I think Hispanics are -- I think the fact that we have Hispanic Members on this body. I think that Republicans are voting -- let me say this correctly, I think your statement assumes that Hispanics will not vote for Republicans, and I just don't think that's accurate.

SENATOR BLANCO: Would you assume that Hispanics are trending to vote more Republican than Democratic?

SENATOR KING: You know, I haven't really analyzed

that out of anything other than an anecdotal level, but I just believe that this map is going to create at least five more competitive districts. I don't know whether someone Hispanic, or Anglo, or African American will be elected to those or Asian. I don't know and I don't know who will run for them, but I know when you look at Republican v. Democrat, those maps are -- those districts, those five will lean more Republican, but they're going to be very competitive districts. There's not a walkthrough, a guarantee by any measure.

SENATOR BLANCO: You just mentioned that this map improves Republican performance. Isn't it true that the effect of this map, even if not intentional, does dilute Hispanic vote and Black voting power?

SENATOR KING: I haven't seen any data suggesting that.

SENATOR BLANCO: No? Okay. So you argue these maps aren't -- are race neutral, but haven't conservative federal courts already struck down similar supposed race neutral maps in states like Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, for doing exactly what House Bill 4 does here, because of the effect?

SENATOR KING: I'm not aware of that.

SENATOR BLANCO: You're not aware of that.

Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Those are all my

questions.

SENATOR KING: Thank you, Senator.

MR. PRESIDENT: Senator Gutierrez, for what purpose?

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Thank you, Mr. President. Just to ask the gentleman a few questions, if I may?

MR. PRESIDENT: Senator King, do you yield?

SENATOR KING: I am, but I'm still recovering from your questions about SB-15, so --

MR. PRESIDENT: The gentleman yields.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: I forgot which one that one was. Well, let's go about when we were in the first called special session. When we got up, and I think we were kind of putting the rules out. You will recall what you said then? I asked you then if you would have voted for a map in 2021 and then when we -- I think the Congressionals we did in '21.

I asked you then if you would have voted for a map that violated the Voting Rights Act because my suggestion was -- is that's what the Department of Justice letter suggests. Department of Justice letter clearly states that these districts in question are -- that race was taken into consideration in the creation of these districts that they now want to undo.

Excuse me, Mr. President, can we have Members kind of quiet down and maybe take their telephone conversations

off the floor, please? It's a little bit too distracting.

MR. PRESIDENT: Members, can we have some order so we can hear the discussion between the Members?

Please proceed.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Thank you, Mr. President. So when we talked about that then, I asked you, "Did you think that the maps that we voted on in 2021 were fair and within the Voting Rights Act," and your answer to me was that, "I would not have voted for maps that I felt were illegal."

Do you remember that answer?

SENATOR KING: I don't specifically recall the conversation, but I would not have voted intentionally for any map that I believed violated the Voting Rights Act or any other applicable law.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Okay. So in 2021 --

SENATOR KING: In 2021.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: You voted for maps, Congressional maps, and you felt that those maps were fair, within the Voting Rights Act, and there was no race in the consideration of those maps. That's why you voted for those maps. Yes or no?

SENATOR KING: I -- at the time I voted, I believed they -- those to be legal maps and I still do.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Okay. You still do?

SENATOR KING: I had no -- I haven't personally been presented with any evidence otherwise.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Then why are we here? Why are you carrying this bill?

SENATOR KING: As I stated before, one of the purposes of the bill is to improve Republican candidate performance for Congressional candidates.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Okay. You're a very good lawyer. You are, I really respect you for that, and I -- I've seen you here and I've seen you in the House of Representatives. We've served together now for almost 20 years.

SENATOR KING: Crazy.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: It's crazy. Sometimes I think I'm crazy for being in here. But you've always been very well prepared. Do you go into the courthouse when you -- and I don't know -- I know you've done some criminal work, and I know you've done some civil work. Am I correct in that?

SENATOR KING: Yes.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: All right. I'm kind of like, I don't know, I can't characterize you. I characterize me as kind of a street lawyer. I do a little criminal, a little bit of family, a little bit of civil work. I've tried damn near just about anything except for the -- really, stuff that I can't get into, it's like bankruptcy and stuff like that --

stuff in federal court, even though I'm licensed in federal court. So you've tried a little bit of everything yourself?

SENATOR KING: I really don't practice much anymore, but I did some litigation. I did some transactional, yes.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: When you go do litigation, when you go into a civil courtroom, you'd have your trial notebooks. And in that trial notebook, you had all your pleadings. You had all your discovery. Yes?

SENATOR KING: Yes.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: You had your exhibits, correct?

SENATOR KING: When I was prepared, yes.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Yes. And all of that was to present to the Court, to present the best argument for your client, to be able to do the things that you needed to do to have success in Court, correct?

SENATOR KING: Yes.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: And I understand you're not a voting rights expert and you're not a redistricting expert, but over and over again today, you've said, "Well, I don't know and I'm just relying on what these lawyers told me to do. I'm just relying on what they've said." A lot of people have asked you the same question, and I don't know that I want to answer -- ask the same question again, but I'm going

to go down through this a little bit, and we're going to try to see where we get from here. The CD-7, a coalition district, in the current plan, in your opinion.

SENATOR KING: In the current map?

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Yes, sir.

SENATOR KING: I don't know off the top of my head. I'm not advised.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Not advised. Are you -- so are you also not advised? Does HB-4 change that? Is it still a majority/minority?

SENATOR KING: To determine if something is a majority/minority district or to determine if something is a coalition district, you have to look at racial data, and I have not done that.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Is CD-9 a coalition district?

SENATOR KING: Same answer.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: HB-4 changes that by making it barely a Latino majority, correct, of 50.3?

SENATOR KING: Again, I have not looked at racial data.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: You can't answer the fact that HB-4 changes CD-9 to 50.3 Latino?

SENATOR KING: I can tell you that HB-4 makes CD-9 a more Republican leaning district than it is today.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: And they tweaked -- just

barely Hispanic, just over the 50 percent mark. CD-18, a coalition district in the current plan, in your opinion?

SENATOR KING: Again, to determine if something is a coalition district, you have to look at racial data, and I have not looked at racial data.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Is CD-22 a coalition district?

SENATOR KING: I would have to give the same answer to that to any district you ask me about, of the 38.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: So you didn't look at race, we can go on and on and on, and you're going to say -- give me the same answer that you didn't look at race as a consideration or make any of these maps because you didn't actually make the maps, correct?

SENATOR KING: That's correct.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Other people made the maps.

SENATOR KING: That is correct.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: And you don't know whether those people looked at race in creating these maps, do you?

SENATOR KING: What I -- No. All I can tell you is -- and I haven't inquired as to who physically drew the maps. I haven't inquired as to the process, who all was involved in that. All I can tell you is that I am confident that the map does not violate the VRA or any other applicable law, and that it also will make at least five districts perform better for a Republican candidate.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: I'm going to try to keep my temperature down at this level because I think it's important, but I find it interesting that you keep going back to this notion that you don't know. You were told, you know. You didn't make the maps. You didn't call the people that make the maps. They didn't communicate with you. You don't know who they are. You never saw them. What kind of level of preparedness is that on this very important matter? You're supposed to believe some person that you don't even know who made these?

SENATOR KING: As I've said before, House Bill 4 meets all legal criteria, and it will promote the election of more Republican Congressional Members.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Okay. That's great, but that's not what the United States Justice Department said. They said that these race-based considerations from these special districts were created, making them unconstitutional coalition districts. So they had to, if you take the inverse of this, they had to have used race in making their assessments. They had to take race into consideration. Correct? That's what they say in this letter.

SENATOR KING: As far as I know, they haven't written any letter in regard to HB-4. If you're speaking of the existing 2021 map, that letter states those conclusions, but I have not seen, nor do I know of anyone who's seen, any

underlying data in support of those conclusions.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: The same maps that you said were fair, legal, within the Voting Rights Act; they make conclusions that claim that race was taken into consideration in the making of those maps, and you're now telling us because that's why we're here. We're here because of this letter, and we know that because Greg Abbott included this letter in his first call, correct?

SENATOR KING: He did mention that letter in the first call.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: There are nine Congressional districts currently that do not have a majority of any single race, correct? That's CD-7, 9, 18, 22, 27, 30, 32, 33, and 35. Take my word for that?

SENATOR KING: Are you referring to the 2021 map or HB-4?

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Currently. The maps that are currently in place.

SENATOR KING: And again, I haven't looked at the racial data for those maps.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: HB-4 makes three of them majority Anglo: CD-22, 27, and 32. Is that correct?

SENATOR KING: Again, I don't know how many times to say it, and I don't mean to upset you, and I don't want your temperature to get up, as you referred to. But I have

not looked at any racial data. Period. At any time, in any way. Maybe I'm wrong, but I think that's the right way to approach redistricting.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Okay. So you're going into the trial, and you're very, very well prepared at trial. I've seen you come into committees, and I've seen you come on this floor very, very well prepared on your bills. But on this one, we're supposed to believe "I don't know"? "I didn't make the maps." "I didn't talk to the map makers," and "I'm just going to go on the advice and counsel of my -- of what the lawyers tell me." Is that a fair statement?

SENATOR KING: No.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: What is then? I mean you're accountable, right? You're "a buck stops here", kind of guy?

SENATOR KING: I was going to try to answer your previous question.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Well, answer that one. Are you accountable?

SENATOR KING: Yes. I'm accountable to God. I'm accountable to my wife. I'm accountable to my family. I'm accountable to this body. Certainly.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Okay. You're accountable to this body. You're accountable to the people of Texas, correct?

SENATOR KING: Sure.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: So, if a three-judge panel looks at these -- there's going to be a lawsuit, we know that. If a three-judge panel finds that race was definitely a consideration in this place, because that was said in that DOJ letter. That's what was said by the Governor. That's what was said in the House of Representatives. That's what Todd Hunter over there said. That's what Pam Bondi says. And so maybe you've been a very good lawyer or very good witness here and been dodging everything, but ultimately, if that three-judge panel says that race was a consideration, then you erred, I guess.

SENATOR KING: Well, any determinations that they make, one way or the other, are going to be based on expert witnesses that have done the type of analysis to answer their questions.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Okay. That's good. Expert witnesses did analysis, and those experts -- are those your lawyers? Are those your lawyers?

SENATOR KING: Okay. No, I think under privilege they would not be under expert witnesses.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Okay.

SENATOR KING: That might be in some cases who they used -- could be -- that's a long discussion for a different day.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Let me skip around a little

bit, because you bring about expert witnesses and expert analysis. Red Apple has political data down to the bloc level, or is it by voter tabulation district or precinct? Does Red Apple have political data down to the bloc level, to your knowledge?

SENATOR KING: It's been a long time since I've played with Red Apple, but it takes you down to the census track level, I recall. But I also think a lot of people are using a different program out there. I forget the name of it -- that -- for drawing redistricting maps today.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Tell all these people in the room what Red Apple is. I should probably -- we should probably educate them because they probably think we're talking about our iPhone.

SENATOR KING: Well, Red Apple is a program that's been utilized in this -- by the Texas Legislature for many years to assist in drawing maps.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Okay. Fair enough. Does Red Apple have political data down to the bloc level?

SENATOR KING: You know, I honestly have not looked at Red Apple in so many years, I don't know what it has today.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: There are 444 split precincts in this HB-4 plan. Do you have any information as to why there are so many split precincts and how the map drawer made

those decisions?

SENATOR KING: Now, are you referring to voting precincts or commissioner precincts or JP precincts, or are you referring to census tracts?

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: I'm referring to voting precincts.

SENATOR KING: I suspect if you looked at any redistricting map, State, House, State Board of Education, anything, you're going to find a lot of precincts that are split. Commonly just for rounding out the numbers that you have to get to get within, in this case, one person, one vote, the exact number, plus five or minus five in House and Senate.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: That's a little bit non-responsive. Do you have any information as to why there are so many split precincts and how the map drawer made those decisions?

SENATOR KING: No.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Do we have racial data down to the bloc level? We've already said, you don't know, correct?

SENATOR KING: I haven't looked at Red Apple in a long, long time.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: I'll submit to you that it doesn't, but guess what does? Guess what does have racial data down to the bloc level?

SENATOR KING: I can answer a question. I can't guess at something.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: We do it every 10 years, the census. The census has data down to the bloc level. So if a map drawer is splitting a precinct or a voter tabulation district, the racial data of the blocs in that district could have been used as a split in that district, correct?

SENATOR KING: Or could not have been used.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Could have or could not have been. Fair enough. Fair enough. And since racial data is the only information that we have below the precinct level, the bloc level, isn't it likely that the map drawer used race to split the voter tabulation districts like they did so well in House Bill 4 plan?

SENATOR KING: You know, again. It's just really hard to answer a hypothetical, but --

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Well --

SENATOR KING: -- I would think that if someone had built a map from the bottom up in an illegal fashion, it would be reflected in the final product, and this map is not illegal.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Well, I'll tell you that that wasn't a hypothetical, not a hypothetical. We talked about it earlier. When you said you didn't know whether which district or what other district was a coalition district,

because you haven't really looked at it. You can't tell me what percentage of Anglo, or Hispanic, or Black population are in any district because you don't take, you don't look at the racial data. But that's what it is. The racial data of these districts that have been created are just barely over their majority/minority level. Shrunk down, cracked over and over and over again.

And so, for folks in the gallery or watching this on TV, it's pretty simple, right? You just look at the map. You look at this map that you didn't create. Other people created. You don't know who created it. Appeared out of blue sky. Was sent to you by -- well, who created it?

SENATOR KING: Senator, this map, this bill, this is a bill --

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Mm-hmm.

SENATOR KING: -- came to me in the same way that you have adopted dozens and dozens of bills over the years. And no -- don't -- I'm not trying to be snarky; I'm trying to be straightforward.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Okay. I'll listen without being snarky.

SENATOR KING: You picked up a house bill that came over. You don't know everything that went into that house bill. You don't know how many people talked about it for the last five years or anything about it, but you

understand the author's intent. You look at it. It complies with your objectives for legislation. You do some research into it. You see that it meets the law and that it'd be good for the State of Texas, and you pick up and you become the sponsor to that Bill. That is exactly what I have done here.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: That's a --

SENATOR KING: There's nothing inappropriate about that or irregular.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: That's a --

SENATOR KING: That is as conforming to Senate regular process as it can it be. In this case, it's a redistricting map.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: That's a nice answer.

SENATOR KING: It's a truthful answer.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: You see that woman over there? What's her name? Senator Joan Huffman. She had this job two sessions ago. She knew what plans she was posing to us. She knew who the drafters were. She did analysis. She talked to lawyers. All of those things were fleshed out and aired out on this floor and in the House where you were.

SENATOR KING: And I think -- and I think, if you'll go back and look at her testimony, because I have for the presentation of that. She also did not look at racial data. Again, I am following very appropriate Senate process, and I've gone back and looked at those hearings from when

those bills were -- that bill was presented in 2021.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Do some Anglos vote for Democrats in Dallas County?

SENATOR KING: I'm sure they do. Absolutely.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: How about Harris County?

SENATOR KING: I'm sure they do.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: You'd agree that there's some crossover Anglo support for Democrats in some urban areas in Texas?

SENATOR KING: Again, at 100,000-foot level, people vote for different people, yes.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: This might surprise you, but a few Republicans vote for me, too. That's a joke, but it's true.

SENATOR KING: No comment, sir.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: So, if the map drawer were looking just for Democrats in Dallas County, they would get African Americans, Latinos, Asians, and some White people, correct?

SENATOR KING: I would expect that to be true, yes.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: And in Bexar County, there's crossover Anglo support for Latinos, Latino preferred candidates. We've already, you've already suggested that to be true, but let me ask you this. In Dallas County, how was

the map drawer able to recreate CD-30 as a black majority in Dallas, if the map drawer was not looking for black voters?

SENATOR KING: Just from past experience, personal experience, I can tell you that it is very easy to draw a map that improves Republican performance by just looking at Republican and Democrat votes, and I believe that's what this map is a product -- I believe it's a product of that process.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Yeah. You mentioned these lawyers, you mentioned some experts, you mentioned some expert testimony that was -- that I think you probably had in your hearing. I must admit, I wasn't at your hearing. This stuff is about as exciting to me as it is exciting to you. And there are things that we truly find exciting in this building.

This is just something we do every 10 years. I get it. The lawyers that you hired, they verified with you that this map is legal. You've said that over and over. Did they give you an EI estimate? Ecological Inference Estimate? Yes or no?

SENATOR KING: No.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Did they give you a racial polarized voting analysis? Both of those two different types of analyses are generally performed by these types of people that are reviewing these types of maps. You said that you went to the experts. You hired the best lawyers in town.

They did an analysis, and they came back to you that everything is okee-dokee, Senator - it's all wonderful, no race in the offing here.

Did they give you either one of those two analysis that they likely used?

SENATOR KING: Well, obviously, in doing a Gingles, you have to do the analysis you've discussed, but I specifically have not looked at any of the underlying data because I would have had to look at racial data, and I did not want to take that into consideration in drawing this map. Whether you agree with me that that's a good or bad way to draw a map -- I understand we can disagree on that, but I did not take racial data into consideration, and any question you ask me about that, I'm going to be giving the same truthful answer that I've been giving all day on it.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: No one called you a liar. I didn't call you a liar. I said you're a good lawyer, and despite the jokes, lawyer and liar aren't the same thing. But it sure is a good way to create an ignorant witness. Someone up here to give us the testimony up here and say, "Well, you know what, they did those things because they have to do them, and I didn't get a report -- a book report on that. I didn't look at it."

So you're a lawyer. You're accountable. You're accountable to the courts. You're accountable to this body.

You're accountable to the taxpayers. You're accountable to God and your family. These reports were likely done, and you didn't review them.

SENATOR KING: That's correct.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: They rendered an opinion. You said that, correct?

SENATOR KING: Yes.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Did you review that opinion? You said that earlier, by the way.

SENATOR KING: I have received their conclusions, and their conclusions are that this completely complies with the VRA.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: And help you --

SENATOR KING: I'm not a redistricting attorney. I'm not a -- I'm not capable of the level of statistical analysis that it takes to do the type of regression and other studies you have to look at.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: All right.

SENATOR KING: To be honest, the data would have been fairly meaningless to me. That's why you have expert witnesses in court, because it's fairly meaningless to the parties and to the attorneys.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Fair enough. So they rendered an opinion to you that you reviewed. Did they help you prepare your talking points?

SENATOR KING: Of course.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Okay.

SENATOR KING: I asked -- I prepared my talking points, and I went over those talking points with them, of course.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Did you provide these resources that they provided to you to anyone else in the Senate outside of your office?

SENATOR KING: Would you say that slower?

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Did you provide these resources that they provided to you to anyone else in the Senate outside of your office?

SENATOR KING: No.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: So the reports that they created, the opinion that they gave you, you have it. It's in your office, and no one's seen it.

SENATOR KING: I have none of their underlying data. I have none of the analyses in my office. I have asked for things such as give me a brief that overviews redistricting law to date so that I could familiarize myself with it again.

I have asked for other background on redistricting materials. The specific thing that I have hired them to do is to analyze any plan that was proposed during these special sessions, and they have done so at my request, and as I have

said before, they have told me that -- they've assured me that this map meets all legal criteria.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: They've analyzed it. They've given you an opinion. They have analyzed it. They've likely done those two types of analyses that we have discussed, because they have to do them. Well, let's see, whatever you do have in your office, just as a matter of Senatorial courtesy, are you going to allow us to review that before we go forward with this bill? Well, I mean, we want to make the same informed decision and opinion that you're making. I know you have this look on your face, I'm just wondering, can we see the things --

SENATOR KING: No, I'm trying to think what in my office would be of any benefit to you. You've heard my talking points.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: I'd like to see the opinion. I'd like to see the analysis that they created.

SENATOR KING: Well, you've pretty much heard it all.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: No. I heard, I don't know. I've been told. I don't know who drew the maps. I'm pretty sure that my lawyers know what they're doing. I'm pretty sure that they're the experts in this thing. That's what I've heard all day long.

SENATOR KING: You understand how privilege works

and how releasing information under privilege works, and you're a good lawyer, too.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Yeah. No, I do. I do. And it's funny because we're two sides in this place, Republicans and Democrats, just like we are in this country, and yet, we're not in a courtroom. We're not in a courtroom. We're in a place where transparency is the most important, number one issue, that those people outside of this building, those people in that gallery, and everybody watching on TV thinks that Government should be transparent, but the analysis, the reports, the EI, and the, oh goodness, what was it called -- the RPV, The Racial Polarized Voting Analysis.

SENATOR KING: Yes, that's part of Gingles analysis.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Somewhere -- part of Gingles, you're right. Your lawyers did it, and yet there's no access to it by the general public, the people, or even your own colleagues in this room, because why? Are we in a courtroom? You don't want to be transparent to people? I thought you were -- I thought you were going to be accountable to us.

SENATOR KING: You know, I'm very confident that a lot of parties have done analysis and analysis of this map, and I have yet in hearing or anywhere else had anyone present me with any tangible data suggesting that this map is not legal. I want to say that again. We've had hearings; this

map has been out there. Its predecessors have been out there. I have yet to have anyone present me with any tangible data that this map is not legal. Period.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Well, let me --

SENATOR KING: And I suspect, if you had it, you you would have come to the committee and presented it.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Well, let me give you some tangible data. I'm glad you mentioned it. When we talked about coalition districts, I brought up percentages. Everybody in this room has brought up percentages, and you claim the same ignorance, and I get it. So now you've looked at racial data, even though you don't want to -- you say you don't. Or you say you have not looked at the racial data, I get that. But did you know that several of the districts in HB-4 are just barely majorities of racial minorities? Can we at least establish that?

SENATOR KING: I'm taking you at your word. I haven't looked at the data.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Most, just a fraction of a percentage beyond a majority, and I'm going to go through those numbers because, all right, listen, maybe we will be in a courtroom someday. Maybe someone does need to hear the evidence. Or maybe our constituents, the ones that you don't want to be transparent with, maybe they can hear it now. CD-9 is 50.3 Hispanic, H-CVAP. CD-30 has 50.2 Black CVAP.

CD-18 has 50.5 Black CVAP. CD-35 has 51.6 H-CVAP. More than a fraction, but just beyond a majority.

What is the likelihood? Senator, you're a smart man. You're a good lawyer. You're accountable and you're truthful to the people of the State of Texas, even though you don't want to show them all the analysis that we've just talked about. What is the likelihood of increasing these seats to just a fraction beyond a majority of one race, if race was not considered?

SENATOR KING: Senator, I can't answer something I don't know. All I'm telling you, again, is that -- now if you're alleging those districts looked packed. It's hard to envision that 50 point something percent is a packed district, but aside from that, all I can tell you is I am absolutely convinced that this map is legal, and I have had no one present any tangible data to me -- any analysis otherwise.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: My friend, I'm suggesting those were cracked, not packed.

SENATOR KING: Well, if you're suggesting they're cracked --

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Look, I'm not suggesting it. The numbers suggest it, my friend.

SENATOR KING: I don't know how to answer a question that I've answered about 45 - 50 times today.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Yeah, I get it.

SENATOR KING: I don't know how else to say it.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: I know what your answer was.

SENATOR KING: I have not looked at racial data. I have not taken that into consideration.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Not taken into consideration because you don't want to.

SENATOR KING: And, Senator, I'm not going to take it into consideration.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Yeah.

SENATOR KING: I just think that's inappropriate.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Because you don't know, because other people did it, and you don't know the map makers. Even though Joan Huffman knew the map makers. Even though she talked to the map makers. I get it. Let's move on. We're wrapping up soon.

Before you filed the Congressional map in the first called session, had you spoken with anyone in the Trump administration about the possibility of seeking changes to the Congressional maps?

SENATOR KING: I have not spoken with anyone in the Trump administration.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: The Attorney General's Office? Pam Bondi's office?

SENATOR KING: I have not spoken with anyone in

the DOJ.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: The Texas Attorney General's Office?

SENATOR KING: I have conferred with the Texas Attorney General's Office.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Who have you talked to there?

SENATOR KING: I'd have to go back and look at my notes to get names. I've -- in fact, actually, I'm not sure I have talked to anybody directly since then, since this session began.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Either you have or you haven't, man.

SENATOR KING: I know, but look --

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: You said you did.

SENATOR KING: Please understand, during -- when the letter came out, and I was handling redistricting, I requested a copy of their response. I think -- I'm trying to think back, excuse me. I know I or my office conferred with them, but I wanted to see a copy of their response. I wanted their opinion on the letter, but in terms of any counsel with regard to this map, the districts, whether it's legal, they have not provided any advice, any counsel at all.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: So who did you speak to over there?

SENATOR KING: If you'll give me a few minutes,

I'll ask my staff. It was probably -- it was certainly the litigation team that's on the El Paso trial --

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Mr. President, I --

SENATOR KING: -- because they were responding to the letter, --

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: -- I'm glad to take a --

SENATOR KING: -- and I'll just be honest. I don't know the names right now.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Mr. President, I'm glad to take a 30-second, 1-minute, 2-minute break so he can ask his staff. He's suggested it.

SENATOR KING: Well, Mr. President, all he needs to know is it's the litigation team that is handling the El Paso case. There's no need to break. But when the DOJ letter came out, we conferred with their office to get a copy of their response. I read their response. I don't think I've talked to anyone over there since then.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: But you have spoken to somebody. The El Paso team is what -- that's your answer today?

SENATOR KING: But nothing to do with this map. Nothing to do with HB-4. Nothing to do with our redistricting process.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Okay. So when we ask them, if they're asked in a deposition, under oath, 'cause you'll be

deposed under oath. You're an attorney, you know what that means. Will that be your same answer? Is this the El Paso team, or we going -- will that litigation?

SENATOR KING: Well, I think that's all it would -- that's the only ones it could have been. I don't --

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: You forgot?

SENATOR KING: Well, no. It's not a matter of forgetting. It was a very inconsequential discussion.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: All right. Okay. Did you speak with Steven Miller?

SENATOR KING: I'll be honest with you; I don't remember their names. I'm sorry.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Did you speak with Steven Miller with the White House?

SENATOR KING: Oh, that Steven Miller. Oh no, I haven't talked to anybody in the White House.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Did you speak with the Vice President or the President?

SENATOR KING: I have not talked to anybody in the administration.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Did you consult with any Congressional representatives before filing? If so, which ones?

SENATOR KING: I have not had any discussions about this map with any Congressional Members.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Did you talk to Mike McCaul? Careful.

SENATOR KING: Did you just say be careful?

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Yeah. Did you talk to Mike McCaul?

SENATOR KING: No, but I don't need to be reminded to be careful, Senator. That's a little bit beneath you. I have not talked to Michael McCaul.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: You give me answers where you tell me, yes, I spoke to someone at the AG's office, and then you turn around and say, well, maybe not.

SENATOR KING: Well, I'm trying to remember conversations over the last eight weeks, and I've talked to a lot of people, and I'm trying to answer you honestly.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: You know what, you're right. Let me apologize to you because I apologize to people when I --

SENATOR KING: But I have not talked to Michael McCaul.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Let me apologize to you. You're right. That was beyond the pale. Well, maybe that's a little too much, but I do apologize. Did you speak to Adam Kincaid at all?

SENATOR KING: Yes.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: You did speak with Adam

Kincaid? Tell us about what that conversation was like.

SENATOR KING: I've talked to Adam Kincaid three times in the last probably couple of months --

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: The what? I don't mean to interrupt. The last time I asked you this, you said you did not speak to Adam Kincaid, so now you did.

SENATOR KING: No. No.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Yeah, you did.

SENATOR KING: No. No. No. No. We haven't talked about this map in detail. What I -- I spoke to Adam Kincaid when all the rumors first started. Again, I'm trying to remember correctly, but as I recall - to the best of my recollection -- the first time I talked to Adam Kincaid, and I had known him years ago, is we'd spoken on a panel or two together. When the media first started discussing redistricting, I had called him and asked him if he was involved in that process, and he said he was.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: When was that conversation?

SENATOR KING: It was before this committee was appointed.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Two months ago?

SENATOR KING: Yeah. Probably. Whenever it all started first coming out on TV. Then -- and we were all trying to figure out if there was going to be a special session and all that, and if it was really for real something

going on.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Who is we? You and him?

SENATOR KING: Yeah. I just called him. I was kind of surprised I had his mobile number, actually, but I did. I ran into him at ALEC.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Time out. I apologize. You have his mobile number. Do you guys text?

SENATOR KING: Not that I recall.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Okay. I was just asking. Sorry, go ahead. So the second time you ran --

SENATOR KING: I ran into him at the ALEC Annual Conference this summer.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: How'd that go?

SENATOR KING: We visited a few minutes. I specifically told him, "Don't tell me anything you're doing with regard to map drawing. Don't tell me about the details of any map if you're involved in it."

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Okay. So, so, so you knew that he was doing the map drawing.

SENATOR KING: Yes.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: But earlier, you said you didn't know the map drawers.

SENATOR KING: I knew that he was involved in the redistricting process, and I called him that first time and said, "Hey, are you involved in all of this? Is this for

real? That they're pushing for redistricting?" Something to that effect.

He said, "Yeah. How are you doing? Haven't talked to you in years. See you later.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: All right.

SENATOR KING: Then we talked at ALEC, and we sat down for a few minutes, and I specifically told him, "Don't tell me anything about the maps you're drawing. I don't want to discuss that."

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: I'll give you the benefit of the doubt. Earlier, when you said you didn't know the map drawers, that was just, you now remembered that you spoke --

SENATOR KING: Yeah.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Okay. So Adam is a map drawer. Okay. We got that now.

SENATOR KING: Yeah. He's CEO or President or something of the --

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Republican Redistricting Trust.

SENATOR KING: Yeah. You came up with the correct name for it the other day, or Miles did -- National Republican Redistricting Trust.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: There you go.

SENATOR KING: It's been around a long time.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Third conversation, which one

was that?

SENATOR KING: Adam called me this last Monday --

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Last Monday, which would have been, I don't know, the 14th or so --

SENATOR KING: Whatever day it was.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Wait. Hold on. Last Monday, like this very last Monday?

SENATOR KING: Yeah.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Okay.

SENATOR KING: Yeah. He called me and asked me if I was aware that the House was going to be putting out a map that had some changes from the original HB-4, and I said, "No, I wasn't."

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Okay. So you heard from Adam about the changes.

SENATOR KING: Yeah. He was actually trying to get in touch with a House member. He was looking for someone that might have some --

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: So earlier, when someone was asking you, you said that you didn't know about the changes that the map -- that the House was doing that, and you didn't know about them, but now, we now know it's Adam that told you about the map changes on Monday. Maybe Adam --

SENATOR KING: Yes. We found out at first when our legal counsel contacted my chief of staff, and then about

the same time, I received a call from Adam Kincaid --

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Anybody on your staff --

SENATOR KING: -- for a contact with someone, and that's when I found out that. It was probably 1:30 or 2 on Monday.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Okay. All right. Fair enough. Anything else happen in that conversation on Monday?

SENATOR KING: No.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Okay. Who in your staff -- your chief of staff talked to Adam at any time, to your knowledge?

SENATOR KING: Not that I'm aware of. I don't know if they've ever met.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Anybody in your staff talk to Adam Kincaid or his staff?

SENATOR KING: Not that I'm aware of.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Anybody in your staff, to your knowledge, talk to anybody in the White House?

SENATOR KING: They have not.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: They have not. Okay. There were some changes between the filed version of HB-4 and the committee sub.

SENATOR KING: As happens on almost every bill that's filed in the legislature.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: My understanding of that is

those changes were made at the behest of incumbent congress people. Is that accurate?

SENATOR KING: I do not know.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Is that what was part of the discussion on Monday, August 18th?

SENATOR KING: I do not know. It looks pretty diverse to me because it affects HB-9 and made HB-9 a better-performing Republican district. It fixes a problem in East Texas that Senator Hall and I assume somebody in the House probably was concerned about, and it fixes a concern that was raised by Senator Blanco and some El Paso witnesses with regard to Fort Bliss. So I'm assuming that that came out of a combination of discussions in the House with the bill author, interested parties, and their Counsel.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: But those "changes to the map", and I put that in quotes, that Adam called you about on August 18th, he didn't make any reference about Congress people wanting those changes?

SENATOR KING: We did not go into a detailed discussion about anything.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Did you take any changes that had been proposed by Congressman Al Green?

SENATOR KING: We did not go into detailed discussions about the new map.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: No, no, no, I know. I'm

asking you did you take any changes that had been proposed by Congressman Al Green?

SENATOR KING: I haven't seen any changes that have been proposed by Congressman Al Green.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Okay. So they never requested anything of your office, one way or another, that you're knowledgeable about?

SENATOR KING: He testified in, I think, the first hearing we had in the first session, as to his opposition to any redistricting.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: And Congressman Casar?

SENATOR KING: Sorry, who?

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Congressman Casar from here in Travis.

SENATOR KING: I don't believe he testified.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Okay. I'll submit to you that he did. Did you make any of the changes that he suggested?

SENATOR KING: I haven't had any changes requested by any Congressional Members, Republican or Democrat.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: We went over this before, and if a court decides that there was some racial considerations that were wrongly made, whether here by you or your staff or over there in the House of Representatives, I think Representative -- oh gosh, my old desk mate, Hunter -- He's acknowledged that perhaps there were.

If there's a legal problem with this bill, it's because you made a mistake or because they made a mistake. I mean, you're accountable. We talked about that. In other words, are you responsible for this bill?

SENATOR KING: It is a bill that I filed.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: If the court finds that it's illegal to pack African Americans into CD-30 or CD-18, because they're already performing African American districts, then you are responsible for that choice, correct?

SENATOR KING: I can't respond to hypotheticals. I don't think they will find that this map violates the law.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: President, if you'll just indulge me for a moment while I look at my notes.

As I skip around, you know we do this. You've done this when you're in trial, and you have, you know, you have the notes, and when you're in law school, you take your big yellow pad? Or at least this is the way that I do it, the way I kind of think. I know most people think I don't. I take a pad and I do a line in the middle, do you do that?

SENATOR KING: No.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Yeah, I do answers on one side from the witness. Then my themes on the other side, and so then I start jumping around all over the place, and I was just jumping around quite a bit here. But there's something very important that's near and dear to my heart in my

district. Under the current map, is all of Maverick County currently in one district? 2021 maps.

SENATOR KING: I would have to look at the map. If you want, we can get it out.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: I would like you to, yes.

SENATOR KING: Okay. Which CD district is that?

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Oh, let's see. Currently it's 23. It is going to be proposed for -- to be split up between 23 and 28.

SENATOR KING: All right. So you're talking about CD-23.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Yes, sir.

SENATOR KING: Correct?

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Current 2021 maps.

SENATOR KING: And under the existing map --

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Maverick, just so you know, is down on the border, next to --

SENATOR KING: Yeah, I know where it's at, right at Eagle Pass.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Yes, sir.

SENATOR KING: Maverick is divided in Plan C 2333, which is HB-4, that's before us, and it's divided, looks like right about at just south of Eagle Pass, maybe?

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Yeah. It is. You're right. It's divided. What was the consideration for dividing it?

SENATOR KING: Looking at 28 next to it, and the fact that they were trying to make efforts to make 28 more compact, I would suspect it was just a population equalization.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Historically, Maverick County has been kept whole in Congressional maps for well over 100 years. Would that surprise you?

SENATOR KING: No. Generally, the smaller population counties historically are not divided, but as they grow in population, it just kind of happens more and more often.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: And since you didn't make this decision, I suppose. You said the map makers made the decision, of course, the map makers you didn't talk to. How do you think they decided to split Maverick? What was the rationale for it?

SENATOR KING: Well, my guess is that it was, I mean, just looking at it, 28 is more compact than it is today. 28, in the old map, goes way up north into New Braunfels area. In this map, it doesn't go as -- in HB4, it doesn't go as far north. My suspicion is that it's an effort to make it more compact, and splitting Eagle Pass was probably -- I'm sorry, splitting Maverick was probably just a population rounding, and in fact, did you notice also they brought up -- what county is that? With (indiscernible)

Springs, (indiscernible) County? That's -- was brought into 28 as well, so I'm assuming it was just a -- probably just a population equalization.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Okay. All right. So in 2006, after a mid-decade redistricting, also by the way with a corn break, when this legislature split Webb County, that's the adjacent county,

SENATOR KING: Are you talking about in 2003?

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Yes. You're right. How did the Supreme Court -- well, 2003, the Supreme Court decision came down in 2006. How did they treat the split of Webb County?

SENATOR KING: You know, I'm sorry. I don't remember the details. I -- if I remember correctly, Henry Benia's district was ordered changed by the court.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Yeah. The court said --

SENATOR KING: And to be honest, that's all I remember because, like you said, that's 20 years ago.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Yeah. The United States Supreme Court said the District 23 Latino voters were poised to elect their candidate of choice. They're becoming more politically active with a mark in continuous rise in Spanish surname voter registration. In successive elections, Latinos reverting against voting in greater numbers, and in 2002, they almost ousted him.

Webb County in particular, with a 94 percent Latino population, spurred the incumbent near defeat with dramatically increased turnout in 2002. They go on, but yet, the people that drew this map, that you've not met, that you've not talked to other -- well, that's not true. That's not true. We now know that you've talked to Adam Kincaid three times.

SENATOR KING: There's not a "We now know."

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: No, you can laugh all you want --

SENATOR KING: I've mentioned in the past that I knew Adam Kincaid.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: You can laugh all you want. You've been asked by a lot of people in this room, and they talked --

SENATOR KING: Senator, you're getting way out of line.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: I'm not out of line.

SENATOR KING: No, you're getting way out of line.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: I am not getting way out of line.

SENATOR KING: You haven't been in those committee hearings. You haven't seen or heard what's been stated in those committee hearings.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: It's 2000 --

SENATOR KING: You've said that yourself.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: It's 2025. I can watch you on TV, and by the way, I have.

MR. PRESIDENT: Members, if we can have order and ask the question, and then answer the question. Don't talk over each other if you please.

Senator King, you have the floor.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Let me ask you this as my last question. Were you aware that you split up the Kickapoo Tribe? Were you aware of that?

SENATOR KING: No.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Are you aware that there's another tribe in West Texas, the Tiguas?

SENATOR KING: Yes.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Were you aware that you might have split up Members of their population as well?

SENATOR KING: Are you aware of all the counties that are split up in the current map in North Texas?

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Oh, I'm aware that --

SENATOR KING: My point is there are --

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: I'm aware that not only did you do that. I'm aware that this map splits up 444 voter precincts at the bloc level solely, solely to get at racial bias. That's what I'm aware of.

Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR KING: Mr. President?

MR. PRESIDENT: Senator King, you're recognized.

SENATOR KING: This map does not violate the VRA or any other legal requirements. Every redistricting map in place today for the State of Texas breaks up voting precincts, divides counties; that's what has to happen when you have rural, urban, and suburban districts. There's nothing racial in the construction of this map.

Thank you, Mr. President.

MR. PRESIDENT: Members of Senate will stand at ease for five minutes.

(Recess taken.)

MR. PRESIDENT: Senate will come to order. Chair recognizes Senator King.

SENATOR KING: Thank you, Mr. President. And before we go to the next question, I wanted to -- I got some of the information that Senator Gutierrez had requested, and I wanted to go ahead and fully answer his questions.

He asked about the meeting with the Attorney General's office. That was on August the 19th. It was -- I was having, to be honest, I was having difficulty finding a law firm at that time that didn't have conflicts.

And I met with Ryan Kirschner, William -- Will Walls-Dorth, and Kathleen Hunker, and it was for the purpose of asking if they could serve as our legal counsel if they

had the in-house ability to do Gingles and other type of analysis that would be appropriate. They discussed it.

I later got a call from Brent Webster, who said that they've looked in-house and they do not have that expertise and could not represent me. So for Senator Gutierrez, that was on August the 19th. The -- with regard to his questions about Adam Kincaid and his suggestion that I haven't been up front about that.

Everybody has known that Adam Kincaid has been involved in the redistricting process since this began, and in fact, the committee had considered a subpoena to bring him to testify, and I sent a formal letter from the committee to Mr. Kincaid inviting him to testify. He has been involved throughout this process. I just don't know the extent to which he has been involved.

I know he has been involved in some of the early map drawing. I don't know what role he played in the changes between HB-4 and the committee substitute that was passed out as HB-4. So everyone knows, Senator, that he has been involved in this from the beginning. That has been discussed and brought up in committee. I have sent him a letter myself inviting him to testify before the committee.

There's nothing that is not transparent in this process. If you want to know what his specific roles have been, you probably need to have asked the House about that

during their committees or had someone ask it in their floor debate. I do not know the specifics of his involvement. I just want to clarify that.

So thank you. Oh, I said August 19th. I meant July 19th. I'm sorry. My apologies. Thank you, Senator.

MR. PRESIDENT: Senator Gutierrez, what purpose?

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: Well, and I don't want to belabor your ending points here, I just have one question since he's brought --

MR. PRESIDENT: Question for --

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: -- back this information.

MR. PRESIDENT: Do you have a question for the author?

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: First off, thank you. Thank you --

MR. PRESIDENT: Senator King, do you yield?

SENATOR KING: Yes.

SENATOR GUTIERREZ: It's really just one question. Thank you, Senator King, and thank you for giving us that information. I don't know because I am fallible, too.

And I -- but I'm pretty sure because it was so important to me then when we laid out the rules on the first special session. I mentioned Mr. Kincaid, and you said you never spoke to him.

Now, I'm going to go back at the record, at the

different times, at the different hearings, where other people have asked you that, but it's just I remember myself specifically asking you about him.

But I thank you now for giving us this information.

MR. PRESIDENT: Senator King.

SENATOR KING: I don't recall that conversation, but if I said that, it would have been an error, and I've mentioned the three times that I've spoken to him.

MR. PRESIDENT: Chair recognizes Senator Eckhardt for what purpose?

SENATOR ECKHARDT: To ask questions of the author.

MR. PRESIDENT: Senator King, do you yield?

SENATOR KING: Certainly.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Thank you so much, Senator King. Back when we were discussing the rules in the first special, we discussed your hiring of a law firm. Do you recall telling this body who you anticipated the law firm would be representing?

SENATOR KING: I probably said they would be representing me, as the Chair of the Committee.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Do you remember answering a question about whether or not the law firm would be representing you as the Chair of the Committee or you as a Republican?

SENATOR KING: I don't recall the question. I know, at that point, we were just setting up the committee, and there were a lot of questions, at that point, but I assume I would have said that the law firm would be representing me. Now, if I wasn't sure at that time, I may have answered a little more vaguely, but that's the way it has worked out. The contract was with me.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: So does BakerHostetler represent you in your individual capacity?

SENATOR KING: No, in my capacity as the Chair of the Committee.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: So you have stated your three goals for this redistricting. Would you again restate them? I know it's repetitive.

SENATOR KING: Sure. The first goal was it'd be a legal map. Be able to withstand legal muster. That it be legal and with regard to all applicable law. Second, it improved the performance. Improve Republican performance of Republican candidates for Congressional office, and the third, which actually came up during the hearings, was that it would become -- improve compactness.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: And of those three goals, rank them in order.

SENATOR KING: Well, I really put them in order then. The first one was that it be legal because there's no

value in doing this if it's not to begin with, and certainly don't want to do anything that's illegal. So the first and most important is that it be legal. The second, that it accomplish the objective of creating some congressional districts that would lean more Republican than the current map, and the third was that would be -- that if we could, try to improve the compactness quota -- quotia.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: And in fact, you can't make this map lean maximally Republican and have it be legal, correct?

SENATOR KING: I actually don't know the answer to that. I haven't tried to do it.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Sure you do.

SENATOR KING: No, I really don't.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Sure, you do.

SENATOR KING: I can only --

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Make the entire map Republican?

SENATOR KING: That would probably be very difficult because we have so many committed Democrat voters.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Could you maximize the number of Republican seats mathematically?

SENATOR KING: What do you mean by maximize?

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Well, could you take the voting age population, and look at just the election results, and maximize your Republican seats? Mathematically?

SENATOR KING: You could probably try to create more seats that lean Republican, but because we have a large number of Democrat voters in this State, you would probably make those new districts thinner and thinner and thinner, and it would be less likely that they would actually elect a Republican.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: But if you were to mathematically maximize your number of Republican seats, you would almost certainly run afoul of the Voting Rights Act, correct?

SENATOR KING: I've never thought about that. I don't know how to -- I don't know how to create any more Republican seats without making the seats we have drawn. These are very -- these five new seats, these are very competitive seats. I'm not sure a Republican is going to win them.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: And we're going to talk about how competitive those seats are. So, it's your --

SENATOR KING: If you tried to make it ten, they'd be thinner.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: I'm asking the questions, so --

SENATOR KING: You're right. You're asking them, but I'm trying to answer them, so --

SENATOR ECKHARDT: I don't think it was responsive for you to tell me how many competitive seats there are.

What I asked you was, you could maximize the number of Republican seats mathematically, but you are constrained by the Voting Rights Act in doing so, correct?

SENATOR KING: I've actually never thought through that. I'm not sure that's a valid question. I don't know the answer to that hypothetical.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: It is your contention that the 2021 maps that are currently in litigation are legal under the VRA, correct?

SENATOR KING: I haven't personally seen anything that suggests otherwise.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Why didn't you use the same law firm that Senator Huffman used in drawing those maps, which you have not seen any reason to believe are infirm under the Voting Rights Act?

SENATOR KING: Which law firm was that?

SENATOR ECKHARDT: I don't recall, actually. But it was not BakerHostetler.

SENATOR KING: We interviewed a number of them that -- and they'd already been hired by other parties; the House and others, and I don't know who she -- I don't know whether I interviewed who she used or not.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: It never crossed your mind, though, to use the same law firm that drew the maps that you believe are not questionable under the VRA?

SENATOR KING: I know that the Attorney General's Office did more of an analytical process, did more of a legal assist previously, because they had different staff. And I believe those were involved in the 2021 process. I know I was looking for a firm that could do everything. That could provide the legal counsel, as well as to do the statistical of the Gingles analysis and that type of thing, and we -- I interviewed a number of firms.

I actually thought I had hired one at one point, and then they backed out because we weren't going -- couldn't -- the funding we never got to agreement on that. There was another one, a conflict arose at the last minute. Then another one a conflict arose. And because, interestingly, they had at one time done some work for the Redistricting Trust. And so, I mean, it's a pretty small universe. And then we found this wonderful firm. They had just finished a case. We were very fortunate to have got them when we did.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Now you have testified that you did not -- well, actually, you just testified in your rehabilitation that you had spoken with the Attorney General's Office in July -- July 19th, looking for in-house counsel, but that they had responded that they could not represent you.

SENATOR KING: No, that's not correct. I went to them because I was having difficulty finding a firm, and I

know that in previous cycles they had provided the Gingles analysis and things like that, and so in trying to narrow down what I might need from a law firm, I spoke with them and said, "Can you provide those services?"

They have, as you know, a lot of -- they've got kind of a new team over there. They got back with me later and said we do -- we no longer have anyone in-house who can provide those type of services.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Did you ever ask for the Attorney General's analysis of either the 2021 map or either of the two maps that had been produced in this mid-decade redistricting?

SENATOR KING: No. We did request -- at the committee's request, we did ask for the Attorney General's Office to send us all the pleadings and all the court documents from the El Paso trial, and that was -- we got it actually that day as one of the early hearings, and we distributed it to all the committee Members.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Did you ask for the Attorney General's RPVA analysis?

SENATOR KING: I don't recall. I know we just asked for all the court filings on the El Paso case. And that was at the request of one of the Democrat Members of the committee.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Did you ask for the ecological

inference analysis? The regression.

SENATOR KING: I do not know.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: But you're aware that our PVA and EI are standard analyses.

SENATOR KING: And that may have been part of what they produced for us, I don't know. It was a pretty big file. It was a digital file they transmitted.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: So you previously testified that you don't know who drew this map that is before us today.

SENATOR KING: No. I said that I know that Adam Kincaid has been involved in the process throughout. I don't know at all times to what extent he was involved in it. I know that the House made some changes. You'd have to ask them who all drew up those changes. I'm assuming some of them were in-house because they were local, they were El Paso and Navarro changes. But I think that's an accurate and thorough answer.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: So those are assumptions you are comfortable with making?

SENATOR KING: Well, yes. I'm interested in the final product.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Okay. So now that, and, of course, Senator Gutierrez is a tough act to follow after he interrogates you and finds out that you've spoken to Kincaid

three times as recently as Monday.

SENATOR KING: Well, it wasn't anything big to find out. He just had to ask.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: I'm so glad that he asked again because we've got a significantly different answer than we've gotten in the past.

SENATOR KING: No, I don't believe that's correct.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: So, in your discussions with Adam Kincaid or anyone else who was involved in drawing the maps, what data did they use to constrain their Republican performance analysis?

SENATOR KING: I haven't asked that question.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: What data did they look at with regard to their analysis?

SENATOR KING: I haven't asked that question, either.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: What data was on their computer screen as they considered different lines?

SENATOR KING: I wasn't there. I have no idea.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Did your lawyer interview the map drawer with regard to what data constraints they were utilizing?

SENATOR KING: Not to my knowledge. I don't know.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Did your lawyer discuss with the map drawer the map drawer's goals with regard to the

constraints?

SENATOR KING: I've never asked that question. I don't know.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: And what data did they use to achieve those goals?

SENATOR KING: Did who use?

SENATOR ECKHARDT: The map drawer.

SENATOR KING: I don't know the answer to that.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Did you tell your law firm that your three goals were Republican performance, legality, and compactness, or did they tell you those were the goals?

SENATOR KING: I told them that those were my goals.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: How did you determine that the goal of Republican performance had been met?

SENATOR KING: When I reviewed HB-4 and it had five new districts that leaned Republican, and it didn't lean a great distance Republican, but leaned Republican. I considered that to be a worthy goal.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: So the five seats was the goal that was set for you, yes?

SENATOR KING: Nobody has ever told me, Phil, we want to get x-number of seats. Ever.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Did you ever read in the newspaper that Donald Trump had a goal of getting five new

Republican seats out of the Texas map?

SENATOR KING: I am aware of that.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Isn't it a coincidence that it would be his goal and your goal to get exactly five?

SENATOR KING: All I can tell you is that I have not talked to the President or anybody in his administration. When I looked at HB-5, my personal conclusion was, as I looked at the partisan performance of both parties, I would have been concerned to try to take it any thinner in creating additional districts.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: So, how did you determine that your goal, that the map was legal, was met?

SENATOR KING: Because I employed counsel that we had a lot of confidence in, based on their experience. After interviews with them, after looking at their teams' resumes, looking at all they had done, I felt like I could have complete confidence in them. And I asked them to look at each map that we were looking at as Session 1 and 2 progressed, and tell me whether or not they believed that it met all requirements of the law. And I have relied upon that counsel.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: So you are relying upon their word that the map is legal?

SENATOR KING: As any attorney's opinion, I'm relying upon their legal opinion.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: And how did you determine that the goal of compactness was met?

SENATOR KING: Well, compactness is never completely met because of the size of our state and the fact that we have so many dense urban areas and so many, many rural areas that are not dense.

So you're always going to have maps that are drawn oddly, but there are a couple of well-established measurements for determining compactness, and using those, they determined that several districts in HB-4 were more compact than the same districts under the 2021 map. So that leads me to believe that the map is more compact today than the existing map.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: So did you look at case law for legal tests regarding compactness?

SENATOR KING: Well, I'm aware through counsel of the standard tests that are used for proving up compactness in court, and those are the measures that they used to compare the existing district to the proposed district.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Are you saying that you are relying on their word that the goal of compactness has been met?

SENATOR KING: Yeah. I'm relying on their report to me of their analysis of those districts, and I went over those districts specifically when I was doing the early

layout.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: So I'd like to look at Travis County, just for a moment, because that's the county I know best. You've testified that you didn't look at racial data because you don't think it's appropriate, right?

SENATOR KING: Yes. And because I think that when your goal is partisan performance, that's what you look at. It's just a lot simpler to look at. Where Republicans are and where Democrats are.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: I think you specifically said, though, you didn't believe that looking at racial data was appropriate.

SENATOR KING: No, because it makes things very complex because the law is very complex, and robust, I think is the term I used, and it's very simple to look at what is very well-established protocol for drawing maps, which is partisan performance.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: You also have testified that you didn't look at CVAP, Citizen Voter Age Population.

SENATOR KING: I did not look at those estimates.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: And why did you not look at CVAP?

SENATOR KING: Well, because CVAP is very problematic because it is not a -- it is not true census data. It is an annual estimate, and it is -- we're required

to go -- to draw the maps based on the 2020 Census data.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: So it was your belief that you specifically should not look at CVAP or at racial data, that it would be wrong for you to look at CVAP or racial data?

SENATOR KING: Upon advice of Counsel, yes.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: And this was advice of BakerHostetler. That you should not look at racial data or CVAP.

SENATOR KING: Yes.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: But BakerHostetler looked at racial data and CVAP, right?

SENATOR KING: You have to look at that to make a Gingles analysis and do other determinations.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: So, when they were looking at Republican performance, did they look at Presidential performance or Senatorial U.S. Senate elections performance?

SENATOR KING: I think primarily Presidential.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Did they look at it at the district level, the precinct level, or the census tract level?

SENATOR KING: Really, I think they looked at the voting results primarily for the 2024 election.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: But did they look at the voting results at the district level, the precinct level, or the census tract level, or all three?

SENATOR KING: I don't know the answer to that.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Did they look at the racial demography of the results by district, precinct, or census?

SENATOR KING: I don't know the answer to that.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Now, you have presumed that some changes were made between Hunter's initial map and the next map, which you adopted, correct?

SENATOR KING: Well, I'm not presuming. It's self-evident. The first map is different from the second map.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: But you've made some presumptions as to why?

SENATOR KING: Yes. I haven't inquired of Chairman Hunter as to why, but I'm guessing they had somebody that wanted the El Paso change, as we had already told them we were fine with. They wanted -- somebody wanted the Navarro change. I'm assuming over there, maybe Cody Harris, it's his district, I think.

And all I can tell you is that CD-9 performs as a Republican district better now than it did under the filed HB-4.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: And you feel comfortable making those presumptions as to why the map changed?

SENATOR KING: I don't have to make any presumptions. I'm just looking at the map that was sent over

by the House and evaluating it, and it meets all three of my goals: that it be legal, that it hopefully elect more Republicans, and that it improve compactness. I don't have to make any assumptions, presumptions, or guesses or anything. I can look at the map, and the map speaks for itself.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: But you have made presumptions about why it changed, and you're comfortable with that?

SENATOR KING: Well, I mean, common sense tells you if -- that since we had had testimony about moving Bliss back into 16, they probably had to, and since Bob Hall had, at one time, even prepared a floor amendment, to combine Navarro. Cody Harris or somebody was probably doing the same thing that represents East Texas, so that's -- that's just kind of common sense.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: I agree.

SENATOR KING: And looking at CD-9's improved performance, I'm assuming that someone looked at it and thought, "Hey, we can make it a better Republican performing district if we move it into Liberty County."

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Isn't it also common sense to presume that race was a necessary constraint in drawing these maps?

SENATOR KING: I think, well, without question, compliance with the VRA and other and the Constitution as a

whole, was an overriding requirement for creating a legal map.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: What was the specific purpose in creating a CD-35 with a Hispanic citizen voting age population of 51.6 percent?

SENATOR KING: I haven't looked at that racial data, so I can't answer that.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Sure, you can. What was the purpose of a Hispanic district at 51.6 percent?

SENATOR KING: I've already answered that.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Is your answer that you don't know?

SENATOR KING: Yes.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: So you don't know why the population, the Hispanic population, in that district, which is currently at higher than 51.6 percent, went down to 51.6?

SENATOR KING: No. I haven't looked at any racial data.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: But your law firm and whoever draw -- drew the map did, correct?

SENATOR KING: They did whatever was appropriate to determine if the map complied with the VRA and other applicable law.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: So your testimony is it would not be appropriate for you to look at race, but it was

appropriate for the law firm and the map drawer to look at race?

SENATOR KING: To be able to report to me that the map would withstand court review, it would have been necessary for them to do a Gingles and other similar analyses.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: What role did the metric of Hispanic Citizen Voting Age Population play in the creation of this new CD-35?

SENATOR KING: Again, I haven't looked at racial data. I can't answer that.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: The goal, though, was to make CD-35 lean Republican, correct?

SENATOR KING: Correct.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: So why not make it lean Republican by 20 points? Because you could.

SENATOR KING: Well, I don't know if you could or not.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Sure, you could.

SENATOR KING: Well, you're guessing now, too.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: No, actually, I'm not. Why didn't you make it lean more Republican? What made you stop at 51.6 percent Hispanic?

SENATOR KING: Again, I haven't drawn this map. I have adopted this map as mine when it came over from the

House as passed. It meets my three goals. I'm presenting it to the Body. It's the Body's choice whether or not this becomes law. Whether or not it becomes the next map. It's a decision for the Senate as a whole.

It's my recommendation that this is legal, that it has five seats that now lean significantly more Republican than they did before, and that it also improves compactness. And I think --

SENATOR ECKHARDT: But now you couldn't make CD-35 lean any more Republican because you would have to dismantle a Hispanic opportunity district, correct?

SENATOR KING: I haven't looked at that. I don't know.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Well then, why didn't you make it lean more Republican?

SENATOR KING: Well, because I'm satisfied with the way the map is today. I am also cognizant of the limited amount of time that we have in special sessions. And it's not prudent on my part to try to create amendments and then begin the process of going back and forth in conference committees when we're on such a short timetable.

I believe this is an excellent map for the goals of legality, of partisanship performance, and the added benefit, which I wasn't initially pursuing, of making it a little bit more compact. And it's -- and to me it is a

reasonable measure to recommend to the Senate today that they approve this map.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Why can't you admit that making CD-35 more Republican would have dismantled the appearance of a Hispanic opportunity district? You could not take it below 51 percent, could you?

SENATOR KING: I can't -- honestly, Senator, can't answer that without looking at racial data, and I haven't looked at any racial data.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: And why didn't you look at racial data? Because you were told not to, right? That was your testimony.

SENATOR KING: No. Nobody has told me not to.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Actually, just moments ago, probably --

SENATOR KING: No.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: -- five minutes ago, --

SENATOR KING: No.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: -- you said that you were counseled not to look at racial data.

SENATOR KING: No. The advice of counsel was that it's not necessary --

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Not necessary for you, but it was necessary for them --

SENATOR KING: Let me finish, please. The advice

of Counsel was -- which -- that it's not necessary for me to look at racial data to determine that this map will perform better for Republicans.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Because your metric is five more seats. That's your metric for showing that it performs better for Republicans.

SENATOR KING: Well, I would prefer it had seven, but I think five is very reasonable at this point in the process.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: And if you had gone for seven, you would have mathematically violated the Voting Rights Act because you would have dismantled minority opportunity districts to do it, correct?

SENATOR KING: I have no idea if that's true. Common sense tells me if I would go mathematically, I'm probably going to be thinning out some other Republican districts.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: That, too. Good point.

SENATOR KING: But I haven't tried to draw a map with seven or ten or eight Republican districts in it. This map has been presented by the House. I think it's a good map. I've been told it's legal. I've been -- I've looked at the data with regard to political performance. I think those five seats that we would have a reasonable chance of prevailing as Republicans in them, and I think it's more

compact.

And so, I think it's a good map. I haven't -- I'm not a redistricting lawyer, but I have found no need throughout this entire process from the first day I was asked if I would chair the committee. I have found no need to look at racial data. I have had no desire to look at racial data.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: And it's actually been --

SENATOR KING: All I've wanted to do is to make sure that any map I recommended was legal.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Again, you do not find it appropriate for you to look at racial data, but you recognize that your law firm and the map drawer had to look at racial data in order to analyze under Gingles?

SENATOR KING: Yes.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Now, with regard to compactness. You are aware that about a third of Travis County's population is Latino, correct?

SENATOR KING: I have not looked at that, but I certainly take your word.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: And you're aware that Travis County, on the whole, is just under 50 percent White population, correct?

SENATOR KING: If you say so, then it certainly is.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: And that it has historic

communities of both Latino and Black citizenry in its Eastern edge and some coalition and cross-over district precincts in its northern edge, correct?

SENATOR KING: I'm not aware of that, but if you say so, I'll take your word.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Do you consider it compact that Round Rock is in a district that is thin to grab Round Rock and then goes all the way to Johnson County, just south of Tarrant County?

SENATOR KING: Well, as I said, throughout the entire state of Texas, there are districts that pick up -- I've got --

SENATOR ECKHARDT: You can see it right here. It is a tiny little tail. A tiny little sliver to pick up Round Rock, and then goes all the way up to just south of Tarrant County. Does that look compact to you? That tiny little sliver up there? That's the pink sliver.

SENATOR KING: There are --

SENATOR ECKHARDT: That grabs Cedar Park and Round Rock and then goes up to just south of Tarrant County.

SENATOR KING: I see that, and I don't know why that sliver's there. I don't know if it's a particular community or something of that nature. I did not draw the map. I am not the map drawer. But what I will tell you is, if you look at the current map, including the House and

Senate maps, all across the State, you find where you have to reach into urban areas, grab population, and move those into more urban and suburban areas to get the population that's required for one person/one vote and --

SENATOR ECKHARDT: And would you think that the more racially diverse population, paired with the majority White rural population, is the reason for that?

SENATOR KING: Again, I'm not the map drawer, and I have not looked at any racial data. You're asking me questions that I can't answer.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Because you have chosen not to look at the data that was available to you, correct?

SENATOR KING: Because my goal was to draw a map that elected more Republicans and was legal, and I believe this map meets both of those goals.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: What about this next little sliver underneath here? This little thin blue line? That picks up Pflugerville, also a just barely or if just under White population. Pflugerville's actually, arguably, more racially diverse than the city of Austin. Its district, which is CD-11, goes all the way out to Midland.

Would you consider that compact?

SENATOR KING: Again, you can find examples of difficulty in compiling population in districts all across this state. And I suggest you could go page to page, and you

can find things to point out, but at the end of the day, when roughly only about 14 percent of Texans live West of I-35, and that includes the large cities like Wichita Falls and Amarillo and Lubbock and Midland/Odessa and even El Paso, which is a million people for the county. And Abilene, even with large cities like that and San Angelo, it's only about 14 percent of the population.

And then east of I-35, is only about 8 1/2 or 9 percent of the state population, and the rest of it is meted to settle within that triangle that I-35/45 triangle. And so when you've got to put a million people together for a Senate seat or 190 some thousand for a House seat or 766,000 for a U.S. Congressional seat, you have no choice but to combine rural and suburban and urban areas.

And it is, in fact, the rare exception when a congressional seat or a senate seat is wholly contained in an urban area. In North Texas, at least on the Tarrant County side, there's only one, and that's -- actually, there's none that are congressional districts. There is one senate district. It is -- you have to reach out into those areas.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Are you done with your dissertation?

SENATOR KING: No. I'm done with my answer.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: So, let's talk about the traditional African American settlement area of Travis

County, which is the Eastern side of Travis County. Traditional freedmen colonies that go back to the Civil War.

Would you consider it communities -- acknowledging communities of interest and compactness to take a community like Manor or Webberville, for instance? Webberville actually is named for a white doctor who was married to a black woman who moved here to start a freedman's colony. Webberville is now in Congressional District 27 that goes down to Aransas Pass. Is that compact?

SENATOR KING: It is as compact as many, many congressional districts around the state are today.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: But it is Republican performing, isn't it?

SENATOR KING: I'd have to look at -- which district number is it?

SENATOR ECKHARDT: This would be Congressional District 27.

SENATOR KING: I'd have to look and see.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: I can tell you it is Republican performing. Let's go to -- let's go specifically to the issue that you don't feel it's appropriate for you to look at racial data, which is available to you, but your lawyer and the map drawer had to look at racial data, which you agree with, correct?

SENATOR KING: I don't know what the map drawer

looked at.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: You do know that the map drawer looked at racial data.

SENATOR KING: No, you're wanting me to answer you accurately, Senator, and I don't know what they looked at. I know what I have looked at.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: You said that you and your attorneys reviewed these maps in light of Gingles factors, did you not?

SENATOR KING: I said that I instructed my legal counsel to review this map in light of all applicable redistricting law, and Gingles is one of the standard tests, right?

SENATOR ECKHARDT: And you know that Gingles requires an analysis of the racial performance of these districts.

SENATOR KING: Yes.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: So you concede, you must concede, that your lawyers and the map drawer looked at race to draw these maps.

SENATOR KING: I can't testify to what somebody did -- the map drawer -- that, I haven't talked to or asked what they did.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: If you are confident it's legal under Gingles, you must concede that they looked at race.

SENATOR KING: Senator, you're asking me to make jumps that I'm just not going to make. I haven't asked the map drawer --

SENATOR ECKHARDT: You have specified three --

SENATOR KING: Now you're interrupting me.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: -- preconditions that a minority group must prove to succeed on a vote dilution claim.

MR. PRESIDENT: Members, a reminder that this is not a courtroom, and then we ask the questions --

SENATOR ECKHARDT: I am quoting Gingles.

MR. PRESIDENT: If, Senator, Senator --

SENATOR ECKHARDT: I'm not --

MR. PRESIDENT: Senator, one at a time, if you please. Ask the questions and then allow -- the other Senator will respond, and we'll keep it nice and civil.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: First --

MR. PRESIDENT: You're recognized, Senator Eckhardt.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: -- the minority group must be able to demonstrate that it is a sufficiently large and geographically compact to constitute a majority in a reasonably configured single-membered district. Second, the minority group must be able to show that it is politically cohesive, and third, the minority must be able to demonstrate

that the white majority votes sufficiently as a bloc to enable it to defeat the minorities preferred candidate. How would one determine if the Gingles test had been met if the law firm and the map drawer didn't look at race?

SENATOR KING: I'm trying to answer you accurately, and you're asking me to make statements that I don't know. I have no personal knowledge of what -- and I'm assuming there may have been multiple map drawers; I don't know. But I have no personal knowledge of what any of the map drawers looked at. I could guess, but I'm not going to tell you unless I know. I --

SENATOR ECKHARDT: But you have --

SENATOR KING: Please let me finish. I do know that my legal counsel would've had to look at Gingles. You've read through the three elements of Gingles. I do know that they would have had to use that, and the underlying data that goes with that, to be able to come back to me and say that this map is legal.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: So the law firm had to look at race in order to give you an opinion upon which you could rely?

SENATOR KING: They would have had to follow whatever protocol is required by Gingles, which obviously, that includes looking at a broad range of data, and racial is part of it, sure.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Now, you have repeatedly testified, you've been steadfast in saying that you did not look at race, and you did not look at CVAP. The map and the spreadsheets on our desks this morning, when we walked in, includes CVAP, but you didn't look at them?

SENATOR KING: No.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: And you never have looked at CVAP?

SENATOR KING: Never. And I didn't prepare those documents either.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Earlier, you said that Representative Hunter drew the map, and you liked the map, and so you are now sponsoring it.

SENATOR KING: Could you repeat that?

SENATOR ECKHARDT: That Representative Hunter drew the map, that you liked the map -- the new one -- as it was adjusted, and then you adopted it and are sponsoring it today.

SENATOR KING: I don't know if Representative Hunter, I doubt he physically drew the map.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: And you've testified that you didn't see the map that's before us today until the 18th?

SENATOR KING: Say that again.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: You testified earlier today that you had not seen the map that's before us today until it

was made available to the public at the hearing in the House on the 18th?

SENATOR KING: Yes, I actually don't think I -- Yeah, that was the first day it was available, yes.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: And you did not see it before then?

SENATOR KING: No.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Now, you have testified both that --

SENATOR KING: And actually, this isn't testimony; this is Q&A on the Senate floor.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: You have shared with us that your first knowledge of the map that's before us today was when the lawyers in the House sent it to your chief of staff on the 18th.

SENATOR KING: I don't think they sent it. I think that they called my chief and said we just got a call from the House Counsel, and be aware there's going to be an amended map put out.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: And you have also shared with us that Adam called you and said there were differences in the map?

SENATOR KING: Yes. Interestingly, at the same time.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Coincidentally?

SENATOR KING: I have no idea. I just thought it was interesting that he called at the same time because when I hung up, I picked up my phone to call my chief of staff and said, "Are you aware of any new map?" and she said she had just got a call.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Just wanted to give you a heads up?

SENATOR KING: No, he was actually looking for a contact with someone with the House.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Did you watch the House hearing?

SENATOR KING: I listened to a little bit of it, but it was sporadic.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Did you hear the portion where --

SENATOR KING: Back -- let me correct that. I'm not sure I listened to any of the hearing. The floor -- no, the hearing on Monday, when they laid it out, yes. I listened to parts of it.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: And did you listen to any of the floor layout on Wednesday?

SENATOR KING: Very, very little. I was busy both those days, and I just kind of flipped it on a few times and flipped it off.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: During the committee hearing as well as during the floor layout, Representative Hunter

repeatedly refers to the CVAP, the Hispanic CVAP, and the Black CVAP.

SENATOR KING: Okay.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: So it -- is it your testimony that it was not -- is it you're sharing with us, that it's not appropriate for you to look at race data, but it is appropriate for Representative Hunter to look at race data?

SENATOR KING: You know, all I can tell you, it wasn't necessary for me to look at race data to decide whether I wanted to carry this map and whether I thought it was a good map for the State of Texas and whether I thought it was legal. It's not been necessary for me to -- appropriate to -- is another word. It's just not been necessary for me to look at racial data.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: But it was somehow necessary for your colleague in the House to look at it? Representative Hunter?

SENATOR KING: You know, I can't answer for him, and I -- you need to ask him questions like that. But for me, you know, once a map is drawn, I felt like and feel like my job was to make sure it was a legal map. I very simply had our legal counsel review it. They came back and said yes, it is legal. And, you know, looked at what districts it enhanced from a partisan perspective.

It enhances these five, and then, oh by the way,

the changes they made improved compactness.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: How many maps did you ask your law firm to scrub?

SENATOR KING: I looked at each one that the House initially filed.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: How many was that?

SENATOR KING: Oh wow, they filed originally filed HB-4 the first session, and then when they stalled, I filed it as SB-4, same map. And then they filed HB-4 in the second session, and then they filed the committee substitute for HB-4 in the second session, so I guess it was technically three maps.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: So technically, three maps that law -- your law firm needed to take a look at under a Gingles analysis, which by definition requires that they look at race?

SENATOR KING: Yes, I mean, in doing a legal analysis. I mean, the map is drawn. They're going to do -- I've asked them to tell me if it's legal, if it's got any VRA problems or anything else, and they did their analysis, yes.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Now, you had said that you're not an expert in redistricting law, and so you hired an expert in redistricting law. That makes all the sense in the world. You also said it's no different than hiring a real estate lawyer to handle a real estate transaction because

you're not an expert in real estate law, correct??

SENATOR KING: Not maybe one of the best metaphors, but it's what came to mind at the time.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Sure. So if you hire a real estate lawyer and they do something that's illegal, you're liable, aren't you?

SENATOR KING: Not necessarily.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: No. Not necessarily.

SENATOR KING: That's what they have malpractice for.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: But if you have the information available to you and you chose not to look at it?

SENATOR KING: Then I'd be the infraudulent.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Yes.

SENATOR KING: Are you accusing me of being fraudulent?

SENATOR ECKHARDT: What I'm suggesting is that you are willfully not looking at important information about whether this map is a racial gerrymander.

SENATOR KING: And my response is, and it has been all day, that for me this was the simplest process. The House produced a map. I asked our Counsel to look at it and make sure it was a lawful map, and they have reported to me that it is a legal map. And apparently, the House Counsel came to the same conclusion. But now that I know the map is

lawful, does it perform better for Republicans, and it does. And it also helped a little bit with compactness.

Y'all are trying to make complicated what, from my perspective, has been very, very simple. We checked to make sure it was legal; the map that the House sent over. It is. We -- I checked to make sure it performed better for Republicans. It does, and it's more compact.

This has been a very simple process for me, that y'all are trying to make very, very difficult for reasons that I believe have nothing to do with what we're doing here today.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: The law firm represented your goal to get five Republican seats, correct?

SENATOR KING: No. They represented me in my request, and my request was: tell me if this map is legal.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Who represented, who executed, who was your agent to get five Republican seats?

SENATOR KING: I'm sorry. I don't know what you mean by that question.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Well, you've testified that you didn't draw the map. You've testified that you didn't look at the racial data required to make sure that the map met legal muster. You've testified that you were not directly involved in the statistical analysis because it's beyond your capabilities. So you had someone or a firm or people to

execute on the goal of five Republican seats.

SENATOR KING: Senator, I'm sorry, but you see conspiracies and long tales where there are none. This is the Senate --

SENATOR ECKHARDT: I don't think -- you testified that was your goal.

SENATOR KING: No. This is the Senate.

MR. PRESIDENT: Senator Eckhardt, if you would, this is not a trial, again. I'll remind you that this is questions and answers and is not testimony. This is not a courtroom. This is the floor of the Senate, and if you would please refrain from "on testimony" because it's not, and allow him to answer the questions, and he'll respond to yours.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: You have shared with us that your goal was to get five Republican seats.

SENATOR KING: That is not what I've said. I've said my goal was to improve political performance for Republicans so that more Republicans can hopefully be elected. This has been a very simple, non-conspiratorial, non-confusing process, like with hundreds of bills in our regular session.

The House passes something out. They send it over to us. It looked like a good bill to me. I had our attorneys double-check it to make sure it was legal. I look

at it, it looks like it's going to make at least five districts more competitive. It added to compactness, which was something that came up in the public hearings. It's totally within our normal practice for me as a Senator to say yes, I like this bill. I'm going to be the sponsor.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: It's totally within our normal practice to rely on experts, correct?

SENATOR KING: Sure, we do it all the time.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Will you share with the rest of the body your expert's analysis of this map?

SENATOR KING: I've given it to you. They said it is legal with all respects.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: Including their linear regression on ecological regression, including their racial polarization analysis?

SENATOR KING: I have not requested those documents from them, and I haven't reviewed any similar documents.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: But they have done those analyses, and you know it. So would you instruct them to share them with us?

SENATOR KING: I have the highest level of confidence that they have done -- taken all steps necessary to determine that this map meets the VRA and all other applicable law. I have confidence in them. They have

assured me that is the case.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: You know, I always like the term "trust but verify." I believe that Senator West actually raised that term. So I will try one more time. Will you instruct the law firm that you hired to share with us the RPVA and the ecological inference analysis that they most certainly did in order to determine whether or not this map complies with the Voting Rights Act?

SENATOR KING: Counselor, you understand privilege law in the waiver of privilege law as well as I do. Now those type of things will be available if and when this case goes to litigation, and I'm sure it will. We're already told that there's steps being done to do that. Those things will be available in the normal process for receiving experts' information and -- but I'm not going to stand up here and you wouldn't either and waive any attorney/client privilege.

SENATOR ECKHARDT: It is convenient that the experts that you are utilizing to draw maps of the State of Texas are under attorney/client privilege to you and you alone.

Thank you for answering my questions.

SENATOR KING: To my knowledge, that's the way it has always been for anyone carrying a redistricting bill.

MR. PRESIDENT: Senator Miles, what purpose?

SENATOR MILES: Just a point of clarification with

the Chairman.

MR. PRESIDENT: Senator King, do you yield?

SENATOR KING: Yes.

SENATOR MILES: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, you recall -- I'm assuming now that you recall being asked if you knew or ever talked to Adam Kincaid in our hearings. Is that correct? Do you recall those?

SENATOR KING: I know that we've talked about Adam Kincaid several times in the hearings.

SENATOR MILES: Right. And do you recall your answer when we -- when you were asked if you knew or talked to Adam Kincaid? I'm assuming that's why you're -- well, do you recall your answer?

SENATOR KING: I've been asked a number -- no, I don't recall any specific -- I can tell you that to the best of my recollection today, I think he and I have talked three times.

SENATOR MILES: So you have talked to Adam Kincaid?

SENATOR KING: Yes. I said that earlier today.

SENATOR MILES: And what's your most recent time you've talked to Adam Kincaid?

SENATOR KING: Last Monday, he called me looking for a contact.

SENATOR MILES: Last Monday. Okay. So that's --

because we were asked -- you were asked multiple times in the committee --

SENATOR KING: So --

SENATOR MILES: And you volunteered the fact that you had never talked to Adam Kincaid.

SENATOR KING: I don't think I've said anything incorrect in the hearing. If I have -- had, it was in error.

SENATOR MILES: Okay. Thank you for the clarification, Mr. Chairman. That you have spoken to him.

SENATOR KING: Thank you, and I have went over those three occasions, sir, with Senator Gutierrez a few moments ago.

SENATOR MILES: Thank you for that clarification, Mr. Chairman.

MR. PRESIDENT: Senator King, moves to (indiscernible) the regular order of business on House Bill 4. There is objections.

Secretary, call the roll.

THE SECRETARY: Alvarado, Bettencourt, Birdwell, Blanco, Campbell, Cook.

MR. PRESIDENT: 18 ayes, 11 nays.

Rules are suspended. Chair lays out on second reading

Rules are suspended. Chair lays out on second reading, House Bill 4, the secretary will read the caption.

THE SECRETARY: House Bill 4. Relaying the composition of the districts for the election of Members of the United States House of Representatives from the State of Texas.

(Pause)

MR. PRESIDENT: All in amendment.

Secretary, read the amendment.

THE SECRETARY: For Amendment No. 1, by Zaffirini.

MR. PRESIDENT: Senator Zaffirini, you're recognized.

SENATOR ZAFFIRINI: Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President and Members, modern technology has made map drawing more precise than ever, increasing the potential for partisan advantage or discrimination. These advances also provide an opportunity for an independent redistricting commission to leverage data and tools to create fair, more equitable maps that better reflect Texas communities.

This amendment would establish a bipartisan Texas redistricting commission and transfer responsibilities for redistricting congressional districts from the legislature to the commission.

The commission would comprise two Members chosen by House Democrats, two by House Republicans, two by Senate Democrats, two by Senate Republicans, and one independent

member chosen by those eight. Members would serve three-year terms beginning February 1st of the year following the census. The commission would meet the first business day in February, following the census here, and could vote to terminate their terms early and is following the adoption of all redistricting plans.

The legislature would fund the commission's operations, while granting a data access and support from the Texas Legislative Counsel. The commission would adopt its own rules and approve each redistricting plan by at least five votes by November 15th, after the census here. If it didn't, the Texas Supreme Court would adopt a plan by December 30th, with all approved plans submitted to State leaders.

Aggrieved persons could challenge a redistricting plan by petition to the Texas Supreme Court. If a final judgment in State or Federal Court invalidated all or part of the plan or otherwise made it unenforceable, the commission would reconvene to modify and adopt a new plan. The redistricting plan would be required as practicable under Federal Law to create contiguous, compact, and convenient districts with nearly equal populations.

Each adoptive redistricting plan would be required to include a report of the Secretary of State detailing district populations and deviations, criteria and

justifications, district maps, commission expenditures, and related materials, and the report would be made public. This article would take affect, January 1st, 2030.

Members establishing a redistricting commission would reduce the opportunity for gerrymandering and improve voters' confidence in our democratic process. Senator Jeff Wentworth, a Republican from San Antonio, first filed a redistricting commission bill in 1993, and Senators Menendez, West, Johnson, and I have done so since. In fact, I've filed six senate bills and seven senate joint resolutions across three regular and five special previous legislative sessions, but have never received a hearing.

With redistricting being such an important decision, an independent commission would make the redistricting process more fair. Given this need and justification, I hope it is acceptable to the author.

MR. PRESIDENT: Senator Menendez for what purpose?

SENATOR MENENDEZ: Questions to the author of the amendment, Mr. President.

MR. PRESIDENT: Do you yield?

SENATOR ZAFFIRINI: I do.

SENATOR MENENDEZ: Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, Senator Zaffirini.

And Senator, I appreciate the acknowledgement of the work that many of us have done on this. I really

appreciate you bringing this amendment forward because you've been -- you've reviewed the maps that have been presented to us today --

SENATOR ZAFFIRINI: Yes.

SENATOR MENENDEZ: -- and you currently represent a district that goes all the way from Lidell to Travis County, correct?

SENATOR ZAFFIRINI: My Senatorial district? Yes.

SENATOR MENENDEZ: Your Senatorial district. Have you seen what this map does to Travis County in terms of its congressional representation?

SENATOR ZAFFIRINI: I certainly have, and I asked questions about, and so did Senator Eckhardt.

SENATOR MENENDEZ: So one of the things that was mentioned is a goal earlier today, and you brought it up as well, is compactness. Is that correct?

SENATOR ZAFFIRINI: Yes, it is.

SENATOR MENENDEZ: Would it surprise you to know that, out of Travis County, or I think it's three, at least three of its districts start at Travis County. One goes all the way down to Corpus. The other one goes all the way down to almost the edge with New Mexico. I think it's past Midland, Ector County, and then one goes from Travis County to Polk County in East Texas. Those three range in distance from 218 miles to 357 miles apart.

Does that sound compact to you?

SENATOR ZAFFIRINI: It does not sound compact, and it surprised me when I saw it.

SENATOR MENENDEZ: It seems that compactness is a matter of convenience, but your amendment is one where you think that it -- instead of the politicians drawing the lines and picking their voters, you want an independent commission of people taking everything into account and drawing maps to represent the community.

SENATOR ZAFFIRINI: That is correct and many of us have tried, certainly the person who tried hardest, as far as I know was Senator Jeff Wentworth. He really worked at it and I'll remind you again, he was a Republican from San Antonio. He first filed a bill in 1993 and then you have filed several bills, I believe, five or six times?

SENATOR MENENDEZ: Yeah.

SENATOR ZAFFIRINI: And I have sent to West House and to Johnson House.

SENATOR MENENDEZ: And I don't think any of them ever have received a hearing.

SENATOR ZAFFIRINI: Never.

SENATOR MENENDEZ: I want to thank you for bringing this forward. I think that when people -- if these maps become law, and you live in that part of Travis County, and you know that your Congressional Representative might be

from Midland, you might lose the interest in going because that person may not relate to the issues that are important to you in Travis County.

SENATOR ZAFFIRINI: That's exactly right. And believe me, Senator. I understand the issue, and during the 1990s redistricting, at one point, my district from Laredo was redrawn, all the way to El Paso, 615 miles away. New Orleans is closer to Laredo than El Paso. Yet for two years, I represented part of El Paso.

SENATOR MENENDEZ: Wow. Well, thank you for bringing the amendment forward. I see that you have quite a few co-authors, and I think it's an excellent amendment, and I mean, if for nothing else, to save future chairs of redistricting. If we had your amendment, we wouldn't have to do this ourselves. The commission would do it, and then people could have confidence and faith that politicians weren't picking their voters. That the voters would get to select and elect their politicians.

SENATOR ZAFFIRINI: Well, we've never had a hearing, but at least we have some floor attention today.

SENATOR MENENDEZ: Thank you. Thank you.

SENATOR ZAFFIRINI: Thank you.

SENATOR MENENDEZ: Thank you, Mr. President.

Thank you, Senator, for answering my questions.

SENATOR ZAFFIRINI: Thank you.

MR. PRESIDENT: Senator Johnson, what purpose?

SENATOR JOHNSON: Statement on the bill.

MR. PRESIDENT: Statement on the bill. That would be --

SENATOR JOHNSON: Are we not there yet?

MR. PRESIDENT: We're on an amendment.

SENATOR JOHNSON: Oh, no, no. That's not really on --

MR. PRESIDENT: Senator Zaffirini, I thought when you spoke, everyone hung on every word, and Senator Johnson didn't know it was an -- your amendment.

SENATOR ZAFFIRINI: I'm so disappointed.

MR. PRESIDENT: I know. Okay. Well, that would have still been too soon. Yeah. It's one third and final passage you can make your statements.

Senator King, on the amendment.

SENATOR KING: Thank you, Mr. President, and Senator Zaffirini, these are -- the redistricting commission is always a very, very interesting discussion. It's been brought up in the legislature many times, although I'm not sure this is germane to this bill, but I'm not going to call -- I'm not calling a point of order on that. I also wonder if it requires a constitutional amendment, which I'm not sure for.

But the larger question is that this is a really

substantial change in how Texas operates and I think it's more appropriate that it be brought up in a stand-alone bill during the next regular session, where it can be considered in hearing and where we can hear from all the interested stakeholders and constituents on that because it is such a substantial change to our process.

I know that in talking to other states, I know in some places it has worked out well, in others, it has not at all. It's just become another political problem. And so with that, I would respectfully oppose the motion with the suggestion that it be brought up next session or a full discussion before the legislature.

MR. PRESIDENT: Secretary, will call the roll. Secretary will call the roll when ready.

THE SECRETARY: Alvarado, Bettencourt, Birdwell, Blanco --

MR. PRESIDENT: 11 ayes and 18 nays. The amendment fails. You're recognized for passage to engrossment. The -- sorry, the third reading. It's a House Bill. The secretary will call the roll when ready.

THE SECRETARY: Alvarado, Bettencourt, Birdwell, Blanco, Campbell.

MR. PRESIDENT: 18 ayes, 11 nays. The Bill passed the third reading. We'll hold there.

SENATOR KING: Thank you, Mr. President.

Thank you, Members, for the long day. Thankfully. Not snarkily. Thank you for being patient with me.

MR. PRESIDENT: Members filing bills and resolutions on first reading and reference to committee. Secretary will read the bills and resolutions.

THE SECRETARY: House Bill 1: Relating to Youth Camp and Campground Emergency Preparedness to the Select Committee on Disaster Preparedness and Flooding.

House Bill 3: Relating to the inoperability of emergency communication equipment and infrastructure in this State to the Select Committee on Disaster Preparedness and Flooding.

House Bill 20: Relating to certain measures to prevent and reduce fraudulent charitable solicitations and theft during disasters to the Select Committee on Disaster Preparedness and Flooding.

House Bill 22: Relating to the authority of the controller to provide funding for the deployment and operation of certain emergency communication equipment to the Select Committee on Disaster Preparedness and Flooding.

(Glitch in the audio).

MR. PRESIDENT: Members, if everyone could take their seats, we have a memorial adjournment today.

The Chair recognizes Dean of the Senate for a highly privileged motion.

SENATOR ZAFFIRINI: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President and Members, before I move to adjourn for the day, to reconvene later, I yield to Senator King for a memorial statement.

MR. PRESIDENT: Senator King.

SENATOR KING: Thank you. I have a very, very dear friend whose funeral is today, and I was unable to make the gathering, the celebration of his life, because we're all here today.

A good friend, Robbie Hollier, our kids grew up together. We've been going to church together for, I don't know, since the early 80s. Wonderful man. Suffered quite a bit the last few years. His family has suffered along with him. They're wonderful people. He's with the Lord. Couldn't be here today, but I thought it would be a neat thing if I could tell his family that we adjourned today in the memory of Robbie Hollier.

MR. PRESIDENT: Thank you, Senator.

Senator Zaffirini.

SENATOR ZAFFIRINI: Thank you, MR. President. Mr. President and Members, I move that the Senate adjourn until 5:45 today, August 22, in memory of Robert Hollier, a constituent of Senator King.

MR. PRESIDENT: Any objection? Hearing none. Senate stands adjourned until 5:45.

Thank you, Members.

(Adjourned.)

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I, Mary Henry, certify that the foregoing is a correct transcription from the audio recording of the proceedings in the above-entitled matter.

Please take note that I was not personally present for said recording and, therefore, due to the quality of the audio provided, inaudibles may have created inaccuracies in the transcript of said recording

I further certify that I am neither counsel for, related so, not employed by any of the taking parties to the action in which this deposition was taken, and further that I am not financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.

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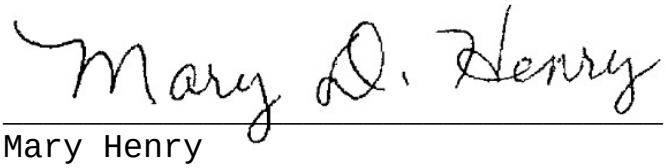

Mary Henry
Integrity Legal Support Solutions
Firm Registration No. 528
9901 Brodie Ln.,#160-400
Austin, Texas 78748
512-320-8690
www.integritylegal.support

State Defendants' Response to Plaintiff-Intervenors' and TXNAACP Motion for Preliminary Injunction

Exhibit AM

https://x.com/bradj_TX/status/1950598530659135847?t=iVWobfgmJ_IjnDt9tvGI3Q&s=19

PageVault

Document title:	Brad Johnson on X: "One more observation: those drawing the map clearly used the Trump 2024 results as the benchmark for where to set the lines. But Trump himself will not be on the ballot again. They're betting a lot on replicating 2024 to get all 5 seats rather than just 3 or 4. Example A: TX 28 https://t.co/emDXz0dNdv" / X
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Page loaded at (UTC):	Mon, 22 Sep 2025 15:47:58 GMT
Capture timestamp (UTC):	Mon, 22 Sep 2025 15:48:47 GMT
Capture tool:	10.61.0
Collection server IP:	54.145.42.72
Browser engine:	Mozilla/5.0 (X11; Linux x86_64) AppleWebKit/537.36 (KHTML, like Gecko) Chrome/138.0.7204.97 Safari/537.36
Operating system:	Linux (Node 22.17.0)
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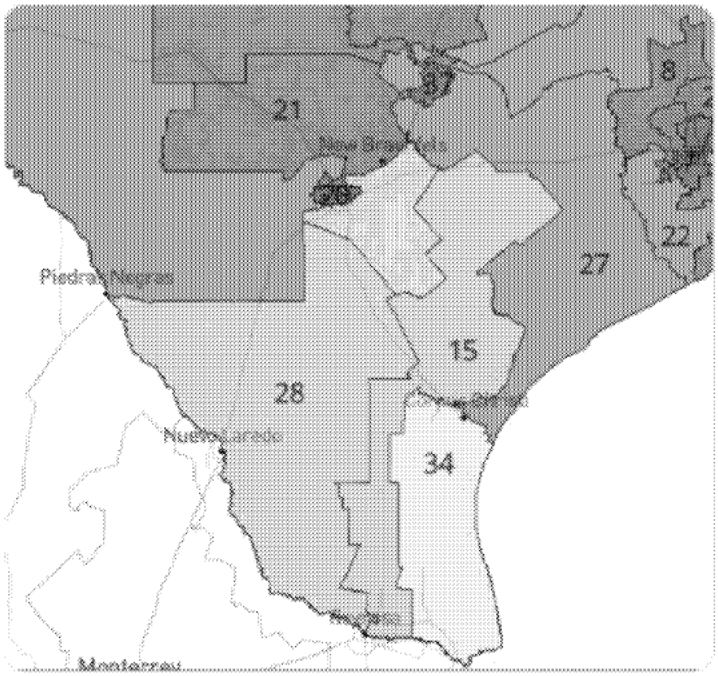
Post

Brad Johnson
@bradj_TX

One more observation: those drawing the map clearly used the Trump 2024 results as the benchmark for where to set the lines. But Trump himself will not be on the ballot again. They're betting a lot on replicating 2024 to get all 5 seats rather than just 3 or 4.

Example A: TX 28



Brad Johnson @bradj_TX · Jul 30
Biggest changes in this map:

-Trump won both of the South Texas gains (28 & 34) by ~10 points, but 28 is much closer in PVI
-New TX 9 takes from TX 2 & 36 in Harris County...
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Exhibit AN

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Brad Johnson ✓
@bradj_TX

Texas Republicans drew the new map based on 2024 Trump results, that's how they get the 5-seat pickup. No telling how 2026 shakes out, but it's possible that's a high-water mark. Here are 3 scenarios for Rs compared next to each other under the new map:

-2024 Presidential, 30-8 map; davesredistricting.org/join/2c315ae1-...
-2022 Governor, 29-9 map; davesredistricting.org/join/2df1ecbf-...
-2018 Senate, 26-12 map; davesredistricting.org/join/7e1362bc-...

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Benjamin Schneer

Associate Professor of Public Policy

Contact: Email
Assistant: Stacy Hannell
617-496-1477

Profile Selected Publications

Benjamin Schneer is an Assistant Professor of Public Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School. His research is in American politics and focuses primarily on political representation: how citizens express their preferences, how government responds to them, and what may shape and distort these processes. His most recent papers have studied just how much of an effect the media has on the national political conversation, the role that petitioning has played in American political development, and the returns to elected office based on future earnings from corporate board service and lobbying. His research has been published in journals including *Science*, the *American Journal of Political Science*, the *Journal of Politics*, and *Studies in American Political Development*and has received coverage in media outlets including the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Economist*, and *Fast Company*.

He received his Ph.D. in 2016 from the Department of Government at Harvard University. He received his B.A. in History and in Economics from Columbia University and an M.A. in Economics from Stanford University. Prior to joining the Kennedy School, he was an assistant professor in the Department of Political Science at Florida State University.

Additional information can be found on Professor Schneer's website.

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API-202M

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CONTACT

Email
Assistant: Stacy Hannell
CV
Additional Website

EXPERTISE

Politics

HKS AFFILIATIONS

Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation

Malcolm Wiener Center for Social Policy

Taubman Center for State and Local Government

MAILING ADDRESS

Harvard Kennedy School
79 John F. Kennedy Street
Cambridge, MA 02138

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