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REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, JULY 13, 2011

8:00 A.M.

COLONY COTTAGE RECREATION CENTER
THE VILLAGES, FLORIDA

Transcribed by:
CLARA C. ROTRUCK
Court Reporter

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

2 CHAIRMAN PRECOURT: Representative
3 Precourt, the Joint Senate House Redistricting
4 hearing is hereby called to order. We are also
5 pleased to be joined today by a number of other
6 members here, Senators and Representatives
7 alike, but first I would like Senator Alan Hays
8 here to have an opportunity to welcome everyone
9 and let other members introduce themselves.

10 Before we do that I am Steve Precourt,
11 State Representative from House District 41,
12 which includes south Lake County, parts of
13 Orange and west Orange County, and I will be
14 chairing today's meeting, and the -- with me
15 today from the Chair of the Senate
16 Redistricting Committee is Senator Gaetz who
17 will be Co-Chairing the meeting, and with that
18 let me turn it over to Alan to go ahead and
19 welcome everyone.

20 SENATOR HAYS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman,
21 and it is my privilege to welcome all of the
22 members from across the state to Senate
23 District 20. You are right in the heart of
24 God's country, and you are in, you are in House
25 District 42, Representative Marlene O'Toole's

1 district and we certainly want to thank each of
2 you for coming this morning to participate in
3 democracy.

4 It is great to look out there and see
5 Speaker Larry Cretul and Senator Carey Baker
6 with us today also. Thank you for joining us,
7 guys, but it is my privilege to be the Senator
8 for this area and certainly enjoy welcoming
9 each of you to hear some real good input today.

10 A VOICE: Good morning, and it is a great
11 day in The Villages, is it not? I am happy to
12 see you all here. It is like church, no one is
13 up front, but we will pass the plate back there
14 just the same.

15 Thank you for being here, and I am just
16 going to turn right back -- is everyone speak,
17 and this is Representative Passidomo from the
18 Naples area.

19 REPRESENTATIVE PASSIDOMO: Good morning,
20 Kathleen Passidomo, I am from Collier County, I
21 represent the City of Naples, Marco Island,
22 Everglades city and a lot of alligators.

23 REPRESENTATIVE BOYD: Good morning, I am
24 Jim Boyd. I am from Bradenton, which is
25 Manatee County, District 68, just south of

1 Tampa Bay on the other side of the, the other
2 part of the state over there. Thank you.

3 REPRESENTATIVE HOOPER: Good morning,
4 everyone, I am Ed Hooper from -- a
5 Representative from District 50, which is the
6 Clearwater area of Pinellas County, and I
7 purposely took my golf clubs out of the car
8 before I got here so I would make this meeting.

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

13 REPRESENTATIVE GOODSON: Good morning,
14 Representative Tom Goodson, representing
15 Brevard County and Indian River County, House
16 Seat 29.

17 SENATOR MONTFORD: I am State Senator Bill
18 Montford, District 6. It is all or a part of
19 11 counties, all around Tallahassee, and we are
20 proud to say, well, I was proud to say that I
21 have a lot of relatives move down here but the
22 problem is they can't vote for me anymore, but
23 take good care of them.

24 REPRESENTATIVE NEHR: State Representative
25 Peter Nehr from Pinellas County and Pasco

1 County, Palm Harbor and the East Lake area.

2 Thank you.

3 REPRESENTATIVE KAIR: Hello, everybody, my
4 name is Martin Kair, I represent District 97 in
5 the Florida House of representatives, which is
6 located solely within Brevard County. Thank
7 you so much for coming today.

8 REPRESENTATIVE CALDWELL: Good morning,
9 Representative Matt Caldwell, District 73 down
10 in southwest Florida, Lee County.

11 REPRESENTATIVE FRISHE: Good morning, I am
12 Representative Jim Frishe, I am the majority
13 whip of the Florida House. I represent
14 District 54, which is the west coast of
15 Pinellas County, all of the beaches.

16 REPRESENTATIVE ADKINS: Hi, my name is
17 Janet Adkins, I represent House District 12,
18 which is in northeast Florida, Nassau, Baker,
19 Bradford, Clay, Union and Duval Counties.

20 REPRESENTATIVE STARGEL: Hi, my name is
21 Kelli Stargel, I am a State Representative for
22 District 64, which is north Polk County and my
23 grandfather actually was the Sheriff of Sumter
24 County back in the late 1800s, so I have roots
25 here.

1 SENATOR THRASHER: Hi, I am Senator John
2 Thrasher, Senate District 8, which includes
3 parts of Nassau County up in the north part of
4 Florida, Duval County, St. Johns County,
5 Flagler County and Volusia County, and honored
6 to be here today.

7 CHAIRMAN PRECOURT: Senator Evers.

8 SENATOR EVERS: And I am Senator Greg
9 Evers, I represent District 2 in the Senate,
10 which is up in the panhandle. It is north
11 Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton,
12 Washington, Holmes Counties, and it is a
13 pleasure to be here at The Villages.

14 CHAIRMAN PRECOURT: Okay, I think we got
15 everyone. Any other members? Terrific. So,
16 folks, you see that we have got members from
17 all over the state of Florida that are here.

18 The sole purpose is to hear you and to
19 hear your input from both parties as well,
20 there is Republicans and Democrats as well up
21 here.

22 We are trying to make this as open,
23 transparent and inclusive a process as
24 possible.

25 First I want to also say thanks to The

1 Villages, themselves, for allowing us to use
2 this beautiful facility. It is great to have
3 the opportunity to be in a place like this
4 where everybody can come and enjoy themselves
5 at meeting as well, and we want to thank you
6 all for being here.

7 You, the members of the public, you are
8 taking time out of your day to come and share
9 your comments and recommendations with us to
10 help us shape the Congressional Seats, State
11 Senate Seats, as well as the Representative
12 Seats.

13 Today's hearing is also being televised,
14 simulcast on Florida Channel over the Internet.

15 Once again, our sole purpose is to hear
16 from you about how you believe the legal
17 standards governing redistricting should be
18 applied in your community, as well as statewide
19 so that you are represented in Washington and
20 Tallahassee fairly, equitably and sensibly.

21 Now, our procedures today are very simple,
22 but they are going to be very important to
23 follow.

24 It is important that you sign in so we can
25 create an accurate public record of all of the

1 attendees and the speakers. You may also want
2 to as part of signing in, join our e-mail list
3 so that we can keep you informed about the
4 entirety of the redistricting process and all
5 of the developments along the way, whether it
6 be meetings, news or you get to see what other
7 people submit as far as maps and comments on
8 the redistricting process.

9 So if you are not signed in, please raise
10 your hand and one of our staff who are around
11 the room will give you an attendance card.

12 In addition, if you wish to speak today
13 and you have not filed out an attendance card,
14 make sure you do. They are like this. We need
15 these to make sure that we give you the
16 opportunity to speak.

17 Now, if you haven't filled one out and you
18 want to fill one out later on in the meeting,
19 because it comes to mind that you have
20 something more or different to say, you can do
21 that at any time as well by seeing one of our
22 staff and they will get those cards up to me
23 and get them in line.

24 Our job is going to be to sit here and
25 listen though, the folks up here on the dais,

1 but before we begin, I want to recognize
2 Senator Gaetz to explain how today's hearing
3 will fit into the overall redistricting
4 process. Senator Gaetz.

5 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
6 Mr. Chairman, and it is good to be here. I am
7 Don Gaetz, I represent five coastal counties up
8 in northwest Florida, from Panama City to
9 Pensacola, and you stole my jeweler. Bill and
10 Suzie Houck came down here to live and they
11 closed their jewelry store and my wife's
12 birthdays haven't been the same since.

13 Every ten years the Legislature is
14 required by our Constitution to redistrict the
15 state based on increases, decreases and
16 movements of population. Because Florida has
17 grown more than other states in the last decade
18 we will move up, Florida will move up from 25
19 to 27 members of the U.S. House of
20 Representatives, and we get two more electoral
21 votes for President. So we are up to 29
22 electoral votes for President.

23 Now, because some parts of the state have
24 increased or decreased disproportionately in
25 population, many Senate and House Districts

1 will change either by adding or losing
2 population.

3 When redistricting is completed,
4 Congressional Districts have to be equal in
5 size. They have to be equal in population and
6 contain 696,345 people. That is a
7 Congressional District, no matter where it is
8 in America.

9 The 40 Senate Districts here in Florida
10 must also be nearly equal at about 44 hundred
11 and seventy thousand people and our 120 House
12 Districts must also be nearly equal at about
13 156,700 people.

14 Now, we have displays in the front of the
15 room here and in the back of the room as well
16 showing the current boundaries of districts in
17 this area of the state, and also the number of
18 persons who have to be added or subtracted from
19 current districts in order to achieve equal
20 representation.

21 So there are maps. We can use the current
22 maps as a take-off point for you to tell us
23 what is right, what is wrong, what should be
24 changed, what should be kept, and you will be
25 able to see how many additional people have to

1 be added or subtracted from every district.

2 But equality of representation is not the
3 only legal requirement redistricting plans must
4 meet. The laws and important court cases
5 governing redistricting are explained in detail
6 on the House and Senate websites.

7 Those websites are listed on the
8 Redistricting 2012 brochure that was available
9 when you came in. If you didn't get one of
10 those brochures you can get one during the
11 meeting, you can get one afterwards.

12 The brochure summarizes Federal and State
13 laws and outlines topics that we hope you will
14 discuss here at today's meeting. The brochure
15 also details what is on our websites. The
16 websites are packed with information about
17 redistricting in Florida, including an
18 explanation of laws and important court cases
19 governing this process.

20 The Legislature can't just draw lines the
21 way it wants to. We are obligated to follow
22 Federal laws, State laws, Constitutional
23 provisions, as well as be guided by important
24 court cases that have affected redistricting.

25 The websites also deliver to your

1 fingertips important demographics information
2 that will be used by us in drawing districts
3 and the exact same computer software that
4 Legislators and professional staff will use is
5 on the website.

6 As soon as we got the information from the
7 Bureau of the Census about Florida and the
8 descriptors about all of us as Floridians, we
9 put it on the website. we got our information
10 from the Census Bureau later than most states.

11 We put it on the website, and then also
12 the software that is used to draw the districts
13 is on the website so that anybody can take a
14 look at it, can draw districts that might be in
15 your area of the state, or if you want to, you
16 can draw the whole state.

17 Before, during and after this hearing
18 Senate and House staff are available to show
19 anybody the simple steps to getting on-line,
20 building districts and submitting a plan if you
21 want, now or in the weeks to come.

22 Recommendations from citizens or from
23 interest groups will be made publicly
24 available as soon as we get them. In other
25 words, as soon as you submit an idea for how

1 you think things ought to be changed we will
2 put it on the website so everybody can see it.

3 As soon as a Legislator submits a Bill or
4 a map, we will put it on the website so you can
5 see it and comment on it. In fact, some
6 submissions, some maps are already on the
7 website and available for you to look at.

8 The other day when we were in Jacksonville
9 literally during the hearing there were three
10 more maps that were placed on the website,
11 three more proposals that were submitted. So
12 there are some options to look at already.

13 The submission of proposed maps, whether
14 it is for your part of the state, whether it is
15 for your neighborhood, whether it is for the
16 whole state, submission of maps that makes
17 sense to you, to your community, is the single
18 most effective form of public participation in
19 the redistricting process.

20 Redistricting is also driven by a
21 schedule. The schedule we are operating under
22 is imposed by the State Constitution. We can't
23 change it without changing the Constitution and
24 we can't change the Constitution, only the
25 voters can do that.

1 The Constitution does not permit the
2 Legislature to act on state legislative maps
3 before the second year after the census. In
4 other words, before 2012.

5 Now, we have accelerated the process as
6 much as we could by moving up the 2012 session
7 of the Legislature from March, when it usually
8 starts, to January, and by beginning our
9 statewide hearings five months in advance of
10 the 2012 session.

11 Now, it has been suggested by some that
12 the Legislature ought to just draw the maps and
13 bring them here and say here they are and then
14 ask the public to comment and react to Feta
15 Compli.

16 We believe that puts the answer ahead of
17 the question. There should be no
18 preconceptions created by politicians, but
19 rather public testimony and your ideas should
20 be free and unrestricted. Believe me, there
21 will be plenty of time for all of the
22 politicians to make all of their speeches and
23 offer their observations, but first we want to
24 hear from you.

25 In fact, the author and Chair Person of

1 the Fair Districts Committee that put together
2 Amendments 5 and 6 that are now a part of our
3 Constitution testified before the House and
4 Senate and is on record as saying that new maps
5 could not be drawn.

6 She wouldn't even to try new maps without
7 public hearings first, without giving the
8 public an opportunity to comment. Our intent
9 is to use the recommendations made at these
10 hearings and through input from the Internet as
11 the basis for developing one or more options
12 for district maps.

13 We will discuss any option in open public
14 meetings before any votes are taken even in
15 committee. So this isn't your last time to
16 have input. This is your first time. Any maps
17 that come before the House or Senate
18 Redistricting Committees for votes will be
19 publicly available and publicly discussed and
20 the votes will all be taken in front of the
21 public so that if you have criticisms or
22 suggestions or observations you can offer them
23 to us by Snail Mail, by telephone, by hearings
24 such as this, or any other method of letting
25 your views be known.

1 And then whatever the Legislature passes
2 is submitted for judicial review to ensure that
3 the final plans meet every legal requirement.
4 Because our purpose today is to hear from you,
5 all of the time between now and noon, and we
6 will go all of the way to noon, if as long as
7 there is public testimony, all of the time will
8 be used to ensure that every member of the
9 public who is here and who wishes to speak will
10 have time to present testimony and be listened
11 to respectfully without interruption or
12 argument.

13 Now, after all of the citizens who are
14 here and want to speak have their say, if there
15 is time remaining before our scheduled
16 adjournment, then any member of the Committee
17 will have the opportunity to offer any
18 observations, answer any questions, ask any
19 questions, offer any proposals, react in any
20 way to anything that comes up in today's
21 meeting.

22 And, of course, any member of the
23 Legislature may today, or at any time, propose
24 a map or a plan and we will immediately make it
25 available to the public.

1 Mr. Chairman, I hope this description of
2 our schedule and our process helps set the
3 stage for a successful hearing.

4 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: I really think
5 so and thank you very much, Senator Gaetz, for
6 that great introduction.

7 We have staff all around the room, and
8 again, they are great staff, they provide us
9 notes to make sure we don't miss anything, so
10 we give you the important information that you
11 need so we can have a successful meeting here
12 in which you can participate.

13 So if you need anything, again, walk to
14 the back of the room during the meeting, feel
15 free to get up and mill around and talk to
16 them, they can help you out.

17 I want to reiterate, as Senator Gaetz
18 mentioned, we are going to adjourn promptly at
19 12:00, but we still have three hours. That
20 will be a good amount of time to get
21 everybody's comments in.

22 However, we have already got over 40 cards
23 and typically we pick up a few more in the
24 process of people that want to speak. So if
25 you do want it speak and if there is anybody

1 else that wants to speak as you walk in, raise
2 your hand, and ask for a card and our staff
3 will walk over to you and help you out with
4 that.

5 To ensure that everybody gets the
6 opportunity to speak we are going to divide the
7 time equally and limit each person's testimony
8 to three to five minutes as a courtesy to all
9 of those behind you that wish to speak.

10 Sometimes we have to, you know, be a
11 little bit more hard on the rules, but we are
12 going to be as flexible as possible to make
13 sure that you have the opportunity to say
14 everything that you want, but if there is a
15 great deal of additional detail, please submit
16 something in writing, because as the Senator
17 said, those written comments and maps in
18 particular, a picture paints a thousand words,
19 so that will help us interpret what you say
20 much better.

21 Our first speaker is going to be Mr. Dan
22 Hahnfeldt. I believe I pronounced that
23 correctly. If you would step up to the
24 microphone, and let me, before he starts, I am
25 going to mention who comes next and if ya'll

1 can start lining up so that you can be prepared
2 to speak as soon as the previous speaker is
3 done and I introduce you we can get right to it
4 and we don't have to wait for people to come to
5 the microphone.

6 After Mr. Hahnfeldt will be Gail Boetty.
7 Okay, thank you. Mr. Hahnfeldt, the floor is
8 yours.

9 MR. HAHNFELDT: Good morning, good
10 morning, Mr. Chairman, and Committee,
11 distinguished members, Representatives and
12 Senators that have come to hear us and take
13 public input at The Villages.

14 First of all, on behalf of the 84,000
15 Villagers and voters from District 42, State
16 House District, I am the President of the
17 Villages' Homeowners Association and want to
18 thank you for taking that public input before
19 putting pen to paper and drawing those lines.

20 It is very important to us for a number of
21 reasons. A couple of comments about The
22 Villages and one simple request. The Villages,
23 one of the reasons why we are redrawing these
24 numbers, ten years ago at the previous census
25 we were small relative to today, retirement

1 community of about 11,000 homes and 22,000 in
2 population.

3 Since that time and in the current census
4 you see the result of quadrupling those roof
5 tops and population to now 84,000 and we are
6 still growing. We are about 75 percent to
7 80 percent done. There will be another 25,000
8 added by the next census and we look forward to
9 meeting you again in another ten years when you
10 are going to have to redraw those lines again.

11 In that time The Villages has become the
12 world's largest retirement community and grown
13 to a size in population where it is today, but
14 not in area. The area has not changed
15 markedly.

16 The circumference of The Villages is about
17 32 square miles, 1.6 times the size of
18 Manhattan, but it crosses boundaries of three
19 counties, Lake, Marion and Sumter County, two
20 cities, two water management districts and 12
21 community development districts.

22 That poses a bit of a challenge to us from
23 time to time in managing all of these
24 governmental entities to serve the general
25 interest of the population, growing to a

1 maximum within The Villages of about 109,000 in
2 five years.

3 That growth rate is unique in this period,
4 and I point that out because it has been very
5 significant to and to the benefit of Florida,
6 increasing the tax base, bringing resources to
7 the community, to our school districts, to the
8 general economy.

9 In fact, the last year the worst year in
10 47 years in the United States in new home
11 sales, The Villages was down selling maybe only
12 about 2,500 new homes out of the 321,000 in the
13 entire United States.

14 Now, while that is less than one percent
15 of the entire new home sales in the entire
16 United States, it is about two percent of the
17 new homes in the south eastern 17 states and
18 generated eight percent of the building permits
19 in the entire state of Florida. So we are
20 still growing, we are still contributing
21 greatly to the economy.

22 My simple request. We work very hard as a
23 community in the surrounding counties and
24 Representatives of the governmental entities
25 that serve work hard in this complex

1 governmental organization to serve this
2 community of interest.

3 The request is that, as you redraw the
4 lines, you keep us as a community of interest
5 and not divide us up. We are best served as a
6 community of interest. Thank you very much for
7 taking input.

8 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you very
9 much, Mr. Hahnfeldt, and in furtherance,
10 calculating purposes, that was perfect. Right
11 at three minutes, if everybody that we have
12 down takes three minutes, we are going to make
13 it. If everybody takes five minutes we are
14 going to not have the opportunity to hear a
15 couple of people.

16 So with that, Gail Boetty is up, followed
17 by Fran Grossi.

18 MS. BOETTY: Yes, it is Gail Boetty.

19 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Boetty.

20 MS. BOETTY: I am looking at this as a
21 very good opportunity for all of you. You got
22 up this morning, you came out here and we thank
23 you for that. It is time to get it right this
24 time. No more spouting off a river off to the
25 right.

1 Lake County, when you look at District 8,
2 you got a beautiful square there and then all
3 of a sudden you got a line going here and a
4 river going there. Block it out, add a few
5 people, it is not rocket science, our children
6 are watching you.

7 We don't want games to be played with the
8 districts anymore. It is that simple. It is
9 not that scary to divide the state, and we just
10 would like you to show that to our children by
11 making it fair.

12 Show some integrity, no more running off
13 and grabbing certain areas that the votes look
14 good for certain people. We see what it looks
15 like. It is right there in the map in front of
16 you, and we thank you for doing justice this
17 time out. Okay.

18 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Well, thank you
19 very much, and thank you for keeping those
20 remarks focused on the redistricting process as
21 well. So we have got Fran Grossi, followed by
22 Leo Fallon.

23 MS. GROSSI: Thank you for giving us this
24 opportunity to come and talk with you today.
25 Ours is a government of the people. The

1 people's voice needs to be heard.

2 If you will look at our state, it is
3 divided up into different communities, okay,
4 different counties. I think we need to look at
5 those counties and try to keep them together as
6 possible, because the people of those counties
7 have issues that are different from maybe other
8 counties, and those voices need to be heard.

9 Okay, by dividing up those counties, by
10 shredding them into pieces, you are shredding
11 the voice of the people, and we are a
12 government of the people. We need to allow the
13 people's voices to be heard. Thank you for
14 this opportunity.

15 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you very
16 much for speaking. Leo Fallon, followed by
17 Patricia Sullivan.

18 MR. FALLON: Yes, thank you very much for
19 coming, Senators and Representatives. I am Lee
20 Fallon, a resident of The Villages for 11
21 years. I have a very easy request, please keep
22 The Villages as a complete contiguous voting
23 district and not split as up. We are CCD and
24 we should keep that. Thank you very much for
25 your time.

1 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you, now,
2 that is concise. Patricia Sullivan, followed
3 by Robert Carey.

4 MS. SULLIVAN: Good morning, my name is
5 Patricia Sullivan. I am from Lake County, I
6 live in Eustis. I am a mother of four and I
7 also teach them and so I appreciate the fact
8 that you haven't drawn maps ahead of schedule
9 for us to come in and criticize, because I
10 wouldn't do my children's school work for them.

11 I would give them the opportunity to take
12 personal responsibility in looking at the
13 fabulous website that you have created for us,
14 and then us taking the time as we should as it
15 is our duty as citizens to then draw maps.

16 And I have actually drawn a map, and it is
17 loading I am told, for all three districts.
18 And currently in Lake County, I believe that is
19 the Congressional map, Lake County is split
20 into four Congressional Districts.

21 As Fran eloquently stated, when we keep
22 our counties and our communities together, then
23 our voice is stronger and we bond together.

24 As you can see on that map, I have all of
25 Lake County in one district, which would be my

1 request, first off, and then I have Seminole
2 County basically because we have a lot of
3 similarities, but also in looking at projected
4 growth, Lake County is going -- is one of the
5 highest counties that will grow over the next
6 ten years. Seminole County is one of the
7 lower.

8 So to also keep it within the right
9 population that we desire to have in one
10 district, and then in the bottom of Seminole
11 County, I removed some of the voting districts
12 there simply because as the -- as we find here
13 in The Villages, it is one community, but it
14 crosses some political boundaries, and in that
15 area of Seminole County which I am familiar
16 with in the Winter Park, Maitland area, that
17 crosses two counties, but I took that out of
18 that district because there will be times when
19 we will expect you will have to cross political
20 boundaries in an effort to keep communities
21 together.

22 So the next map that I have that is going
23 to, I believe that is the House, Florida House
24 District. Again, Lake County in itself is
25 basically split into north Lake County and

1 south Lake County, and so the House District
2 there that I have chosen really just takes
3 north Lake County and its communities and keeps
4 them together in one district.

5 And then in the third map is the Senate,
6 and I just have Lake and I have Sumter County
7 together and there are areas in Orange County
8 around Mt. Plymouth and near Mt. Dora that are
9 a part of those communities, but I would not
10 object if you wanted to just then go north and
11 put The Villages, because -- and cross over
12 that political boundary and I will probably
13 redraw that map and takes parts of Orange
14 County out and include the parts of The
15 Villages to keep that together.

16 So again, I appreciate very much you
17 giving us the opportunity to speak. I
18 appreciate you giving us the opportunity to
19 draw our own maps before you do so, and thank
20 you for your time.

21 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you,
22 Ms. Sullivan, thank you very much for
23 submitting those maps. It is very clear what
24 your intent is there.

25 Next we have Robert Carey, followed by

1 Andy Dubois.

2 MR. CAREY: Distinguished ladies and
3 gentlemen, I want to thank you for offering a
4 chance for a true Representative to democracy.
5 Your computer program, I was cussing you
6 yesterday.

7 I sat down and like most men, I didn't
8 bother to read the directions. I saw the
9 pictures you made a presentation the other
10 night, and I thought, well, this will be easy,
11 you just click around here and things disappear
12 and, well, it didn't work that way.

13 So after about an hour and-a-half I
14 decided to read the directions, and once I got
15 into it, it was fun, it is almost like a game,
16 and it is very educational.

17 I realized that we have to keep various
18 minorities and races and everything
19 represented, and so I tried to do that. I came
20 up with a plan for a Congressional District.

21 First off, Lake County with four
22 Congressional Districts running through it is
23 ridiculous. Congressional District 3 is an
24 abomination, as is District 8. So I tried to
25 keep things together, and like I haven't gotten

1 to the House and Senate yet, but after a few
2 hours of playing around I came up with a
3 Congressional District plan that keeps Lake
4 County and Sumter County together, along with
5 Marion County.

6 Of course, The Villages is included in all
7 of that, everything in Marion County except the
8 far western part, and as I was playing around
9 with it, the -- an outline of George Washington
10 started appearing, and, on Interstate 75 is the
11 bridge of his nose.

12 However, I couldn't get rid of his chin.
13 I would get rid of that, but that would put me
14 under or over and I still couldn't come up with
15 it. So you have to use your imagination. But
16 my request is to keep the counties together
17 wherever possible. Let's do away with this
18 cancerous finger here, finger there.

19 You know, as one of the previous speakers
20 said, it is not rocket science. You know, and
21 I do compliment you for giving us a chance for
22 this input and for having it fun, and making it
23 a game. I would encourage everybody to get
24 involved with it.

25 I intend to go back and do the House and

1 Senate Districts and do some more. I came up
2 with a plan, I will give you a couple of
3 copies. Anyway, I do want to compliment you
4 and let's keep it fair as far as minorities go,
5 and let's keep it simple. Thank you.

6 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you very
7 much, and if one of our staff could grab that
8 input from you right beside you, thank you very
9 much.

10 Next we have Andy Dubois, I think I have
11 got that right, followed by Nancy Hurlbert.

12 MR. DUBOIS: Yes, you do, Representative
13 Precourt. My name is Andy Dubois, I want to
14 thank you for this opportunity to -- for
15 citizen input.

16 I am a resident of Lake County as well. I
17 live in Howie-in-the-Hills and my request is
18 that we keep the counties intact as much as
19 possible as opposed to the way it is now.

20 I am becoming familiar with the District
21 Builder Tool. I am also grateful for the
22 opportunity and the tools that you have made
23 available. I am looking forward to attending
24 other meetings as well, and I am just grateful
25 for the process that you have -- that you have

1 put forward in allowing us to have input rather
2 than just drawing the lines.

3 And I am hoping that we can end up with
4 some common sense in this and that we don't
5 lose, lose track of that in this process. I
6 want to thank you very much again for allowing
7 me to speak.

8 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you for
9 being here, yes. Nancy Hurlbert followed by
10 Theodore Stratton.

11 MS. HURLBERT: Good morning, members of
12 the Legislature. Thank you for this
13 opportunity. My name is Nancy Hurlbert. I
14 live in Lake County and I want to talk just
15 briefly about two particular incidents in the
16 drawing of the districts.

17 Lake County, as you have heard several
18 times now, is represented by four members of
19 Congress. In one instance, in Corinne Brown's
20 district, which is House District, U. S. House
21 District 3, there is one precinct in Mt. Dora
22 that is in her district. All of the rest of
23 Mt. Dora is in Congressman Daniel Webster.

24 And the reason, I surmise, is that this
25 one precinct is in Corinne's district is that

1 it is a predominantly black district, and
2 predominantly Democrat.

3 So particularly partisan picked out to be
4 in that particular district. I would hope that
5 we do not split cities with this redrawing and
6 that we adhere to Amendments 5 and 6 that say
7 that cities and counties should be compact and
8 contiguous as much as possible.

9 In my -- I live in Leesburg, and as the
10 State House is represented, there are four
11 Representatives in Lake County, four. I live
12 in the east part of Leesburg, my Representative
13 is Larry Metz.

14 Friends of mine live in the gated
15 community of Plantation, which is also
16 Leesburg, and they have a different
17 Representative, and I have another friend that
18 lives in the city of Leesburg proper, and
19 another Representative.

20 So here we have Leesburg that is really
21 split up by three different Representatives.
22 That dilutes our representation and is really
23 unconscionable.

24 So again, adhering to Amendments 5 and 6,
25 and I really hope that you all take seriously

1 the voice of the people when they voted
2 63 percent for Amendments 5 and 6 that you
3 really look at these districts and you don't
4 split cities, you don't divide communities.

5 And when you are looking at areas like The
6 Villages that have three different counties,
7 even though they are in three different
8 counties, they are still a community of
9 interest, and as you heard from the homeowners
10 president, it is vital that communities of
11 interest also be kept together.

12 So in that particular case perhaps three
13 counties can be organized around The Villages,
14 but again, for Lake County that has less than
15 300,000 people, to have four U.S.
16 Representatives and four State Representatives
17 is just unconscionable, and I hope that you
18 seriously take into account compact and
19 contiguous when you look at the maps. Thank
20 you.

21 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you for
22 being here, Ms. Hurlbert. Theodore Stratton,
23 followed by John Wood.

24 MR. STRATTON: Yes, good morning. I have
25 tried to figure out what law governs how you

1 people decide. It, at the end of this thing,
2 it says that they should be geographic, where
3 possible they should follow existing political
4 and geographic boundaries.

5 But then you have agenda six -- Amendment
6 6 and 7, and are the census blocks the basic
7 building blocks for how you people design these
8 different boundaries? I can't figure out how
9 the law, which law applies to what, and I have
10 no axe to grind. You guys have my sympathy.
11 Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Mr. Chairman, he raises a
13 great point. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and just
14 for information purposes, let me, let me offer
15 a little explanation, and that is that there
16 appears to be to the normal person some
17 inconsistencies.

18 If you look at Amendments 5 and 6 and then
19 you look at the Federal Court cases, and then
20 you look at the applicable Federal and State
21 laws and then you listen to the interpretations
22 that individual citizens or even courts place
23 on terms, you would get the feeling that this
24 gentleman is exactly right.

25 And that is that there is no clear answer

1 to exactly what the building blocks should be.
2 Last night in Daytona Beach we had strong
3 testimony from a gentleman who said we need to
4 use rivers and power lines and railroads as the
5 lines that would determine where districts
6 would be.

7 We also heard testimony last night from
8 someone who said that we need to use economic
9 blocks. In other words, where people shop and
10 do their commerce, that that needs to be taken
11 into account as defining the boundaries.

12 And then, of course, you have the
13 testimony we have heard today where some people
14 say county lines and then someone else says,
15 well, except when it comes to The Villages,
16 then it is okay to cross county lines because
17 there is a community of interest.

18 That is why we have come here today,
19 because we are interested in finding out how
20 you believe these standards should be applied.

21 Now, however they are applied in the
22 development of maps, it is likely that somebody
23 will be unhappy and will challenge whatever
24 comes out the other end, but what we want to do
25 is make sure that any proposal that comes out

1 of the Legislature and does go to the courts is
2 defensible because we have listened to you and
3 we can hark to this hearing we had in The
4 Villages and we will be able to quote you,
5 because you have said keep The Villages
6 together or draw the lines this way or that
7 way.

8 But there is no definitive dispositive
9 building block, instead, there are
10 interpretations and those interpretations move
11 back and forth depending upon what court case
12 and what statute and what constitutional
13 provision you look at.

14 So thank you, you have put your finger
15 right on the problem that brings us here today.
16 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

17 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you,
18 Senator, and they did, in fact, when we got on
19 the Redistricting Committee, the first thing we
20 got was a textbook on reapportionment law, and
21 half of which is referenced to other books and
22 other law.

23 So there is a tremendous amount of
24 information out there and lots of experts on it
25 that we have to rely on as well. Mr. Wood,

1 followed by David VonGunten.

2 MR. WOOD: Yes, sir. I am John Wood from
3 Lake County, and I am going to just echo what
4 you heard so far. We would like you to keep
5 Lake County together as far as the
6 Congressional, Congressional District goes.

7 We want you to think about reducing Lake
8 County's representation from four
9 Representatives to two Representatives. We
10 feel like that would be much more beneficial to
11 Lake County, to the people of Lake County.

12 Also, what you heard about keeping The
13 Villages together, I echo that. That would be
14 separating a part from Lake County to keep The
15 Villages together, but it would also be within
16 the guidelines that you are supposed to be
17 following by keeping the city boundaries --
18 using city boundaries.

19 I understand you got a lot of boundaries
20 that you are thinking about that people are
21 talking about, but new district boundaries for
22 Lake County would require your reducing some of
23 the boundaries that go into Orange, Seminole,
24 Volusia and Marion County, to get our
25 population back to where we fit into the --

1 into the guidelines.

2 That is it. I did go on the computer and
3 try to draw up the maps three different times,
4 but I failed. So I hope next time like Bob
5 said, maybe I will follow the directions, get
6 the directions first. Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Patricia, you need to
8 hold a class.

9 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you,
10 Mr. Wood, and speaking of classes, in addition
11 to written directions, there is some great
12 U-Tube type videos on there about how to use
13 the system as well.

14 So there is tremendous resources, and if
15 you need it, these guys are available via phone
16 and here today to work with you on the system
17 if you want to get a personal tutorial. Again,
18 thank you, Mr. Wood.

19 Next we have got Mr. VonGuntten, and
20 followed by John Riedel. Please, if you need
21 to adjust the microphone, by the way, please
22 feel free to adjust the microphone and speak,
23 you know, loudly into it so that we can get
24 that on the record as well.

25 MR. VONGUNTEN: First I want to thank

1 everyone who is here on the stage. As I look
2 at the stage, I can tell that our input is
3 important. I expected kind of this morning to
4 come and find maybe Representative Precourt,
5 and he says, don't worry, I will pass along
6 everything you have to say. We don't have to
7 worry about that, because everyone is here to
8 hear what we have to say, and I thank you for
9 that.

10 You probably heard someone say that a
11 presentation was made by Patricia Sullivan and
12 if she can do it, we can do it, and that is
13 true. We have done a little bit of training.

14 I am going to take some advice from Bob as
15 well and go back and read the directions. I
16 have gone into the system and kind of made up a
17 map, and I am going to go back and redo it and
18 learn to fine tune to get those numbers exactly
19 where they need to be, and I think what is
20 important, if I am going to do that and if I am
21 going to encourage the folks that come to our
22 meetings to do that, that in fact that is just
23 not a paper exercise for us, but really that
24 our input is going to -- that you will look at
25 those.

1 And I understand the problems that you
2 face, and we all do, but if, and again, I am
3 not a youngster, so if I am going to do that, I
4 encourage everyone here to go in and learn that
5 system and have direct input and I just really
6 appreciate the fact that you are listening to
7 us and do encourage you to take a look at the
8 maps that we do submit. Thank you very much.

9 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you, sir,
10 John Riedel, followed by Mark, I think it is
11 Fisher.

12 MR. RIEDEL: Good morning, ladies and
13 gentlemen. Thank you for the opportunity to
14 address you all and to listen and the fact that
15 you are listening to our ideas.

16 Basically my name, I moved here from South
17 Florida in 1983, and I have yet to vote for a
18 U. S. Congressional candidate from Lake County.

19 I would appreciate and also would like to
20 reemphasize the fact that we would like to form
21 and vote with my neighbors and the people that
22 I correspond with on a daily basis.

23 Thank you once again for this opportunity
24 and I appreciate all of your efforts. Thank
25 you.

1 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you,
2 Mr. Riedel. Mr. Fisher, followed by William
3 Stomp.

4 MR. FISHER: Yes, good morning. My name
5 is Mark Fisher, I am from Mt. Dora, Florida. I
6 have a couple of observations and some
7 questions that I want you to leave here with.

8 First of all, during your introduction the
9 reference was made to the fact that there is
10 participation on the panel by Representatives
11 of the political parties, the Republicans and
12 the Democrats.

13 I point out that just recently it was
14 published that the number of Independents,
15 registered Independents in Florida have
16 increased since 1990 from 430,000 to 2.4
17 million.

18 The number of people who do not affiliate
19 by choice, thereby eliminating their
20 opportunity to participate in the primary
21 system, should be something of great importance
22 and of consideration by you.

23 That means there are a lot of voters out
24 there who are qualified voters who have
25 registered to vote, who do not choose to

1 affiliate with either of your political
2 parties. You should pursue that.

3 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Sir, could I get
4 you to address your comment to the
5 redistricting process?

6 MR. FISHER: Sure.

7 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: And this might
8 do it, but I just want to remind everyone that
9 we are here to hear about redistricting. Thank
10 you.

11 MR. FISHER: That relates to it because I
12 think most of us are very concerned and the two
13 Amendments that were passed by the citizens of
14 the State of Florida related to the fact that
15 we want you to take politics and self interest
16 out of the redistricting process.

17 My questions are this. Who is going to
18 vet the proposed plans to assure that they are
19 legally sufficient? When and where is that
20 vetting processing going to be undertaken and
21 what public participation in that review is
22 going to be allowed?

23 What is the process or what measures are
24 in place to assure that viable legally
25 qualifying submissions, regardless of their

1 source, are all given equal consideration?

2 And finally, once all of those legally
3 sufficient plans have been determined, who is
4 going to grade or rank those proposed
5 districts?

6 If you get several thousand of them, it is
7 not very logical to assume that between
8 January 10th and March 9th of 2012, that the
9 House and Senate are going to be able to go
10 through all 1,000 of those plans and decide
11 which one is going to be the one that is
12 finally implemented and submitted for court
13 review.

14 I will close with this comment. John
15 Adams wrote, "There is nothing which I dread so
16 much as a division of the republic into two
17 great parties. Each arranged under its leader
18 and concerting measures in opposition to each
19 other."

20 This, in his humble apprehension, is to be
21 dreaded as the greatest political evil under
22 our Constitution. Leave politics out of this.
23 We don't need people in Mt. Dora voting for
24 somebody who ostensibly lives in Jacksonville,
25 Florida.

1 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you,
2 Mr. Fisher, and again, ladies and gentlemen, we
3 are here primarily to listen to your input at
4 Senator Gaetz's discretion. I am going to
5 recognize him if he would like to address any
6 issues as we go through the meeting.

7 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Sure, and again, not in
8 any way to do -- to be argumentative, but
9 rather just to provide some data in answer to
10 your questions which are excellent questions.

11 Who vets plans to make sure that they are
12 legal? The Supreme Court of the State of
13 Florida and the Justice Department of the
14 United States.

15 When and where are the vetting, does the
16 vetting occur? It occurs as soon as the plans
17 are presented. There are also public hearings
18 that occur along the way.

19 In other words, if any Legislator or any
20 special interest group or any individual
21 citizen presents a plan and then that plan
22 takes the form of a Bill that goes before a
23 committee, the vetting occurs in public with
24 public hearings on that Bill in Tallahassee.

25 Those hearings would be open to the

1 public. Any member of the public can testify,
2 but the hearings will also be available so that
3 individuals who maybe can't come to Tallahassee
4 can share their views.

5 But the legal vetting, in answer to your
6 question, occurs after the plans are voted on
7 by the Legislature and they occur by the
8 Supreme Court and the Justice Department.

9 Are all plans given equal consideration?
10 No. There are 3,000 Bills introduced in the
11 Legislature every year, and thank God, only
12 about 240 of them get passed because a lot of
13 them are pretty stupid ideas.

14 So we can't guarantee that just because
15 someone proposes something that it will be
16 given equal consideration. That is the purpose
17 of Representative government, to make sure that
18 by your contacting your Legislators, that you
19 can say, look, this plan as it pertains to our
20 part of the state ought to be given more than
21 equal consideration.

22 It ought to be given preferential
23 consideration because we here in this community
24 understand how we want the maps drawn to make
25 sense in our community, but it is the

1 legislative process with open public input that
2 creates the vetting process, and really
3 indicates what is given consideration.

4 And then who grades or ranks the
5 districts, and I think, sir, you make an
6 excellent point that if we are fortunate, we
7 will be getting a lot of input.

8 You are right, if we waited until all of
9 the input was in before we began looking at any
10 of it or considering it or sort of seeing how
11 it fit with the other input we are receiving in
12 other parts of the state, it would be very
13 difficult to get it done.

14 That is why we have professional staff who
15 are here. That is why we are recording these
16 hearings. It is why instantly when we get a
17 proposal we put it up on our website, not just
18 for the public to see, but it is the obligation
19 of these two committees, the House Committee
20 and the Senate Committee to work on these plans
21 and listen to this input as we go, so that it
22 is not -- we don't light ourselves on fire at
23 the very end.

24 Instead, we are working right along
25 evaluating plans, but the final grading of the

1 work that is done has to be done by the voters,
2 themselves.

3 The Constitution of Florida says that the
4 Legislature is responsible for developing these
5 plans. We have chosen to make it a much more
6 open process than just Senators and
7 Representatives sitting in a room listening to
8 each other's echos, but rather to get out and
9 listen to the people of Florida first.

10 But at the end of the day, you grade and
11 you rank our work because you determine which
12 of your Representatives gets reelected or which
13 ones don't.

14 I would also make one final point just as
15 a factual matter, and that is that hardly any
16 of us, maybe none of us on this stage drew the
17 maps that exist now.

18 In other words, I ran for a Senate
19 District that somebody else drew years ago. I
20 didn't draw a district and then run for it. I
21 didn't draw a district that I am in now. I ran
22 for a district that somebody else drew.

23 So there is no pride of authorship of what
24 is. We are really interested in making changes
25 that make sense, and Mr. Chairman, I hope that

1 provides just some factual information in
2 answer to the gentleman's excellent questions.

3 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you very
4 much, Senator Gaetz. In addition, several
5 other Representatives have arrived today. Is
6 there anyone that wants to introduce themselves
7 that didn't get a chance to earlier? We will
8 take a short break from the agenda here.

9 REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Good morning, State
10 Representative Mia Jones from Jacksonville.

11 REPRESENTATIVE CLARKE: Good morning,
12 state Representative Gwyndolen Clarke, District
13 92, Broward County, northeast quadrant.

14 REPRESENTATIVE TAYLOR: Good morning,
15 State Representative Dwayne Taylor from House
16 District 27, that is Daytona Beach and Volusia
17 County.

18 REPRESENTATIVE JULIEN: Good morning, John
19 Patrick Julien, representing House District
20 104, which is in Miami Dade County, it is a
21 pleasure to be here.

22 REPRESENTATIVE METZ: Good morning, ladies
23 and gentlemen. I am Larry Metz, representing
24 House District 25, which comprises portions of
25 Lake, Seminole and Volusia counties. Thank

1 you.

2 SENATOR LYNN: Senator Evelyn Lynn, I
3 represent District 7 and that is parts of Clay,
4 Marion, Putnam and Volusia.

5 REPRESENTATIVE DRAKE: Brad Drake, Fifth
6 House District, panhandle of Florida.

7 SENATOR DEAN: Good morning, my name is
8 Charlie Dean. I am a Senator from District 3,
9 I am your neighbor to the west. I am from
10 Citrus County, I am also one of the Senators
11 that represents the southwestern portion Marion
12 County.

13 My Senatorial district goes from Baker
14 County, just outside of Jacksonville, all the
15 way to Monroe Street, the Capitol steps in Leon
16 County, and south to Citrus, Hernando County
17 line, 98 and 19.

18 Glad you are here this morning, and I
19 would like to say also that as Senator Gaetz
20 said a while ago, many of us serve in districts
21 we had nothing to do with about who drew those
22 lines. If they did, they certainly didn't
23 figure out I was going to be there.

24 REPRESENTATIVE ROGERS: Hazelle Rogers,
25 good morning, representing eight cities in

1 Broward County, District 94, and of course,
2 Broward County, one of the most diverse
3 counties in the state of Florida with over 1.8
4 million residents. Thank you.

5 REPRESENTATIVE BAXLEY: Hi, I am Dennis
6 Baxley. I represent Florida House District 24,
7 Ocala, Marion County, and I am one of the few
8 people up here that actually operates a
9 business in The Villages, Hiers Baxley Funeral
10 Service, and glad to be home.

11 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Was that a
12 pre-commercial?

13 REPRESENTATIVE LOGAN: Representative Ana
14 Rivas Logan, I represent parts of Miami Dade
15 County.

16 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: So once again,
17 to reiterate what I mentioned earlier, we have
18 representation up here that is from all over
19 the state. We have men, women, minorities,
20 Republicans, Democrats, evening people and
21 morning people, and so we will get right back
22 to the agenda.

23 Mr. Stomp, followed by Robert Lewis.

24 MR. STOMP: Good morning, ladies and
25 gentlemen. Chairman, thank you very much for

1 this opportunity to speak. I have to really
2 compliment all of you Representatives and
3 Senators for coming here and just putting up
4 with what we have to say.

5 I have great confidence that you are going
6 to listen to people, and you are going to use
7 this input and I appreciate that very, very
8 much.

9 My comment, I want to focus my comment on
10 the fact that even though the Legislature, I
11 mean, the people have voted for these -- these
12 consolidated districts rather than the
13 gerrymandering things we have, there is one
14 exception that I see.

15 It is the gerrymandering that is set up
16 for the minority type districts. It is time we
17 move away from that, folks. If there is anyway
18 we can do that it would be wonderful if we
19 could just -- just become one nation again.
20 That just takes and splits everything all over
21 again.

22 If there is some way you can gently move
23 away from that, that method of dividing our
24 country, I would appreciate it very much.

25 Thank you very much.

1 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you for
2 those comments. Robert Lewis, followed by
3 Thomas Edmonston.

4 MR. LEWIS: Good morning, thank you for
5 providing this opportunity for me to provide
6 some comments. Almost 63 percent of Floridians
7 who voted on the Constitutional Amendments
8 voted to affirm Amendments 5 and 6.

9 Fair minded Floridians of all political
10 persuasions want elections in which candidates
11 are honestly chosen and compete on even playing
12 fields.

13 It was time to put a stop to the practice
14 of gerrymandering. Legislative and conditional
15 Congressional Districts after each census. In
16 the past, the party in political power
17 brazenly redrew boundaries and laid out new
18 or changed boundaries to reflect population
19 changes in a manner primarily designed to best
20 assure it of victories in future elections.

21 The irregular and even illogical design of
22 some districts attest to this deliberate
23 manipulation which is contrary to the high
24 principles of our democracy.

25 I hope that your reports of these public

1 meetings will emphasize that Floridians want
2 the Amendments respected. We will be most
3 upset and disappointed if you fail to ensure
4 that the districts are compact, equal in
5 population, and make use of existing city,
6 county and geographical boundaries.

7 The Amendments prohibit drawing districts
8 to favor or disfavor an incumbent or political
9 party. It is your obligation to abide by the
10 Amendments even though there will be efforts by
11 some who try to thwart the Amendments by
12 claiming that adherence to the Amendments would
13 be unjust for various reasons. Thank you.

14 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you very
15 much for those comments. And I might add, if
16 you have written comments that you want to
17 submit just to make sure that your comments are
18 accurately transcribed into the record, feel
19 free to leave those written comments with our
20 staff as well.

21 Mr. Edmonston, followed by Barbara Weese.

22 MR. STONE: I am Tom, I am also from Lake
23 County. A bunch of us, a whole of people here
24 from Lake County, obviously, and I am very
25 pleased to be here and be able to give a chance

1 to speak and I appreciate everything ya'll do,
2 and I know, having just recently gotten
3 involved in the political process, I don't want
4 to be up there with you.

5 But I have been known as a person of, not
6 known as a person of very few words, but I am
7 going to cut this real short because I am not
8 going to repeat everything that my fellow Tea
9 Party people have said, because everything is
10 true.

11 That picture on the screen right now looks
12 like the, one of mine, because it looks very
13 similar. Actually, I worked on the thing. The
14 Builder is real easy to use once you get to
15 using it, but the trouble is I did it the first
16 time on a laptop and I didn't have any programs
17 in the laptop in order to print it out or even
18 see the file, so it didn't work too well, and I
19 had to do it a second time.

20 And really what I did, just for that map,
21 I just start out with Lake County and took all
22 of Sumter County, and looked at what you had
23 left, and, you know, it had options of, when I
24 looked at Orange County, Orange County has
25 enough population that it has to have at least

1 three districts in it, because you could take
2 two full districts and then a partial one.

3 So I decided that I would use the old
4 lasso feature and I would lasso part of the top
5 of Orange County, and then when I got into the,
6 into the voting districts, I had a hard time
7 finding those until I found out that you have
8 to zoom in real quick and then they show up.

9 And so I intentionally over, over lassoed
10 and then I just started deleting districts and
11 I got it down to like 25, I still have 24 extra
12 people, but that is about it, but I really just
13 did it like everybody else has said, just to
14 keep communities together and keep everything
15 close-knit.

16 Everybody that pays taxes in Lake and
17 Sumter at least got the same voting district,
18 and sorry about Orange County, you have to be
19 split up a little bit. Thank you very much.

20 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you, sir.
21 Barbara Weese, followed by Dan Eaton.

22 MR. WEESE: Good morning. I would like to
23 say one thing and then I would like to defer to
24 Cathy Williamson, and that is when you are out
25 trying to help voters to find out where and

1 whom they vote for, it is very difficult if one
2 side of the street has one Representative. I
3 am talking U.S., now, and the other side of the
4 street has another one.

5 Most of our voters or many of them in
6 central Florida come from other states. They
7 are confused and new to the Florida process,
8 but it is even more confusing when you don't
9 know for whom you should vote or where you
10 should vote. So please keep that in mind when
11 you are redistricting.

12 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you, and
13 Ms. Williamson, if you could fill out a card if
14 you don't, and I will put it in line, but
15 everybody has gotten in line, I am going to
16 take them as they come. Okay, thanks. Don
17 Eaton, followed by Sam Green.

18 MR. EATON: Yes, Don Eaton. Thank you for
19 being here today. We really appreciate this.
20 I am caught sort of flatfooted. My wife put my
21 name down, but, thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: You are not the first
23 guy, you are not the first guy.

24 MR. EATON: I am in good company then.
25 Yes, we, we in The Villages really appreciate

1 you coming here, and as you gain age, you will
2 see our really great facilities and we hope
3 that you consider moving here, and I echo the
4 words from our homeowners' association
5 president.

6 He very eloquently told about The
7 Villages, and we, I am here for the
8 Conservative Liberty Alliance, also. We are a
9 group that, we are a conservative group that
10 will be out campaigning for candidates this
11 year, and we hope that we will be in
12 Tallahassee to see each one of you. Thank you.

13 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you, sir.
14 Appreciate that, Mr. Sam Green, followed by
15 Ellen Green.

16 MR. GREEN: Good morning. Thank you very
17 much for the opportunity to have my input on
18 this today. Sixty-three percent of the voters
19 in this state voted for this, that is almost
20 two for one, and I feel that just about at
21 every point along the way the leaders of the
22 State House, Senate and also the Governor have
23 fought this process, tried to delay it, tried
24 to stop it in any way possible.

25 And that is very upsetting to me, because

1 of that, I don't really have confidence that
2 this is going to be a nonpartisan thing, and I
3 think it is extremely important that politics
4 is taken out of it totally, completely, and I
5 hope, I hope you all prove me wrong, totally.
6 I hope, I hope I am dead wrong about it not
7 being nonpartisan.

8 I think that it should be -- districts
9 should be drawn up considering city, county and
10 natural boundaries and again, totally
11 nonpartisan. Thank you very much.

12 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you, sir,
13 Ellen Green followed by Suzanne Jantz.

14 MS. GREEN: Thank you. I am very proud
15 that my husband filled in a form for me so that
16 I could be here today. I agree with a lot of
17 what I have heard. I would think it is very
18 important that the districts be contiguous so
19 that we can talk to voters and help them with
20 voting.

21 I have lived in the Golden Triangle area.
22 I live in Eustis, sort of in Eustis the Golden
23 Triangle area is Eustis, Mt. Dora and Tavares.

24 We function as a community very much as
25 The Villages do, and it is important that we

1 all have as much as possible the same
2 representation and we do not.

3 We do have District 57, which is Corinne
4 Brown's district, but there are a lot of other
5 things that divide up. Even within our city,
6 people vote for different Congressmen or
7 different State legislators, and it just
8 doesn't make any sense.

9 You talk to your friends about a certain
10 candidate and they will say, I have never heard
11 of him or he doesn't represent me, I have this
12 other person that I never see because this
13 person lives so far from us, and it must be
14 very hard for you.

15 Like Mr. Metz, for example, he has to
16 represent a big chunk of our Golden Triangle
17 area, but not all of it, and then he has to go
18 over to neighboring counties, drive through the
19 woods to get there.

20 So it doesn't benefit the voter or the
21 candidate, either one. So please keep it
22 contiguous and fair. Thank you.

23 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you,
24 ma'am. Suzanne Jantz, followed by Joanne Coen.

25 MS. JANTZ: Hello, hi, I live in Mt. Dora,

1 Lake County, and I want to thank you for
2 participating in this process, and I especially
3 want to thank anyone in this room who was part
4 of the countless volunteers who worked for
5 years to get Fair Districts on the ballot.

6 This was democracy at its best. I
7 appreciate Mr. Fisher's comments because I am
8 afraid this process will serve as a delay
9 tactic for special interests opposed to change,
10 where it is death by 1,000 cuts with endless
11 maps submitted by people without the subject
12 matter expertise, without the understanding of
13 the litigation, and then the state taxpayers
14 will be forced to defend litigation and spend
15 badly needed taxpayer money on litigation that
16 is pointless and groundless.

17 Will there be a deadline? Will there be a
18 process like this where a certain number of
19 proposed maps are then brought out to community
20 meetings like this before something gets
21 written in stone in Tallahassee?

22 I object to any idea that Tallahassee
23 could make these decisions without public input
24 of this nature, that this would have been a
25 waste of taxpayer money to have all of you here

1 traveling throughout the state on this
2 initiative and then drop the ball later when
3 maps are being finalized and there is a select
4 number of proposed maps that meet the criteria
5 for meeting the legal issues and so on.

6 So please tell me that there is a
7 deadline, that we will be seeing the results of
8 this, that you will be good stewards of the
9 taxpayer money at a time when we are being told
10 that the state has so little money that it
11 can't provide nursing home care to the frail
12 elderly on Medicaid and children's health needs
13 and other needs like unemployment being cut.

14 I want the taxpayer's money respected, but
15 I do want to see maps and have an opportunity
16 for input later instead of now. Thank you.

17 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you,
18 ma'am. Joanne Coen, followed by Richard Coen.

19 MS. COEN: Good morning. On behalf of the
20 League of Women Voters of The Villages
21 tri-county area, which is a nonpartisan
22 organization, I want to thank the Committee for
23 an opportunity to speak to you.

24 I am a Sumter County resident of The
25 Villages. During the last election cycle, the

1 League actively supported Amendments 5 and 6
2 which were passed by 63 percent of the voters
3 in the November 2010, election.

4 Today voter registration shows that
5 Florida is a politically balanced state, but
6 the current representation in Tallahassee does
7 not reflect the balance.

8 In the past during every reapportionment,
9 majority party politicians in both parties have
10 taken advantage of the opportunity to pack
11 minority party voters into very few districts,
12 thus reducing their influence in government.

13 Florida's population has grown and our
14 congressional representation will increase.
15 Drawing new political boundaries to offset
16 population growth is a complicated process.

17 You must balance a myriad of demands from
18 Federal laws to prevent minority voting
19 disenfranchisement to individual ambitions of
20 your fellow lawmakers seeking higher office.

21 As a result I recognize that your job is
22 not easy, that the process is long and arduous
23 and there will likely be legal challenges no
24 matter the outcome.

25 The census data has been completed. The

1 information has been delivered to the Governor
2 and leaders of the Legislature. Many states
3 have already completed or almost completed the
4 redistricting process, yet in Florida no
5 proposed or draft maps have been drawn, thereby
6 precluding the public from making any meaning
7 full comments on what our Congressional
8 Legislative Districts will look like other than
9 our own suggestions.

10 As a result, and as I am doing today, I
11 can only appeal to your better nature and speak
12 in generalities. The maps referenced by Senate
13 Gaetz in his opening comments should be made
14 available going forward at all of the proposed
15 hearings that are on the schedule. Thank you
16 very much.

17 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you for
18 those comments. And once again, if you would,
19 we have prepared written comments like that, if
20 you would submit it to the staff so that we can
21 accurately get them into the record, I would
22 appreciate that.

23 Richard Coen, followed by Linda or John
24 and Linda Stene.

25 MR. COEN: Good morning, my name is

1 Richard Coen, and as in most points of life I
2 follow my wife. I am Vice-President of the
3 League of Women Voters of The Villages
4 tri-county area. Thank you, I appreciate that.

5 Gentlemen and ladies, your own time table
6 which is posted on the Redistricting 2012
7 Florida Senate website shows that rather than
8 passing district maps at the beginning of the
9 legislative session in January 2012, district
10 maps are slated to be passed at the end of the
11 session on March 9th.

12 Even in the unlikely event that there is
13 no litigation over the newly drawn maps, final
14 rulings on the constitutionality of the new
15 districts will not occur until shortly before
16 the June 2012, qualifying deadline.

17 This delayed time table will only lead to
18 voter confusion. Some potential candidates may
19 not know their district boundaries in time to
20 decide whether to mount a campaign.

21 It is my understanding that Bills were
22 filed at the last session requiring the maps be
23 drawn earlier and that these bills did not even
24 get a hearing. Why was that?

25 You have told us that you will follow the

1 letter of the law and the will of the people on
2 redistricting, but you say that even as the
3 Legislature is joined in a lawsuit to fight
4 Florida Constitutional Amendment requiring new
5 boundaries be drawn with competition in mind,
6 not your own job security.

7 So, yes, you have created a situation
8 where the state is both the plaintiff and the
9 defendant, and so, yes, at a time when lower
10 revenues have been received and budgets have
11 been reduced, the state is spending taxpayer
12 money on both sides of the same question.

13 The Legislature should stop avoiding the
14 voters' decision and remember its obligation to
15 follow the Florida Constitution and support the
16 new fair district standards and apply the
17 dictate of those amendments when preparing
18 redrawn districts as the voters wanted. I
19 thank you for the time that you have given me
20 to speak to you today.

21 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you again.
22 We appreciate those comments, Mr. Coen, and
23 once again, when you have written prepared
24 remarks like that, if you would please submit
25 them into the record so they can accurately be

1 reflected, I would appreciate it. John and
2 Linda Stene, followed by Roz Odell.

3 MR. STENE: I am John Stene, and my wife
4 has said she doesn't want to speak. Anyway,
5 thanks for the opportunity, and we have been in
6 The Villages for eight years.

7 Our main concern is that we have a
8 contiguous unit, you know, for our voting
9 block. And my mother once said years ago, the
10 mind can only stand what the rear end can
11 endure, so I will get down.

12 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Excellent
13 comments. Roz Odell, followed by Patricia
14 Hanley.

15 MS. ODELL: Hello, I am Roz Odell from
16 Citrus County. I was beginning to think we
17 weren't represented here, but Mr. Dean came in.

18 As you heard, when he described District
19 5, the size and direction is rather unruly, and
20 also, as you have heard, at the moment the
21 public perception is that our districts are
22 drawn with careers in mind, not the good of the
23 people, and I would like to ask that this not
24 happen.

25 Please remember that you are representing

1 a large group of people, both Democrat and
2 Republican. Please make it easy for people to
3 vote. Don't have one precinct in another
4 district.

5 We need to be able to talk amongst ourself
6 to decide who to vote for, and to do it where
7 we know where we can go and not one person on
8 one side of the street goes five miles away and
9 the other person on the other side of the
10 street goes 10 miles in the opposite direction.
11 Thank you.

12 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you,
13 ma'am. Patricia Hanley, followed by Mike
14 Fahey.

15 MS. HANLEY: I would like to thank you for
16 being here and Senator Dean for being here as
17 well. He represents an entirely wide and long
18 district. It is very hard to campaign in his
19 district.

20 I don't necessarily support anybody that
21 is up there right now, but I do want to say
22 that it has got to be, you have got to use some
23 common sense in drawing these districts.

24 When we are in Citrus County in the middle
25 of the state, in our district, our Senatorial

1 District goes all of the way up to the Georgia
2 border, and all of the way over to Tallahassee,
3 that is ridiculous, especially if you are
4 paying for gasoline and you are trying to
5 campaign in an area that large.

6 I know you are bound by population, but I
7 am sure you can make some of these districts
8 more compact and that is all I want to say.
9 Let's be fair about things.

10 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you very
11 much. Mike Fahey, followed by Kathleen Weaver.

12 MR. FAHEY: Hello. My name is Mike Fahey
13 and I am from Citrus County. I would just like
14 to thank you for having this hearing, and also
15 I would like to thank everyone else in this
16 room for taking their duty as citizens and
17 becoming well-informed people acting
18 responsibly.

19 Actually, I would like to see more people
20 in this room, but I have been on the website
21 and I know that operating this computer
22 applications and reading and writing and trying
23 to find solutions to complex problems, these
24 all point to a well-educated citizenry, and I
25 would encourage you not to balance the budget

1 on the backs of our students and our teachers.

2 But the -- my point today that I would
3 like to make about Citrus County, in looking at
4 the map, is the Congressional District, and our
5 Congressional District, the Fifth District, is
6 35 percent over population, and just to be
7 really simple, I would suggest that you just
8 cut Citrus County loose from the Fifth
9 District, because our geographically, we are
10 more in with Marion County and the north
11 central part of the state, and the marketing is
12 incorrect.

13 In lumping us in with Tampa Bay, I never
14 go to Tampa. I go to Marion County to do
15 shopping and to work and so on and so forth,
16 and that is my point. Thank you.

17 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you, sir.
18 Kathleen Weaver followed Brian Corley, and once
19 again, I know it is tempting to get off topic,
20 but please keep your comments focused on
21 redistricting, thank you. Ms. Weaver.

22 MS. WEAVER: Thank you for coming here
23 today. We all appreciate it, I am sure. I
24 just will reiterate the same thing that other
25 people have said.

1 We would like the Legislature to please
2 drop the lawsuit against the Amendments that we
3 passed. It is a waste of our money. We would
4 also definitely like a nonpartisan group to be
5 choosing these, and please give us some maps
6 that we will be able to choose from before it
7 goes to the Legislature in Tallahassee.

8 Many of us will not be able to go to
9 Tallahassee to present our issues at that time.
10 Thank you.

11 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you.

12 MR. CORLEY: Good morning, Mr. Chairman
13 and members, my name is Brian Corley. I am the
14 Supervisor of Elections for Pasco County. You
15 are probably asking yourself, what am I doing
16 here.

17 My children are with my grandparents over
18 at the pool right now. I am taking time from
19 vacation to be here with you all this morning.

20 I also serve on the Executive Committee
21 for the Florida State Association of
22 Supervisors of Elections.

23 I want to thank you all first for the
24 opportunity to provide input on the front end
25 of this very important topic, and I sincerely

1 applaud all of you for the unprecedented level
2 of transparency of this process.

3 I don't envy your task ahead.
4 Redistricting is not going to be fun, and for
5 many of my colleagues, including myself, this
6 is our first go around and my colleague sitting
7 next to me, Dee Brown, I asked her how many she
8 has been with, she is from Marion County, she
9 has been through four. Pretty impressive,
10 isn't it, and I am concerned about the stress,
11 because I can't lose much more hair going
12 through this.

13 I don't know if I am going to gain weight
14 or where we are going here, but I will say
15 this, ladies and gentlemen, I am confident that
16 when it is all said and done, we as elections
17 officials will continue to make Florida shine
18 with regards to elections in 2012 and beyond.

19 I want to slightly, obviously, deviate
20 from the topic today. I want to focus on two
21 issues that are important to elections
22 officials. Time and district lines.

23 Number one, time. To conduct successful
24 elections in 2012, we as elections officials
25 need time to complete required tasks. To

1 conduct our elections efficiently and
2 accurately, we need time to adjust precinct
3 lines to new districts, gain approval of those
4 precincts by our Board of County Commissioners,
5 and notify all voters well in advance of
6 election day.

7 And as you are well aware, we can't
8 re-precinct our counties until your work is
9 done. I realize that the Florida Constitution
10 specifies that reapportionment occur during the
11 2012 regular session.

12 However, as was stated earlier, the
13 earlier in the session the better. That will
14 give us more time to do what we need to do. It
15 is also my understanding that if the
16 legislature, Attorney General, Supreme Court
17 and Justice Department all complete their work
18 on schedule, the Supervisor of Elections will
19 have less than two weeks to adjust the records
20 of Florida's 11 million voters and nearly
21 300,000 in my county alone.

22 This is before the first absentee ballots
23 must be mailed to our military and overseas
24 voters, and this, of course, excludes any
25 litigation.

1 Also, the calendar provided by the
2 legislative staff indicates that final Justice
3 Department review of new districts will likely
4 be completed after a candidate qualifying.
5 This has the potential of confusing candidates
6 and delaying ballot printing.

7 The second issue I want to briefly touch
8 upon is we ask that you represent, excuse me,
9 in regards to district lines, that you respect
10 communities when you draw district lines.

11 I want to thank the legislative staff for
12 working with us in providing voting tabulation
13 districts, which, as you all know, take into
14 consideration intact communities, traffic
15 patterns and physical barriers, and we would
16 ask that you adhere to these lines wherever
17 possible.

18 Again, thank you for the opportunity to
19 provide some input on this important process,
20 as the Supervisor of Elections, I speak for my
21 colleagues when I say it is very much
22 appreciated. Thank you very, very much.

23 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you, sir.
24 Next we have Al Butler, followed by Mary
25 O'Hanlon.

1 MR. BUTLER: Thank you very much. I want
2 to welcome all of the Legislators to The
3 Villages. My name is Al Butler. I am a
4 resident of The Villages and Chairman of the
5 Sumter County REC.

6 I want to reiterate a message that you
7 have heard from others today, and it would make
8 our political processes so much more effective
9 if you recognize The Villages as one entity,
10 and although we are unique and cross three
11 counties, I hope that you will take that into
12 consideration when you do the realignment.
13 Thank you very much.

14 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you, sir.
15 Mary O'Hanlon, followed by Nancy Bell.

16 MS. O'HANLON: My name is Mary O'Hanlon
17 and I live in Clermont in District 5. I would
18 like to tell you something about several years
19 ago I arranged a meet the candidate event and
20 the then Representative for District 5, three
21 different people in his office told me that he
22 was not our Representative, but he was, and
23 that -- so that is no representation.

24 I would like to suggest that you follow
25 the kiss principle, and keep it simple.

1 Districts should not cross county lines,
2 Representatives should live within the counties
3 that they represent. They should not cover
4 three different counties that are so big that
5 they don't even know the parts of the counties
6 they represent.

7 And I really wonder why there even has to
8 be these meetings. I think it is great. The
9 people have an opportunity to speak. However,
10 I think they spoke loud and clear last November
11 about what we wanted in districts.

12 It is no secret that gerrymandering was
13 started 200 years ago, and the benefit of it,
14 of course, has always been to stack the
15 districts to suit the party in office, both
16 parties, and I think that is what really has to
17 be focused on and eliminated.

18 We need to have districts that are
19 contiguous and that are small enough that the
20 people can know their Representative and
21 vice-versa, and they should have the
22 opportunity to go to the polls feeling that
23 their vote is going to count.

24 I have spoken to many Democrats who don't
25 bother voting because they feel it is a waste

1 of their time, that they can't win and
2 certainly the last election proved that
3 statement.

4 So my request would be, keep it simple,
5 keep it compact and keep it fair. Thank you.

6 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you. Next
7 we have Nancy Bell, followed by Charlene
8 Walker. Ms. Bell.

9 MS. BELL: Good morning, ladies and
10 gentlemen. Thank you for coming to our area to
11 listen to us, and I think you have done that.
12 It is worth repeating, I think, that in
13 November of 2010, 63 percent of Florida voters
14 approved the Constitutional Amendments for fair
15 districting.

16 On a personal note, if you had been
17 elected by 63 percent, I think you would be
18 pretty happy. I think you would feel like you
19 had a mandate, and that is what the voters in
20 Florida feel.

21 We feel that we have a mandate for fair
22 districts, and you wouldn't try to challenge or
23 change the vote because the voters' votes are
24 the wishes of the people and that is the way we
25 feel about the Fair Districts Amendment.

1 We expect you to follow the wishes of the
2 people on the issue of fair districts and we
3 certainly do not expect you to spend taxpayer
4 money to fight the fair districts.

5 The State Constitution requires that no
6 apportionment plan or district shall be drawn
7 with the intent to favor or disfavor a
8 political party or an incumbent.

9 Gerrymandering, as it has already been
10 said, is wrong, whether it is done by
11 Republicans or Democrats or Independents or
12 whoever, it is wrong, and it is time for the
13 voters to be able to choose their
14 Representatives rather than elected officials
15 choosing their voters.

16 We talked a lot about maps this morning.
17 One map I have seen is the one done by Columbia
18 University law student and Juris Doctorate
19 candidate, Nicholas Ortez (phonetic), working
20 under the direction of Columbia University law
21 professor, Nate Persily, who is a redistricting
22 expert the courts relied on to redraw lines in
23 four states following the 2000 census.

24 His map is very interesting and it is fair
25 with districts that are contiguous, compact and

1 with equal population, which follows
2 traditional redistricting principles.

3 If you attempt to redistrict based on
4 favoring one party or, in fact, if you do that,
5 we will be a whisper away from fascism.
6 Defined in the dictionary, as a system of
7 government characterized by a rigid one party
8 dictatorship and forcible suppression of the
9 opposition.

10 The people in our democratic republic and
11 the people of Florida will not stand for
12 fascism. Now, I beg you to do the right thing.

13 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Ma'am, I am
14 going to ask you keep the rhetorics --

15 MS. BELL: For the right reasons when you
16 draw the new districts.

17 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: -- to a little
18 bit more higher standard. And once again,
19 ma'am, if you could, when you have written
20 prepared remarks like that, if you could submit
21 them to our staff so we can accurately reflect
22 them in the record, I would appreciate it.

23 Next we have Charlene Walker, and she will
24 be followed by Evelyn Arthur. Ms. Walker.
25 There she is.

1 MS. WALKER: I can't follow that. I
2 really, really just want to say and ask you to
3 please follow the requirements listed in the
4 Amendments, and if you do that I think we will
5 have a fair redistricting process, and that is
6 the important thing, especially Lake County.

7 I live in Lady Lake, Lake County and Lake
8 County is an absolute disaster, and that has
9 been discussed. So if we can correct those
10 kinds of things I would appreciate it. Thank
11 you.

12 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you,
13 Ms. Walker, Evelyn Arthur followed by Albert
14 Exner.

15 MS. ARTHUR: Good morning, everyone, and
16 thank you for being here. In November 3.1
17 million Floridians voted and passed the
18 redistricting standard. The fact that the
19 Legislature has a suit or set aside money
20 basically is saying that we are suing
21 ourselves.

22 Sixty-three percent of us voted. We want
23 the districts to be fair, as a lot of people
24 have said, and I am just about convinced that
25 it should be done by a computer.

1 It should be done by a program that has
2 been proven before in various states. I just
3 think that the job is just really, really, just
4 too tremendous to be done in the time frame
5 that is necessary for the proper folks that
6 want to represent us be able to come forth and
7 know who they are representing.

8 Like a lot of others, I think we just need
9 to feel that it is going to be done fairly, and
10 I am not sure that individuals can do that. I
11 think a proper computer program by the person
12 that Ms. Bell said, talked about, would be the
13 proper way to go. Thank you for coming, and I
14 appreciate this opportunity.

15 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you,
16 ma'am. Albert Exner, followed by Mike Archer.

17 MR. EXNER: I would like to start by
18 thanking the folks on the stage being here
19 today to listen to what the public has to say.

20 The most important thing I think that I,
21 it occurred to me was that the likelihood of
22 having every county and every community having
23 just the representation that belongs to it and
24 not sharing a legislative assistance by
25 devoting the -- the -- the -- the various

1 opportunities to gerrymander, there is no
2 possibility that these gentlemen on the stage
3 can possibly arrange to have every county only
4 represented by the folks within that county,
5 and the -- the -- not just the county, but the
6 individual localities.

7 I think that we all have to be realistic
8 that that can't happen, but we can certainly
9 work to approximate this by having, say, for
10 example, I am from Marion County, and in Marion
11 County we have three, I think four different
12 Senatorial districts representing us, and by
13 this, it occurs that there is a lack of
14 concentrated effort, concentrated knowledge,
15 concentrated work on the part of the folks
16 doing the job in the Senate.

17 With this in mind I would like to suggest
18 that we all get behind them and continue to
19 submit ideas and I thank you very much.

20 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you, sir.
21 Mike Archer is next, followed by Linda Hobbs.

22 MR. ARCHER: Good morning. How are you
23 doing? Here we are 11 years later after what
24 many people believe, whether we agree or not,
25 many people believe was one of the most corrupt

1 elections in modern American history, took
2 place right here in Florida.

3 We developed widespread voter mistrust
4 following that, year after year after year.
5 Now, the process of redistricting is very
6 healthy, because it allows us to try to rebuild
7 some credibility into the political process in
8 Florida.

9 So it is something we all want to do, but
10 what I would like you to consider is this.
11 Your stated goal that you said several times
12 today is to remove politics from the process,
13 yet as many speakers have pointed out, the
14 Legislature, itself, is fighting the process.

15 That is just not helpful at all, fighting
16 those Amendments is not going to build
17 credibility.

18 Secondly, to remove politics from the
19 process, are you legally forbidden, I mean
20 legally forbidden from getting the services of
21 a politically neutral redistricting expert to
22 manage this process and see it through, through
23 all of the vetting and all of the Supreme Court
24 work so that the public has a full chance to
25 see every piece of this process, as many people

1 have mentioned.

2 I want to know and I would like an answer
3 from both a Democrat and a Republican, I would
4 like to know, are you legally forbidden from
5 doing that? Thank you.

6 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you, sir,
7 and after the meeting, everyone here will be
8 available to meet with you at your convenience.

9 We are going to have people address issues
10 at that time. Again, thank you for your
11 comments.

12 MR. ARCHER: May I have an answer, please?

13 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: We are at the
14 end of the meeting we are going to answer a
15 whole long laundry list of comments and we are
16 going to do it in that format.

17 MR. ARCHER: Okay, so you will answer that
18 question later, thank you.

19 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you for
20 your time, sir. Linda Hobbs is up next,
21 followed by Sandy Trusso.

22 MS. HOBBS: Good morning.

23 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Good morning.

24 MS. HOBBS: My name is Linda Hobbs and I
25 live in Sumter county and I would like to thank

1 each of you for coming here this morning. You
2 probably got up earlier than I did. A number
3 of you probably had to drive quite a distance.

4 This issue is one of one nation or not,
5 divided or not. I would, for those of us who
6 have seen the present map districting, some
7 people have referred to it as having fingers.

8 For sure it is a strange map, and I
9 acknowledge that you -- that you did not draw
10 the map, but I also am aware that you may have
11 benefited from that map, and so, and what did
12 that strange map say?

13 And the question is, can redistricting be
14 used for voter suppression, and that is what we
15 are actually talking about today. And what did
16 the vote of the 63 percent of Floridians say
17 they wanted?

18 They want voter expression, not voter
19 suppression. They want every vote to count,
20 and they want every voter included. This is an
21 incredible opportunity that each of you have
22 now, and it is to right a wrong and it is to
23 say that you represent all of the people in
24 your district, not just some of them.

25 So I ask each of you to let the desire for

1 citizen representation and voter expression be
2 the guide for this new redistricting. Our
3 people, our country has been divided enough.
4 We are looking to you to bring us together.
5 Thank you.

6 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you very
7 much for those comments. Sandy Trusso,
8 followed by Marguerite Cavanaugh.

9 MS. TRUSSO: Thank you for allowing our
10 input on this redistricting process. In my
11 opinion we need to draw the lines in compact
12 districts that are most convenient to local
13 voters and in districts that best serve the
14 needs of the majority of the communities in
15 each county.

16 This way it is much easier to know your
17 Legislators and they, in turn, are more
18 attentive to individual and community needs.
19 When you spread these geographic districts out
20 so far, it is almost impossible for a
21 Legislator to cover the territory so as to
22 really understand the needs of his or her
23 constituency.

24 Marion County is one of the largest of the
25 smaller Florida counties, and we should not be

1 so chopped up so as to render us insignificant.

2 For example, currently in Marion County we
3 have four Senators, each of whom slices off a
4 small piece of our county, and then in each of
5 these small pieces, each of them is thrown into
6 a mix of other counties, who's cultures are so
7 varied, everything from a portion of our State
8 Capitol, Senator Dean, college towns, to rural
9 farm land, to ocean life styles, none of which
10 is representative of the type of values,
11 culture and growth that is unique to Marion
12 County.

13 We need for our State Senators to
14 understand and represent the needs of Marion
15 County as their top priority.

16 Another example, one of our Congressmen is
17 mainly in Orange County, Orlando, an area so
18 far away and so culturally different, so as to
19 have very little in common with our needs. We
20 need for our Congressman to be geographically
21 more personally assessable which also enables
22 more accountability, especially within the
23 Federal government.

24 People already feel that the U.S. Senate
25 and Congress are so far away that they are out

1 of reach. Although we appreciate town
2 meetings, it is nearly impossible to explain a
3 specific problem in depth. While there are
4 Congressional District offices, most of the
5 time we have to drive to Orlando to meet with
6 our Congressman.

7 No matter how responsive our Congressman
8 tries to be, in a district this size, it is
9 extremely difficult to meet with many of his
10 constituents from further and smaller counties.

11 Therefore, it is essential to have a
12 smaller Congressional District, exclusive to
13 Marion County, which may or may not incorporate
14 small pieces of other bordering communities
15 who's communities are closer to our needs.

16 One other thing I would like to mention, I
17 wasn't going to mention it, but since it has
18 been brought up. Unless there is a massive
19 education program, we know by the pregnant pig
20 amendment that most of the voters here have not
21 been fully informed on a lot of the ballots and
22 so a lot of times they vote a straight yes.

23 Okay, so we aren't really sure that they
24 have agreed with Amendments 5 and 6, and
25 another thing is that the organization who

1 wants to define what is fair, despite the fact
2 that they claim nonpartisan, are very much in
3 line with a particular party, and I think that
4 this causes discrimination against the rest of
5 the races and the ethnicities.

6 So again, I would ask that you do it by
7 community need and compact, compactness. Thank
8 you.

9 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you,
10 Ms. Trusso. Next we have Marguerite Cavanaugh,
11 followed by Marsha Shearer. Ms. Cavanaugh?
12 Has she left? Okay. Great. Marsha Shearer is
13 next, followed by Anne Schalet.

14 MS. SHEARER: Good morning, voters,
15 indeed, knew what they were voting for when
16 they voted for these two referenda. How many
17 times do we actually do it? How many times
18 does it take?

19 The Chair indicated that building blocks
20 were needed to look at the various issues
21 involved in coming up with these districts.

22 It seems to me that the major building
23 blocks are already there. First of all, common
24 sense, and secondly, the very specific
25 directions that were specified in the two

1 referenda. I frankly am very disappointed we
2 don't have a map to comment on today.

3 I -- perhaps if the Legislature had not
4 been so busy trying to avoid the
5 implementation, perhaps we would have one.

6 There is a concern I do have, now that I
7 got that out of my system, and that is the
8 timeline. This has been talked about before,
9 but there is an issue that does relate to
10 fairness, and that is that by the time these
11 districts are redrawn and comments are made and
12 then the districts are redrawn again, by the
13 time the election comes around, the candidates,
14 particularly those who are not incumbents of
15 either party, are going to have one heck of a
16 time getting their views known to the public.

17 So the timeline here that the way this is
18 going on is set right now in favor of
19 incumbents, regardless of party, and that I
20 feel is against the very issue that the
21 referenda tried to address. Thank you.

22 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you very
23 much for those comments. Ann Schalet, followed
24 by Sam McConnell.

25 MS. SCHALET: I only came to Florida 18

1 months ago. I feel totally incompetent to say
2 anything more than I am in total culture shock
3 that 63 percent of the voters could vote for
4 something that is now being sued by the
5 Legislature. Thank you.

6 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you. Sam
7 McConnell followed by Alan Wichman.

8 MR. MCCONNELL: Sam McConnell from Marion
9 County. I want to thank The Villages for
10 hosting us. We don't get our own community of
11 interest meeting, so I thank you for having us
12 as guests.

13 That is part of why I wanted to talk to
14 you. You know, I had a choice to go to
15 Daytona, a choice to come down to The Villages
16 and a choice to go up to Gainesville, so
17 therein lies part of the challenge.

18 We are so splintered, we are not a
19 community of interest in Marion County, we are
20 a community of pot pie. We just flat out do
21 not have that singleness of representation that
22 we need to have to show that we are a community
23 of interest.

24 Marion County I don't think has had a
25 State Senate probably since the '80s, that

1 lived there. You know, I was raised with a
2 statement that home is where the heart is.

3 I think in this redistricting it might be,
4 the heart is where the home is, and I am really
5 concerned that we haven't taken into effect
6 that Marion County has got four State Senators,
7 and they are all great State Senators, I
8 appreciate what they have done for our county,
9 and this is by no means a reflection upon the
10 current elected officials, but what I am saying
11 is that we need somebody that can stand up for
12 Marion County and can represent Marion County
13 and can put forth our wishes and concerns as a
14 community of interest.

15 You know, whether you are running for
16 political office or running the political
17 office or running from the political office,
18 you need to have a community of interest to
19 stand for.

20 We don't, we don't -- our elected
21 officials are so splintered that when we have
22 community activities it is hard for a State
23 Senator or a state Representative to be at some
24 of our community activities because they are so
25 from away.

1 It took me 48 minutes to drive here from
2 my house and I am an aggressive driver.
3 Daytona, if I would have went to that meeting
4 it would have took me 75 minutes to an hour
5 and-a-half to drive over there to that meeting.
6 If I go up to Gainesville, it is almost an
7 hour.

8 We are a community of interest in Marion
9 County, ladies and gentlemen. We do represent
10 a strong body of voters, and for you to have us
11 splintered the way we are is not fair to Marion
12 County.

13 I totally respect the State legislators
14 and the State Senators that have tried to
15 represent us, but it is time for a change and a
16 redistricting of Marion County, and I thank The
17 Villages in Lake County and Sumter County for
18 having us here.

19 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you, sir.
20 And those were great comments, and, you know,
21 the home is where the heart is, is a great way
22 it look at it, and those comments truly came
23 from your heart, I could tell. Thank you.
24 Alan Wichman, followed by Joyce Hamilton Henry.

25 MR. WICHMAN: My name is Al Wichman, I

1 live in Grand Island, which is in Lake County,
2 and my wife and I are members of the League of
3 Women Voters and we certainly agree with the
4 comments that have been made by Mrs. and
5 Mr. Coen of the Lake County board.

6 The item of time seems to be mentioned by
7 most people. I was reading an article about
8 the number of states that have already adopted
9 their own redistricting, and we are falling by
10 the wayside.

11 Somehow as I watch television I see
12 candidates are now identifying that they wish
13 to run for particular offices. How do they
14 know what office they are running for? We
15 haven't identified what the districts are.

16 So this is the biggest situation that
17 faces people like yourselves to find out what
18 kind of representation you are going to have to
19 work with if you are elected.

20 Now, in addition to the 63 percent figure
21 which most people have been applauding all
22 meeting we see that our tax money is being
23 spent to fight what we want, and I think
24 63 percent majority of people that really
25 studied, really studied these Amendments back

1 in November, the League of Women Voters, one
2 agency that has worked diligently to get the
3 word out to the people.

4 So the comment that people didn't know
5 what they were voting for doesn't take any kind
6 of credence at all. We want fairness. We want
7 our tax money spent wisely. We want good
8 representative districts, not the
9 gerrymandering that we see when we look at our
10 present map which is an absolute disgrace.
11 Thank you.

12 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you, sir.
13 Next we have Joyce Henry, followed by Marsha
14 Solms. Joyce, are you here? Thank you.

15 MS. HENRY: Good morning. My name is
16 Joyce Hamilton Henry, and I am the Director of
17 the Mid Florida Regional Office of the ACLU
18 which is based in Tampa, and I am here to speak
19 on behalf of the ACLU.

20 You have two mandates to uphold. The 1965
21 Voting Rights Act and the mandate from the
22 63 percent of Floridians who voted for
23 Amendments 5 and 6.

24 They both require that you draw the maps
25 for the new House Senate and Congressional

1 Districts that are compact, contiguous and
2 reflect the needs of communities of interest,
3 specifically, more specifically,
4 African-Americans and Latinos.

5 We want fair nonpartisan districts. It
6 should not favor or disfavor any political
7 party. We want a process that is truly, truly
8 transparent. We believe that lawmakers should
9 not be able to draw their own individual
10 districts.

11 That is the essence of insider and back
12 room deal and you also heard gerrymandering.
13 We are deeply troubled by this very slow and
14 what will amount to be a very expensive
15 process.

16 You have had the data, census data for
17 months. Our question to you is, where are the
18 maps? We have the technology, the software,
19 and we clearly have the intellectual capital to
20 draw the maps. This is not rocket science.

21 Where are the maps and why is it taking so
22 long? We are being asked to come in on a
23 process, but we are not given the opportunity,
24 the real opportunity to comment.

25 Citizen participation is at the heart of a

1 healthy democracy. On the surface, these
2 hearings may seem to engage people in a
3 democratic process, but in reality, without the
4 maps, it is a sham, a farce, a waste of
5 everyone's time and the taxpayer's dollar.

6 Floridians want to see the map. We want
7 to know who our Representatives will be.
8 Potential candidates want to know which
9 district they should run for and we just heard
10 from one Supervisor that Supervisor of
11 Elections need to know also so that they could
12 do their jobs.

13 If you are truly committed to making our
14 democracy work fairly, vibrantly and
15 inclusively, you need to make the map, present
16 it to the public, tell us why you draw the
17 districts and then invite our comments.

18 Only then can we have a real conversation,
19 unless the goal is to keep us in the dark,
20 confused and further delay the process. I hate
21 to resort to a colloquial kind of term, but I
22 will. Read our lips. Show us the maps. Thank
23 you.

24 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you. Next
25 we have Ms. Marsha Solms, followed by Gary

1 Davis.

2 MS. SOLMS: My name is Marsha Solms, I
3 live in The Villages in Sumter County. I just
4 have two brief comments.

5 I am in District 42, and I would like to
6 urge that The Villages remain, remain in one
7 State House District.

8 My Congressional District, which is
9 District Number 5, I would like all of The
10 Villages to be, I would urge you to vote for
11 all of The Villages to be represented by one
12 Representative.

13 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you,
14 ma'am. Next we have Gary Davis, followed by
15 Cheryl Borkowski.

16 MR. DAVIS: Good morning, everyone, thank
17 you for being here. I appreciate the
18 opportunity to be part of a public forum. I am
19 a unique Villager, I live in Sumter County here
20 in The Villages. I came here seven years ago,
21 moved north to come to The Villages, and I
22 didn't come here to retire, I came here to open
23 a business.

24 My business partner sent me up here to
25 establish this office. So over the last seven

1 years in building this office I have talked to
2 literally thousands of people, not only through
3 business, but my Rotary Club, my political
4 party affiliation and activity, as a
5 representative of one of our districts here in
6 The Villages, my church and other activities.

7 We are a unique community. We have a
8 common culture, we have common interest. We
9 came here for the lifestyle and what this
10 community represents, but being spread over
11 three counties and two municipalities makes it
12 a challenge.

13 So I would ask you to give serious
14 consideration that when you are looking at what
15 The Villages represents, now 83,000 and
16 growing, expected to peak out at around 105,000
17 residents, that you look at The Villages as one
18 voting block, for Legislative, Congressional
19 and Senatorial Districts.

20 And Mr. Baxley, like you, I share a target
21 rich environment here. Thank you very much.

22 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Cheryl
23 Borkowski, followed by Roger Kass.

24 MS. BORKOWSKI: I am Cheryl Borkowski from
25 Sumter County. I don't speak very well in

1 public. In fact, I am shaking, and I just --

2 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: You are doing great,
3 ma'am, but could you speak directly into the
4 mike, because I know all of these friends and
5 neighbors here --

6 MS. BORKOWSKI: Okay, I don't want to
7 sound too loud.

8 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: No, that is all right,
9 that is all right.

10 MS. BORKOWSKI: I am just very
11 disappointed that our Representatives have been
12 dragging their feet. I want fair
13 representation in the redistricting, and I have
14 been very disappointed in public officers and
15 people that have participated in running our
16 government in Florida.

17 I don't feel you have to be a Harvard
18 graduate to do what is right for the American
19 people, and on this small little redistricting
20 thing, I expect you people to do the right
21 thing, and you know you can do it by computer
22 and it is probably going to be the fairest way.
23 Thank you.

24 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you. Next
25 we have Roger Kass, and I don't have any other

1 cards. So if anybody else wants to speak if
2 would you get with staff and fill out a card
3 and get it up with me, you still have that
4 opportunity. Mr. Kass.

5 MR. KASS: Good morning, and thank you for
6 the opportunity. My name is Roger Kass, and I
7 am the previous President, past, immediate past
8 President of The Villages Homeowners'
9 Association.

10 I happen to live in Marion County, but
11 when I was the Homeowners' President I
12 represented all of The Villages, and all of the
13 residents of The Villages.

14 As has been said, we are a unique
15 community, a community of common interest. Our
16 interests are similar and I believe it is
17 important that our representation reflect that.

18 I would ask that you consider the fact
19 that we are a community of common interest and
20 establish The Villages as part of a single
21 congressional legislative and represented
22 district, regardless of what county we live in,
23 because we do live in three counties, and we do
24 have -- and in two municipalities, and I thank
25 you for your consideration and time. Thank

1 you.

2 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you, sir.
3 Now, I did have one lady who was not here when
4 I called her name earlier. Has Marguerite
5 Cavanaugh come back, last call? Okay. And
6 then I have Catherine Williamson, would you
7 like to speak, please step up to the -- thank
8 you.

9 MS. WILLIAMSON: Thank you, and thank you
10 all for coming here. The topic that this
11 reminds me of is one of the things that we see
12 all around the country, and that is the erosion
13 of our population's faith and trust in their
14 government and you guys probably experience it
15 all of the time, but many times people become
16 involved with government and their first
17 involvement is from a negative point of view,
18 because they basically have a very low level of
19 trust.

20 And I think this is a great opportunity
21 for you all, there is maybe in your daily work
22 you can only feel like you can make slight very
23 small steps towards improving that.

24 This is a big step you can make towards
25 improving our population's faith and trust in

1 government. Anybody who looks at a current map
2 has a -- an immediate sense that something
3 doesn't make sense here.

4 So, of course, the first thing that
5 everybody is looking for in redistricting is
6 districts that make sense. I think that it is
7 easy to understand that The Villages are a
8 community of interest and that it makes sense
9 that they are kept together in redistricting.

10 For the rest of us who live in Lake
11 County, it makes -- it would make more sense to
12 us if we were not represented by four different
13 U.S. Congress people, four different
14 Representatives, that if there were -- if it
15 was more along county lines, that would make
16 more sense to us.

17 The timeline is another area where you can
18 effect what people's perception of what you are
19 doing is. If this drags out to the point
20 where it becomes clear that the votes and the
21 late vote in the Legislature puts this in a
22 time frame where this gets finished up the day
23 or a week before ballots need to be put
24 together, this will be viewed as a general
25 public as a way that you could be -- that you

1 have caused difficulty for them, that you have
2 not enabled them to be positively involved with
3 government, but have made it more difficult.

4 The other thing that you can do is, it is
5 good to see so many people from different areas
6 up here. One of the things that I hope that
7 people from other parts of the state are here
8 for, is that we would like to see the people
9 from other parts of our state be involved with
10 drawing the lines in our state so that there is
11 no perception at all that any of you are
12 individually involved in drawing the districts
13 that you represent.

14 It needs to be something that is clearly
15 fair in how you do that. You are doing your
16 meetings in an open way. You need to keep that
17 going so that everything looks transparent.
18 This is a great opportunity. We hope that you
19 really follow through on that. Thank you.

20 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you very
21 much for those kind words. I have got one
22 additional card here from Bud Mangels, and
23 again, anyone else that wants to speak, please
24 see our staff. They are handing me another
25 card right now and we will give you that

1 opportunity. Mr. Mangels.

2 MR. MANGELS: Yes, the name is Mangels.

3 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Mangels, I
4 mangled it, sorry.

5 MR. MANGELS: That is a grand old German
6 name and I am proud to be a first generation
7 American, and one of the things that I find
8 lacking in this discussion is we are talking
9 about Republicans, Democrats, Independents,
10 ethnic groups, but I haven't heard anybody
11 talking about we are all Americans.

12 Secondly, I think we talk about a republic
13 that is based upon a representative form of
14 government, and we need neighborhoods, I heard
15 the word compact made several times, but we
16 need to have an opportunity to be in contact
17 with our representatives because frankly, what
18 you think isn't very important.

19 What is important is that you know what we
20 think, so that when you have cast a ballot, so
21 that when you cast a ballot, whether it is in
22 the Federal government or the State government,
23 it is really responding to the basis of this
24 republic, and that is that we have somebody
25 that is going to represent us.

1 You don't have a job. You have an
2 assignment. You have a calling, and that
3 calling is to represent a group of American
4 people in a very wonderful form of government
5 and that is one that is based upon
6 representation of all of the people.

7 I neglected to say thank you for being
8 here. I appreciate you willing to serve as
9 part of that government process, and all of the
10 people that I sit with out here today, I am
11 thankful that they are taking part in this very
12 precious thing that we have. Thank you.

13 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you, sir.
14 Now I have a card from Ms. Sandra Mott.
15 Ms. Mott. Followed by Harriet Heywood. Thank
16 you, ma'am.

17 MS. MOTT: Good morning, and thank you all
18 for being here and for offering us the
19 opportunity to tell you what we think, because
20 come next election, we are going to tell you
21 again what we think.

22 The things that seem to be important in
23 what I have heard here today about
24 redistricting are that we do need our -- keep
25 our communities of interest intact. We need to

1 keep our districts compact so that we can have
2 ready access to our Representatives, because it
3 is important.

4 I know you all think it is or you wouldn't
5 be here, to know what we think. The American
6 people are beginning to wake up and the next
7 ten years are going to be very critical years
8 in the future of our nation, so thank you.

9 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you,
10 ma'am, I appreciate those comments. Next we
11 have Harriet Heywood, followed by Dave O'Neill.

12 MS. HEYWOOD: Thank you very much. You
13 will excuse me for being a skeptic about the
14 redistricting process. What I have seen is the
15 Governor and the Legislature fight it at every
16 turn.

17 Unfortunately, when you have districts
18 that are drawn by Representatives, you have
19 unrepresented citizens and that is what we have
20 in Florida today.

21 Sixty-three percent of the voters of this
22 state voted for fair districts, and what we
23 want to see is our wishes carried out, and what
24 we really are upset about is our tax dollars.

25 My tax dollars being used to fight a law

1 that I voted into effect. Ideally what we
2 would like to have is a nonpartisan commission
3 that is going to be voting on the maps.

4 At the very least, a computer program
5 which is not being gerrymandered by one party
6 or the other. I hope, I really hope that you
7 are not going to use my tax dollars to fight a
8 law that I voted, and I also want to add that
9 the people of Florida are going to be watching
10 you, and the people of the country are watching
11 us also. So please do the right thing. Thank
12 you.

13 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you,
14 ma'am. Dave O'Neill. Mr. O'Neill. And again,
15 this is my final card that I have. So if you
16 want to speak, please see one of our staff
17 quickly. Mr. O'Neill.

18 MR. O'NEILL: Okay, glad to be here,
19 folks, and I have listened to the meetings that
20 I have been watching on TV every day, and a
21 point came out here that some of you people
22 have voted to tax or to spend our taxes against
23 the Amendments that were passed by 63 percent
24 of the vote.

25 Now, I wonder if you, Senator Hays, since

1 I am in your district, did you vote?

2 SENATOR HAYS: Did I vote on what?

3 MR. O'NEILL: On these taxes being paid
4 for the suit against --

5 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Okay, Senator
6 Hays, sir, I would like you to have that
7 conversation after the meeting here. We are
8 here to listen to your comments though, but we
9 are not going to engage in a debate from here.

10 MR. O'NEILL: I am asking you people a
11 question and I want to know. Did you --

12 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: No, Alan, I am
13 not going to recognize you.

14 MR. O'NEILL: No, I will go on to the next
15 statement.

16 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Okay, thank you.

17 MR. O'NEILL: But at least I let you know
18 I am here.

19 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Okay.

20 MR. O'NEILL: Okay. So now it comes down
21 to everyone up there with a big smile on their
22 face, and I see it in meetings, where was it,
23 Panama City or up there in Pensacola, and
24 Jacksonville and that, and it looks like you
25 are laughing down at us.

1 You are really making us look like jerks
2 for coming up here to even have the audacity to
3 ask you super white folks, the super majority,
4 but you are not a majority, you are a minority,
5 and that is what this whole thing is about.

6 How could we -- how could a party that has
7 got half the population of the Democrats which
8 happens to be Republicans, why, how could they
9 possibly control both Houses?

10 So it turns out that it turns out that
11 over in Pensacola about, what was it, eight,
12 ten years ago when they had the redistricting,
13 they moved a black neighborhood out with 3,000
14 votes and the guy up there won by 400, and he
15 happened to be a Republican. And I thank you,
16 folks.

17 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you very
18 much for your comments, sir. Okay. That was
19 the -- that was the last speaker card that we
20 had. That concludes our list of those who have
21 asked to speak. Aha, I have got some more
22 coming up, and then what we are going to do
23 after we get to the end of the speakers, is we,
24 if we don't have any written remarks that have
25 been submitted over social media and the like,

1 we are going to then proceed to having some of
2 our members up here answer some of the
3 questions that have been raised today and that
4 have been raised regularly over time, and once
5 I get to that we are going to start with
6 Senator Gaetz and then I have several others
7 who have already indicated that they wish to
8 speak. So, Heather Rabinowitz.

9 MS. RABINOWITZ: Thank you very much. I
10 am pleased to be here. I would like to give my
11 opinion about the fair districting. My
12 understanding of the Constitution is that
13 everyone in the country that is a citizen has
14 the opportunity and the right to vote.

15 And in order to do so they need candidates
16 of their choice, and districting is an
17 important element of this function. If the
18 maps for the districts are not presented early
19 enough in the process of elections, then
20 candidates do not have the opportunity to stand
21 forth and get support from the people in the
22 district that they hope to represent.

23 So my contention is that the maps for the
24 projected districts should be issued on the
25 early side rather than on the later side, so

1 that this American ideal can be fulfilled.

2 Thank you.

3 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you very
4 much. Okay, that was the final card that I
5 have in my hand. Anyone else, raise your hand?
6 Okay, well, then we will go ahead and move to
7 the members of the panel that would like to
8 comment at this point in time.

9 First, thank you very much for being here.
10 We really appreciate all of the constructive
11 input that we have gotten and I was really
12 personally impressed with a lot of the maps
13 that we got. Representation Frishe, you are
14 recognized.

15 REPRESENTATIVE FRISHE: Thank you,
16 Mr. Chairman. First of all, thank you all for
17 coming out. I am a firm believer in that we
18 have a participatory system of government and
19 it doesn't work if you don't participate. So
20 thank you very much for participating.

21 There were a couple of questions raised
22 earlier today about whether the public could
23 intelligently submit maps and really start the
24 process.

25 Obviously, from the maps that have been

1 submitted today and over the last couple of
2 days, and also from everywhere from Tallahassee
3 to Pensacola to northeast Florida, and now The
4 Villages, obviously you have the intelligence
5 to do it. So those of you who don't think you
6 can, give it a shot.

7 We are, we are here to listen to what you
8 have to say because, as Mr. Mangels said, it is
9 not so important what we think coming out of
10 the box, it is important that we know what you
11 think locally, and I think that is very
12 important.

13 I am Vice Chairman of the House
14 Redistricting Committee. I live in Pinellas
15 County. I have to tell you, I have learned an
16 immense amount about the concerns of the
17 panhandle, of the northeast and now this area
18 in central Florida.

19 The Villages in particular are going to
20 have a problem because all of ya'll who
21 supported Amendment 5 and think it is wonderful
22 and it will solve your problems, you may have
23 just subdivided The Villages, because the use
24 of geographic and political boundaries were
25 feasible according to Amendment 5 is more

1 important than the preservations of communities
2 of interest.

3 But we are very glad to hear your input
4 there and we are going to try to do our very
5 best to accommodate those, but that is, you
6 know, the way Amendment 5 is worded, we may
7 have a problem there. So I hope you will help
8 us and give us some suggestions on how to
9 overcome that.

10 I thank you again for being here, freedom
11 is a heavy lift. It takes a lot of hands to
12 keep a country free, and I appreciate you
13 helping do some of the lifting. Thank you for
14 being here.

15 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you,
16 Representative. Next we will go to
17 Representative Nehr. You are recognized.

18 REPRESENTATIVE NEHR: Thank you. I
19 appreciate that. My name is Representative
20 Nehr, and as Chairman of the Senate
21 Redistricting Committee in Tallahassee, I took
22 a few notes and I just want to make sure I
23 share some of that with you.

24 And I wanted to offer some clarification
25 regarding the redistricting timeline, because

1 there was some mention made of that a couple of
2 times.

3 Now, what you see on the websites as far
4 as the timeline, when action can occur is not
5 meant to suggest that the maps will definitely
6 pass on one day or another day or on a specific
7 day.

8 It is simply a range of dates that final
9 action by the Legislature, the courts and the
10 Department of Justice can occur. As long as it
11 is not in 2011, because our Constitution says
12 it cannot be acted on until 2012.

13 What that means is that after committee
14 meetings that started September, and go through
15 December, we will be discussing that, we will
16 be discussing the maps. We will have community
17 meetings where there will be public input at
18 all times for any votes are taken, that
19 everyone is allowed to do that.

20 If we get our work done early, we can
21 actually vote on the maps as early as the first
22 day of session, or if there is too many actions
23 that we need to do, if there is too many
24 questions by the public, we can wait until
25 later on, but that is not a definitive

1 timeline. It is just a timeline when they can
2 occur since we have certain laws that we have
3 to follow. So I just wanted to mention that to
4 everyone to clarify that situation. Thank you,
5 Mr. Chairman.

6 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you,
7 Representative. Next on the list, I have
8 Representative Baxley. You are recognized.

9 REPRESENTATIVE BAXLEY: Thank you,
10 Mr. Chairman. I first want to thank our
11 Chairman for conducting these kind of meetings
12 that have been conducted with a proper decorum
13 and proper respect for many different opinions.

14 As you can hear, a lot of different
15 opinions are out there. I am very proud to
16 have all of these members in my area of the
17 state, you know, we do have different issues
18 here in north central Florida, and The Villages
19 is an incredibly unique event in the
20 demographics of Florida, and I think it is
21 absolutely necessary that they come and see
22 what is happening here before these maps are
23 drawn.

24 And so I am delighted that we were able to
25 get this tour of meetings. If we came here

1 with pre-drawn maps and telling you what we
2 plan to do, I don't think that would have been
3 proper.

4 You know, there is a time to listen and
5 there is a time to speak. Please remember,
6 this is the beginning of a process. This is
7 the beginning of a process that you can be part
8 of all of the way through.

9 I was one of the few people, I was a brand
10 new freshman when we did draw the maps in 2000,
11 and I can tell you, this has been the most
12 transparent experience of any state that I have
13 observed, especially knowing that we get our
14 information from the Census much, much later
15 than many of the states that are already
16 drawing maps.

17 How presumptuous of us to come here and
18 tell you, this is going to be your map. We
19 should come and listen to you first before we
20 draw maps, and that is exactly what is
21 happening.

22 I want to thank you for contributing to
23 that process and the things that you have
24 contributed. And also knowing, and Senator
25 Gaetz, I hope that you will explain the rules,

1 you know, when we can do what, and what our
2 Constitution requires.

3 We all swore to keep that Constitution and
4 I think you give the best explanation of why we
5 are doing what we are doing in this process,
6 but I am very proud of this participation.

7 I am very proud that these comments will
8 be on the record and part of the decision,
9 rather than already made the decision and just
10 informing you of something.

11 So I, having been through this process
12 before, I can tell you, this is a far more
13 transparent way to conduct this process and
14 this is only the beginning.

15 There will be open meetings at every venue
16 for you to come and participate and comment on
17 as we go through this process, and it is,
18 redistricting is very important. It has to do
19 the way, resources get allocated. It has to do
20 with so many things, and term limits, look,
21 most of us won't even run on these new maps.

22 Most of us, many of these people are
23 already term limited out. They won't even be
24 here. So in the case of Florida, eight years
25 is all you have, so you don't even run on those

1 maps.

2 Most of us run on maps that someone else
3 drew. You heard that, a point earlier. Term
4 limits has done that for Florida and it will
5 make this a more open process, because we are
6 not just preserving our own territory, because
7 most of us are going to go out of office.

8 So thank you for understanding that, and I
9 appreciate the Chairman for conducting these
10 meetings. This is a tremendous amount of
11 effort to have this many colleagues. You see,
12 I am the only one from Marion County and all of
13 these folks are people that we have to have a
14 discussion with.

15 Thankfully we have had great
16 representation in our delegation and I thank
17 them for their work, but I am excited about you
18 continuing to be a part of this process and
19 nothing will be passed that you won't have a
20 chance to comment to. Thank you.

21 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you,
22 Representative Baxley. Senator Hays, you are
23 recognized.

24 SENATOR HAYS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I
25 want to thank each one of you for being here.

1 This is what democracy is all about, it is
2 called citizen participation.

3 I am very encouraged by the crowds that we
4 have gotten all across the state. Believe me,
5 this is not what we call a vacation at all. So
6 don't think the taxpayers are funding us a
7 great vacation.

8 We were in Jacksonville on Monday, we left
9 Jacksonville Monday night and drove to St.
10 Augustine, and we were at a meeting at 8:00
11 yesterday morning in St. Augustine. We left
12 Daytona Beach last night at 9:00 to come over
13 here for 8:00.

14 We will be in Gainesville this evening and
15 then we are through with this particular
16 circuit. So folks, it is not a glory tour at
17 all.

18 Believe you me, every one of us up here
19 just are thirsty for compact districts. My
20 particular Senate District in which we are
21 sitting right now is 85 miles east and west,
22 and I feel embarrassed to be commenting on it,
23 it is not complaining, but to be commenting on
24 it in the presence of Senator Dean who's
25 district goes all of the way to the Georgia

1 line, and he told you about that earlier.

2 But, you know, there are so many pine
3 trees out there and so few people out there
4 that we have to have that large area to meet
5 the numbers.

6 This whole process is numbers driven. The
7 founders of this country over 200 years ago
8 knew, I personally I believe it was with divine
9 wisdom that was given to those men that they
10 designed the reapportionment process the way
11 they did, so that every person would have equal
12 representation and they knew it had to be
13 adjusted periodically. That is what we are
14 going through.

15 We want the compact districts. Every one
16 of us up here have sworn to uphold the
17 Constitution of this state, and we are going to
18 honor Amendments 5 and 6.

19 To answer specifically that question of
20 the gentlemen a while ago, no, I did not vote
21 to spend money to fight that lawsuit. The
22 disappointing part of this whole thing, folks,
23 is the misinformation that is out there.

24 The Florida Legislature has not filed a
25 lawsuit to fight Amendments 5 and 6. The

1 Amendment 6 lawsuit was filed by one Republican
2 Congressman and one Democratic Congresswoman.
3 The Florida House chose to go, what is the
4 term, an intervenor. In seeking clarification,
5 the Florida House intervened, but your tax
6 dollars are not being used to sue you the
7 people who voted the 63 percent.

8 Believe me, I don't know where you got
9 your information, but it is incorrect. So, no,
10 I did not vote to waste that money.

11 One thing I would like to address is the
12 splintered counties. I can, I can understand
13 that, but consider this. When you have only
14 one Senator or only one Representative, that is
15 only one voice that you have advocating for you
16 in Tallahassee or in Washington.

17 I live in Lake County. We have six voices
18 in Tallahassee for Lake County, two Senators
19 and four members of the House represent parts
20 of Lake County.

21 That is a far better situation for the
22 people of Lake County than if we had only one,
23 because if that one gets cross-wise with the
24 leadership in Tallahassee, then Lake County's
25 interests are not going to be well represented,

1 and, you know, it is just better when you have
2 six people advocating for your position than it
3 is if you have only one person.

4 So it is not something that we do
5 intentionally. The media have led you to
6 believe that we are up here looking out for our
7 own self interest, and I would invite you to go
8 to the website and try to design the districts.
9 You will see that it is some what like handling
10 a water balloon. If you squeeze it here, it is
11 going to bulge out over there and back and
12 forth like that.

13 So we are dedicated to try to get the
14 districts as compact as we can. We appreciate
15 ya'll being here, and we did not file a
16 lawsuit.

17 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Senator Gaetz,
18 you are recognized.

19 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
20 Mr. Chairman, and someone at some point during
21 this hearing made some comment about how the
22 hearing had no value.

23 Well, I can tell you, I have taken page
24 after page after page after page of notes about
25 local issues of concern that have to do with

1 how your district lines could be or should be
2 drawn or shouldn't be drawn.

3 Information that I as somebody who lives
4 way up in the panhandle of Florida, never could
5 have gotten if we were just sitting in
6 Tallahassee with Legislators talking to each
7 other in an echo chamber.

8 So the fact that you were here today and
9 provided this information makes this hearing
10 extraordinarily valuable to me as one person
11 who will vote on proposals that will come
12 before the Senate Reapportionment Committee.

13 The several folks who said this process
14 ought to be nonpartisan and, in fact, one
15 gentleman asked if we could please answer the
16 question, are we legally forbidden to have a
17 politically neutral person manage the
18 redistricting process and he wanted to hear
19 from a Republican and a Democrat.

20 I am a Republican and I would yield to any
21 of my Democratic colleagues. First of all, I
22 am 63 years old, and I am still looking for the
23 first politically neutral person.

24 I haven't found anybody who is without
25 opinions and without a point of view, but

1 secondly, the Florida Constitution requires
2 that the Legislature, made up of elected
3 individuals, people you can elect and un-elect,
4 actually manage and draw, manage the
5 redistricting process and draw the lines.

6 So I am not sure where we find these
7 political neutrals, if they are on an island
8 somewhere, they get no newspapers, they have no
9 opinions, I haven't found them yet, but if we
10 could find them we would have to I think amend
11 the Florida Constitution because it says now
12 that the Florida Legislature is the one that
13 must draw these lines.

14 Now, can we rely on experts to give us
15 advice and information? Absolutely, and we
16 are. We have I think someone mentioned it
17 earlier, we have had input from -- from folks
18 at Columbia University, and even though they
19 are Floridians by -- by citizenship, they
20 probably don't have too many dogs in the fight
21 here. They are looking at this as an academic
22 exercise.

23 We have had other universities express
24 interest and even offer maps for part of the
25 state or for just Senate Districts or just

1 Congressional Districts, and also there are
2 individuals who are political scientists and
3 they do have points of view, but they are
4 offering expert advice to us, to others, to the
5 Fair Districts group.

6 There is all kinds of advice that we can
7 get from people who have studied redistricting
8 and who are experts on redistricting in this
9 state and in other states, but it is a
10 constitutional requirement that we draw the
11 maps.

12 Now, if the Fair Districts folks felt that
13 was a bad idea, then they could have and still
14 can offer an amendment to the Constitution that
15 would establish some other group other than
16 people you elect to do this job.

17 There, I think, are one or two states that
18 use an unelected group that you don't really
19 have any accountability from or to that at
20 least put together plans or draw districts, and
21 if the Fair Districts folks meant to do that,
22 they didn't, but they certainly still could.

23 But right now, sir, the laws are that we
24 have to draw the districts and we certainly can
25 ask for expert advice from people who do this

1 as individuals who study redistricting across
2 the country.

3 And then someone also asked, a couple of
4 folks said, well, gosh, in fact, I wrote the
5 quote down, we shouldn't have quote, maps
6 submitted by people without subject area
7 expertise, as though we would have the subject
8 area expertise and I want to submit the only
9 people that would be submitting maps and that
10 folks sitting in the chairs here today don't
11 have that subject area expertise.

12 I think that was the implication of the
13 comment. I couldn't disagree more. We have
14 seen maps submitted today by people who have on
15 the ground expertise who know where communities
16 of interest are, who know where people go to
17 church, go to school, go to Synagogue, where
18 their commerce and industry is concentrated,
19 and where they have communities of interest.

20 And by the way, the most often repeated
21 phrase in this hearing today for describing how
22 districts ought to be drawn is the term,
23 communities of interest, the most often
24 repeated phrase.

25 And as another member of the committee has

1 pointed out, sadly, sadly, the term communities
2 of interest is not included in Amendments 5 and
3 6.

4 There was actually an effort made by
5 another group to have the term communities of
6 interest included in the Constitution, but the
7 Supreme Court of Florida said no, that that
8 amendment to the, or proposed amendment didn't
9 meet the ballot test.

10 And so we have contiguity, we have
11 political boundaries, we have natural
12 boundaries, those are all in Amendments 5 and
13 6, but communities of interest isn't there. So
14 there is a tension here, there is a need here
15 to sort of sort out what will work best for
16 you, and you have been extraordinarily helpful
17 in telling us how to sort it out.

18 You have told us, for example, that as to
19 The Villages, it is less important to pay
20 attention to county lines and more important to
21 pay attention to this community.

22 Sadly, Amendments 5 and 6 didn't take that
23 into account, and so, you know, we do have some
24 issues there to work through. Then there has
25 been a great deal of conversation about the

1 timeline, and believe me, it is an issue that
2 we share as well.

3 Let's see if, if we go back and look at
4 the facts and just maybe if I could provide you
5 with some data. The Bureau of the Census does
6 not release census information to all states
7 all at once.

8 The Bureau of the Census releases census
9 information in tranches or groups, and we
10 weren't the last state to receive census
11 information, but we were one of the last, and
12 we could not legally begin the process of
13 redistricting until we knew where Floridians
14 lived, because we have all moved around a lot.

15 In the last ten years a number of you
16 moved here, and a lot more people have moved
17 into Florida. There has been ebbs and flows of
18 population. So we had to have that
19 information.

20 Now, as soon as we got it, as soon as we
21 could convert it to something that could be
22 seen and understood, and believe me, our folks
23 worked around the clock, they worked at night
24 to do it, we immediately put all of that
25 demographic information from the Bureau of the

1 Census on the House and Senate websites, and
2 lots and lots and lots and lots of people have
3 viewed that data and used it as the basis for
4 their own comments or criticisms or suggestions
5 or proposals.

6 So the census data was provided as quickly
7 as we possibly could provide it, and then we
8 have overlaid on the census data the software,
9 a couple of folks talked about computer
10 programs.

11 We overlaid the computer program that is
12 used in redistricting on the census data and a
13 number of you have testified today that you are
14 using that computer program to make your own
15 proposals.

16 Now, there is a thing about computer
17 programs. They get programmed by people. The
18 programs get programmed by people. So again,
19 there is -- there is always a human element in
20 any kind of computer program, but the program
21 that we have provided you is the one that is
22 being used by the courts, it would be used by
23 the courts, it would be used by policymakers,
24 it would be used by Legislators, and it is the
25 same computer program that you can use.

1 So to the extent to which a computer
2 program would be useful and it is, it is on the
3 website, we are going to use it, there it is,
4 and you can use it as well.

5 I think that Senator Hays commented on the
6 lawsuits. Let me just say this. You know,
7 when a rumor, I don't know how it is in The
8 Villages, I can tell you in Niceville, Florida
9 where I live, down at Doris' Cafe, if somebody
10 saw something in the morning, no matter how
11 outrageous it is, it gets embroidered about
12 eight times during the day and by supper time
13 at Doris' Cafe, we got a heck of a rumor going.

14 If I could get a quarter for every rumor
15 that we had in Tallahassee about redistricting,
16 we wouldn't have had a \$3.8 billion budget
17 deficit. We could have funded it.

18 The fact is, as Senator Hays indicated,
19 that the lawsuit that has been filed wasn't
20 filed by the Legislature. Somebody put that in
21 the blood stream and I guess it is in some
22 scripts that people get sent so that they talk
23 about it at these hearings, but the hard fact
24 is that a Democratic member of Congress and a
25 Republican member of Congress filed a lawsuit,

1 but the lawsuit is not related to state
2 redistricting.

3 So the comment that was made that the
4 Legislature is funding lawsuits to quote, keep
5 our seats, is empirically wrong. The lawsuit
6 that was filed by two members of Congress has
7 only to do with the Federal districts. It has
8 nothing to do with Legislators' seats.

9 Now, the Senate is not in an intervenor in
10 that lawsuit. The House is, but the House
11 intervened because there is an apparent
12 conflict or at least some ambiguity between how
13 the Voting Rights Act might be interpreted in
14 terms of minority regression in districts, and
15 Amendments 5 and 6.

16 Now, that is not a bad thing. It is just
17 that Amendments 5 and 6 are brand new, folks,
18 no state has ever seen a template like this,
19 and so therefore, there is going to be some
20 interpretation by the courts as to how our
21 Federal and our State laws intersect.

22 That is not a bad thing. That is an
23 inevitable thing, but the lawsuit, per se, was
24 brought by two members of Congress.

25 Then I think the final comment that I

1 would make is back to a comment that someone
2 made earlier who said, you know, gosh, we have
3 got a state here where the Republicans have
4 barely half the voters in the state classify
5 themselves as Republicans, but how in the world
6 do the Republicans control both Houses of the
7 Legislature?

8 Well, let me just talk about the Senate,
9 because I am a Senator. There are 40 Senators,
10 28 of them are Republican. How could that be?
11 It must be gerrymandering. But wait, did you
12 realize, did you know, and I found out, I, you
13 know, was kind of interesting to me, that in 20
14 of those 40 Senate Districts, in other words,
15 including eight where there are Republican
16 Senators, Barrack Obama carried those Senate
17 Districts.

18 So what we had was, we had the phenomena
19 that we are seeing more and more in Florida,
20 that is, there are people who will vote for a
21 Democrat for one office, a Republican for
22 another office, and we have a growing number of
23 people who are Independents who don't have a
24 party loyalty and they largely pick the person,
25 not the party, and even among us Republicans,

1 and I defer to my Democratic colleagues for any
2 comments they make, it is occasionally the case
3 that Republicans will vote for a Democrat.

4 Many Republicans voted for Barack Obama
5 for President, and it is occasionally the case
6 that some Democrats will vote for a Republican,
7 Republican candidates have carried in
8 democratic areas.

9 Senator Charlie Dean is here. In Senator
10 Dean's district, first the largest number of
11 people of voters by far are Democrats. The
12 second largest number are people with no party
13 affiliation or Independents, and third are
14 Republicans.

15 So how does Charlie Dean, a Republican,
16 get elected? Well, he gets elected because he
17 was a dog-gone good Sheriff, he does a good job
18 as a Senator and so Democrats vote for Charlie
19 Dean, not because he is a Republican, but in
20 spite of the fact that he is a Republican.
21 They vote for him because they want to.

22 So, friends, there is no way to create a
23 redistricting scenario that guarantees that
24 Democrats will vote for Democrats and
25 Republicans will vote for Republicans and that

1 Independents will do what we tell them to.

2 There is no way to do that.

3 Instead, we have a secret ballot and no
4 matter how you district or redistrict, people
5 will still have the opportunity to choose their
6 own candidates.

7 This has been an extraordinary meeting
8 today. We have gotten a large amount of input.
9 I want to thank you for coming out. I want to
10 thank you for staying with the process, but
11 remember this, this is not the end of your
12 input. It is the beginning of your input.

13 Here is what will happen. After we do
14 these hearings we will go back to Tallahassee
15 and instead of starting in March, we will start
16 as early as the Constitution allows us to, and
17 that is in January.

18 We will start committee meetings months
19 before we typically would. We are going to
20 start them in September, and we can begin to
21 consider in September, in the Senate and House
22 Redistricting Committees, not only your ideas,
23 but the ideas we get from other public hearings
24 around the state.

25 We already have a number of plans that

1 have been submitted, and it is not like there
2 is some magic plan that will suddenly emerge.
3 Any member of this committee, Republican or
4 Democrat, can submit a plan today.

5 Any member can submit a map today. Any
6 member of the Legislature who is not on this
7 committee can submit a plan or a map today or
8 in September, but no vote will be taken in any
9 committee beginning in September, which is way
10 early in the process, that is not done publicly
11 with the opportunity for public input.

12 And there may be more than one plan that
13 advances to the House floor or the Senate floor
14 and gets debated and discussed in public
15 openly, and then if and after we pass a plan,
16 we don't have to wait until March. It would
17 drive the Supervisors of Elections crazy if we
18 waited until the end, but if, as soon as we can
19 get plans to the floor and debate them and vote
20 on them in public, then we can submit those
21 plans for a legal clearance.

22 Now, what I hope you will do, is I hope
23 you will put the pressure not just on us to do
24 our job thought fully but with all due speed,
25 but also let's not, you know, the Attorney

1 General doesn't have to take every day that is
2 allowed in statute.

3 She can move a little faster if it is
4 possible for her to do so. She has to submit
5 the plans for clearance to the Supreme Court.
6 The Supreme Court doesn't have to take every
7 single day that they are allowed. They can
8 take your advice and they can move a little bit
9 faster, and the Federal Justice Department in
10 Washington or the Federal courts don't have to
11 take every day that they are allowed. Instead,
12 they, you know, they can move a little bit
13 faster.

14 So it is my goal as Chairman of the Senate
15 Reapportionment Committee that we would have
16 proposals and maps to show you before any votes
17 are taken as soon as we possibly can, and as we
18 get input in these hearings, believe me,
19 members of the House, members of the Senate,
20 Democrats and Republicans, are studying this
21 input.

22 I was up last night until 2:00 in the
23 morning going through my notes from yesterday.
24 We are not waiting until the end to begin to
25 analyze the information that we are getting.

1 So thanks for participating. Democracy,
2 Representative, as you said, is a bit of a
3 heavy lift, particularly when it is a
4 representative republic.

5 Thank you for being part of this messy
6 process, and please, stay engaged and involved
7 all of the way through the end. I am sorry for
8 such a long set of comments, but the questions
9 you asked were very, very good questions.
10 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you,
12 Senator. And -- hold that out. I have got a
13 few more housekeeping comments to make just to
14 finish up business here, but since Senate
15 Dean's name was used in vein there, we are
16 going to give him one last opportunity to
17 comment on today's meeting. Senator Dean.

18 SENATOR DEAN: Thank you. Thank you,
19 Chairman Gaetz, for the kind comments. You
20 know, one of the things we have heard today
21 about a community base of interest, and I think
22 there is no way you can get away of the fact
23 that charity begins at home.

24 We are concerned most about those that are
25 closest to us. That is why it makes you want

1 to have your Representative close to you when
2 you go to vote for him where you can talk to
3 him and understand what is happening.

4 One of those things I want to clearly say
5 that this meeting today is the closest to my
6 home. I am from Citrus County, right across
7 the county line. I am also a Senator up in
8 Marion County, but I heard the same message
9 where I am a Senate in Leon County that I heard
10 the same message in Baker County when we were
11 in Duval County.

12 We do not want the people of Florida do
13 not want gerrymandering, period. I want to say
14 that I share with four Congressmen, five
15 Senators and ten House members if I counted
16 correctly in my district.

17 So I want to assure you again, we are
18 going to do the conscious thing, the right
19 thing to do about doing this district plan and
20 drawing the maps.

21 I appreciate you being here. I normally
22 stand up and speak up and shut up and it is my
23 time to shut up. Thank you for being here.

24 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Thank you,
25 Senator Dean. I appreciate that. And I want

1 to reiterate that I know that we -- there are
2 other opportunities to submit comments. We are
3 about done with the meeting and we are through
4 the public testimony process, but we are always
5 on a continuous basis taking information,
6 whether it is in writing, via e-mail, via
7 Twitter and all of these other uses that are
8 out there right now. So I strongly encourage
9 you, anyone else that wants to say more, even
10 if you stood up and spoke before, get with our
11 staff and get something in to us, preferably in
12 writing. It has so much additional impact that
13 way.

14 One clarification that staff has asked me
15 to address, and it is, because it is a
16 relatively significant issue, is the matter of
17 the lawsuit the House is an intervenor on.

18 The conflict that is trying to be resolved
19 there is a conflict between Amendment 6 and the
20 U.S. Constitution as opposed to the Voting
21 Rights Act.

22 The, and so now I will get to my closing
23 comments. Thank you, everyone, for your
24 contributions today. This was a great day here
25 in The Villages. This is the kind of thing

1 that is necessary for making a democracy,
2 representative democracy work in our state.

3 Again, you have the opportunity to provide
4 written comments, as well as written extensions
5 of your current comments to us, and we will
6 post it on-line.

7 If you didn't speak now, send an e-mail,
8 Snail Mail, to those addresses that are listed
9 on the website. They are in the brochures that
10 are in the back. You can pick up if you are
11 not an electronic person.

12 All of the records from today's meeting,
13 the video, pod-cast and transcripts will be
14 available in the next few days, via both the
15 Senate and the House Redistricting websites.

16 In particular, someone asked for maps to
17 look at today. They are on our website, so if
18 you can visit www.floridaredistricting.org, and
19 it is spelled the same way as the words sound,
20 Florida Redistricting, dot org, click on the
21 Plan Explorer and look at the maps that the
22 public have submitted.

23 It is a growing list of maps at this
24 point, as you saw today, and you have the
25 opportunity there to look at them, to comment

1 on them, to use them, to tweak up and submit
2 your own maps to share with others and the
3 like.

4 If you are not an electronic person,
5 again, talk to our staff. We will get you this
6 information in hard copy.

7 Please, I ask you to please stay engaged
8 in this process, because it is developing as we
9 go along, as you can see. Continue to follow
10 and participate as we get ready to draw those
11 lines that are going to define how your
12 community is going to be represented, not only
13 in Tallahassee, but in Washington.

14 Thanks again for being here. Some of us
15 as well as staff are going to be staying around
16 to answer any additional questions on the side.
17 That issue came up several times, that are,
18 whether they deal with redistricting or those
19 other peripheral issues or completely unrelated
20 if you would like, and with that we stand
21 adjourned.

22 (Whereupon, the proceedings were
23 concluded.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF FLORIDA)

COUNTY OF LEON)

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

That the foregoing pages 2 through 141 represent a true, correct, and complete transcript of the tape- recording;

And I further certify that I am not of kin or counsel to the parties in the case; am not in the regular employ of counsel for any of said parties; nor am I in anywise interested in the result of said case.

Dated this 22nd day of September, 2011.

CLARA C. ROTRUCK

Notary Public

State of Florida at Large

Commission Expires:

November 13, 2014