



Census spurs concern on rural districts' interests

By PHIL SARATA, T&D Staff Writer | Posted: Thursday, March 24, 2011 3:00 am

As lawmakers draw new election districts based on the latest U.S. Census figures, they find themselves balancing the interests of rural and fast-growing urban areas.

"The rural areas of the state tended to lose population and the urban areas that gained are around Beaufort, Rock Hill and Greenville," said Sen. Brad Hutto, D-Orangeburg. "The numbers will shift accordingly. Some of the Senate districts will be pulled toward the coast and the others will be pulled back toward Greenville and Rock Hill.

"What you don't want is 46 senators living in urban areas and trying to reach out into the countryside to small pockets of population. You certainly bring a different perspective from a rural area."

Hutto and other members of the Senate Redistricting Subcommittee appeared before a sparse audience for a public hearing at Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College on Wednesday. The subcommittee is charged with creating a plan to redraw the state's senate and congressional districts.

The new Census figures show South Carolina's population is more than 4.6 million, representing statewide growth of 15.3 percent since 2000.

Each state Senate district will have approximately 100,552 people. Each congressional district will have about 660,767.

State Sen. John Matthews, D-Bowman, spoke of the different standards that can be used drawing districts. He asked the subcommittee to use a standard that maintains rural districts.

In order to bolster rural representation in the legislature, Orangeburg County Republican Party Chairman Jim Ulmer advocated a return to one sitting senator and representative from each county. The remaining state House seats could then be divided by population.

Hutto said the federal courts have already ruled against that.

"The court mandates one man, one vote," Hutto said. "It's an interesting concept but not one we'll be able to consider since it's already been ruled on."

Due to population growth, South Carolina will add a seventh congressional district.

Retired educator Harvey Elwood Jr. said the congressional districts should reflect the population mix of the state.

"The African-American population of South Carolina is 29 percent," Elwood said. "That seat should reflect the makeup of this board. I notice there are five white members here and one black member.

"I am looking for representation based on culture, class, race and those things people have in common. I think an African-American representative would be more sensitive and adherent to the interests of the people he serves."

Another speaker said the Sixth Congressional District should be altered because while Orangeburg and the Pee Dee are different places, they're both in the same district. Matthews feels the district's configuration will change.

"Because we are getting an extra district, the Sixth has two options: It will more than likely contract, reducing the number of counties in it," Matthews said. "It appears that Orangeburg County will become a pivotal part of the district.

"The numbers will put it as the core anchor of that district, along with Richland County."

Written comments will be accepted by the subcommittee through April 9. For more information, go to <http://redistricting.scstate.gov/>.

Contact the writer: psarata@timesanddemocrat.com or 803-533-5540.

Posted on Thu, Mar. 24, 2011

S.C. residents flock to urban areas, coast

Columbia remains largest city, Lexington County among fastest growing

By NOELLE PHILLIPS

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[County population maps](#)

Justin Thomas Williams, 26, left the family farm in Wagener in 2002 to attend USC.

Nine years later, Williams is still in Columbia with a wife, a house and a job in the 5th Circuit Solicitor's office. Not to mention a large church to attend, networking events where he makes friends with other young professionals and endless entertainment options.

"I love my hometown for what it gave me," Williams said. "I grew up on a farm. People know my family.

"But there's no Prince concerts in Wagener. There are no malls in Wagener, and the one that is 20 miles away is smaller than Richland Fashion Mall."

In South Carolina, Williams is just one of thousands of people who fled small, rural areas during the past decade to find jobs and other opportunities in urban areas. Growth during the past 10 years centered along the S.C. coast, the counties that serve as Charlotte suburbs and the Midlands, according to 2010 census data released Wednesday.

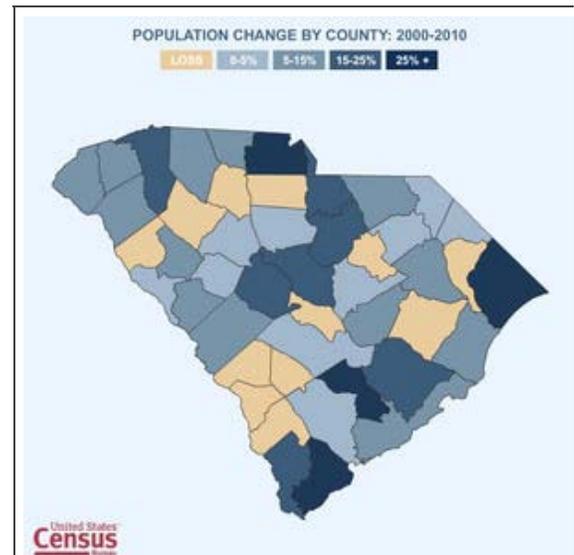
"South Carolina is becoming increasingly urbanized," said USC economist Doug Woodward. "People vote with their feet. They migrate to where the jobs are."

That migration brings more prosperity to cities but also creates issues such as traffic jams. As for the rural areas, they are left to deal with lower tax bases and other problems that result from a declining population.

In December, the Census Bureau reported the state's total population had risen 15.3 percent to 4.6 million residents. On Wednesday, the agency released more detailed numbers on county and city growth and the racial makeup of the state. Those numbers reflected the widening gap between the state's urban and rural areas as more people flocked to the coast and metropolitan areas.

While Columbia remained the state's largest city with 129,272 residents, its growth rate was slower than the other four cities that rounded out the list of the five largest incorporated areas. But Richland County recorded a much larger growth rate that reflects the Northeast's popularity and the surge in houses, shopping and restaurants. The county population grew 20 percent, increasing to 384,504 residents.

The growth of urban centers didn't necessarily mean the growth of cities. It also meant the growth of suburbs, the growth of bedroom communities that evolved into new cities outside Greenville, Charlotte, Charleston and Columbia. Think Mount Pleasant, North Charleston and Rock Hill.



US Census Bureau map of South Carolina showing population change by county. Darker-colored counties have seen more population growth between 2000 and 2010.

/US Census Bureau

6 LARGEST S.C. CITIES

Columbia, 129,272; up 11.2 percent

Charleston, 120,083; up 24.2 percent

North Charleston, 97,471; up 22.4 percent

Mount Pleasant, 67,843; up 42.5 percent (ranked 6 in 2000)

Rock Hill, 66,154; up 32.9 percent

Greenville, 58,409; up 4.3 percent (ranked 4 in 2000)

(OF NOTE: Spartanburg alone among the state's 20 largest cities lost population, falling 2,660 to 39,673.)

10 LARGEST COUNTIES

South Carolinians knew the suburbs were growing, but 10 or 20 years ago, might never have predicted they would grow by this much: Greenville fell to the state's sixth-largest city, surpassed by Mount Pleasant and North Charleston.

The census information's primary purpose is to draw new voting districts on the federal, state and local levels. South Carolina gained a seventh congressional district, and now the General Assembly must redraw the state's federal and state political districts.

But census numbers also provide state and local leaders with valuable information on where people are moving, how old they are and their race and ethnic origins, said Jerry Mitchell, a USC geography research professor. The numbers can help decision-makers with everything from planning English as a second language programs to designing hurricane evacuation routes along the coast.

"It helps us if we know a certain age group is here," he said. "It tells us about elder care needs or if we need to build more schools."

Statewide, the population booms took place along the coast, with Dorchester County topping the list with a 41.6 percent increase, to 136,555 residents. York and Lancaster counties, which have become Charlotte suburbs, also showed tremendous growth.

And the state's Hispanic population more than doubled to 235,682 people, or 5.1 percent of the state's total population.

"Five percent is pretty impressive," Mitchell said.

Experts believe the number could have been higher if not for the recession, which cost jobs, and the state's tough immigration laws that crack down on businesses that hire illegal immigrants.

"I just hoped we counted them before they left," Bobby Bowers, director of the S.C. Office of Research and Statistics, said of the out-migration caused by the Great Recession.

But the primary trend was the migration toward cities and the jobs and lifestyles they offer.

Woodward used Greenville as an example of a place where educated, working people can work and play. The region has a manufacturing base to provide jobs, a happening Main Street and a large civic center that can host concerts and other entertainment events.

"People don't necessarily want to live down there, but they certainly want to be nearby," he said of Greenville's Main Street. "People want to be close to that, and it feeds on itself."

As more people look to cities for those opportunities, the small towns and rural areas suffer.

"If you're educated and you look around at job opportunities, you're just going to leave," Woodward said. "If you have a spouse and you're both working, you're both more likely to find a job in your field in a city."

That's the case for Williams and his wife, Stacy A. Williams. They're both college graduates with advanced degrees, and Columbia, the state's largest city, has what they are looking for.

"As a young professional who is looking for opportunities to establish myself and grow my career, everything is right here in Columbia," he said.

While Columbia and Richland Count packed on the residents, the fastest growth in the Midlands during the past decade was in Lexington County.

Greenville, 451,225

Richland, 384,504

Charleston, 350,209

Spartanburg, 284,307

Horry, 269,291

Lexington, 262,391

York, 226,073

Anderson, 187,126

Berkeley, 177,843

Beaufort, 162,233

10 FASTEST-GROWING COUNTIES

Dorchester, up 41.6 percent

York, up 37.3 percent

Horry, up 37 percent

Beaufort, up 34.1 percent

Lancaster, up 24.9 percent

Berkeley, up 24.7 percent

Lexington, up 21.5 percent

Richland, up 19.9 percent

Jasper, up 19.8 percent

Greenville, up 18.9 percent

COUNTIES LOSING POPULATION

Williamsburg, down 7.5 percent

Allendale, down 7.1 percent

Marion, down 6.8 percent

Lee, down 4.5 percent

Laurens, down 4.4 percent

Bamberg, down 4 percent

Barnwell, down 3.7 percent

Union, down 3.1 percent

Abbeville, down 2.9 percent

Chester, down 2.7 percent

Hampton, down 1.4 percent

CHANGES IN MIDLANDS TOWNS, CITIES

As the state's seventh fastest-growing county, Lexington added 46,377 residents – a 21.4 percent increase.

Areas that watched their population decline included a band of counties just south of I-85 in the Upstate – Abbeville, Laurens, Union and Chester – and a cluster of counties in the southeastern portion of the state – Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell and Hampton.

Many people who left the I-85 corridor most likely moved to Greenville and other Upstate areas where jobs were more available, Woodward said.

As Mitchell explained, "We know that most people when they move go short distances."

Those areas that watched people move away will suffer.

"For those left behind, it's going to be pretty hard times for supporting schools and those types of things," Mitchell said.

COMING SUNDAY: More on the Midlands

Two SC census maps:

Total population **Population change**

[Full screen](#)

Reach Phillips at (803) 771-8307.

Arcadia Lakes, 861, down 2.4 percent
Batesburg-Leesville, 5,362, down 2.8 percent
Blythewood, 2,034, up 1,096.5 percent
Camden, 6,838, up 2.3 percent
Cayce, 12,528, up 3.1 percent
Chapin, 1,445, up 130.1 percent
Columbia, 129,272; up 11.2 percent
Eastover, 813, down 2 percent
Elgin, 1,311, up 62.7 percent
Forest Acres, 10,361, down 1.9 percent
Gaston, 1,645, up 26.2 percent
Gilbert, 565, up 13 percent
Irmo, 11,097, up 0.5 percent
Lexington, 17,870, up 82.5 percent
Pelion, 674, up 21.9 percent
Pine Ridge, 2,064, up 29.6 percent
South Congaree, 2,306, up 1.8 percent
Springdale, 2,636, down 8.4 percent
Summit, 402, up 83.6 percent
Swansea, 827, up 55.2 percent
West Columbia, 14,988, up 14.7 percent

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South Carolina News and Sports

Sumter citizens on redistricting: Don't split our precincts

by Susan Trautsch on March 25, 2011

The process of creating a new congressional district in South Carolina continued last night in Sumter with the second in 10 public hearings across the state. Last night's hearing focused on Clarendon, Kershaw, Lee, Sumter and Williamsburg counties.

A group of about 30 community leaders and citizens attended the meeting with several individuals taking to the podium to make comments and suggestions.

One theme that came up several times was that of not splitting up the communities and precincts into different districts.

Chairman of the Sumter County Republican Party, Braden Bunch added:

When we consider not splitting precincts within state house or state county or state senate seats, I also suggest that you consider starting to not try to split the state senate seats and congressional seats.

The theme of avoiding splits to precincts was mentioned again by Jonathan Bryant, attorney for the City of Sumter. Bryant's recommendation was made to avoid confusion during the election process.

On behalf of the people that run the election commission, people who are trying to instill confidence in government, are asking that you avoid splits as much as possible. If it's impossible that's fine. But these numbers that you have, 100-thousand, 600-thousand, I think that if you can avoid the splits. I think that you can maintain the communities of interest and some of the other positives protect.

Sumter Branch NAACP President Ferdinand Burns was among those who addressed the subcommittee:

We just want it to be fair. If it's not fair, then of course the NAACP will take action. We believe that South Carolina can be a great state, but South Carolina is going to have to learn to do it right.

James Feldon represents the South Carolina Voter Education Project. Feldon said he once assisted with redrawing the lines some years ago and he recommends the process includes a focus on diversity.

GreenvilleOnline.com

Greenville County redistricting hearings start next week

Population shifts could change representation

By E. Richard Walton • Staff writer • Published:
March 25, 2011 2:00AM

State Rep. Chandra Dillard and Greenville City Councilwoman Jill Littlejohn are asking voters to attend two public hearings on redistricting for the state Senate and House of Representatives.

The meetings are about possible adjusting of the Upstate and state representation following the 2010 census, as districts are redrawn.

Redistricting occurs following the census every 10 years.

The sessions are for Senate and House districts in 10 counties: Greenville, Spartanburg, Anderson, Laurens, Pickens, Oconee, Abbeville, Cherokee, Greenwood and Union, according to Dillard.

The hearing on redistricting in the Senate is scheduled for Thursday at 6:30 p.m. in the Greenville County Council chambers on University Ridge.

The session for the House is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. April 13 at the same place.

Dillard said the hearings will be used in testimony for the U.S. Department of Justice.

The sessions are open to the public.

Dillard and state Rep. Karl Allen, who will co-chair the hearings, said the sessions will be important to all Upstate residents, particularly those in minority districts.

They said the outcome of redistricting could affect voters in city, county and state races.

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Have a voice in reapportionment

Created Mar 27 2011 - 7:12pm

With the release of 2010 Census data, lawmakers at the state and county levels are ready to dive into reapportionment as required by the U.S. Constitution. And the public is not only invited, but encouraged, to participate in the redistricting process.

That process begins soon with a public hearing by the S.C. Senate Redistricting Subcommittee at 6:30 p.m. today at the Technical College of the Low Country, Building 12 Auditorium, 921 Ribaut Road, Beaufort.

The hearing, one of 10 statewide, will focus on Beaufort, Jasper, Hampton and Colleton counties and new district lines for the state Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives.

South Carolina's population growth from about \$4 million people to more than \$4.5 million entitles the state to a seventh congressional seat, probably along the coastal plain.

Also today, Beaufort County Council Chairman Weston Newton is expected to announce a meeting and public hearing schedule for the reapportionment committee he has appointed to draw local district lines.

Beaufort County's population has grown by about 34 percent, from 120,937 in 2000 to 162,233 in 2010. County Council districts (and the corresponding school board districts) will increase in size from about 11,000 people each to about 15,000. And the balance of political power is likely to shift from northern Beaufort County to south of the Broad River.

And on Monday, April 4, the S.C. House Election Laws Subcommittee is scheduled to hold a public hearing — one of nine statewide — at 5 p.m. at the Beaufort High School Performing Arts Center on Lady's Island.

Again, Beaufort County could see dramatic shifts in House representational districts because of rapid growth in the last 10 years.

We've said it before, but it bears repeating: take advantage of the opportunity to have a voice in redistricting. It will be 10 years before you get another chance.

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South Carolina News and Sports

“The fighting hasn’t happened yet:” Legislators prepare to redraw their districts

by Matt Long on March 31, 2011

Legislators in the South Carolina House began the long task of redrawing the districts they represent this week as they saw local Census data for the first time.

While many of the headlines focused on where to put a new congressional seat in South Carolina, some legislators are distracted trying to save their own careers. Population shifts out of rural and inner-city areas into suburban ones mean some House members will likely be out of a seat in the 2012 election- especially those in the more rural parts of the state.

House districts are supposed to have populations of roughly 37,000 each, according to the newest Census data. However, many of the current alignments are well off the average. That means the House has the arduous task of re-organizing, making deals, and re-drawing so each of the state’s 124 districts are as close to that number as possible.

[Learn how you can get involved in redistricting](#)

SCRN interviewed two House members who will be impacted by the moves.

Rep. Bill Herbkersman’s (R-Beaufort) district is the House’s largest. He represents over 60,000 people– meaning his district will almost certainly be split. The massive growth of the Bluffton and Hilton Head areas puts him in an enviable position, since any redistricting will probably keep his home address safe.

Herbkersman said there was one good thing about his district splitting– his office would no longer be overwhelmed by a constituency twice the average size.

We get probably between 300-600 constituent contacts per week. We do call everybody that’s in the district back. It’ll relieve some of that issue and probably provide for a little bit better service to the constituents.

However, he said it was bittersweet to have to lose such a large number of his supporters to another legislator. He predicted his finished district would stay in Bluffton, where he lives. Beaufort County is expected to pick up a new seat, which would almost certainly lean Republican.



Rep. Rutherford says debate will "get interesting."

But, on the other end is Rep. Todd Rutherford (D-Richland), whose inner-city Columbia seat is the smallest in the Legislature both geographically and in population (28,000 residents). Rutherford said he lost a number of constituents when the city began converting the densely populated downtown public housing projects into mixed-use residences.

My district is going to have to grow to get population from somewhere. Over the last 10 years, (there) was a federal program to take people out of housing projects and put them into better housing. Even though I knew I was losing thousands in population, I wasn't going to stop people from moving into better housing.

The revamping of those areas was one reason for a significant African-American migration out of Democratic strongholds in Columbia into the city's more conservative suburbs. While Columbia grew in size, most of the growth came outside of downtown. Rutherford said it's too early to know how the Legislature will redraw the districts to match the shift, but he expects a challenge.

It's still so early in the process that a lot of the fighting, and a lot of the very interesting stuff, just hasn't happened yet. Once we go further along... that's when it's truly going to get interesting.

And Rutherford will likely be among those doing the "fighting." His district borders five others, and three of those are also below the 37,000 mark. Since one of those three seats is held by a Republican (Rep. Joan Brady), Rutherford will likely end up spending much of his energy in an attempt to grow and protect his district against two other Columbia Democrats in a similar predicament.

In the coming weeks, SCRNs will take a look at how legislators can combine Census data with modern technology in a special "map room" to redraw their district lines as accurately as possible.

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State urged not to divide Greenville in new political lines

By Rudolph Bell • Staff writer • Published: April 01, 2011 2:00AM

Greenville County might to keep all of Greenville County inside a single congressional district and make sure minority representation isn't diluted as they redraw political boundaries to conform to the 2010 census.

More than 30 people spoke during the two-hour public hearing called by the Senate's Redistricting Subcommittee.

It was held as state lawmakers take up the task of inserting a seventh congressional district somewhere among the six that South Carolina already has.

They must also redraw every state House and Senate district to conform to the census, which found South Carolina's population had grown more than 15 percent between 2000 and 2010.

Newly released census data show the combined population of Greenville and Spartanburg counties is about 75,000 more than the 660,766 total that each South Carolina congressional district must approximate in the future to ensure the principle of one man, one vote.

That means the counties must move into separate districts for the first time — or portions of one or both must move into a different district.

Numerous speakers advocated keeping all of Greenville County inside a single congressional district.

"Don't split the largest county in the state where 10 percent of the people live," local attorney Henry Parr urged.

William Allen of Greenville said he also wanted all of Greenville County inside a single congressional district but also wants to keep U.S. Rep. Trey Gowdy, the new representative of the 4th Congressional District and a Spartanburg resident.

Allen urged senators to put part of Spartanburg

County into another district "not including Trey's residence and solve the problem that way."

However, Steve Mauriello of Greenville said Greenville County should be joined with Pickens and Oconee counties to form a new congressional district.

Evert Headley of Travelers Rest told senators he thinks Greenville and Spartanburg counties should "go our separate ways and maybe we can lead the state to bigger and brighter things separately."

"It's time for Greenville and Spartanburg to split up," said Scott Crosby of Mauldin. "They're too big to stay together."

Numerous speakers also expressed concern about the future makeup of state legislative districts and urged the subcommittee to keep intact Senate District 7, now represented by Ralph Anderson of Greenville.

Others asked senators to preserve House districts 23 and 25, though the Senate isn't charged with redrawing House districts. That will be done by the House, which has its own subcommittee on redistricting and has scheduled a public hearing in Greenville on April 13.

Greenville attorney Theo Mitchell, a former state senator, said lawmakers should keep in mind the interests of minority voters and take into account a growing Hispanic population.

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aspiration for representation?" Mitchell asked.

He said South Carolina has a budget crisis and can't afford to be drawn into litigation over redistricting and "spend a whole lot of money trying to correct the wrong thing."

Other speakers, including Mauldin businessman and state Senate candidate Jim Lee, asked senators to keep the redistricting process transparent, making public every proposal, including those submitted by private parties.

Clarence Echols, president of the Greenville County NAACP branch, urged senators to be sensitive to the interests of minority voters.

Dan Richardson of Greenwood said the Legislature should "nullify" a U.S. Supreme Court ruling and follow the South Carolina Constitution in having one senator per county.

The final redistricting plan will be reviewed by the U.S. Justice Department to ensure it complies with voting rights laws — a fact noted by Ron Romine of Spartanburg, a self-described "yellow dog Democrat."

"Whatever comes out of here will have to pass muster with a Democratic administration," Romine said. "You'll want to keep that in mind as we move forward."

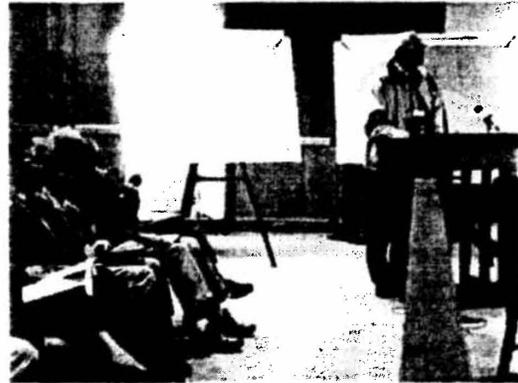
But Travelers Rest attorney Nathan Earle told lawmakers they shouldn't worry about upsetting U.S. Attorney General "Eric Holder or the Obama Justice Department."

Four of the seven members of the Senate subcommittee were present: Larry Martin of Pickens; Robert Ford of Charleston; Phillip Shoopman of Greer; and Gerald Malloy of Hartsville.

The subcommittee's chairman is Glen McConnell of Charleston, president pro tempore of the Senate.

Public officials at the meeting included state senators Mike Fair and Anderson of Greenville and Floyd Nicholson of Greenwood and state representatives Chandra Dillard and Dan Hamilton of Taylors. The audience also included Joe Baldwin and Lottie Gibson of Greenville County Council, Lillian Brock Flemming of Greenville City Council, Travelers Rest Mayor Wayne McCall, former state Sen. Lewis Vaughn of Greer and LaDonna Ryggs, chairwoman of the Spartanburg County Republican

Party.



Dan Richardson speaks to South Carolina senators during a redistricting meeting held at Greenville County Council chambers. (PATRICK COLLARD / Staff)

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South Carolina News and Sports

Citizens around state have say in redistricting this week

by Michael Brown on April 4, 2011

All this week, the South Carolina Senate Redistricting Subcommittee will hear from citizens on efforts to redraw state lines for a new congressional district the state gained for 2012.

Senate President Pro Tem Glenn McConnell is the chair of the subcommittee and encourages residents to be at the hearings when the panel comes to their area. Each of the 10 meetings will focus on the specific district the counties represented are in. The senators will be in Conway on Monday. On Tuesday, the hearing will be in Columbia, Wednesday in Florence, and Thursday in Charleston.

McConnell says every 10 years they are required by federal law to redraw legislative and congressional districts. This year, they are looking at adding a seventh congressional seat. But first, the subcommittee wants to hear from the public.

Visit the redistricting website to find out details on a hearing near you at <http://redistricting.scsenate.gov>.

Meanwhile, the South Carolina House will also be holding similar hearings across the state over the next two weeks. Rep. Alan Clemmons (R-Horry) is chair of the subcommittee spearheading the effort. Clemmons said he was disappointed by low turnout at the panel's first meeting in Columbia last week. Only five people testified.

Clemmons is concerned that a lack of public input may cause legislators to split communities and towns that have natural ties.

It's very important that we have this input. Without it, we have to make guesses... with it, we don't have to guess. We'll have information to back us up.

CITIZENS around state have say in redistricting this week

Page 2 of 4

He also urged residents to tell the panel as much as possible about each area, to help legislators make informed decisions. Although Clemmons had not been elected yet during the 2001 redistricting, he said officials made some mistakes due to a lack of input.

Everybody steps back and scratches their head and says, "Why is it that the people we have always been with in the past are now separated from us?" This is the time to prevent that from happening.

For a complete schedule of when legislators will be in your area, visit the subcommittee's [website](#).

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Redistricting group gets an earful

By [TUCKER MITCHELL](#)

Published: April 05, 2011

FLORENCE, SC -- As a subcommittee of the S.C. House's Judiciary Committee held a public hearing on political redistricting at Florence-Darlington Technical College on Tuesday night, a debate on the importance of the 1965 Voting Right Act broke out.

Just less than 60 people filed into the Fred C. Fore Auditorium to tell the Election Laws Subcommittee what they thought about new lines for state house and congressional districts. Twenty-two wound up speaking and most addressed a topic that could broadly be defined as longing for a new congressional district/dissatisfaction with the current one.

A long line of speakers, many with ties to the Florence County Republican Party, railed against the injustice of having most of Florence County fall in the 6th Congressional District, which is represented by Sumter's [Jim Clyburn](#), the only Democrat in the state's congressional delegation.

More than half those who spoke implored the representatives to create South Carolina's new congressional district out of some combination of Horry, Florence and a few other Pee Dee counties. Much of that sentiment sprang, however, from disenchantment with Florence County's current congressional lot. Several speakers said they had nothing in common with the rest of Clyburn's district, a much-contorted compilation that includes part of 16 counties and voters from both Columbia and Charleston. Others said they felt essentially disenfranchised.

"It's almost taxation without representation for most of Florence County," said [Bill Pickle](#), newly-elected chairman of the county GOP.

Ron Moore is chairman of Florence's Founders Coalition, which describes itself as a citizens' group dedicated to promoting an interpretation and application of the Constitution which is based upon a clearly identifiable set of principles held by the Founding Fathers. He carried the argument a bit further, arguing that the drawing of a special "minority-majority" district to elect an Afro-American like [Clyburn](#) was essentially a form of discrimination itself.

"That's not any fairer than the practice it seeks to address," he said. "Many of us here feel like we have not had any representation for a long time."

Another speaker, [Jessie Carraway](#), rose spontaneously after Moore spoke and said, "I just want to say on the record that everything that last man said is the gospel!"

The Republican rhetoric eventually drew some fire late in almost two-hour session. [Toni Graves](#) of Dillon told the subcommittee members that she was "confused and a little disappointed."

"I hear all this about how unfair this is," she said, "but when I look at the representatives on TV and all, I don't see many who look like me." Graves is a black woman.

Florence City Councilman [Ed Robinson](#) followed Graves to the microphone and began by saying, "she's basically said everything I was going to say."

Unfazed by that turn of events, Robinson went ahead and reiterated Graves' line of reasoning, adding a choice line or two of his own.

"Basically what you have here is a bunch of unhappy Republicans," Robinson said. "Well, Republicans in South Carolina haven't had the best interest of black folks in mind for a long time. If you don't believe me, look at where I live and where the Republicans live. All I can say is thank God for the (U.S.) Department of Justice."

The Justice Department must approve all redistricting in South Carolina because of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Speakers Monday represented five different counties. Four speakers from Marlboro County begged the subcommittee not to split up House District 54, the only legislative district left with a majority of Marlboro County residents in it. Chesterfield County Councilwoman [Lenora Powe](#) praised her county's current legislative delegation, saying "We even like [Jay Lucas](#) (of Hartsville), and he's a Republican." She then reminded the subcommittee that Chesterfield is "still in South Carolina."

State Rep. [Alan Clemmons](#) of Myrtle Beach, chairman of the Election Laws Subcommittee, said afterward he was pleased to see "so many people speak at the meeting."

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Support for single representation for Fort Mill discussed

Posted April 7, 2011 at 7:36 am by Sheila Caldwell (13696)

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Supporters of single representation for the Fort Mill Township in the State House spoke out last night during a South Carolina House Subcommittee meeting on redistricting. The public hearing at Rock Hill City Hall was held as South Carolina looks at how to redistrict the state after the latest census numbers came out earlier this year.

Ralph Norman besides representation the majority of Fort Mill and Tega Cay, also has parts of Rock Hill. District 48 in 2000 had just under 33,000 people, the latest census showed District 48 with over 63,000 people. The ideal district according to the committee will have 37,301 people.

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Published: Thursday, Apr. 07, 2011 / Updated: Thursday, Apr. 07, 2011 07:19 AM

House panel hears input on districts

York County likely to gain just 1 seat; residents suggest how to draw new lines

By Don Worthington - dworthington@heraldonline.com

YORK COUNTY -- New census numbers show York County population growth might justify two new South Carolina House districts within the county, but legislators said Wednesday only one more seat is likely.

The comments came after a meeting of the Legislature's House Redistricting Subcommittee at Rock Hill's City Hall. About 40 people attended and 17 spoke.

Like a Senate subcommittee which has already met in Rock Hill, the House panel Wednesday listened to residents for guidance in helping the committee set the criteria for redistricting. The meeting was not about drawing maps, but the follow-up conversations among legislators and political observers were about how York County will fare in the process.

Democratic state Rep. John King's 49th District will likely be central to the redistricting process, said state Rep. Ralph Norman, a Rock Hill Republican who attended Wednesday's meeting but is not a subcommittee member.

Minorities make up the majority of the 49th District, and the Legislature will have to protect that district as much as possible to meet the guidelines of the federal Voting Rights Act.

The law says minorities must have a reasonable chance to elect representatives of their choice.

King's district is close to the ideal size for the new districts. The 49th District has 37,806 people, according to the 2010 Census, 505 more than the ideal size of 37,301. Legislators said a new district could deviate 1 percent to 2 percent from the ideal size, meaning King's district could grow slightly.

Four local districts are significantly over the ideal size:

District 45, which includes part of Fort Mill and Lancaster County, has 50,117 residents, 12,816 more than the ideal size. The district is represented by Deborah Long, R-Indian Land.

District 46, which is Rock Hill, has 40,384 residents, 3,083 more than the ideal size. The district is represented by Gary Simrill, R-Rock Hill.

District 47, which includes Clover and York, has 40,075 residents, 2,774 more than the ideal size. The district is represented by Tommy Pope, R-York.

District 48, which includes Tega Cay and Fort Mill, has 63,391 residents, 26,090 more than the ideal size. The district is represented by Norman.

The 29th District of western York County has 32,990 residents, 4,311 short of the ideal size. The district is represented by Dennis Moss, R-Gaffney.

There was no discussion Wednesday of what the new lines would be. York County's population growth, however, means a district elsewhere in the state will be collapsed into another district, said Simrill, who attended Wednesday's meeting but is not a subcommittee member.

Several speakers Wednesday encouraged the legislators to create districts where minorities were the majority, both at the federal level and locally.

South Carolina's population grew enough to qualify for another congressional seat. Rep. Bakari Sellers, a subcommittee member who represents Bamberg, Barnwell and Orangeburg

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counties, said the population numbers might give credence to the theory of more majority-minority districts. He said it might be doable at the congressional level, but much harder at the state level.

Melvin Poole, president of the Rock Hill NAACP, advocated for a majority-minority district in York County as well as majority-minority congressional seat.

Twana Burris of Rock Hill said the process should not dilute minority voting representation and should protect "socio-economic interests." Burris, who lives in District 49, said she did not want to see it change.

Holly Cooper, who ran unsuccessfully in District 46 last year, encouraged the subcommittee to increase the possibility of women representing York County and throughout the state. She was representing a group called Southeastern Women in Politics.

Residents of Tega Cay and Fort Mill repeated a pitch they made to the Senate subcommittee: They want the two localities to be in the same district. Currently, Fort Mill is divided between the districts 45 and 48.

Several speakers urged a nonpartisan approach that did not draw districts to benefit one group or the incumbent. Don Long, a Lake Wylie resident, said redistricting should be done by an independent commission and not the Legislature.

Rep. Alan Clemmons of Horry County and chairman of the subcommittee, said that was the first time the committee has heard that suggestion this year.

Don Worthington 803 329-4066

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By Nikki Gaskins
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NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C. (WCIV)—A big hike in the Palmetto State's population could change how you vote on Election Day in 2012.

The numbers are up 15 percent which means new district lines will be drawn.

On Thursday, state senators met with the public at Trident Technical College in North Charleston to decide how the state should be divided.

The state's population currently stands at 4.6 million. That means next year South Carolina will gain a congressional seat in the U.S. House of Representatives—bringing the total number to seven.

"It doesn't make a whole lot of sense," stated one Charleston County voter before the panel of senators on the redistricting committee.

Voters packed Thursday's hearing. Many of them are worried how redistricting might impact them.

"We have a county with no representatives living in it," stated Pete Anderson of Edisto Beach in Colleton County.

Anderson worries that his future representative could be someone not familiar with his county's needs.

"We need somebody living in our county that would help us get things done," stated Anderson.

"The drawings should be more on a level playing ground," stated Dewitt Williams, a St. Stephens voter in Berkeley County.

Williams fears state leaders will draw lines favoring long running politicians already in office.

"A lot of young people want to run for some of these jobs," stated Dewitt.

"It's not a packed scheme for one political party," stated Sen. Glenn McConnell.

McConnell is chairman for the redistricting subcommittee and says voters along the coast will most likely impacted by the new lines.

"From Myrtle Beach to all the way to Beaufort, we've got an abundance in population, which means district lines have got to move," stated McConnell.

Where they move remains the big mystery. However, McConnell says in the end, the extra congressional district will give the Palmetto State more clout on Capital Hill.

"It means we're going to have a greater opportunity to have our voice heard because we'll have more congressmen," stated McConnell.

McConnell hopes to have the senate vote on the new congressional lines some time in May.

After the new lines are voted on, the state justice department will then have to approve them.

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South Carolina Congressional Redistricting Hearing To Be Held At Aiken Technical College



By [Christine O'Donnell](#)

Published: April 09, 2011

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Aiken, SC --

South Carolina lawmakers want your help in drawing the new Congressional lines, as the 2010 Census showed the state's population increased over the last decade.

Lawmakers are holding public hearings to decide where to re-draw district lines.

The South Carolina House of Representatives redistricting committee says its goals are to keep districts compact, follow natural and geographic boundaries, and to keep communities of similar interest together.

State Representative William Clyburn, (D) District 82: "It's very important that they come out and participate because this is going to last us for ten years. We just want to make sure their interests are protected and their needs concerned."

If you'd like to participate in the next hearing, it will be held on Monday April 11th at 5:30 p.m. at Aiken Technical College.

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Upstate residents debate congressional redistricting at Greenville meeting

Minority voting strength a top issue

By [Stephen Largen](#)
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GREENVILLE - Members of a House redistricting panel at a public hearing here Wednesday night received commentary and requests from a large group of speakers weighing in on how state and federal district lines should be redrawn.

Most speakers who stepped forward from the crowd of more than 200 people that filled the Greenville County Council Chambers spoke out in favor of preservation, whether for keeping current district lines intact, keeping communities of interest linked together in districts or ensuring continued minority voting strength.

Wednesday night's hearing was the eighth of nine hearings the House [Elections](#) Laws subcommittee, comprised of five state House members, has held across the state.

A similar Senate subcommittee was in the same Greenville chambers late last month for a public hearing.

Each subcommittee will use 2010 census population figures and the requirements of the Voting Rights Act to develop new districts for their chamber and the state's U.S. House districts.

Because of strong population growth during the last decade, South Carolina was awarded a seventh congressional seat.

Most political observers have said the state's fastest-growing area along the coast, especially Horry County, is likely to be home to the new congressional seat.

But state Rep. Bakari Sellers, a Bamberg Democrat, and other members of the House redistricting panel stressed Wednesday night that no region of the state is assured the new seat.

Travelers Rest resident Ernest Headley spoke to the subcommittee about the issue that's foremost on the minds of many in the Upstate: Will Spartanburg and Greenville counties remain paired as they are in the current 4th Congressional District, or will they need to be split apart, perhaps anchoring their own congressional districts?

"Something's going to happen," Headley said, alluding to the new census numbers that make it unlikely the growing counties can remain whole in a new congressional district.

"You all are going to have to split something."

The 4th Congressional District includes all of Greenville, Spartanburg and Union counties, along with a small part of Laurens County.

Based on the recently released census figures, each congressional district in South Carolina ideally should have 660,766 people. But Greenville County is now home to more than 450,000 people, while Spartanburg County has about 284,000 residents — a numbers problem for those hoping to keep the counties fully intact in a new district.

"Maybe it's time for Greenville and Spartanburg to lead separately," Headley suggested.

"Eventually they are going to get big enough to where we have to do that."

In an example of the local-level requests made by hearing attendees Wednesday night, Andy Burleigh of Greer asked the subcommittee not to split his city — which sits in both Greenville and Spartanburg counties — into two separate state House districts.

But he acknowledged such a request might not be feasible and urged the assembled state House members to split the city based on county lines if such a cleaving proves necessary.

"If you're going to split it on a border that already exists, people can understand that," Burleigh said.

No redistricting issue was the subject of more questions at Wednesday night's hearing than how the state redistricting panels will retain minority voting strength, even in complicated cases such as in Greenville County where once clustered African-American populations have fanned out to more suburban areas in the last decade.

South Carolina is one of a group of states that must have minority-majority districts under the Voting Rights Act, and the Palmetto State must have its redistricting plans approved by the U.S. Department of Justice before new districts are created.

The spreading out of minority populations makes the state redistricting panels' jobs more difficult because the population shifting necessitates the creation of sometimes peculiarly shaped districts in order to avoid dilution of minority voting strength in a geographic area.

In response to a request by the Rev. Darrin Goss of Spartanburg asking the subcommittee to emphasize minority-voting strength in creating new districts, Sellers said the new congressional district could contain considerable minority voting clout.

“I think there is the ability for us to have another district that's not necessarily majority-minority, but where minorities can compete and perhaps win,” he said.

State Rep. Alan Clemmons, a Myrtle Beach Republican who chairs the House redistricting panel, said the panel will submit its new district map to DOJ for preclearance by August.

Clemmons said DOJ has not given the panel any indication of the department's timeline in vetting South Carolina's new district maps.

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Tuesday, Jul 5, 2011

Posted on Mon, Apr. 18, 2011

Redistricting: Black flight to suburbs could remake political map

Movement could cost some incumbent black legislators their jobs

By JOHN O'CONNOR
joconnor@thestate.com

The movement of black South Carolinians to the suburbs is reshaping Palmetto State politics.

The question is: What will be the result?

One possibility is fewer African-American state legislators — as the urban and rural districts that they represent depopulate — and more politically moderate suburban districts, threatening some Republican incumbents.

“South Carolina living is becoming more integrated,” said Rep. Jim Harrison, the Richland Republican who chairs the House committee that will use census data to draw new election districts. “It’s a good thing.”

According to U.S. census data, more black South Carolinians are calling the suburbs home. Suburban neighborhoods in Richland, Dorchester, Florence, Spartanburg and Lexington counties saw the state’s largest increase in the number of black residents between 2000 and 2010, according to that data.

Those gains came largely at the expense of urban and rural communities in Richland, Spartanburg and Charleston counties, which lost black residents.

The shift of black residents to the suburbs from urban and rural enclaves is an issue because the S.C. Legislature this year, as it does once a decade, must redraw the political boundaries of state House and Senate districts, as well as congressional districts, to ensure that each has roughly equal populations.

But the federal Voting Rights Act puts strict limits on how new district lines can be drawn. In particular, that law seeks to ensure that lines aren’t drawn to diminish the political influence of a demographic group, in particular African-Americans in the South.

That will create political and legal problems this year.

Why?

Census data shows some S.C. House districts that have lost the most black residents are represented by black lawmakers, all Democrats. Meanwhile, some of the districts that have seen the greatest increase in the number of black residents are those represented by white lawmakers, most always Republicans.

The suburban migration is part of a two-decade trend, said Todd Shaw, a political science and African-American studies professor at the University of South Carolina.

In some cases, black residents are moving because they are earning more money and can afford to live in better neighborhoods with better schools. In other cases, Shaw said, black residents have moved because of rising costs in their old neighborhoods, some of which have been gentrified as more and more white South Carolinians move back into downtown urban areas.

Where black South Carolinians are moving

Legislative districts with the biggest gains — and biggest losses — in black residents over the past 10 years, according to the census, and who represents each now

Districts that gained the most black residents

House

79 – Richland and Kershaw counties, Rep. Mia Butler Garrick, D, +14,007

98 – Charleston and Dorchester counties, Rep. Chris Murphy, R, +7,756

77 – Richland County, Rep. Joe McEachern, D, +6,833

117 – Charleston County, Rep. William Crosby, R, +4,811

80 – Richland County, Rep. Jimmy Bales, D, +4,292

Senate

22 – Richland and Kershaw counties, Sen. Joel Lourie, D, +19,262

38 – Charleston and Dorchester counties, Sen. Michael Rose, R, +12,050

19 – Richland County, Sen. John Scott Jr., D, +11,025

Districts that lost the most black residents

House

74 – Richland County, Rep. Todd Rutherford, D, (4,496)

23 – Greenville County, Rep. Chandra Dillard, D, (3,619)

111 – Charleston County, Rep. Wendell Gilliard, D, (3,425)

103 – Georgetown County, Rep. Carl Anderson, D, (1,957)

The result "is a greater degree of African-American presence in counties," as opposed to cities, Shaw said. "That is an important implication as we're doing reapportionment."

Concerns about future for black pols

Politically, the movement by black South Carolinians to the suburbs could cost some incumbent African-American legislators elected from depopulating districts their jobs.

"It's raising some real questions about the African-American community's political future," said Rep. Joe Neal, D-Richland, referring to the record number of black representatives now in the Legislature. "Will events conspire to change that?"

Neal thinks black residents are not dispersing but, instead, re-concentrating themselves in new communities such as House District 79, which includes Spring Valley and other Northeast Richland neighborhoods.

That district had been represented in the House by a Republican. But, in 2009, the district elected a black Democrat.

Other once-Republican House districts also are seeing an influx of new African-American residents, traditionally Democrats.

USC's Shaw says that population shift could mean that those traditionally Republican-controlled districts will become more moderate politically.

For example, Rep. Nathan Ballentine's northwest Richland County House district saw the ninth-highest growth in black residents in the state during the past decade.

Ballentine, a Republican from Irmo, said the reason is simple. "People move to our area because of the schools."

There has been so much movement that Ballentine's District 71 has about 8,000 people more than the new ideal population of a House district, 37,301. But neighboring District 73, represented by Rep. Chris Hart, D-Richland, is about 6,000 people under that ideal and could add some parts of Ballentine's current district to get its numbers up.

Rep. Todd Rutherford's Columbia district is at the other end of the spectrum, losing almost 4,500 black residents over the past 10 years. The reason? One factor is that the city used federal money to redevelop a former housing project, moving nearly 1,000 residents to the suburbs.

Still, Rutherford, a Democrat, is less concerned that redistricting might reduce the number of black lawmakers. "I just haven't seen the numbers that suggest it's easy to do that."

Harrison, head of the House committee handling redistricting, said questions about how shifting demographics affect minority representatives and incumbents will be part of the redistricting debate.

"It is harder to create minority districts," Harrison said of the new census results. But, he added, the task is not insurmountable or even bad.

South Carolina's redistricting proposal must be reviewed by the federal Justice Department. Any plan that does not maintain proportional representation — in a state that is almost 30 percent African-American — faces being struck down.

The redistricting plan also is likely to be challenged in court.

For now, Harrison, Rutherford and others say lawmakers are taking a wait-and-see approach while the state House and Senate conduct public hearings and gather facts before drafting a redistricting plan.

31 – Spartanburg County, Rep. Harold Mitchell Jr., D, (1,918)

Senate

42 – Charleston County, Sen. Robert Ford, D, (5,258)

45 – Beaufort, Charleston, Colleton, Hampton and Jasper counties, Sen. Clementa Pinkney, D, (2,981)

32 – Florence, Horry, Georgetown and Williamsburg counties, Sen. Yancey McGill, D, (2,976)

Reach O'Connor at (803) 771-8358.



Do the Right Thing on Redistricting

by : Andy Brack

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Redistricting is the political equivalent of the fox guarding the hen house. As important as it is to redraw our political districts periodically to ensure elected officials are representing areas of about the same population, the very people in South Carolina who redraw the lines are those in office.

That makes many cynical about the process because of the potential for backroom nudge-and-wink deals, political gamesmanship and the pressure by incumbents to protect their districts.

The big news this year is that the federal government might look at what's happening in South Carolina with renewed interest. For the first time in 50 years as reapportionment is being done, Democrats control the Justice Department, which monitors redistricting plans in several states, including South Carolina.

Many believe that a Justice Department led by Democrats, long associated with pushing civil rights legislation, will work hard to ensure compliance with the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965. Among the things it requires is for states to redraw district lines that are compact (they don't look crazy on a map); contiguous (all areas of the districts are connected geographically); non-discriminatory; and protect "communities of interest" (i.e., they try not to split up natural communities).

A look at the results of the last legislative reapportionment in 2003, which was approved by a federal court, shows a lot of odd-shaped districts in the state House and Senate. These are textbook examples of some of the political gerrymandering that protected incumbents and made sure different areas had some black-majority districts where black leaders could win.

Just look at the lines for three GOP senators in the Mount Pleasant area of Charleston County:

Senate 43: Sen. Ray Cleary of Georgetown has a district that stretches 75 miles from the Old Village in Mount Pleasant along the coast through Georgetown County to Murrells Inlet in Horry County.

Senate 37: Sen. Larry Grooms of Moncks Corner has a district that curls from Walterboro in Colleton County through Dorchester and Berkeley counties to pick up a small piece of Charleston County east of the Cooper River.

Senate 43: Sen. Chip Campsen's district includes Sullivan's Island, Isle of Palms and Mount Pleasant, and then jumps over the Cooper River to take south of Broad on the Peninsula. It then stretches north of Hanahan and west to parts of James Island and Folly Beach.

In other words, the area east of the Cooper River is represented by three senators, two of whom don't live in Charleston County. On the whole, the county has seven senators representing its various parts.

The districts from 2003 for the House are little different. Just look at some districts across the state:

House 111: Democratic Rep. Wendell Gailliard's district in Charleston County looks like a backwards C that hooks from West Ashley through the Neck area to North Charleston.

House 65: GOP Rep. Jay Lucas lives in Hartsville, but has a district that sprawls from western Lancaster County, has two separate pieces of Chesterfield County, a chunk of Kershaw County and part of Darlington County.

House 29: The district of GOP Rep. Dennis Moss of Gaffney connects communities from Interstate 85 in Cherokee County through York County to Interstate 77 in Chester County.

Bottom line: While these court-approved 2003 districts are contiguous, many aren't compact, as evidenced by their odd shapes. And several split up traditional communities. It will be interesting to see what lawmakers come up with when the Obama Justice Department is looking over their shoulders.

The House and Senate committees this year are to be congratulated for public hearings across the state to get citizen input on where and how the new lines should be drawn. The House had nine hearings, while the Senate had 10. Local governments, which also have to redistrict, would do well to emulate how state legislators reached out this year to citizens.

In the meantime, if you want to have a say in how you think state House, Senate and congressional districts should be drawn, contact your state representative or senator in the next few days. They're about to start drawing the lines.

Andy Brack, publisher of Statehouse Report, can be reached at brack@statehousereport.com. For more information on House redistricting, visit redistricting.schouse.gov; for Senate info, visit redistricting.scsenate.gov.

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REDISTRICTING: Residents at public hearing say they want counties to 'stay whole'

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REDISTRICTING: Residents at public hearing say they want counties to 'stay whole'

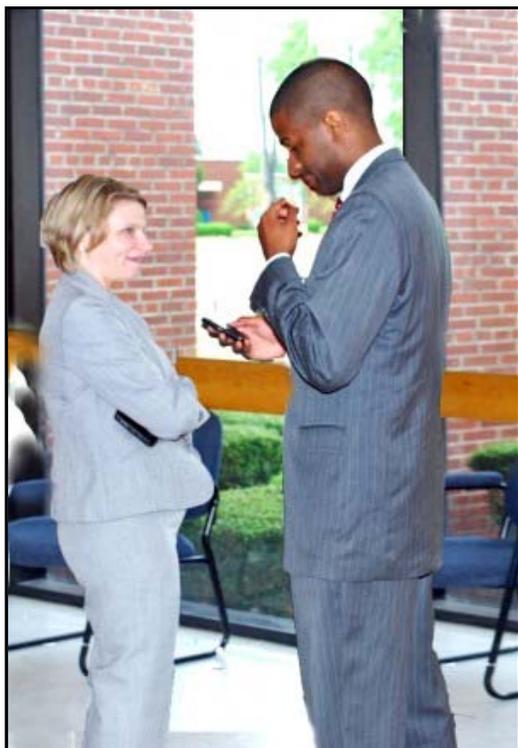
By JERRY DURGAN, T&D Correspondent The Times and Democrat | Posted: Wednesday, April 27, 2011 2:00 am | (1) Comments

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[Buy this photo](#) T&D CORRESPONDENT JERRY DURGAN S.C. House Rep. Jenny Anderson Horne, R-Dorchester, chats with Rep. Bakari Sellers, D-Denmark, following the April 12 public hearing on redistricting at Voorhees College. The hearing was one of a series conducted around the state this month by the House Election Laws Committee.

"Do not split counties" seemed to be the consensus of those attending a recent public hearing on redistricting in South Carolina held at Voorhees College in Denmark.

The April 12 hearing was one in a series being conducted this month by members of the Election Laws Subcommittee of the S.C. House Judiciary Committee to receive public input on redrawing district map lines.

More than three dozen people attended, most from Bamberg, Barnwell and Allendale counties, with a few coming from Hampton and Colleton counties.

Serving on the panel at the public hearing were Rep. Alan D. Clemmons, Rep. Karl B. Allen, Rep. Jenny Anderson Horne, Rep. Bakari T. Sellers, Rep. Thomas R. "Tom" Young Jr. and Patrick Dennis, chief counsel, House Judiciary Committee.

"These hearings are only a part of a long, involved process in developing a redistricting plan," said Cummings, who chairs the subcommittee.

"We will use (the input) from the (hearings) to form the basis of how we will proceed based on the new population census. Our goal is to listen to the interested parties ... how the people wish to be represented ... to see that the plan will assure one person, one vote."

The key concern of those attending seemed to be that "our county and its representation will remain intact."

Ben Kenlaw, chairman of the Barnwell County Democratic Party, said the Bamberg, Barnwell, Allendale, Hampton and Colleton region was "the forgotten part of the state."

"We want to be sure that we are recognized (in the redistricting process)," Kenlaw said.

Brunson Mayor Terry Wright wanted to know why Hampton County had three House representatives instead of one since it was such a small county.

"Why can't we have just one representative? ... We are regionalized (in our infrastructure) ... it would be so much better to be able to talk to just one representative about our concerns," Wright said.

Alonzo Frazier of Allendale County was also concerned that his county "stay whole" in the redistricting process.

Several people from the counties of Barnwell and Allendale praised the work Dist. 91 Rep. Lonnie Hosey, a Democrat, had done for their area. Ann Rice of Allendale, Marie Davis of Williston and former representative Wilbur Cave each spoke of the "good work" Hosey had given to his constituents.

Hosey thanked his constituents for the support they have shown him.

"I appreciate my constituents for coming out tonight and to voice their opinions about their district," he said. "Keeping the districts together is very important."

"You must really think deep and do what is right ... even when it's hard," Terry Jowers of Williston told the subcommittee.

"Keep the district together whenever possible. Keep the communities of interest together. Barnwell County has absolutely nothing to do with Beaufort County. Neither does Allendale nor Bamberg counties ... I challenge you that when you redraw the districts, be sure they mirror the population."



REDISTRICTING: Residents at public hearing say they want counties to 'stay whole'

By JERRY DURGAN, T&D Correspondent | Posted: Wednesday, April 27, 2011 2:00 am

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Contact the writer: j_durgan@att.net.



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Wednesday, Aug 3, 2011

Posted on Thu, May. 19, 2011

Horry anchors new congressional district in S.C. House plan Clyburn, Wilson districts face changes

By JOHN O'CONNOR
joconnor@thestate.com

Horry County would anchor South Carolina's new 7th Congressional District, according to a redistricting proposal released by the S.C. House on Wednesday.

The plan also dissects and recombines four S.C. House districts — Democratic districts in Hampton and Darlington counties, and Republican districts in Laurens County, and spanning Greenville and Pickens counties. New S.C. House districts would be added along the coast and in South Carolina's growing Charlotte suburbs.

Lawmakers said the plan — drawn by a Republican-controlled House — largely would maintain the state's balance of power.

Republicans expect to win the new congressional district and keep control of the five that the GOP currently holds. Democrats likely would have a lock only on the state's sole majority black district, which U.S. Rep. Jim Clyburn of Columbia now holds.

Democrats said the GOP-controlled plan was not perfect but acknowledged it could be worse.

"We've got a few areas of concern," said House Minority Leader Harry Ott, D-Calhoun, pledging to try and amend the plan. "Overall, I can't say the whole plan is terrible."

In the Midlands, the plan calls for:

- The 2nd Congressional District — represented by Republican U.S. Rep. Joe Wilson of Springdale — to shift away from the coast, adding Aiken County while dropping Beaufort County and the counties between Beaufort and the Midlands.
- The 6th Congressional District — represented by Democratic U.S. Rep. Clyburn — to become more compact, adding a portion of Sumter County and stretching southwest to the Savannah River.

In addition, the House plan would split Greenville County between the 3rd and 4th Congressional districts. Greenville would continue to make up a majority of the 4th District's population, which now includes Greenville, Spartanburg and Union counties, as well as a tiny slice of Laurens County.

Also in the Upstate, Rep. David Tribble, R-Laurens, was redrawn into another lawmaker's district. Tribble said he expected the move. His district had lost 7,000 people over the last decade and is surrounded by other districts that have lost population.

"When you're losing population, you don't have a whole lot to say," Tribble said, adding he will try to amend the plan and will run again regardless of where his new district is located.

Rep. Eric Bikas, R-Pickens, was moved into a retiring lawmaker's district but was satisfied with the change. "It's not going to change anything."

A House subcommittee will take up the redistricting plan Monday, with the full Judiciary Committee picking up the plan two weeks later.

House Judiciary chairman Jim Harrison, R-Richland, said he expects the bill to hit the House floor on June 14.

The state Senate is still drafting its own redistricting plan for Senate and U.S. House districts.

Legislators are scheduled to meet for two weeks in June in an attempt to approve a redistricting plan, which then would go to Nikki Haley for her approval or veto.

Because of the state's history of discrimination against minority voters, the U.S. Department of Justice also must review and sign off on any plan approved by lawmakers and the governor.

Harrison said he thinks the House plan complies with both the federal Voting Rights Act and the criteria, set by legislators at the beginning of the once-a-decade redistricting process that follows a new census, to maintain current districts as much as possible.

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Proposal calls for new Carolina Forest district in SC House

Posted: May 19, 2011 8:05 PM EDT

Updated: Jun 06, 2011 8:31 AM EDT

By Brandon Herring, WMBF News Reporter - [bio](#) | [email](#)



MYRTLE BEACH, SC (WMBF) – A proposed redistricting plan adds a new district for the Carolina Forest area of Horry County in the State House of Representatives.

The State House of Representatives released the proposed plan late Wednesday. It calls for the Carolina Forest area to get a representative in Columbia because of the population growth in that part of Horry County explained Representative Alan Clemmons. The Republican from Myrtle Beach is the Chair of the House Elections Laws Subcommittee overseeing the redistricting proposal.

The new Horry County District would be District 56, and it would be carved mostly out of District 105, with some of the district also coming from the current Districts 104 and 68. Those Districts are represented by George Hearn, Tracy Edge and Thad Viers respectively.

"The more voices we have the better off we are," commented Horry County Council Chairman Tom Rice.

Rice said having an extra voice from Horry County could help keep more tax money in the county.

He said currently, of the money Horry County sends to Columbia, the county gets the lowest percentage of that money back compared to the rest of the state's counties.

"Our money is used across the state" Rice said. "It builds Charleston's bridges and Greenville's roads and Columbia's roads, and yet Horry County has to build its own roads. We paid 72 percent of the cost of Highway 31 and Highway 22."



Lawmakers in the state House of Representatives also released their proposed plan for the state's new seventh Congressional District. That new district means a seventh US House representative for South Carolina in Washington, DC. The proposed plan could also give more political clout to Horry County because it includes Horry County and several Pee Dee Counties, Georgetown County and parts of Berkeley County. Horry County would be the largest population center in the proposed district.

Florence and Marion Counties would be in the new district, moving them out of the 6th Congressional District represented by Democrat Jim Clyburn.

The new District 7 also means a split of the current Congressional District 1. Horry County and the Charleston area would no longer share a representative. Rice said that is also a positive proposal for Horry County because the person election from the new District 7 would be more likely to push hard for interests in Horry County and the Pee Dee.

"Charleston has its own needs," Rice said. "Of course it's a large population center. I think it's a very good thing we will have a separate House district from Charleston."

The South Carolina Senate will also release redistricting proposals, and the new districts could be finalized by the end of June. The U.S. Justice Department will also review the finalized proposals, and any legal challenges would have to be settled before the new districts could become official.

The first time the new districts would be used is for next 2012 elections.

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Redistricting proposals for South Carolina posted online

By Liz Carey

Friday, May 20, 2011

The South Carolina House of Representatives redistricting committee on Friday made public the first maps of proposed new district lines. In northern Anderson County, the proposed District 10 would extend into Pickens and Greenville counties.

That district, currently represented by Rep. Dan Cooper, R-Piedmont, is one of several that are being redrawn as part of the redistricting.

The maps are available at redistricting.schouse.gov.

According to state law, districts are redrawn every 10 years after U.S. census information is gathered to determine population areas of growth and decline across the states. The Judiciary Committee of the South Carolina House of Representatives is responsible for determining lines for congressional districts, as well as state House districts.

The proposed lines for District 10 would actually place Cooper's house in fellow Republican Rep. Brian White's District 6.

Cooper, who has served for more than 20 years in the legislature and is chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, which oversees budgeting for the state, said the redistricting was expected given the growth in the area.

In April, Cooper resigned his seat, saying he wanted to spend more time with his family. His last day is June 29. He would not comment on whether the redrawn district lines played a part in his decision to resign.

Dan Harvell, chairman of the Anderson County Republican Party, said redistricting is an uncomfortable fact of life.

"All the Southern states are experiencing this right now because of the influx of people moving into the area," Harvell said.

The process can make or break politicians, he said.

"There's always jockeying amongst the officials when it comes to redistricting," Harvell said. "Those lines can actually make or break some people's political careers."

Harvell said he would like to see the lines stay within the county.

"Anytime you extend those lines into another county, you make it more difficult for the legislator because they become part of two legislative delegations instead of just one," he said.



Tuesday, Jul 5, 2011

Posted on Tue, Jun. 07, 2011

S.C. House panel OKs redistricting that would affect Horry, Georgetown counties

By Jim Davenport
The Associated Press

South Carolina legislators approved plans for new election boundary lines Monday that includes a new 7th District U.S. House seat in Horry and Georgetown counties.

The House Judiciary Committee's approval of redistricting plans for 124 state House seats and the U.S. House now head to the House floor for debate next week.

The state Senate will take up plans today drawing lines for its 46 seats as well its version of U.S. House district lines.

Redistricting is required every decade to make sure Statehouse and U.S. House districts properly divide the state's population. And any changes to S.C. boundaries must be approved by the U.S. Department of Justice because of the state's past Voting Rights Act violations.

House Judiciary Chairman Jim Harrison, R-Columbia, said the state's U.S. House members have signed off on changes made in their districts, including those needed to create the 7th.

The new seat was added to account for population growth and returns the House seat S.C. lost in 1930 as population fell. Neighboring Georgia also is picking up a seat.

The 7th District would include Horry and Georgetown counties on the coast as well as inland counties Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon and most of Florence County. Several of those counties had been in the 1st, 5th and 6th districts.

Adding the seat and request from U.S. Rep. Jim Clyburn, the House's third highest ranking Democrat, for a more compact district, rearranged swaths of the state's U.S. House map.

Black voter influence in a state with a history of racial discrimination remains a key element of redistricting. But that's become more difficult this time as more black voters have moved to suburban areas. For instance, state Rep. Robert Brown, a black Democrat from Hollywood, for years has represented a majority black district. But population shifts would have his district majority white.

The plan creates two new majority districts made up of minorities: one in Richland County and one in Georgetown County.

Other details:

The 1st District, now held by Republican freshman U.S. Rep. Tim Scott shifts farther down the coast, and shifts Beaufort and Jasper counties from the 2nd District, home to veteran U.S. Rep. Joe Wilson, a Republican.

Wilson's 2nd District compacts and is made up mostly of Aiken, Barnwell, Lexington and parts of Richland counties.

Freshman Republican U.S. Rep. Jeff Duncan's 3rd District appears to change the least. It loses Aiken County and picks up parts of Newberry and Greenville counties.

Republican freshman U.S. Rep. Trey Gowdy's 4th District compacts, with 60 percent of it in Greenville County and 40 percent in Spartanburg. Union County moves into the 5th District.

Freshman Republican Rep. Mick Mulvaney's fast-growing 5th District picks up Union County as well as parts of Newberry and Sumter counties.

Clyburn's 6th District picks up Allendale and Hampton counties and more of Sumter and Florence counties.

Legislators from Spartanburg and Greenville counties tried to keep their entire counties in the 4th District. For instance, Republican Greenville Rep. Wendy Nanney argued her county is the state's largest and deserves its own congressman.

"We view it as quite an economic powerhouse and feel like it's important to keep Greenville County whole," Nanney said.

But the committee rejected proposals from both counties.

The state House plans draw eight legislators into four districts that would essentially pit existing lawmakers against each other in primaries next year. The committee also will adopt plans for a new, seventh U.S. House district.

Democratic Rep. Denny Neilson of Darlington, the House's longest-serving member, had been drawn into the same district as Rep. Terry Alexander of Florence in a draft plan. Neilson said that would have meant parts of her district in downtown Darlington would have been merged into a Florence-based district. Neilson wanted the Darlington voters represented by the same House member.

"It was like the disenfranchisement of several thousand people," Neilson said.

The panel agreed Monday to draw her and Rep. Robert Williams into the same district, creating a primary faceoff for Neilson, who first won her seat in 1984, and Williams, who has held his since 2007.

"No one wants that to happen," Neilson said.

Democratic Reps. Curtis Brantley of Ridgeland and Bill Bowers of Hampton were drawn into the same district representing Hampton and Jasper counties. Both are veteran legislators. The draft of the plan had drawn Brantley, who has served in the House since 2007, out of the district. But the committee moved the lines to make sure he lived in the redrawn district.

Republican Reps. Dan Cooper of Piedmont and Eric Bikas of Easley were drawn into a Greenville-Anderson county district. Cooper, however, is giving up his seat. That would give Bikas, a freshman lawmaker, a better chance of holding onto the seat in next year's elections.

Republican Reps. Mark Willis of Fountain Inn and David Tribble of Clinton were drawn into the same district around Laurens and Greenville counties. Willis has been in the House since 2009 and Tribble is in his freshman term.

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SC senators approve election district lines

By JIM DAVENPORT Associated Press

Published: Wednesday, June 8, 2011 at 1:18 p.m.

South Carolina lawmakers rejected proposals on Wednesday to add a black majority district to the South Carolina Senate as they unanimously adopted a redistricting plan.

American Civil Liberties Union voting rights lawyer Katie O'Connor had proposed on Tuesday adding the black majority district and protecting another from losing majority-black districts.

The ACLU proposal called for 11 black-majority districts among the Senate's 46 seats. The proposal advancing to the Senate Judiciary Committee for debate on Thursday has nine.

Victoria Middleton, state director of the ACLU, said the panel's plan has problems.

"We think the Senate's plan is potentially retrogressive; it eliminates one majority-minority district while ours adds one. Our plan is more compact and more in line with the Voting Rights Act. It also reflects the demographic reality in South Carolina better," Middleton said.

The proposed plan can be amended in the Senate Judiciary Committee or when it's debated in Senate floor.

Redistricting is required every decade to make sure legislative and congressional districts reflect population changes and meet certain requirements.

The new maps require federal approval under the Voting Rights Act, to ensure they don't discriminate against minorities in a state with a history of inequitable treatment of blacks. Legislators haven't decided whether to use a streamlined process that would take the proposed district lines to a federal judge for approval or go through the more traditional approach of having the Department of Justice review the plan.

The panel also rejected a South Carolina Republican plan that combined four Democratic-held districts into two. Republicans control the Senate with 27 seats to Democrats' 19.

The GOP plan would have forced Democratic Sens. Creighton Coleman of Winnsboro and Vincent Sheheen of Camden to run against each other in a primary next year in a combined district. The same scenario would play out for Democratic Sens. Joel Lourie of Columbia and Nikki Setzler of West Columbia.

Sheheen was the Democratic gubernatorial nominee last year and ran a closer-than-expected race against Republican Nikki Haley, who won.

On Monday, the House Judiciary Committee approved plans for its 124 districts. Their plan collapsed four Democratic districts into two and four Republican districts into two.

The Senate and House plans will be debated when the Legislature returns for a wrap-up session next week.

But the Statehouse districts are expected to draw far less debate than a new U.S. House seat. Population growth means the state gains a seventh district - returning a seat that the Palmetto State lost in 1930 as population fell. Neighboring Georgia also is picking up a seat.

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Republicans, who hold five of the state's six current U.S. House seats, want that district added along the state's coast and counties near the eastern border with North Carolina. That nearly would assure Republicans pick up a sixth seat. The House Judiciary Committee approved that proposal on Monday.

Democrats argue South Carolina's 34 percent minority population justifies adding a second minority district. The ACLU recommended a seventh district that includes all of Sumter, Fairfield and Lee counties and parts of Chester, Chesterfield, Clarendon, Darlington, Marlboro, Richland, Spartanburg, Union and York counties.

Some of that proposed district was in U.S. Rep. Jim Clyburn's current 6th District, including the veteran Democratic lawmaker's home. Under the ACLU plan, Clyburn's old 6th District would be enlarged and extend from the Savannah River on the state's border with Georgia to near the North Carolina border in Marlboro County.

The Senate panel won't discuss the congressional district until the Senate district map is adopted by the Judiciary Committee.

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Committees approve redistricting proposals

By Liz Carey

Originally published 12:05 p.m., June 9, 2011

Updated 02:46 p.m., June 9, 2011

COLUMBIA — New district lines drawn by legislative committees would shift some area legislators' constituencies.

The South Carolina House of Representatives Judiciary Committee has approved new lines for 124 House districts and seven congressional districts. The committee's plan collapsed four Democratic districts into two, and four Republican districts into two.

In Anderson County, several lines will move. In District 10, which covers the Piedmont and Powdersville area and is represented by Republican Dan Cooper of Piedmont, new lines would eliminate part of Anderson County from the district, but would add parts of Pickens and Greenville counties.

Rep. Don Bowen, R-Anderson, who represents District 8, would lose a small portion of Oconee County and the community of Fair Play.

Anderson Republican Rep. Brian White's District 6 would expand north to incorporate some of Cooper's district, but shrink in the southern part of the district. If the plan is approved, Cooper will live in White's district. Cooper, who is chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, resigned in April, citing a desire to spend more time with his family. His last day will be June 30.

On Thursday, the state Senate Judiciary Committee approved a proposal that has nine minority districts. The American Civil Liberties Union had wanted to preserve an existing minority district and add a new one. The group's state executive director, Victoria Middleton, said its proposal was more in line with the Voting Rights Act.

Sen. Glenn McConnell, the committee's chairman and the Senate's president pro tem, said the Senate plan meets federal standards.

McConnell said the minority district that would become a majority white district covers Fairfield and Chester counties.

"We think it's defensible," said McConnell, a Republican from Charleston. "The problem is there's a whole chunk of population up there that's got to go somewhere. You cannot make race the primary and sole factor."

The House and Senate plans will be debated when the legislature returns next week for a wrap-up session.

Redistricting is required by law every 10 years in conjunction with the U.S. census to ensure representation based on population increases and shifts.

Once approved by the legislature, scheduled to happen before June 30, the plans go to the U. S. Department of Justice for pre-approval, officials said.

It was not known when the federal government would act.

The goal, officials said, is to have new legislative and congressional districts in place by March in time for filing for seats in the 2012 election.

-- The Associated Press contributed to this report.



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<http://www2.snow.com/news/2011/jun/13/house-redistricting-will-bring-changes-darlington--ar-1968772/>



Published: June 13, 2011

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House redistricting will bring changes to Darlington County

By **Jim Faile**

Weak population growth will mean some changes for Darlington County's political landscape under a proposed redistricting plan for S.C. House districts.

Darlington County will lose one of its three resident House districts under a plan before the House and up for approval this week.

The proposed plan for 124 House seats merges the current House District 56 into House District 62 and puts Democratic Reps. Denny Neilson and Robert Williams, both of Darlington, into the new District 62. Neilson represents District 56 and Williams represents District 62.

The new District 62 will give up most of its current area in Florence County and move deeper into Darlington County taking in a large portion of territory that is now in District 56. It will become almost solely a Darlington County district with a small part of Florence County, including Timmonsville, in it. The district will take in all of the city of Darlington and will move deeper into the city of Hartsville from the east, according to new proposed election maps for the House. Currently, Darlington is divided between Districts 56 and 62.

The proposed plan puts eight lawmakers into four districts essentially pitting them against each other in primaries next year.

The House is expected to take up the plan Tuesday. A vote could come then or later in the week as members take up amendments to the proposal, said Republican House Speaker Pro Tempore Jay Lucas of Hartsville. Lucas said he plans to introduce several amendments himself aimed at reducing the number of precincts in Darlington County that would be split among multiple House districts under the plan.

State legislative districts are redrawn every decade to reflect changes in population. South Carolina's plans must be approved by the U.S. Department of Justice because the state remains under the federal Voting Rights Act.

The Senate is working on its own reapportionment plan.

Neilson said the plan is a vast improvement over an earlier proposed plan that carved up the city of Darlington and put part of the downtown area into a Florence-based district. "It was like the disenfranchisement of several thousand people," she said.

"The unfortunate part is that Darlington County became sort of a target because of the census," Neilson said. "The county's population didn't go down any, but it didn't gain either."

“It’s unbelievable how they’re going about it,” Williams said. “But it is what it is.”

Williams said he is not happy with the proposed plan. “I’m disappointed at how they cut up my area,” he said. “They’re giving some of my area around Lamar to Florence, and they’re putting Denny and me into the same district. That’s not good.”

Neilson said the new plan righted a wrong. “I don’t think much thought was put into that original proposal and how it would affect the people of Darlington,” she said.

“I’m upset about the way it’s been handled. I’m distraught about the fact that Denny and I may have to run against each other. But I think overall, we’re going to get through this redistricting,” Williams said.

“Rep. Williams and I are good friends. I appreciate his friendship,” said Neilson. “No incumbent wants to run against another incumbent, but sometimes it happens. We’re not the only ones.”

Under the new plan, a new district that will be created in Beaufort and Colleton counties will be designated as District 56, according to Lucas.

According to Lucas, House District 60, which currently includes portions of Florence and Sumter counties, will be reconfigured to take in areas of Florence County and Darlington County including the town of Lamar and surrounding area and the rural community of Oates, areas currently in District 62. District 60 is currently represented by Florence County Republican Rep. Phillip Lowe.

House District 55, currently a Dillon/Horry County district, will become a Dillon/Marlboro/Darlington County district, taking in a portion of Darlington County to the northeast as will District 59, currently a Florence/Marion County district that will become a Florence/Marion/Darlington County district, Lucas said. District 55 is currently represented by Democratic Rep. Jackie Hayes of Dillon, while District 59 is represented by Democratic Rep. Terry Alexander of Florence County.

District 54, which currently includes all of Marlboro County and a portion of northeastern Chesterfield County, will change to take in a portion of northern Darlington County, including Society Hill and the Antioch area, Lucas said. Democrat Elizabeth Munnerlyn currently represents District 54.

House District 65, which is represented by Lucas, will show little change in Darlington County but will take in more territory in Lancaster County to accommodate new population growth there, Lucas said. That district will continue to be spread across four counties - Darlington, Chesterfield, Kershaw and Lancaster. District 65 is the only House district in the state that takes in parts of four counties, Lucas said.

Under the current House election plan, 100 percent of Darlington County’s population is in a district that is considered a Darlington County district. Lucas said the new plan will reduce that number to about 75 percent.

Williams said he was disappointed that the black voting age population of District 62 will decline to from its current level of about 58 percent to about 54.5 percent, although that will still keep it a majority black district. “I think the Justice Department has made it pretty clear that some districts, the population needs to stay the same as much as possible,” Williams said.

Lucas said he believes the plan will eventually face a court challenge and could be redrawn by the courts, which happened after the last reapportionment process 10 years ago. “There are a lot of dissatisfied members out there,” he said. “Not to the same level that there was 10 years ago, but there’s still a lot of dissatisfaction with it. I think there’s no question that the courts will get involved. I do not believe that this will be the ultimate final product.”

He added that if the courts ultimately do redraw the plan, he thinks the Pee Dee will see even more significant changes.

Lucas said the loss of one of Darlington County’s resident House seats is something lawmakers have been expecting for several years based on changing population figures. “We just don’t have the population to support three House districts,” he said.

In fact, he said, the county is doing well to keep two seats. The ideal population number to support one seat is 37,301, Lucas said. For two seats, the figure is 74,602. Darlington County's current population stands at 68,861, he said.

"District 62 will become the most prominent House district in Darlington County, and Darlington will no longer be split between two districts," Lucas said.

"If the population of the Pee Dee continues to remain stagnant, these rural districts are going to continue to spread into other counties," he said.

Messenger Editor Bob Sloan contributed to this report.

State Democratic Party to fight SC's redistricting plan

Party's challenge could test balance of power, influence of black voters

By [Stephen Largen](#)
stephen.largen@shj.com

Published: Tuesday, June 14, 2011 at 3:15 a.m.

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The South Carolina Democratic Party plans to mount a legal challenge to the state's eventual redistricting plan with a goal of giving black people, the party's most-loyal constituency, the opportunity to influence more elections.

In the process, experts said, the party would be testing a legal argument being made by Democrats in several states that will put the U.S. Department of Justice to the test as it tries to balance competing legal guidelines in enforcing the Voting Rights Act.

Party Chairman Dick Harpootlian confirmed the planned lawsuit in a recent interview, but declined to provide much in the way of specifics, saying he didn't want to "tip his hand" to Republicans.

Republicans control the South Carolina General Assembly and power the construction of new election lines that follow the shifts in population measured by the census every 10 years.

But the basic argument Democrats plan to make is that the U.S. Department of Justice should support a plan that reduces the percentages of voting-age black people from some "majority-minority" districts and moves them to other districts in order to spread the black vote to more elections.

South Carolina is among 16 states, mostly in the South, that to be in compliance with Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act must have new electoral maps precleared.

That process can be handled by the Justice Department or the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

Lawmakers have not decided which route the state will take, according to the Associated Press.

With either option, the state's new congressional and state electoral maps likely will be back in court to address the planned lawsuit from Democrats and any other others filed related to redistricting.

Voting Rights Act experts said Democrats will have to show that shifting some blacks from majority-minority districts would not weaken or "retrogress" current overall black voting strength, which the Justice Department measures by the ability of voting-age blacks to elect candidates of their choosing, in order to make a successful case.

"It depends a lot on what the Department of Justice sees as the effective percentage," said Michael McDonald, a redistricting expert with the nonpartisan think-tank the Brookings Institution in Washington. "Dropping below 50 percent (in a majority-minority district) could be dangerous waters."

In weighing a lawsuit from the state Democratic Party, McDonald said the Justice Department will look to see to what degree white people living in districts that Democrats want to move black people from have crossed over to vote for African-American candidates.

Co-racial coalition

Allan Lichtman, a redistricting expert and professor at American University in Washington, said the Justice Department also will examine the potential for the creation of co-racial coalitions presented in a lawsuit seeking to alter majority-minority districts.

He said groups in other states who have received approval to “unpack” black people from majority-minority districts have used the latter argument in making successful cases.

“The Justice Department could look quite favorably on it,” Lichtman said of a South Carolina lawsuit.

In assessing a lawsuit, the Justice Department must reconcile seemingly contradictory directives.

A 2003 Supreme Court ruling in the Georgia v. Ashcroft case strengthened the case for consideration in the redistricting process of methods that create more minority voting power, such as the creation of racial coalition districts.

But in reauthorizing the Voting Rights Act in 2006, Congress strengthened language requiring maintenance of current majority-minority districts.

The competing pulls create “a lot of questions” and a lack of clarity, said Kareem Crayton, a law professor at the University of North Carolina.

Rep. Bakari Sellers, D-Bamberg, introduced amendments during House Judiciary Committee hearings earlier this month on new state House and congressional maps that proposed drawing down the black population in some districts to create more influence elsewhere, but his amendments were defeated in the Republican-controlled committee.

Sellers said the rejection of his amendments showed Republicans are attempting to unduly pack black voters in majority-minority districts that black people already dominate in order to increase GOP control.

Repeated attempts to reach Republicans leading the redistricting process in various committees and subcommittees were unsuccessful.

The South Carolina NAACP did not respond to an interview request.

South Carolina lawmakers resume work on redistricting today, when they return to the Statehouse in special session to tackle the once-a-decade process and other unsettled issues.

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Wednesday, Jun. 15, 2011

House approves redistricting plans, Dems plan to sue

Plan going to Senate soon creates state's seventh congressional district centered in Horry County

By GINA SMITH - gnsmt@thestate.com

The state House of Representatives signed off on a plan Tuesday to redraw its legislative lines and create a seventh congressional district, centered in Horry County and running along the North Carolina border.

The plan requires one more perfunctory vote before heading to the Senate.

But some are disappointed with the plan, including the state Democratic Party, whose chairman plans to sue.



The South Carolina Legislature was in special session Tuesday. Here, Rep. Bakari Sellers, D-Bamberg, left, and Rep. Gilda Cobb-Hunter, D-Orangeburg, right, look at redistricting maps.
- TIM DOMINICK /tdominick@thestate.com

Have Your Say

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<http://redistricting.scsenate.gov> later this week. Other proposed Senate redistricting plans are already on the site.

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- Creates two new S.C. House districts in Georgetown and Richland counties that are "majority minority," meaning the majority of voters in the districts are racial minorities. In the Midlands, the plan affects Rep. Mia Butler Garrick, D-Richland, whose District 79 currently is made up of Northeast Richland County and a slice of Kershaw County. The plan approved places all of Butler's district in Richland County. An amendment to retain more white voters in the district, proposed by Garrick, was voted down Tuesday.
- Eliminates one majority minority district in Charleston County — represented by Rep. Robert Brown, a Democrat — because it has lost African-American population. Under the new plan approved by the House, the state would have 30 majority minority districts, instead of the current 29.
- Merges districts with shrinking population in Laurens, Greenville, Pickens, Anderson, Colleton and Jasper counties.
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"We did our best to keep cities, towns and counties whole and be fair to all House members," said Rep. Jim Harrison, R-Richland, who oversaw the House's efforts to redraw the district lines — a task that must be performed every 10 years using the latest census data reflecting how the state's population has shifted.

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"This plan is fair," said Rep. Harry Ott, D-Calhoun, the House's minority leader. "It's not perfect, and we've got a few Democrats who find themselves in collapsed districts. But there's an equal number of Republicans who find themselves in the same situation."

One of those Democrats is Rep. Denny Neilson of Darlington County, the House's longest-serving member. Under the new plan, Neilson would have to run against her fellow incumbent and Democrat, Rep. Robert Williams.

"No one wants to run against an incumbent. Plus, Robert is my friend," said Neilson, who has been in the House since 1984 and plans to seek reelection. "But the Pee Dee has lost population. It's part of the process. I understand."

Dick Harpootlian, chairman of the S.C. Democratic Party, said the party or a group of Democrats will challenge the proposed new maps in court, contending they create too many majority minority districts.

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Democrats long have contended that Republicans try to put as many reliably Democratic, minority voters as possible in districts, seeking to ensure that other districts are overwhelmingly white and more likely to elect a Republican. Districts with a mix of races are more likely to elect a Democrat, Democrats contend.

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Wednesday, Jun. 15, 2011

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SC Dems call GOP district 'electoral apartheid'

By J M DAVENPORT - Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. -- The head of the South Carolina Democratic Party accused Republican lawmakers Wednesday of redrawing political districts in an effort to "bleach out" regions of the state, grouping black voters together so their needs will be ignored by the majority GOP during elections.

Democratic Party Chairman Dick Harpootlian threatened to sue over the district maps approved the same day by the Republican-dominated state House and Senate. To be finalized, they need a nod from Republican Gov. Nikki Haley and have to meet federal standards to ensure they don't discriminate against minorities.

Republicans said Harpootlian was grandstanding and incorrect in his claims. But he said the proposals need to change now. Specifically, he singled out House Republicans creating a black majority district near Columbia.

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"If it does not change, we will challenge it," Harpootlian said. Republicans are packing black voters into districts that have a preponderance of minority residents to "bleach out their districts so they don't have to talk to, to deal with or to campaign for African-American votes. They do this in the name of the Voting Rights Act and it's a perversion."

House Republican Majority Leader Kenny Bingham said Harpootlian was incorrect and simply seeking

publicity.

"That's a broad-based charge and it's pretty insensitive and I'm sure it's his desire just to stir up conversation," said Bingham, R-West Columbia. "That's not been the case. It's just not true."

The House plan collapsed four Democratic districts into two and four Republican districts into two. That means incumbent legislators will face each other in primaries next year if they seek re-election. It also creates two new majority black districts in Richland and Georgetown counties.

On Tuesday, freshman Rep. Mia Butler Garrett said she didn't want her district made into a majority black district. The Columbia Democrat, who is African American, was elected in November with blacks accounting for 32 percent of her district's voting age population, Harpootlian noted. "This is electoral apartheid," he said.

The House measure also gave final approval to a plan for a seventh U.S. House district along the state's northeastern coast in Horry and Georgetown counties. It is favored by Republicans eager to pick up the new seat awarded the state because of its growing population.

South Carolina senators with a 33-0 vote gave the Senate's redistricting plan a key second reading with a final vote expected Thursday. That plan includes nine majority black districts instead of the 11 pushed by the American Civil Liberties Union, which also has threatened legal action.

Federal law requires redrawing election district lines every 10 years to reflect population growth and shifts in the Census. South Carolina's population gain netted a new seat - returning one lost in 1930 as population fell. Neighboring Georgia also is picking up a seat.

Redistricting plans have to meet federal standards to ensure they don't discriminate against minorities in a state with a history of inequitable treatment of blacks. Legislators haven't decided whether to use a streamlined process that would take the proposed district lines to a federal judge for approval or go through the more traditional approach of having the Department of Justice review the plan.

Senate President Pro Tem Glenn McConnell has tried to head off criticism that the Senate plan doesn't do enough to create or maintain black majority districts. He noted that in 2002 a redistricting plan with nine black majority districts won federal approval.

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Another big fight ahead appears to be over where the new U.S. House seat goes.

Republicans hold five of the state's six current U.S. House seats. The House plan would nearly assure Republicans pick up a sixth seat.

The Senate hasn't drafted a plan for the district, but McConnell said one would be completed later this week. A Senate public hearing is scheduled for Monday on the U.S. House plan.

For now, McConnell said he isn't buying the House-approved plan.

"And I know there are a lot of rumors going around about the so-called House proposed congressional plan. But that's what it is: a House proposed Congressional plan," McConnell said.



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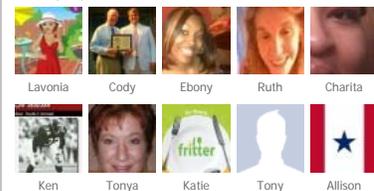
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Thursday, Jun 23, 2011

Posted on Wed, Jun. 22, 2011

Redrawn Statehouse district lines head to governor

The Associated Press

South Carolina legislators are sending redrawn district maps for Statehouse seats to Gov. Nikki Haley.

The Senate and House wrapped up work on the legislation and were sending it to Haley on Wednesday.

Redistricting is required every decade to reflect census population shifts. South Carolina's reapportionment plan requires federal approval.

The House plan merges eight existing districts that lost population into four. That puts some of the legislators in primaries with each other in June 2012.

The Senate plan didn't merge districts. But the American Civil Liberties Union said the plan reduces black majority population in two districts.

Meanwhile, the Senate is preparing to debate next week new district lines for the U.S. House that include a new 7th District. The House has already approved its version.

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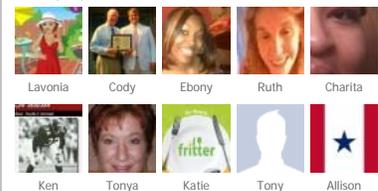
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