



VOTER EDUCATION PROJECT

April 15, 2011

SC House of Representatives
Sub Committee On Reapportionment
Columbia, SC 29201

RE: Congressional District Reapportionment

To Committee Members:

Please be advised that the South Carolina Voter Education Project (VEP), urges you to recommend to the full House of Representatives the creation of a second majority-minority congressional district in South Carolina. The recent census indicates that African Americans make up nearly 30% of the states population and fairness would dictate that it is fitting and proper to create two such districts.

The African American community of interests are, with a few exceptions, we live in the same neighborhoods, attend the same churches, belong to the same fraternities, sororities, lodges and social organizations. Therefore, we should have the opportunity to choose a congress person from our community to represent our interest in the United States Congress.

The SCVEP is an organization that was created in 1966 to help implement the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Further, our mission is to help maintain a level playing field for African Americans to participate in the political process.

Sincerely,



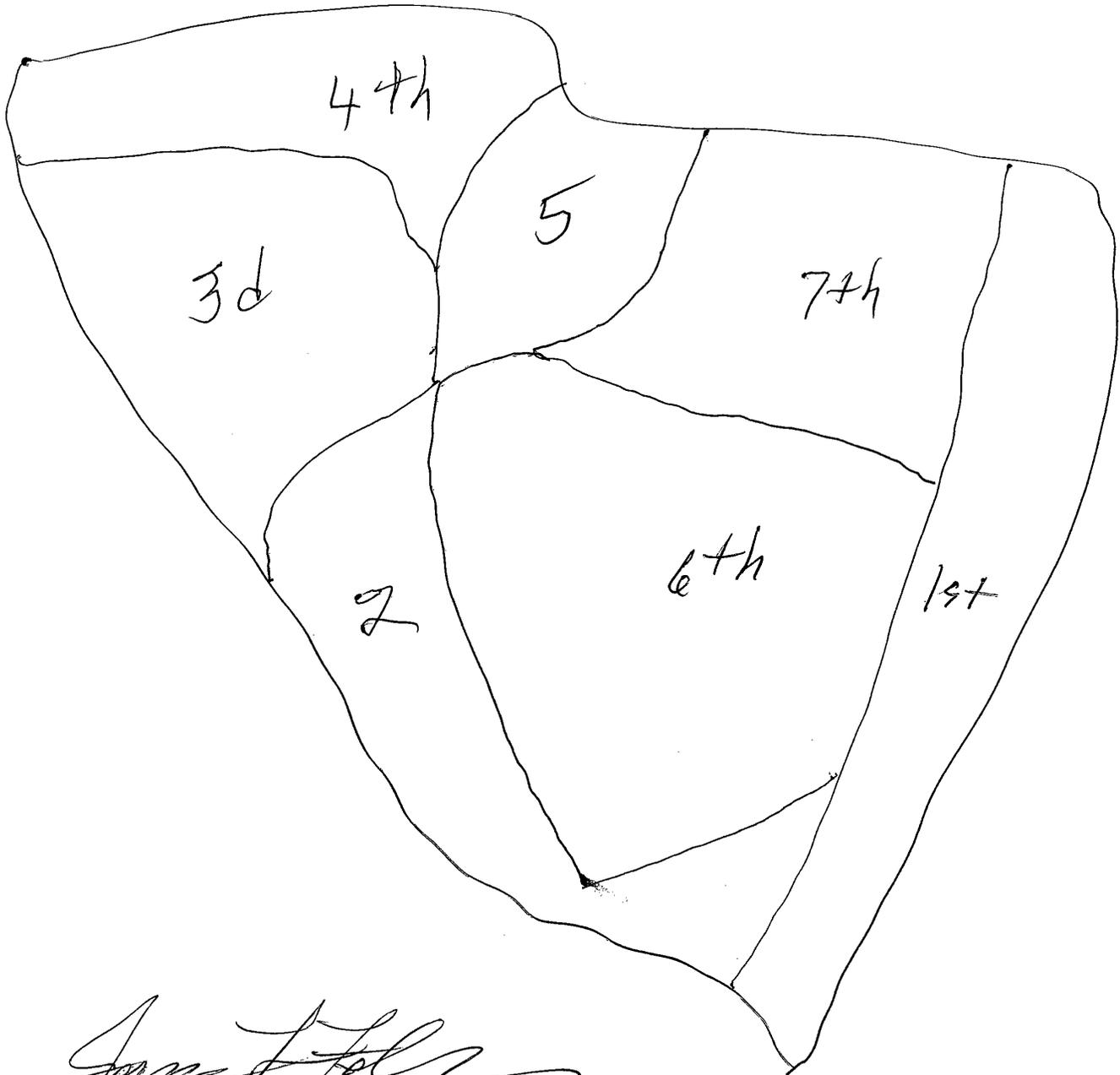
James L. Felder
President

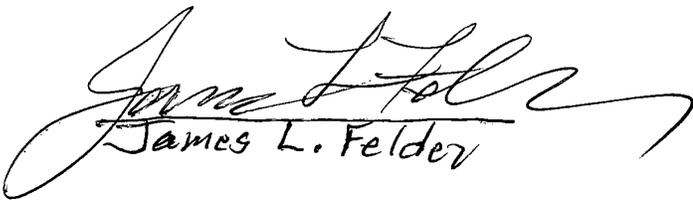
CC: Members of the SC General Assembly

 **VOTER EDUCATION PROJECT**

4-14-11

7th Congressional District




James L. Felder

Draw competitive district lines

Thursday, April 7, 2011

Buzz

Proposals for the completion of I-526 and expanded cruise ship operations aren't the only topics controversial enough to attract large crowds to public forums. The question of how South Carolina's legislative districts, including a new congressional district (No. 7), should be drawn also can pull in large numbers of concerned citizens.

And local residents get a chance to weigh in on that issue tonight in a 6:30 public hearing held by the S.C. Senate Redistricting Subcommittee at Trident Technical College in North Charleston. A similar S.C. House panel will hold a hearing of its own at 5 p.m. on April 14 in Dorchester County Council chambers in Summerville.

Certainly, intense interest in redistricting was on display in Greenville last week when, according to the Spartanburg Herald-Journal, more than 200 people showed up for a hearing by that Senate panel. Evidently, lots of folks in what is now the 4th Congressional District, which includes all of Greenville and Spartanburg counties, are worried about a potential loss of political clout.

Each of our state's soon-to-be seven congressional districts will contain approximately 667,000 people, based on the 2010 Census numbers that gained us that extra seat. Greenville County's 450,000 and Spartanburg County's 284,000 add up to 734,000.

The Herald-Journal reported from the hearing: "One theme that emerged was splitting Greenville and Spartanburg, but keeping each county intact as an anchor in redrawn congressional districts."

That self-serving focus is understandable. Folks in the three current congressional districts that include the Lowcountry (the 1st, 2nd and 6th) have fair reason to be wary about the looming changes, too.

But somewhere along the drawing of new lines, another goal should be set: Creating districts that have geographical coherence and commonality of interest. The result should enhance, rather than stifle, cross-party political competition.

Over the last half century or so, intensified gerrymandering has produced bizarrely shaped districts as the two major parties divvy up the redistricting spoils, often making for general-election mismatches.

Though South Carolina has four new U.S. House members this year, only one of our districts changed party hands in the 2010 election as 5th District Democratic incumbent John Spratt lost to Republican Mick Mulvaney.

That was the first S.C. congressional seat party switch since 1994, when Republican Lindsey Graham won the 3rd District after Democratic incumbent Butler Derrick chose not to run again.

Virtually guaranteeing single-party control of a district forces candidates, including incumbents, to make pleasing the party base their dominant political priority.

That undermines their motivation to recognize broader community interests. It also weakens elected officials' incentive to solve government's pressing problems by working across party lines.

So by all means, speak up for your community's redistricting interests at tonight's hearing.

But also speak up for the overriding civic interests of your community, state and nation in removing the single-party grip on far too many districts.

Suzanne Preslin
PO Box 1775
Folly Beach 29439

Gmail - Any thoughts?

<https://mail.google.com/mail/?ui=2&ik=b755bad82d&view=pt&searc...>



Katharine Eastvold <keastvold@gmail.com>

Any thoughts?

Jonathan Eastvold <jeastvold@gmail.com>

Wed, Apr 13, 2011 at
11:27 PM

To: Rob Groce <regroce@sc.rr.com>, rhayes73 <rhayes73@aol.com>,
Katharine Eastvold <keastvold@gmail.com>

Comment to the House Redistricting Hearing

Summerville, SC, April 14, 2011

by Jonathan C. Eastvold, Ph.D., Chair, DCDP Issues Committee

At some point, it is pointless for the minority party to show up at a hearing like this. In states across the country, minority parties like ours are petitioning the majority party to "please, don't hurt us"; majority parties across the land reply "but we can"; and that's the ball game for another decade.

In South Carolina, the Republicans hold all the cards, and it doesn't look good for the Democrats. (In fairness, I have little doubt that there are some in our party that would do the same to you if our roles were reversed.)

I thought seriously about staying home rather than joining the charade. But this is more about one party's electoral chances for the next

Gmail - Any thoughts?

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decade; we'll get our own safe seats, just not as many. What is ultimately at stake is not who wins and loses in the next round of politics but something much more fundamental: the ability of voters to change their minds.

Why would you not make a district competitive—unless you didn't trust the people to choose you again? Do you think it helps people to take seriously their duties as citizens for their votes not to matter—for them to get the message, explicitly or otherwise, that you think they're too stupid to do anything but be manipulated by spin doctors? The safety valve in our often contentious democracy—what keeps our deeply polarized politics from bursting from the ballot box into the streets—is the public's confidence that there will always be another election where today's winners will be held accountable and today's losers can hope again. Locking in the effects of last November's landslide for five more election cycles makes narrow partisan sense but is deeply irresponsible (not to mention cowardly).

Are today's incumbents so concerned that they won't do an acceptable job that they need to protect themselves at the expense of voter choice? If so, the people of South Carolina might have liked to know that a few months ago.

Politically-driven redistricting is predicated on the notion that demography is destiny: that where we are coming from will inevitably determine where we are going, and that the common good is less than the sum of its microtargeted parts. We Americans are better than this. Our elections matter. Let us not trade away our civic birthright for the watery soup of narrowly construed partisan advantage. Do the right thing: draw competitive districts.

Chairman Clemmons, distinguished legislators:

Thank you for allowing me to testify before the House Subcommittee on redistricting.

Tommy Bentley
John

As you know, Colleton County has been divided six ways with three Senatorial districts and three House districts. The City of Walterboro with a population of 5400 is also divided six ways with each legislator taking a small fragment.

The result has been that we really have no legislator who shares in a community of interest with the majority of citizens in our county and no legislator who is answerable to our county.

Traditional redistricting principles say that districts should be compact and contiguous, that they should follow natural, man made, or political geographic boundaries; that cores of districts be maintained to allow for a continuation of similar representation; or communities of interest be kept together in the same district.

The city of Walterboro and Colleton County meet all of the above principles and yet we are divided up six ways. The City of Walterboro is certainly compact, contiguous, follows natural and man made geographic political boundaries and could serve as the core of a district if it were not so divided. The mayor and council run at large with each representing the entire city. We utilize the same parks, belong to the same civic clubs, attend the same churches, and support the same local charities and events. As a city, we are a true community of interest.

Colleton County also meets the above criteria for redistricting and we believe is almost perfect in population and demographics to have a representative in the state house. Our county follows many natural boundaries as well as political geographic boundaries.

As a county, we are also a true community of interest. We have one public school system and one high school. From across our county, children come together to be educated, participate in sports and the fine arts, and to socialize.

We as a county have one superintendent of Education. We elect a sheriff and a clerk of court who represent the entire county as well as an at large county council member. We utilize the same health care system, hospital, and doctors. We participate in the same recreation leagues and arts council activities. We share in the support of one institution of higher learning, USC Salkehatchie, and we cherish the beauty and bounty of the ACE basin which is a result of our stewardship and lies mostly within our borders.

We support each other in good times and also in times of turmoil and tragedy.

It would seem that one would have to work very hard to find reasons to justify dividing us up, when placing Colleton County in a single house district would be so easy to support.

It would make sense to draw as many districts as possible within the borders of each county and not start in a large county and take chunks away from the smaller surrounding counties to flesh out a district. People living in the same county are generally closer to being communities of interest and meeting the criteria for redistricting.

In the new census, Beaufort County is entitled to 4.35 districts and Jasper County is entitled to .66 districts. Together they work out to an almost perfect 5 districts that meet the criteria for redistricting with one shared district.

Charleston County is entitled to 9.4 districts while Dorchester County has enough population for 3.66 districts. Again they combine for an almost perfect 13 districts that meet the criteria for redistricting. With one shared district.

Colleton County is entitled to 1.04 districts and meets the criteria for redistricting.

~~Hampton County has a population for .57 of a district. Allendale County is entitled to .28 district to almost meet the proper numbers and the other redistricting criteria for a district.~~

Under our current plan, the population centers in Hampton County and a large part of rural Colleton County were used to form one of our districts.

There is no reason why the new district couldn't be drawn to include the population centers within Colleton County as well as the rural areas of our County to give us a representative.

Using a 2 % deviation from the magic number of 37, 301 gives you a usable number of 38,047 people for a district. Colleton County has 38,892 people. Only 845 citizens or .02 of a district more than the allowed number. We hope that you will find a way to place all of Colleton County in a single district but if you must place part of Colleton County in another district, it should be the smallest amount legally required or the approximately 845 people that we are over the limit and the area with that population should be contiguous with the other district. It is imperative that the other 38,047 residents of our county be placed in a single house district.

We would not want for example to be divided into 2 districts one with 25000 and one with 13,892.

For twenty years now we have been gerrymandered almost out of existence. Because of this, we are requesting that you draw our district first or at least very early in your deliberations so that you can guarantee the people of Colleton County that they will no longer be disenfranchised. The past injustices that have been levied on our citizens justify this request for preferential treatment.

Our situation is equally as dire on the Senate side. We have two senators who represent five counties and one who represents four.

At your Beaufort hearing, it was very heartwarming to hear people from Beaufort and other counties join us and testify that the people of Colleton County had made a compelling case for having a single district and that the past wrongs should be righted.

I know that this is a difficult task for you. But I also know that if you have the will to correct the past lack of fairness, ~~to the citizens of Colleton County~~ that it can be done.

When I look at your committee, I have great hope for a better outcome this time because I know that you are people of integrity and that you will do what is right.

Please help us fight this good fight for the people of Colleton County so that our citizens can finally, after all these years, have a real voice in Columbia.

Thank You

Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the House Sub-Committee

I believe and hope we have made a compelling case that Colleton County fits the legal description of an area that is entitled to a House District and the opportunity for us to at last have a resident representative. This new district will be compact and contiguous, boundaries follow political boundaries, and communities of interest will be kept together. There are 38,860 people in Colleton and the ideal number is 37,301 or only 1559, a variance of about 4%, well within the 10% required by law.

If this district is created you will have contributed to the righting a 20 year old injustice.

With respect to Congressional District 1, I would suggest the natural boundary would include Jasper, Beaufort, Colleton, Charleston, and Berkley counties.

This would encompass 664,123 people, almost identical to the "ideal" of 660,766, a variance of only 10 %. It would represent a district 24% African American as opposed to the present district that is 20%.

These counties have the following attributes in common:

- All are coastal counties experiencing growth.
- They are connected by I-95 and the Atlantic coastline and are contiguous.
- They share a reliance on tourism to feed their economies. Major destinations include Hilton Head, Beaufort, Edisto, and the many attractions of Charleston.
- There will be two of the three deep water ports in this district.
- Interstate commerce is facilitated by I-95, I-26, the Savannah-Hilton Head International, Charleston International, and the Lowcountry Regional Airports.
- With the development of the Boeing presence in Charleston, the attractiveness of the area for support industry is evident.
- Most television and major regional newspaper coverage is shared from Charleston.

- Primary service areas for the secondary and tertiary ^{Medical} ~~service areas of~~ ^{Provided by} the Medical Centers cover the area, i.e., MUSC, Roper- St Francis, and the HCA system.
- This is a natural and historically known region known as the “Lowcountry” for over two hundred years, as opposed to the “Pee Dee” or the “Piedmont” or the “Midlands”. It has been defined as the “coastline from Savannah to just north of Charleston.”
- Contains about one third of the Gullah Heritage Corridor that extends from Wilmington, NC to Jacksonville, FL.
- The ACE Basin, one of the largest undeveloped estuaries in the America is located primarily in Beaufort and Colleton County.
- It would adhere to the political boundaries, another of the criteria.
- This leaves the Myrtle Beach area available for the new district.
- It seems as if previous plans start in the Upcountry where lines are nice and straight and logical and fall into Gerrymandering as it moves southward. Let’s start in the Lowcountry for a change.
- This is the third hearing I have attended and the common cry has been to draw districts in a common sense and logical manor. I believe this proposal meets those criteria.
- The area is home to the Charleston Air Force Base, Paris Island, Marine Air Station, and Charleston Navel Weapons Station

That is a lot of commonality of interest, boundaries that are contiguous and following natural and political geographic boundaries.
I am hopeful this proposal will give you a starting point to begin your deliberations with respect to Congressional Redistricting.

Thank you.



Moultrie D. Plowden, JD
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MR. CHAIRMAN AND DISTINGUISHED REPRESENTATIVES,

MY NAME IS MICHAEL MULE. I LIVE AT 1469 VILLAGE ROAD IN CHARLESTON COUNTY.

I WANT TO THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COME OUR WAY TO HOLD THIS MEETING.

AS REP. HORNE CAN ATTEST TO AND I AM SURE YOU ARE ALL AWARE OF, THE ECONOMIES OF THE LOWCOUNTRY — ~~ESPECIALLY~~ ESPECIALLY FOR THOSE OF FOLLY BEACH, JAMES ISLAND, KIAWAH ISLAND AND SEABROOK ISLAND — THRIVE ON THE TOURISM AND RECREATION INDUSTRIES.

I STATE THIS FACT IN HOPES THAT THIS INFORMATION WILL NOT BE FORGOTTEN AS YOU ALL TAKE ON THE TOUGH TASK OF STATE HOUSE REDISTRICTING.

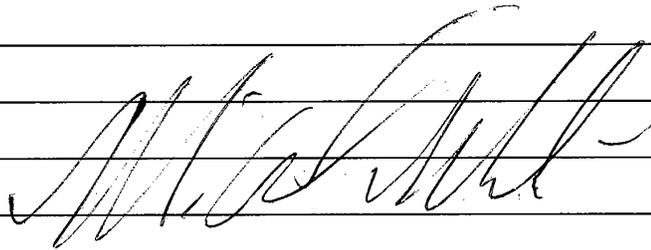
KNOWING THAT THE "TARGET SIZE" OF HOUSE DISTRICTS AS REP. HORNE CALLED IT IS ROUGHLY 38,000 AND KNOWING THAT THE CURRENT HOUSE 115 SEAT SIZE IS "UNDER POPULATED" FOR THIS TARGET SIZE, I BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD MAKE GREAT SENSE TO ADD MUNICIPALITIES THAT SHARE EQUAL ECONOMIES. ~~■~~

HAVING SAID THAT, I ASK THAT YOU ALL PLEASE CONSIDER ADDING KIAWAH ISLAND AND SEABROOK ISLAND TO THE CURRENT HOUSE 115 SEAT.

NOT ONLY DOES JAMES ISLAND, FOLLY BEACH, KIAWAH

ISLAND, AND SEABROOK ISLAND SHARE EQUAL WAYS OF
INCOME, BUT THEY ALSO SHARE A VERY SERIOUS, SHARED
INTEREST - COASTAL RESTORATION, TO MAKE MY AFOREMENTIONED
RECOMMENDATION EASIER FOR YOU TO REMEMBER, IT CAN BE
SUMMARIZED SIMPLY WITH THE PHRASE, "ONE COAST, ONE VOICE."

I THANK YOU, IN ADVANCE, FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION AND
IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS IDEA - ADD KIAWAH ISLAND AND
SEABROOK ISLAND TO HOUSE SEAT 115.



Michael Mule