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**AUDIO TRANSCRIPTION**

*September 08, 2021*

**SC HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE**

**Conway Redistricting Hearing**

REPORTER: Kathryn Bostrom

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STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

REDISTRICTING HEARING

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The within hearing, before the South Carolina House  
Judiciary Committee, transcribed by Kathryn B Bostrom,  
Court Reporter and Notary Public in and for the State of  
South Carolina; said hearings were taken at Horry-  
Georgetown Technical College, 2050 US-501, Conway, South  
Carolina, on Wednesday, the 8th day of September, 2021.

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APPEARANCES:

House Judiciary Committee:

- Wallace "Jay" Jordan, Chair
- Justin Bamberg
- Neal Collins
- Patricia Henegan
- Beth Bernstein
- Jason Elliot
- Weston Newton

House Representatives Present:

- Lucas Atkinson
- Russell Frye
- Heather Crawford

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EXHIBITS

There were no exhibits marked during these hearings.

Court Reporter's Legend:

dashes [--] Intentional or purposeful]

interruption

[ph] Denotes phonetically written

[sic] Written as said

1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S  
2 REPRESENTATIVE JORDAN: I've got about ten after and I  
3 wanted to give everybody a few extra minutes  
4 given the weather outside. First, let me  
5 introduce myself. My name is Jay Jordan. I am  
6 the chairman of our ad hoc committee. I'm from  
7 Florence. Privileged to be with you here in  
8 Horry County, in Myrtle Beach. I want to  
9 introduce to y'all the members of our committee.  
10 We are a bipartisan committee that comes from  
11 literally all across the state of South Carolina  
12 so. Starting us off is Representative Justin  
13 Bamberg from Bamberg. Representative Neal  
14 Collins from Pickens, Representative Pat Henegan  
15 from Marlboro County. To my right we have  
16 Representative Beth Bernstein from Columbia,  
17 Representative Jason Elliott from Greenville.  
18 Lastly, to my immediate left, Representative  
19 Weston Newton from Beaufort County. And of  
20 course we have a few of our friends in the  
21 audience, fellow members. I see Representative  
22 Lucas Atkinson back there from Marion County,  
23 Representative Russell Frye, who I thought we  
24 were in his district. We are actually about a  
25 mile from his district, I believe. Close. And

1 the same goes for right neighboring  
2 Representative Heather Crawford from Horry  
3 County, so thank you for being with us in  
4 attendance tonight as well. Thank you to our  
5 host here at Horry-Georgetown Tech, we appreciate  
6 you letting us be here this evening and being  
7 very gracious and kind hosts and letting use this  
8 great facility. Before we get started with the  
9 most important thing this evening which is your  
10 public input, let me go over a with a few things.  
11 I'll also thank you all for joining us and  
12 participating in this important legislative  
13 process. I will tell you these hearings are one  
14 of several keystones underpinning the process of  
15 redistricting in South Carolina. Both here  
16 tonight and at the other scheduled public  
17 hearings, we the members of this redistricting ad  
18 hoc committee are seeking your input and insight  
19 into this process of redrawing our district in  
20 order to accommodate a tremendous growth in South  
21 Carolina since the 2010 census. The public input  
22 is a key consideration of this committee as we  
23 formulate a proposed plan for presentation to the  
24 house judiciary and ultimately adopt a plan for  
25 consideration by the full House of

1 Representatives. We recognize that this is not  
2 an insubstantial test as we draw legislative and  
3 congressional district lines. The judiciary  
4 committee may or may not adopt the plan proposed  
5 by this ad hoc committee, so too, the full house  
6 of representatives may or may not adopt the plan  
7 proposed by the full Judiciary Committee. Unlike  
8 prior redistricting cycles, the plan that gains  
9 approval of the House and later of the Senate is  
10 no longer subject to the advanced clearance by  
11 the United States Justice Department. This is  
12 because in the decade since last redistricting  
13 cycle, the law surrounding redistricting has  
14 continued to evolve and in 2013, the United  
15 States Supreme Court struck down the requirement  
16 of the voting acts requiring some states to have  
17 federal preapproval of redistricting plans.  
18 Although we no longer have preclearance  
19 obligations we do have the benefit of working  
20 from a redistricting plan that was both approved  
21 by the department of justice in 2011 and  
22 withstood challenge and scrutiny through federal  
23 litigation which resulted in affirmance of the  
24 district lines as they are currently drawn.  
25 Another difference from the prior redistricting

1 cycle that warrants mention is well to us all and  
2 that is in the unprecedented times of the Corona  
3 virus pandemic that continues to impact our  
4 country and our state. Due to this disruption,  
5 the US Census Bureau has been very delayed in  
6 release of the 2020 census data which has  
7 impacted the timing of redistricting of South  
8 Carolina. As I mentioned during our first  
9 committee meeting earlier in August, once the US  
10 Census Bureau releases the final data, which will  
11 be on or about September 30, we will then begin  
12 the map drawing process for the house. Although  
13 we are happy to receive your proposed plans  
14 submissions at our website, which I'll tell you  
15 more about a minute, that may use the legacy  
16 format data, the house will wait to the US Census  
17 Bureau publishes the final data and we have  
18 verification that is unchanged from the early  
19 release information before we open the house map  
20 room and begin drawing or considering proposed  
21 plans. As the house undertakes the process of  
22 redrawing district lines, public input is  
23 indispensable to ensure our districts best  
24 represented the people of South Carolina. We  
25 truly are the house of the people and we need

1 your input on specific issues or concerns in your  
2 communities and in your neighborhoods. As in  
3 previous redistricting cycles, our committee has  
4 adopted a set of criteria to be used as guidepost  
5 in the development of the proposed plan in  
6 redrawing of district lines. The fundamental  
7 goal of this committee and the house is to adopt  
8 a plan that assures South Carolina's legislative  
9 districts provide for equal voting rights.  
10 Traditionally referred to as the "one person-one  
11 vote" principle. As applied to the redistricting  
12 plan, our districts should be of substantially  
13 equal population. While the population directive  
14 is important, we are here tonight because the  
15 committee needs to hear from our constituents,  
16 the South Carolina voters, how do you identify or  
17 define your communities. We welcome your input  
18 on the important social culture and historical  
19 context of how you describe your community so we  
20 can better understand the commonality and  
21 connections that matter to our citizens. This  
22 hearing is being recorded and will be transcribed  
23 and made available to the public. For the sake  
24 of order and a clear record, we ask that anyone  
25 desiring to speak tonight, first please sign in

1 if you've not already done and when you are  
2 called, please come to the microphone to  
3 introduce yourself by your name address and  
4 districts in which you plan to speak. If you are  
5 present tonight on behalf of a group, please  
6 identify the group on whose behalf you are  
7 appearing. Be it a political party or public  
8 interest group or other organization. Also make  
9 sure everyone understands in advance, we are here  
10 to receive information and provide a forum for  
11 the public to express to the committee what the  
12 issues or concerns are that relate to  
13 redistricting. While I and other members of this  
14 committee may occasionally make a comment or ask  
15 questions, we will strive to limit our speaking  
16 so that we can maximize the time available to the  
17 public. We set aside two hours for this hearing  
18 and we want to hear everything everyone --

19 (technical difficulties)

20 REPRESENTATIVE JORDAN: Thank you, sir. Next on our  
21 list is Representative Russell Frye.

22 (technical difficulties)

23 MR. CEDRIC BLAIN-SPLAIN: .... by rendering powerless  
24 any voters with dissenting perspectives.  
25 Domination breeds despair and despair breeds low

1 voter participation rates and cycles of dis-  
2 empowerment evolves from there. Apathy is not an  
3 unreasonable response to a system that wastes my  
4 voting potential even before I get to the ballot  
5 box. For the followers of Jesus or any religious  
6 belief or non-organized religion, gerrymandering  
7 undercuts our fundamental vow to respect the  
8 dignity of every human being, self-determination  
9 and active communal solidarity are both crucial  
10 components of the human dignity, therefore  
11 anything that discourages meaningful  
12 participation in the politics in shape our common  
13 life is an affront to human dignity. There's a  
14 passage in Scripture that said "The lines are  
15 falling unto me in pleasant places." Don't you  
16 see that you have a task to lead this effort from  
17 the House panel to make sure that every citizen  
18 of this county, every citizen of this state, is  
19 fairly represented in the state house. You have  
20 a job to do and we know you can do it. An  
21 excerpt from a Dr. Maya Angelo speech, she said I  
22 want to see some fairness. I mean to say I want  
23 to see some district lines where we don't have to  
24 impose an independent redistrict counter to hold  
25 you to your integrity. I want to see a South

1 Carolina where everybody has a chance for  
2 competitive districts to come to the table. Are  
3 you serious about communities of interest? If it  
4 was so in 2010, when we addressed a panel like  
5 this, we saw cracking and packing at its most  
6 powerful points here in Horry County. They took  
7 Port Harrison and Inland then put them over in  
8 103 with Representative Carl Anderson. They took  
9 the Green C. Floyd's area and up there on 917  
10 and put them in 57 with Lucas Atkinson in Marion  
11 County. That's what you call cracking and  
12 packing. The gentleman addressed district 58  
13 earlier and 57...

14 (END OF PROCEEDINGS)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

I, KATHRYN BOSTROM, COURT REPORTER AND NOTARY PUBLIC  
IN AND FOR THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA AT LARGE, HEREBY  
CERTIFY THAT I TRANSCRIBED THESE HEARINGS HELD ON  
WEDNESDAY, THE 8TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER 2021, THAT THE  
FOREGOING 11 PAGES CONSTITUTE A TRUE AND CORRECT, TO THE  
BEST OF MY ABILITY, TRANSCRIPTION OF THE PRE-RECORDED  
HEARING.

I FURTHER CERTIFY THAT I AM NEITHER ATTORNEY NOR  
COUNSEL FOR, NOR RELATED TO OR EMPLOYED BY ANY OF THE  
PARTIES CONNECTED WITH THIS ACTION, NOR AM I FINANCIALLY  
INTERESTED IN SAID CAUSE.

I FURTHER CERTIFY THAT THE ORIGINAL OF SAID TRANSCRIPT  
WAS THEREAFTER SEALED BY ME AND DELIVERED TO EMMA DEAN,  
512 BLATT BUILDING, COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA, WHO WILL  
RETAIN THIS SEALED ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPT AND SHALL BE  
RESPONSIBLE FOR FILING SAME WITH THE COURT PRIOR TO TRIAL  
OR ANY HEARING WHICH MIGHT RESULT IN A FINAL ORDER ON ANY  
ISSUE.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I HAVE SET MY HAND AND SEAL THIS  
4TH DAY OF OCTOBER 2021.

*Kathryn Bostrom*

\_\_\_\_\_  
KATHRYN B. BOSTROM, COURT REPORTER

MY COMMISSION EXPIRES AUGUST 28, 2022

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