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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

HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

REDISTRICTING HEARING

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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