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AUDIO TRANSCRIPTION

September 15, 2021

SC HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

Charleston Redistricting Hearing

REPORTER: Kathryn Bostrom

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STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

REDISTRICTING HEARINGS

The within hearings, 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 North
Charleston City Hall, 2500 City Hall Lane, North
Charleston, South Carolina, on Wednesday, the 15th day of
September, 2021.

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APPEARANCES:

House Judiciary Committee:

- Wallace "Jay" Jordan, Chair
- Neal Collins
- Patricia Henegan
- Jason Elliot
- Weston Newton

House Counsel:

- Emma Dean

Other Representatives:

- Sylleste Davis
- Joseph Jefferson
- Mandy Kimmons
- Elizabeth Wetmore
- Linda Bennett
- Wendell Gilliard
- Chardale Murray
- Marvin Smith

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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: My name's Jay Jordan, I'm the
3 chairman of the South Carolina House Ad Hoc
4 Redistricting Committee. It's my privilege to
5 welcome y'all tonight. This is a bipartisan
6 committee that I'm gonna introduce y'all to from
7 all across the state. We are down a couple
8 members of the committee tonight for various
9 reasons. So let me introduce the team that's
10 here tonight. To my far left we have
11 Representative Neal Collins from Pickens.
12 Immediately next to him -- I'm sorry about that,
13 Pat -- representative Pat Henegan, my good friend
14 from Marlboro County. To my very far right we
15 have Representative Jason Elliott from
16 Greenville. Also to my left, my good friend,
17 Weston Newton, who lives in this congressional
18 district and represents Beaufort County. And
19 then of course, Ms. Emma Dean our Chief Counsel
20 to the House Judiciary Committee. This is stop
21 number -- let me make sure I get it right -- stop
22 number 5. Last night we were in Greenville.
23 Tomorrow night we will be in Representative
24 Newton's area down in Bluffton. But this is our
25 effort to get to hear from you. I can tell you

1 that these hearings are -- I've described them as
2 key ingredients in the process of redistricting.
3 Both here tonight and at other public hearings,
4 we the members of this committee are seeking your
5 input into the insight into the process of
6 redrawing our districts in order to accommodate
7 the tremendous growth in South Carolina since the
8 2010 census. The public's input is a crucial
9 consideration of this committee as we formulate a
10 proposed plan for the presentation to the House
11 Judiciary Committee and ultimately a plan for
12 consideration to the full House of
13 Representatives. We recognize that this is not a
14 small task to redraw legislative and
15 congressional district lines. The judiciary
16 committee may or may not adopt the plan proposed
17 by this ad hoc committee, so too the full House
18 of Representatives may or may not adopt the plan
19 proposed by the judiciary committee. Unlike
20 prior redistricting cycles, the plan that gains
21 approval of the House and later the Senate is no
22 longer subject to advanced clearance by the
23 United States Department of Justice. This is
24 because in the decade since the last
25 redistricting cycle, the laws surrounding

1 redistricting has continued to evolve and in
2 2013, the United States Supreme Court struck down
3 a requirement of the Voting Rights Act that
4 required some states to have federal pre-approval
5 of redistricting plans. Although we no longer
6 have pre-clearance obligations, we do have the
7 benefit of working from a redistricting plan that
8 was both approved by the DOJ in 2011 and
9 withstood challenge and scrutiny through federal
10 litigation which resulted in affirmance of the
11 district lines we currently have. Other
12 difference -- another difference from a prior
13 redistricting cycle that warrants mention -- of
14 course everyone knows, is the unprecedented times
15 presented to us by the current Corona virus. And
16 it continues, of course, to impact our country as
17 well as our state. Due to the disruption of the
18 pandemic, the US Census Bureau has been very
19 delayed in the release of the 2020 Census data
20 which has impacted the timing of redistricting in
21 South Carolina. As I mentioned during our very
22 first committee meeting in early August, once the
23 United -- once the US Census Bureau releases the
24 final data, sometime later this month, we will
25 begin the map-drawing process for the House.

1 Although we are happy to receive your proposed
2 plan submissions at our website that may use the
3 Legacy format data. The House will wait until
4 the US Census Bureau publishes the final data and
5 we have verification that it is unchanged from
6 the early release information before we actually
7 open the House map room and begin drawing or
8 considering plans. As the House undertakes the
9 process of redrawing district lines, public input
10 is an indispensable in ensuring our districts
11 best represent the people of South Carolina, as
12 we are truly the house of the people. We want
13 your input on specific issues or concerns in your
14 communities, in your neighborhoods. As in
15 previous redistricting cycles, our committee has
16 adopted a set of criteria to be used as
17 guideposts in development of a proposed plan as
18 we redraw the districts -- district lines. The
19 fundamental goal of this committee and the House
20 is to adopt a plan that assures South Carolina
21 legislative districts provide for equal voting
22 rights, traditionally referred to as one person,
23 one vote principle. As applied to the
24 redistricting plan, our districts should be of
25 substantially equal population. While the

1 population directive is important, we are here
2 tonight because the committee needs to hear from
3 our constituents, the South Carolina voters, as
4 to how you identify or define your communities.
5 We welcome your input as to the important social,
6 cultural and historical context, as to how you
7 describe your community so that we can better
8 understand the commonality and connections that
9 matter to our citizens. This hearing is being
10 recorded and it will be transcribed and made
11 available to the public. For the sake of order
12 and a clear record, we ask that anyone desiring
13 to speak tonight, please first sign in, if you've
14 not already done so. And when you are called,
15 please come to the microphone to introduce
16 yourself by name, address and please provide the
17 district or districts about which you plan to
18 speak. If you are present tonight on behalf of a
19 group, please identify the group on whose behalf
20 you are appearing, whether it be a political
21 party, public interest group or other
22 organization. Also wanted to make sure everyone
23 understands in advance, we are here to receive
24 information and provide a forum for the public to
25 express to the committee the issues or concerns

1 that relate to redistricting. While I and other
2 members of this committee may occasionally make a
3 comment or ask questions, we will strive to limit
4 our speaking so that we can maximize the time
5 available to you. We have several speakers
6 signed up tonight. I simply ask that you take
7 into consideration everyone's opportunity to
8 speak. If someone makes a point that you wish to
9 -- that you wish to speak on, don't hesitate to
10 say, like the point previously made -- previously
11 made, certainly don't hesitate to do that as
12 well. Also, if you plan to leave any written
13 documentation, for instance if you provided or
14 you have typed out materials, please -- please --
15 you can email those to us so that we can have a
16 hard copy of that in the future or you can mail
17 that to us as well. If you have any documents
18 that you'd like to be part of the permanent
19 record, you can leave those as well. I think we
20 have some sticky notes provided for that as well
21 at the submission box. If you do choose to email
22 us, it's redistricting@schouse.gov, or you can
23 mail directly to House Judiciary, that's 512
24 Blatt Building 1105, Pendleton Street, Columbia,
25 South Carolina, 29201. I think that's about

1 everything we need to cover right now. I do want
2 to recognize some of my friends who are here
3 tonight, who served with -- with this group in
4 Columbia. I know we had Representative Sylleste
5 Davis, Representative Joe Jefferson -- there you
6 are. Representative Mandy Kimmons, next to her,
7 Representative Spencer Wetmore and I have to
8 introduce former Representative, current
9 Treasurer of Charleston County, Mary Tinkler, as
10 well. Did anybody else come in that we missed?
11 Oh, Lin -- Lin Bennett. Good to see you back
12 there. You slipped in without me getting you on
13 the list, so Representative Lin Bennett as well.
14 Anybody else I missed? All right. All right.
15 With that, let's get started for the main reason
16 we're here, the first speaker that's signed up
17 tonight -- and I will apologize in advance if I
18 mispronounce your name, I promise you -- unless
19 you talked to the very nice lady from Greenville
20 last night, it is not intentional. Gloria
21 Aslanidis.

22 MS. ASLANIDIS: Close.

23 REPRESENTATIVE JORDAN: I'm close? Come on up and
24 tell me how I got it wrong.

25 MS. ASLANIDIS: It's Aslanidis.

1 REPRESENTATIVE JORDAN: Aslanidis.

2 MS. ASLANIDIS: It's a Greek name.

3 REPRESENTATIVE JORDAN: Yes, ma'am.

4 MS. ASLANIDIS: All right. My name is Gloria
5 Aslanidis, I live at 108 Norview Drive in
6 Charleston, South Carolina. That's House
7 District 114. My -- my home is in the City of
8 Charleston and the County of Charleston, but my
9 House district passes 2 other cities all the way
10 through to Dorchester County. I look at the
11 House of Representatives, it's the smallest or
12 the smallest group of community that I would have
13 representing me in the State House. I have --
14 I'm sure Dorchester County is a lovely place to
15 live, but I see no community of interest. There
16 are two other cities in between my home and the
17 end of this House district. There are plenty of
18 areas and voters close to my home who are in
19 another house district. I don't understand the
20 reasoning for this. Please keep our areas and
21 our neighborhoods closer together.

22 REPRESENTATIVE JORDAN: Can you tell me where that
23 House District is?

24 MS. ASLANIDIS: 114.

25 REPRESENTATIVE JORDAN: Thank you. I apologize, it's

1 either Tim Lewis or Tam? Tim, all right.
2 There's some scribbling below it and I couldn't
3 quite make it out. Mr. Lewis.
4 MR. LEWIS: My name is Tim or Timothy Lewis and my
5 address is 613 East Main Street, Harleyville,
6 South Carolina. I'm in Dorchester County and I'm
7 here to represent the Dorchester County
8 Democratic Party. I'm the chair of the
9 Democratic Party in Dorchester County. And so my
10 purpose here is that the challenge with
11 redistricting is that really its offspring, which
12 is called gerrymandering and that in this it is a
13 significant issue -- gerrymandering in itself is
14 significant in the fact that it really impacts
15 our democracy. And make no mistake that's really
16 what we're talking about is representative --
17 representation by the people in that we deserve
18 to elect our or choose our representatives versus
19 our representative choosing us. Now, I agree
20 with the lady before is that there are some
21 significant challenges. I live in a rural
22 community, Dorchester County, but in Dorchester
23 County, six separate districts are part of
24 Dorchester County; District 94, District 97,
25 District 102, District 109, District 113 and

1 District 14. So I believe that there's a lot of
2 significance that are a part of this. And so
3 this practice of gerrymandering has created the
4 situation in that will be, it does not represent
5 my community of interest, which is Dorchester
6 County and it was already presented here. So
7 there's three issues that we want to talk about
8 here. One is, as I mentioned, is that this
9 current system allows the representatives to use
10 -- to choose the people. Now, you know, I
11 consider myself an American and I consider myself
12 one who lives by our ideas. I mean, I believe in
13 John Wayne, I believe in MLK, and guess what, I
14 also believe in Garth Brooks. And so when we
15 talk about our democracy, as each one of these
16 individuals, in their own different way have
17 exposed or espoused, gerrymandering is against
18 that, because one, the representatives choose the
19 people instead of the people choosing the
20 representatives. Second, Dorchester County is a
21 donor county. If you look at it, and if you
22 look at it there's a piece of this district is
23 added to some of Charleston, there's a piece of
24 this district that's added to another one, all
25 for the purpose of giving them the numbers. But

1 yet we, in Dorchester County -- which is --
2 includes Summerville, 20 percent of North
3 Charleston, Harleyville, Saint George, all those
4 districts have no say-so, because it's just a
5 small piece of representative or representation
6 that's added to these donor counties. And this
7 is probably the third issue which is probably the
8 most-significant of all, that gerrymandering is
9 and the way it was construed back in 2010, is
10 what I call populous authoritarianism. This
11 breeds racism, because we now have white and
12 black districts. This is significant. It also
13 is against what I believe in true competitiveness
14 and being competitive. Because I was a former
15 marine, I played football. I believe that anyone
16 that steps on the field against me, I have a
17 chance to be competitive. I have a chance to
18 win. But gerrymandering does not allow me to
19 have that chance to win, because it's already
20 stacked against me. So my call to action, as I
21 close, is that in order for us in Dorchester
22 County to have our community of interest, that
23 Number 1, Dorchester County should no longer be a
24 donor county. Number 2, let us choose our
25 representatives instead of the representatives

1 choose us. And 3, let's ensure that the playing
2 field is fair, that anyone who is an American has
3 a chance to be competitive. So thank you,
4 Chairman, Committee -- I heard the bell, thank
5 you very much.

6 REPRESENTATIVE JORDAN: Thank you, sir. Next is Shayna
7 Howell. While Ms. Howell comes up, I think I saw
8 Representative Tedder slip in so thank you for
9 being here this evening, sir. Ms. Howell, you're
10 recognized.

11 MS. HOWELL: Good evening, my name is Shayna Howell, I
12 live at 294 Little Oak Island Drive on Folly
13 Beach. My House District is 115. Good evening,
14 Representative Wetmore, I can see you here. I
15 want to thank you all for giving your time to
16 your constituents to give input on the 2021
17 redistricting process. I know you were in
18 Greenville last night and you're sort of criss-
19 crossing the state. It's a lot of effort and I
20 appreciate it. The implications of the process
21 will last for at least the next 10 years. As you
22 well know, the lines that you draw will have
23 acute policy implications on issues that range
24 from education to health care to the environment.
25 I live in House District 115, which means I am

1 lucky to be in the small minority of South
2 Carolina voters that have both a state house
3 district and a US Congressional District that
4 were competitive in 2020. When districts are
5 drawn in a way that the result of the general
6 election is a foregone conclusion, our elected
7 officials have less of an incentive to engage
8 with their constituents or with each other for
9 solutions for our common issues. When the only
10 choice voters have is in a primary with low voter
11 turnout, districts often end up with more-
12 polarizing candidates, which leads to hyper-
13 partisanship in the general assembly. This does
14 not benefit voters of any party and for those of
15 you who have served for a long time, I know you
16 recognize how different legislative service has
17 become. So I ask you not to draw lines that are
18 intended to reduce competition, so that one party
19 or incumbent is guaranteed a victory. Being in a
20 competitive district means that as a voter, I
21 have a choice and my candidates have real
22 incentives to represent moderate voters and
23 consider multiple sides of an issue.
24 Additionally, I urge you to keep municipalities
25 together and not to split precincts when

1 possible. For instance James Island has been
2 split and only part of it is in District 115,
3 which picks up all of Folly Beach, where I live,
4 and then to get anywhere, I have to go through
5 James Island and -- but so it's got most of James
6 Island. These are two very cohesive communities,
7 but it skips part of it, goes around a section of
8 James Island to grab Kiawah and Seabrook Islands.
9 I would love to see that James Island area kept
10 whole. Likewise, I urge you to consider our
11 counties a community of interest and strive to
12 keep them whole in your congressional maps in as
13 much as possible. For instance, instead of the
14 current strangely drawn District 1, a new
15 congressional map could keep Berkeley, Dorchester
16 and Charleston almost completely whole and in a
17 tri-county district, given the new population
18 count. More compact, cohesive districts will
19 allow for representatives who can more easily
20 travel to different parts of their districts and
21 develop strong relationships with both their
22 constituents and the other government officials
23 who are serving those constituents. I look
24 forward to reviewing and commenting on your draft
25 maps, when they are made public. I hope that

1 they are made public and given -- given
2 constituents a chance to review and make input.
3 So I want to thank you again for your time and
4 genuinely thank you for your service to the
5 state.

6 REPRESENTATIVE JORDAN: Thank you very much. Next
7 Carol Jackson.

8 MS. JACKSON: Good evening. I'm very happy to be
9 placed to follow Ms. Howell. I know her well and
10 I also live in House District 115 on James
11 Island, the part that is included in our cohesive
12 district. But I am here to support the beautiful
13 statements that Ms. Howell made to you. We want
14 to be unified on James Island with Folly Beach.
15 We have communities now that maybe in the
16 beginning of the history of James Island, when it
17 was still known as unpopulated countryside, it
18 would make sense to have neighborhoods that would
19 know each other from a whole different part of
20 that region. We do have a lot of connection to
21 Johns Island and especially some of the rural,
22 historically black communities that populated the
23 agricultural areas of those two sea islands. But
24 as it is, we have neighbors that we can't even
25 compare notes or vote together for candidates

1 that we would all prefer to be sharing. So it's
2 really a matter of closing the donut holes and
3 agreeing that unity of place and family and
4 community members is an important value across
5 the state. And I would love to see that the
6 counties could be more cohesive. But for sure,
7 you should start with the geographical
8 territories. They have the opportunity to
9 improve by making these changes. Thank you very
10 much.

11 REPRESENTATIVE JORDAN: Thank you, Ms. Jackson. Jill
12 Davis.

13 MS. DAVIS: Good evening everyone. My name is
14 Jalietta Davis and I stand before you
15 representing the Charleston Area Black Caucus. I
16 am the leadership protocol officer and I am also
17 joined with a few of my colleagues which includes
18 Mr. Henry Ravenel, as our chair, this evening.
19 We are a 13-board executive -- we are a 13-board
20 executive -- we have 13-board executive board
21 members and we just actually launched in November
22 of 2020. So I would like to share a statement
23 that has been prepared this evening on behalf of
24 the caucus with you, as we address our concerns
25 for our -- for this particular meeting. So first

1 of all, again, I would like to thank you for the
2 opportunity and thank the Commission for having
3 these public meetings. It is important that the
4 public gets to provide their input to this,
5 otherwise cryptive process. However, we would
6 also like to express our grievances with the lack
7 of transparency and availability of these
8 meetings. It is going to take more than 10
9 meetings to draw fair, proportionate maps, but
10 that is just the point to never draw
11 proportionate maps for accurate representation.
12 It was to help those in power stay in power. We
13 have seen time and time again the redistricting
14 process in both red and blue states. These maps
15 are designed by the very people elected to
16 represent them. This has created some of the
17 most unapologetically partisan districts in the
18 nation right here in South Carolina, as well. We
19 are not asking to give anyone any seats they do
20 not deserve, nor are we advocating one political
21 party. We do want to give power that is not
22 proportionate over population and demographic,
23 but ensure competitive areas are allowed to be
24 competitive and South Carolina knows too well the
25 evils of segregation, yet discriminatory mapping

1 practice separates communities, which is often
2 based on race, and it suppresses the votes of the
3 people. Elections cannot have consequences if
4 the outcomes are predetermined. The current way
5 districts are drawn and other partisan
6 gerrymandering efforts have done more to steal
7 elections away from honest working and civically
8 engaged citizens than any foreign power or fraud
9 could ever hope to. The Caucus pleas this
10 evening with everyone in this board and everyone
11 listening to do the right thing and draw a
12 proportionate map to ensure the will of the
13 voters will never be controlled by forces that
14 are designed to discriminate and control the
15 outcome. If competition breeds better business,
16 then competition breeds better politicians.
17 Please do the right thing and put an end to
18 racialized gerrymandering in South Carolina.
19 Thank you.

20 REPRESENTATIVE JORDAN: Thank you for your comments.
21 Next up Joan Zaleski. Ms. Zaleski? Yes, ma'am.
22 And while you're coming, I think representative
23 Smith and Representative Murray slipped in the
24 back. Thank y'all for being with us tonight as
25 well.

1 MS. ZALESKI: Good evening everybody. Thank you very
2 much for providing this opportunity for the
3 public to express their interest in the
4 redistricting process. I'm Joan Zaleski. I'm
5 co-president of the League of Women Voters of the
6 Charleston area, which covers Charleston,
7 Berkeley and Dorchester Counties. I live at 179
8 Pondsbury Road in Mount Pleasant. The fourth
9 largest municipality in the state. And I'm here
10 tonight to ask this committee to make sure that
11 this important process of redistricting our
12 congressional state and local maps will be done
13 fairly, equitably and without trying to promote
14 partisan gain. The League of Women Voters is a
15 non-partisan political organization that does not
16 endorse candidates or political parties but does
17 advocate for public policy issues after careful
18 study. And one of those public policy issues is
19 redistricting. The League has been studying and
20 advocating sound redistricting policies for
21 several years in preparation for this moment and
22 while we are disappointed that an independent
23 commission was not created to do this work, we
24 want to make sure that this process is
25 transparent -- as has been mentioned before --

1 and done with the best interest of voters in
2 mind. I'd like to address two points related to
3 transparency that I hope you will take into
4 consideration. First, the House's redistricting
5 criteria were voted on before public hearings
6 were held and many of the same criteria that were
7 used 10 years ago when the House created maps
8 that have resulted in mostly non-competitive
9 districts. In fact, in 2020, only 9 out of the
10 124 House seats had a margin of victory of less
11 than 10 percent. Over half of the House seats
12 were not even contested by a major party
13 candidate. The League goes on record as
14 explicitly rejecting the protection of incumbents
15 of either party. Voters should be able to choose
16 their representatives, not the other way around
17 and I guess that's gonna be a mantra tonight of
18 several people have expressed that. Instead
19 priority should be given to keeping communities
20 together and such as municipalities and counties.
21 Secondly, we are concerned about the timing of
22 the drawing of maps. We understand that the map-
23 drawing process has begun before the public has
24 had a chance to offer input. And with no
25 transparency around when maps will be released or

1 if the public will be able to provide input on
2 them prior to a vote. The League of Women Voters
3 has also been busy analyzing the Census results,
4 such as they are, consulting with experts and
5 drawing maps. This month we will submit our maps
6 to the House and Senate and they will be released
7 publically on September 29th. The maps have been
8 created in consultation with a non-partisan
9 redistricting advisory committee, consisting of
10 redistricting experts, community leaders and
11 former legislators of both parties. We ask that
12 these maps be part of your final deliberations.
13 Making democracy work is at the heart of the
14 League's work and redistricting is where it
15 begins. Thank you for listening tonight.

16 REPRESENTATIVE JORDAN: Thank you. Lee -- is that
17 Caro or Laro? It's -- help me out Emma. L-a-r-
18 r-e-w. Anybody close to that? All right. If
19 you -- if you get to the end and you didn't get
20 called on, raise your hand and we'll make sure we
21 cover you. We'll move on then to Elizabeth
22 Singleton. Ms. Larrew, do you mind if I come
23 back to you? Ms. Larrew. Thank you.

24 MS. SINGLETON: Good afternoon. I'm Elizabeth
25 Singleton. I reside at 1833 North Grimball Road

1 on James Island. I'm in a district that used to
2 be together many years ago, but we were
3 gerrymandered out into District 119. We have
4 very little in common with those people, as far
5 as neighborhoods are concerned. Our community
6 was divided. It actually destroyed the black
7 vote. It gave us less and less privilege of the
8 opportunity of selecting someone that can be a
9 person of color. When you redistrict, you don't
10 realize it affects a whole lot, not just the fact
11 that you want your numbers to look good, because
12 you want some black communities in your district,
13 it's the fact of the division, you divide. You
14 gerrymander and you take away voting rights of
15 others who are already there. I live in a
16 community where my great-great-grandmother first
17 purchased property in 1899. My grandmother,
18 1937. We have long generations of blacks in that
19 community. We were one of the first
20 neighborhoods -- or I should say plantations in
21 Charleston area on James Island. We've always
22 gotten along very well together and when you
23 divide, you conquer. We all know that. And we
24 really would prefer being back in our District
25 115 where we once were. I don't see my district

1 representative or hear from him until it's
2 election time. Why? I'm being compared with
3 Kiawah and Seabrook and parts of Johns Island,
4 where the value of properties are higher and the
5 income of those residents make a difference. And
6 it looks like we've been divided for the purpose
7 not to be recognized. And it's not fair to us
8 and it's really not fair to those who are
9 represented in the other communities. I'd
10 appreciate that gerrymandering stop. We weren't
11 broke. There was no need to fix us. We were
12 happy where we once were, because then our vote
13 meant something, now it means nothing. We get no
14 recognition from who we have, none. I'm saying
15 when you have a representative that you only hear
16 from during election time, when you get a piece
17 of literature in the mail, you are nobody, and
18 that's what I'm concerned with. My vote means
19 something. My neighborhoods mean something. And
20 when we are narrowed down, not just to a
21 minority, but a nobody. Because we're
22 represented by somebody who doesn't even
23 acknowledge our presence. We didn't have that
24 before, but we have that now, because our
25 representative is more concerned with the more-

1 wealthier neighborhood. That's not fair to us,
2 not in the least. That affects our community, as
3 far as prioritizing it. We won't get anything --
4 they don't think of us when time to all these
5 little port funds that be coming down the train.
6 It goes across the water, across the Stono, and
7 that's what makes a difference when you make that
8 division, when you decide that Folly Road should
9 be divided on James Island. It's not right. It
10 wasn't before you made that mistake and it's
11 definitely not right now. So you need to take
12 that to heart. Who and why are you doing what
13 you're doing and how does it affect the
14 neighborhoods, the people of that neighborhood
15 and their voting rights. They should have a
16 choice. They should be worth something. I'm in
17 a predominantly black neighborhood and we cannot
18 compare with those in Kiawah and Seabrook Island.
19 So when you move us where we do have more perhaps
20 land-wise, as far as our community is concerned,
21 we are a people of land or wealth in property,
22 but our income are not the same, our interests
23 are not the same. And we were all well-
24 competitive with those across the street on the
25 other side of Folly Road. Thank you.

1 REPRESENTATIVE JORDAN: Thank you, Ms. Singleton. I'm
2 gonna go back and Mr. Larrew?

3 MR. LARREW: Yes.

4 REPRESENTATIVE JORDAN: We're gonna go back and get
5 you here.

6 MR. LARREW: Thank you. I'm Lee Larrew and my address
7 is 7328 Brown Thrasher Court, Hanahan and my
8 community of interest is the City of Hanahan. So
9 I live and vote in South Carolina House District
10 99, formerly Nancy Mace's, now it's Mark Smith's
11 district and it includes parts of Goose Creek,
12 the City of North Charleston and my city of
13 Hanahan. One who lives on the other side of my
14 street shouldn't be in a different precinct or
15 district if we live in the same city and county.
16 So I pretty much agree with what the Dorchester
17 Democrat and Ms. Howell and all the other people
18 have said that redistricting needs to reflect
19 current population distribution with
20 geographically compact districts with boundaries
21 that make it simpler for us residents to
22 understand and to collaborate. Please redistrict
23 for equal voting power and fair representation.
24 Economic differences in rural, urban differences
25 need to be considered. I acknowledge that I'm a

1 person of privilege who says that all voters
2 should be able to equally influence election
3 results. Thank you.

4 REPRESENTATIVE JORDAN: Thank you, sir. Vince
5 Matthews.

6 MR. MATTHEWS: Good evening. Thank you. I'm Vince
7 Matthews. I am a resident of 1833 North Grimball
8 Road on James Island. I am also a proud graduate
9 of Clemson University, Class of 1990. Also a
10 graduate of Pepperdine Caruso School of Law from
11 1993. I come from an historical African-American
12 community on James Island. Actually, one of the
13 first here in our country. The Grimball
14 Community. Actually, we are the former
15 descendants of that plantation. We built our
16 community on the former land that we worked on
17 for free. Our community is designed or has been
18 defined by the lines that you have drawn. Let's
19 be clear, we didn't set the lines. So we do not
20 come here to tell you who we are because you know
21 who we are. Now, I wasn't here the last time
22 that you drew lines that cut through my community
23 and my family. And we understand that the
24 process and things are complex and people
25 (inuadible). But when you come home after 20 or

1 30 years and you see how the resources have not
2 come to your community, when you hear the stories
3 of how their children cannot find jobs in the
4 city where they live, it's hard. When we pay
5 taxes on both the state and federal level, but
6 yet we see no result. When we were once 50
7 percent of the population on James Island, but
8 we're now less than 10. Our battle for political
9 voice is not new. My parents and my grandparents
10 fought as part of the Township of James Island so
11 that we would have a voice, because James Island
12 is a community of interest. That's why we have
13 the public service district. Now, I don't have,
14 unfortunately, enough time to really tell the
15 full story, but our request is simple, don't
16 split our community. We can't have control over
17 how you draw the map, but what I know what you
18 want is -- what we don't want is don't split our
19 community. The black community, the James Island
20 community, and even look at that in the context
21 of our county and the islands, because we are
22 also Gullah and your part of your responsibility
23 is to draw congressional maps and the last time
24 you drew lines, you gave the Gullah people no
25 voice. In four states the Gullah people have no

1 voice. Now, that's the rules of the game. But
2 what we ask -- because it's possible by how
3 you've drawn the lines before, to give the Sea
4 Island people a voice in the process. Thank you.

5 REPRESENTATIVE JORDAN: Thank you, sir. Stacy Brown.

6 MS. BROWN: Hi everyone. I'm going to be really
7 brief. I heard a lot of great comments tonight.
8 I'm coming essentially as an advocate for
9 children. But my concern is essentially about
10 the gerrymandering and an opportunity to empower
11 and disempower and look at the equitable line
12 that can be drawn for children and so what I want
13 us to think about is our children. They're our
14 future. Currently, we're dealing with something
15 that no one could have imagined, the pandemic.
16 And those children are our future. They're the
17 future to creating a vaccine. We look at the
18 case study and the historical context of Brown
19 versus Education and the implication of drawing a
20 congressional line. And so when you think about
21 this, please think about our children and our
22 future. And the possibilities of empowering our
23 youth through this line or disempowering. So we
24 can think about our youth, I am here representing
25 our youth. So thank you.

1 REPRESENTATIVE JORDAN: Thank you, Ms. Brown. Brandon
2 Upson.

3 MR. UPSON: Thank you. How is everybody doing
4 tonight. Thank you for presenting this
5 opportunity here in the Charleston area. My name
6 is Brandon Upson, I represent the South Carolina
7 Democratic Party's Black Caucus. My address here
8 in Charleston is 1151 Barrett over in West
9 Ashley. So I just wanted to say a couple of
10 things really quickly; my main concern is the
11 impact that COVID 19 had as well as the lack of
12 broadband access had as well as the interference
13 with the previous administration on the Census
14 gathering process. The barriers that those
15 factors had on us having an accurate count
16 throughout our state, especially in our rural
17 areas of our state, I feel like if we don't
18 address these factors and how it played its role
19 in the Census, we are literally leaving our rural
20 communities out to dry. We could potentially
21 harm them more than anything. So I have a small
22 prepared statement here; so with the start of the
23 decade, the Census Bureau sought to catalog the
24 diversity of a growing South Carolina. A South
25 Carolina that has added 5.1 percent more citizens

1 to its population since 2010. However, it is
2 plausible to assert that the Census count in
3 South Carolina was deficient. The Trump
4 Administration sought to stymie every effort to
5 ensure a balanced and fair Census process by
6 launching dozens of lawsuits to derail and delay
7 the count. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic
8 and the barriers caused by our inadequate
9 broadband infrastructure, it is concerning that
10 those who hold a majority power in South Carolina
11 which to go forward without re -- with
12 redistricting without adequately adjusting the
13 deviation to account for our deficient Census
14 count. The five percent deviation set forth is
15 arbitrary. Undergoing the redistricting process
16 without raising the deviation is detrimental to
17 our rule in our racial minority communities'
18 ability to elect their preferred candidate of
19 choice. A ten percent deviation is reasonably
20 standard and acceptable under the case law. For
21 many rural counties less than half of the
22 residents could send in self-responses at all, be
23 it through household calls or the internet. Even
24 our own Governor Henry McMaster, himself, said
25 himself has made it clear that one of South

1 Carolina's biggest failures was to leave our
2 most-vulnerable communities in the dust when it
3 comes to the daily necessity that is internet
4 access in our age. Earlier this summer, Governor
5 Henry McMaster's office or regulatory staff
6 stated that more than 189,000 housing units in
7 the State of South Carolina were without
8 broadband and nearly half a million South
9 Carolinians could not have -- did not have access
10 to reliable high-speed internet of any kind. The
11 US Census shows that minority populations now
12 more than one-third of our state yet -- are now
13 one-third of our state, yet our legislator does
14 not reflect the growth in these minority groups.
15 The Census highlighted the under representation
16 of those of Hispanic origin, we found in our
17 research that nearly 36 percent of Hispanic
18 households never received a follow-up to their --
19 by a Census enumerator. And here in Charleston
20 County, Berkeley and Dorchester Counties, we have
21 a growing Hispanic and LatinX community and the
22 fact that they did not receive the adequate
23 follow-up to be counted in the Census, we deem
24 this as one of those vulnerabilities and
25 insufficiencies that could harm the redistricting

1 process overall. So I just ask that you take
2 this into consideration. I know many of you have
3 faced the challenges in your own districts of
4 COVID-19 and the lack of broadband access, and
5 you know how that effect impacts our ability to
6 send our children to school or do our work. It
7 can definitely impact our decisions to draw maps
8 that will affect our state for the next decade.
9 Thank you.

10 REPRESENTATIVE JORDAN: Thank you, Mr. Upson. I think
11 that you might get to be the final word tonight.
12 Did anyone sign up or didn't get to sign up that
13 wished to sign up. Okay. Let's get you -- Ms.
14 Dean will take down the information and come on
15 up. If you would give us your name and the
16 information you've heard folks give this evening.

17 MS. COPLEY: How are you? Good evening. Thank you
18 for being here. My name is Erica Copley. I live
19 at 520 McLernon Trace, that's John's Island. My
20 Representative House District is actually -- and
21 here tonight, Ms. Chardale Murray, so hey, baby.
22 I actually sit on Charleston County School Board.
23 I ran for the first time not ever running for any
24 electoral seat and I sit on Charleston County
25 School Board, simply for this reason, I didn't

1 sign up this week, but I came out here today
2 because -- simply for this reason, there's too
3 many of us that are disengaged. I couldn't even
4 say the word redistricting until -- and even now,
5 I have a lisp and it's hard. But then I look in
6 this room and I understand what it is that we're
7 doing. There are people that need to be here,
8 being more engaged, getting in on these
9 conversations. They're not here. I saw a post
10 on Facebook, because Brandon Upson posted it, and
11 because I've ran for school board because I know
12 for a fact that there are lots going on and the
13 fact that we are just disengaged. That's why I
14 came. How are you getting this information out,
15 is what I ask everybody; how are you getting the
16 information out. And when you're getting the
17 information to them, do they understand the
18 information that they're getting. I grew up in
19 neighborhoods. I was one, maybe two black
20 families in my neighborhood and people used to
21 tease me and tell me I didn't live in the 'hood,
22 I lived in the outskirts of the 'hood, and I
23 never knew what that meant, I guess because I
24 lived around a lot of white people. And that
25 didn't bother me. But then when I moved to a

1 place and I know that at one point in time that
2 right here where we are it was built on the backs
3 of black people. And then I look around and I
4 see no black people. We've got to start asking
5 ourselves, what -- what's happening. So when I
6 heard about this meeting and hear about these
7 lines and it makes sense to me now that I'm
8 almost 42 years old and I have three children,
9 one that's 23 and one that's 18 and one that's 8
10 years old and has autism. Gerrymandering has
11 been happening. Gentrification has been
12 happening. Redistricting has been happening. I
13 won't take up much time, but I tell people when I
14 speak, I don't write speeches, I just kind of
15 speak from the heart and I speak from what I feel
16 when what I feel is, again, who are you engaging
17 and the people that are engaging are not here.
18 And even when I sit in this room, and I look at
19 the panel of people, I keep telling myself, we
20 can't keep making decisions that are actually
21 going to unify us if we can't even sit in a room
22 together. There's a book that says, why are the
23 black kids sitting together in the cafeteria, why
24 are the white people -- why are the black people
25 sitting separately in public meetings that are

1 supposed to be helping unify people. So like the
2 other guy said that, you know, when you draw
3 these lines are you asking about us? You already
4 know about us, because you did it to us. We
5 didn't do this to ourselves and the reason we're
6 divided, like you said, you divide and then you
7 conquer. It's like taking a house of five people
8 and splitting it in half, and now you've got two
9 over here and three over there. And now they're
10 fighting for what they've got and now they're
11 fighting for what they've got and now we're
12 fighting each other for what we need. And
13 basically, all black people have been doing is
14 fighting for basic necessities and basic survival
15 skills that the more you keep drawing these
16 lines, the less of a choice in decisions that we
17 have and choices to make on any of this. So
18 thank you.

19 REPRESENTATIVE JORDAN: Thank you, Ms. Copley. Anyone
20 else not signed up that wished to address the
21 committee this evening? All right. And I
22 believe we have Representative Gilliard that came
23 in at some point. We welcome you, Representative
24 Gilliard, thank you for being with us as well.
25 All right, ladies and gentlemen, that is the

1 last, last speaker. Let me -- a couple of
2 housekeeping items; let me thank all of you for
3 coming out tonight. I promise you this committee
4 is interested in hearing from you and learning
5 from you and applying what you've told us. I
6 know as I look around, as I do every night during
7 this process, I see the members of the committee
8 diligently taking notes, so again, thank you for
9 coming out. To the other members of the general
10 assembly, thank y'all for coming out and showing
11 interest in what we're doing here this evening.
12 To the members of the committee, I thank you as I
13 do every night for taking time. I think
14 Representative Collins probably wins the --
15 Pickens is probably a little further than
16 Greenville to get here, so you win the long-
17 distance award this evening. I guess you will
18 tomorrow night as well, in Bluffton. Also, just
19 a reminder, as I said before, if you do have
20 written comments that you wish us to review in
21 the future when we go through the actual process,
22 you can email those or mail those to us as well.
23 And lastly, and I failed to mention this when we
24 started, if you knew anyone that couldn't come
25 tonight and wanted to come, we will be having a

1 virtual meeting on October the 4th. We'll be in
2 Columbia, but it will be open, accessible versus
3 Microsoft Teams. So if you know of anyone who
4 didn't get to participate but really wanted to
5 for some reason, whether it be health or just
6 couldn't be here tonight, please pass that onto
7 them so that we can hear from them on October the
8 4th at 4:30. I'm getting the nod, that must mean
9 I covered everything. So again, thank y'all and
10 we will conclude until we resume tomorrow night
11 in Bluffton. Thank y'all.

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