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**AUDIO TRANSCRIPTION**

*September 22, 2021*

**SC HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE**

**Orangeburg Redistricting Hearing**

REPORTER: Sheila Smith

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA  
HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE  
HOUSE REDISTRICTING AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE

\* \* \* \* \*

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTATIVE WALLACE JORDAN, JR. (Chairman)  
REPRESENTATIVE JUSTIN BAMBERG  
REPRESENTATIVE NEAL COLLINS  
REPRESENTATIVE PAT HENEGAN  
REPRESENTATIVE BETH BERNSTEIN  
REPRESENTATIVE JASON ELLIOTT  
REPRESENTATIVE WESTON NEWTON

REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT:

REPRESENTATIVE LONNIE HOSEY  
REPRESENTATIVE GILDA COBB-HUNTER  
REPRESENTATIVE MANDY KIMMONS  
REPRESENTATIVE RUSSELL OTT

\* \* \* \* \*

DATE: September 22, 2021  
TIME: 6:00 P.M.  
LOCATION: Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College  
Roquemore Auditorium, Building R  
3250 St. Matthews Road  
Orangeburg, South Carolina

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1 CHAIRMAN JORDAN: All right, ladies and gentlemen. It  
2 is that time. We're going to call the meeting to  
3 order. My name is Jay Jordan. I'm from Florence,  
4 not too terribly far from here. I want to say  
5 thank y'all for -- the folks here at Orangeburg  
6 Tech for welcoming us and making this great space  
7 available to us. You are the eighth stop on our  
8 statewide tour. I think at the end, this  
9 Committee, some of them -- some of us need new  
10 tires on our vehicles, some of us maybe need a new  
11 vehicle; Representative Collins. But we're glad  
12 to be with you this evening, and we've enjoyed our  
13 statewide tour.

14 Let me introduce you to the Committee.  
15 Justin Bamberg from Bamberg; Neal Collins down on  
16 the far end from Pickens; Pat Henegan from  
17 Marlboro County. To my right, Beth Bernstein  
18 from Columbia; Jason Elliott on the end from  
19 Greenville, and to my immediate left, Mr. Weston  
20 Newton from Beaufort.

21 And also, I want to point out -- I see  
22 Representative Hosey. You're our -- were you with  
23 us in Aiken?

24 MR. HOSEY: Yeah.

25 CHAIRMAN JORDAN: They're all -- they're kind of running

1 together on me a little bit. Thank you for coming  
2 out again tonight. Representative Gilda Cobb-  
3 Hunter, always great to see you. I see  
4 Representative Kimmons, Mandy Kimmons, and  
5 Representative Russell Ott as well. So always  
6 good to see fellow legislators that have time and  
7 take time to come be with us during the process.

8         And most importantly, let me -- as I always  
9 start, thank you all for coming out. We've done  
10 this a lot and I've read this speech a lot, and  
11 the Committee members are probably tired of  
12 hearing me read my speech, but it's very much the  
13 truth, that these hearings are truly one of  
14 several keystones underpinning the process of  
15 redistricting here in South Carolina.

16         Both here tonight and at the other scheduled  
17 public hearings that we've had, this Committee of  
18 the House of Representatives has been seeking, as  
19 we are tonight, your input and insight into the  
20 process of redrawing our districts in order to  
21 accommodate the tremendous growth in South  
22 Carolina since the 2010 census. The public's  
23 input is a key consideration of this Committee as  
24 we formulate a proposed plan for presentation to  
25 the House Judiciary Committee and ultimately adopt

1 a plan for consideration by the House of  
2 Representatives.

3 We recognize that this is not an  
4 insubstantial task to redraw legislative and  
5 congressional district lines. The Judiciary  
6 Committee may or may not adopt the plan proposed  
7 by this Ad Hoc Committee, so too the full House  
8 of Representatives may or may not adopt the plan  
9 proposed by the Judiciary Committee.

10 Unlike prior redistricting cycles, the plan  
11 that gains approval of the House, and later the  
12 Senate, is no longer subject to advanced clearance  
13 by the United States Justice Department. This is  
14 because in the decades since the last  
15 redistricting cycle, the law surrounding  
16 redistricting has continued to evolve. And in  
17 2013, the United States Supreme Court struck down  
18 a requirement of the Voting Rights Act that  
19 required some states to have federal pre-approval  
20 of redistricting plans. Although we no longer  
21 have pre-clearance obligations, we do have the  
22 benefit of working from a redistricting plan that  
23 was both approved by the DOJ in 2011, and  
24 withstood challenge and scrutiny through federal  
25 litigation, which resulted in affirmance -- in an

1 affirmance of the district lines as they are  
2 currently drawn.

3 Another difference from prior redistricting  
4 cycles that of course is well known to us all, and  
5 that is the unprecedented times of the coronavirus  
6 pandemic that continues to impact both our country  
7 and our state. Due to this disruption of the  
8 pandemic, the United States Census Bureau has been  
9 extremely delayed in the release of the 2020  
10 census data, which of course has impacted the  
11 timing of redistricting here in South Carolina.

12 As I mentioned during our first committee  
13 meeting in early August, once the Census Bureau  
14 releases the final data, which actually just  
15 occurred a little bit ahead of schedule, we will  
16 then be in a position to begin the map drawing  
17 process for the House. Although we are happy to  
18 receive your proposed plan submissions at our Web  
19 site, the House will wait of course until that  
20 final data has been published and we have -- and  
21 verified and it's determined that it's actually  
22 unchanged before we can actually open the House  
23 map room and begin drawing, or considering  
24 proposed plans. I can tell you that will  
25 hopefully be in the first of -- first week of

1           October.

2           As the House undertakes this process of  
3           redrawing district lines, public input is  
4           indispensable to ensuring our districts best  
5           represent the people of South Carolina, as we  
6           truly are the House of the people. We want your  
7           input on specific issues or concerns in your  
8           communities and in your neighborhoods. As in  
9           previous redistricting cycles -- did I do that?

10        (INTERRUPTION)

11        CHAIRMAN JORDAN: As in previous redistricting cycles,  
12           our Committee has adopted a set of criteria to be  
13           used as guideposts in the development of a  
14           proposed plan and redrawing of district lines.  
15           The fundamental goal of this Committee and the  
16           House is to adopt a plan that assures South  
17           Carolina's legislative districts provide for equal  
18           voting rights, traditionally referred to as the  
19           one person, one vote principle. As applies to the  
20           redistricting plan, our districts should be of  
21           substantially equal population.

22           While the population directive is important,  
23           we are here tonight because the Committee needs to  
24           hear from you, our constituents, the South  
25           Carolina voters, as to how you identify or define



1 your communities. We welcome your input as to the  
2 important social, cultural and historical context  
3 of how you describe your communities so that we  
4 can better understand the commonality and  
5 connections that matter to you.

6 This hearing is being recorded. It will be  
7 transcribed and made available to the public for  
8 the --

9 (INTERRUPTION)

10 CHAIRMAN JORDAN: Also -- excuse me. This hearing is  
11 being recorded, will be transcribed, and made  
12 available to the public. For the sake of order  
13 and a clear record, we ask that anyone desiring to  
14 speak tonight please first sign in if you have not  
15 already done so. And when you are called, please  
16 come to the microphone to introduce yourself by  
17 your name, address, and the district or districts  
18 about which you plan to speak. If you are present  
19 tonight on behalf of a group, please identify the  
20 group on whose behalf you are appearing, be it  
21 political party, public interest group, or other  
22 organization.

23 I also want to make sure everyone understands  
24 in advance we are here to receive information and  
25 provide a forum for you, the public, to express

1 to the Committee what issues or concerns that you  
2 feel are important as they relate to  
3 redistricting. While I or other members of the  
4 Committee may occasionally make a comment or ask  
5 a question, we will strive to limit our speaking  
6 so that we can maximize the time available to you.

7 As we get further into the evening, if some  
8 or part of your -- excuse me. If you plan to  
9 leave any written documentation with the  
10 Committee, we will be happy to include it in the  
11 permanent record. We ask to make sure you're  
12 identified, please put your name and your mailing  
13 address on the document and we will provide sticky  
14 notes at the submission box for that. You can  
15 certainly e-mail your testimony to our Web site --  
16 through our Web site. That's  
17 [redistricting@schouse.gov](mailto:redistricting@schouse.gov), or mail to House  
18 Judiciary located at 512 Blatt Building, and  
19 that's 1105 Pendleton Street, Columbia, South  
20 Carolina.

21 And I will stop where I started, and that is  
22 to say thank you for taking time out of your plans  
23 and schedules to come out and talk to us. And  
24 while I was doing all that, Representative Govan  
25 came in. Thank you for being with us tonight as

1 well.

2 With that, our first speaker tonight, Mr.  
3 William Johnson?

4 MR. JOHNSON: Good evening. Let me first say that --  
5 excuse me, I must didn't need that note. I'm  
6 William Johnson. I'm the mayor of Holly Hill,  
7 South Carolina, and my representative is  
8 Representative Gilda Cobb-Hunter, District 66.  
9 My address is 1310 Carolina Avenue, Holly Hill,  
10 29059.

11 Now as I sat there, I thought about when I  
12 have a public hearing, nobody gets up and say  
13 anything in a little small town, so I wanted to  
14 make sure I said something. Now as I think about  
15 what could be said that could help not only the  
16 Town of Holly Hill but the District 66, in that  
17 we're a small rural community. It is important to  
18 us that whoever serves us understands small rural  
19 communities.

20 As a matter of fact, we wish that they lived  
21 in small rural communities. And because of the  
22 census, how we really feel that we are  
23 undercounted, especially Holly Hill. As I look at  
24 the numbers, I see where we went from almost 1,300  
25 to 1,150. So it tells me that there's been an

1     undercount. I don't know the system. I don't  
2     know how you all do it, but I think there has to  
3     be some consideration to the deviations and all of  
4     that when you all look at this, that we may be  
5     able to keep those that serves us and serves us  
6     well, keep that area for them to represent.

7             So in short, what I want to say is we would  
8     like to see from Eastern Orangeburg County -- I'm  
9     sure that you all consider the rural community,  
10    consider the leadership that we've had over the  
11    past, and how we won't just draw away to keep the  
12    person out that does a good job and that works  
13    for us, and not that I'm campaigning for her or  
14    anything, but I'm just saying if I get an  
15    opportunity to speak on behalf of what we would  
16    like to have or like to keep personally -- this is  
17    personal for me. I would like to make sure that  
18    we ensure that those in place still have an  
19    opportunity to be in place. And I do realize just  
20    because you have an opportunity to be in place  
21    doesn't mean that you will be.

22            But please consider making sure that we have  
23    that opportunity as you look at us small rural  
24    communities and look at -- again, one of the  
25    things that we know that's going on now, a lot of

1 talk about is how that we look at the races and  
2 make sure that everybody has an opportunity to  
3 have their vote and that we draw it as to where  
4 there's an opportunity that we can all be  
5 represented and not just pick one group to be  
6 represented.

7 So again, I would just love to say to you all  
8 really look at the deviation portion of that.  
9 Does it change, and if you been using six percent,  
10 five percent or whatever, that the numbers are --  
11 as to how they're reported this time, should we  
12 change that, should we consider changing that,  
13 should it be nine percent, ten percent or  
14 something. I think it's a lot of things to look  
15 at. But again, let me just say please do your  
16 best to make sure that it's fair and you look at  
17 all sides and just think about first of all if you  
18 were in our seat, what would you want, if you were  
19 in the small rural communities. But again, let's  
20 be careful that we look close at that. Again,  
21 thank you all. Thank you for your work you do.  
22 I know it has to be tough work, but again, thank  
23 you.

24 CHAIRMAN JORDAN: Thank you, Mr. Johnson. Phil Ford?

25 MR. FORD: Good evening, Mr. Chairman. My name is Phil

1 Ford. I use he and him pronouns. My address is  
2 2362 Mall Terrace Court here in Orangeburg.

3 And I represent a growing coalition of  
4 organizations called South Carolina United for  
5 Justice and Equality. The South Carolina United  
6 Justice -- United for Justice and Equality  
7 Coalition envisions a South Carolina where  
8 everyone can thrive, with a particular emphasis  
9 on the lived and legal equality of LGBTQ+ people.  
10 I'm here to discuss with you the importance of  
11 inclusivity in redistricting and LGBTQ+  
12 representation in the general assembly.

13 There are roughly 137,000 LGBTQ+ South  
14 Carolinians and LGBTQ+ South Carolinians would  
15 like to see districts where our interests are  
16 included. Unfortunately, in our state, we see  
17 that according to the Williams Institute at UCLA,  
18 over 81 percent of LGBTQ+ residents are  
19 discriminated against. The majority of South  
20 Carolinians believe that LGBTQ+ equality is  
21 needed, yet we see discriminatory bills year after  
22 year from politicians that truly don't represent  
23 the will of their districts. And I believe that's  
24 a symptom of safe districts from fringe  
25 politicians.

1           With this information, we implore you  
2 consider LGBTQ+ people when drawing the new  
3 districts. When drawing these new districts, we  
4 ask that district lines respect communities of  
5 interest, especially within the precinct and  
6 county lines. District lines ensure that  
7 minorities, especially LGBTQ+ people, have an  
8 opportunity to elect a representative of their  
9 choosing and legislative districts should not be  
10 drawn with the intention to reduce  
11 competitiveness.

12           Democracy can truly thrive when all people  
13 are represented and have a voice at the table.  
14 The best candidate with the best ideas should be  
15 allowed to run in a district where there is an  
16 opportunity to win. Competitiveness is a good  
17 thing. We must draw districts in a way that  
18 considers and elevates the voices of all South  
19 Carolinians.

20           While the census doesn't specifically include  
21 LGBTQ+ people this past year, we should use the  
22 best resources available, including input from  
23 nonpartisan groups and tools like the one that I  
24 mentioned, the Williams Institute at UCLA School  
25 of Law. And on behalf of more than 30 groups in

1 the South Carolina United for Justice and Equality  
2 Coalition, we urge you to consider LGBTQ+ people  
3 when redrawing these new districts. You can help  
4 level the playing field and ensure that every  
5 South Carolinian's voice and vote matters. Thank  
6 you. And I do have a couple of resources for you  
7 all. Can I give those?

8 CHAIRMAN JORDAN: Certainly.

9 MR. FORD: Okay. Thank you so much.

10 CHAIRMAN JORDAN: Thank you for your testimony. Alonzo  
11 Frazier?

12 MR. FRAZIER: First of all, good afternoon. And my name  
13 Alonzo Frazier and I'm from Allendale, South  
14 Carolina, and this is my wife Elizabeth. Our  
15 address is 3562 Concord Church Road, Allendale,  
16 South Carolina. And we are better known as folks  
17 from Appleton.

18 And I just want to say that over the years  
19 being involved, Representative Hosey have always  
20 been with us at -- years ago, I was involved with  
21 the landfill and Representative -- whenever we  
22 called him, he would show up to the meetings and  
23 he would (indiscernible) to help us. And when I  
24 was on the school board, whenever we needed him,  
25 he would come.



1           And what I'm hoping for is that we can keep  
2           that same integrity in the future, at least for  
3           now. And thank y'all very much.

4 CHAIRMAN JORDAN: Thank you, Mr. and Ms. Frazier. Next  
5           up, Barbara Williams?

6 MS. WILLIAMS: Good evening. My name is Barbara Johnson  
7           Williams, and my address is 1843 Lake Drive.  
8           That's Orangeburg, South Carolina. I'm also in  
9           Representative Gilda Cobb's district and  
10          representing the Orangeburg branch NAACP.

11           And it's my hope that voter of color, we have  
12          the same opportunities to elect fair and preferred  
13          candidates as pertains to our congressional  
14          district. And I feel that the number of people of  
15          color that we have in this district would qualify  
16          us for such. In this area, we have a lot of -- we  
17          could benefit a lot from the Medicaid expansion.  
18          There's a great need here also for our educational  
19          system, as well as other needs for -- outlets for  
20          persons in this community.

21           So I hope that you all can -- when you think  
22          of drawing -- redrawing -- I mean, redrawing  
23          district, that all of these things will be taken  
24          into consideration. Thank you.

25 CHAIRMAN JORDAN: Thank you, ma'am. Representative

1 Jerry Govan?

2 REPRESENTATIVE GOVAN: Okay. Thank you very much, Mr.  
3 Chairman. I'm State Representative Jerry Govan,  
4 and I represent South Carolina House District 95  
5 in the South Carolina General Assembly. I reside  
6 at 143 Sweet Maple Drive in Orangeburg, here in  
7 Orangeburg. I want to thank you and welcome you  
8 as you sit here now to take this testimony at this  
9 lovely campus of Orangeburg-Calhoun Tech. You are  
10 in House District 95, so welcome.

11 Per the Redistricting Ad Hoc Committee's  
12 criteria, the constitutional federal law and state  
13 law of course must be followed. Other factors  
14 that may be considered in the redistricting  
15 process include of course continuity, compactness,  
16 communities of interest, including, but not  
17 limited to, economic, social, cultural, historical  
18 influences, political beliefs, voting behavior,  
19 governmental services, commonality of  
20 communications, and geographic location and  
21 features, and incumbency. Currently, in  
22 Orangeburg County -- we are fortunate there are  
23 four house district in Orangeburg County, mine,  
24 District 95; District 91, which is represented by  
25 Representative Hosey; District 93 by

1 Representative Ott; and District 66, which is  
2 represented by Representative Gilda Cobb-Hunter.

3 District 95 is based in the city and  
4 surrounding suburbs. It's been this way  
5 historically going back to 1974, when the first  
6 African-American was elected to the South Carolina  
7 House, the late Honorable Earl Middleton. Prior  
8 to that, there was no minority representation.  
9 And to some, that seems like a long time ago and  
10 others it's not so long.

11 District 91 is based in Barnwell County and  
12 Allendale County and includes parts of Western  
13 Orangeburg. 93 is in Calhoun County, includes  
14 parts of Northern Orangeburg and Eastern Lexington  
15 County; and District 66 is based in the Southern-  
16 Eastern Orangeburg County, but has previously, in  
17 prior reapportionment has also included parts of  
18 Northern Dorchester.

19 Now the purpose of redistricting is to ensure  
20 equal representation by creating districts with  
21 equal population. All of Orangeburg districts are  
22 below the ideal population for a house district,  
23 which is 41,287. District 95 is at 34,092;  
24 District 91, 32,543; District 93 at 35,055; and  
25 District 66, 33,255. It's important, as it's been

1 articulated by some of the previous speakers, we  
2 feel very strongly in Orangeburg County about the  
3 issue of communities of interest. As far as  
4 District 95 is concerned, we want to keep the City  
5 of Orangeburg and the surrounding suburbs together  
6 in one district. House District 95 has  
7 historically kept this community whole, and this  
8 must continue to ensure that this community of  
9 interest has representation in the South Carolina  
10 General Assembly. Considering the importance of  
11 the Orangeburg community, which is one of the  
12 largest African-American communities in the state,  
13 as well as the importance of the African-American  
14 community within Orangeburg County, the  
15 redistricting process should not dilute this  
16 community's voting power to elect their own  
17 representative.

18 This community of interest should be kept  
19 together to ensure that representation on  
20 important matters continue. Recent issues of  
21 importance that we've had to come together to  
22 resolve include everything from school board  
23 consolidation, utility coverage, as well as a  
24 number of government services. So it makes sense  
25 to give this community a choice in a decision in

1 terms of its one representative. Compactness and  
2 continuity. District 95 is currently compact and  
3 continuous. The redistricting process should  
4 incorporate more of the City of Orangeburg and  
5 more of the nearby suburbs, considering the  
6 history of this district. In order to make the  
7 district to continue its compactness and  
8 continuity and to ensure that the community of  
9 interest is represented.

10 Per the 2020 US Census, Orangeburg County has  
11 a population of 84,223. The fact of the matter  
12 is, as it been stated, and hopefully my other  
13 colleagues will also articulate this, we believe  
14 that representation, that census is a undercount  
15 when you consider the fact of the impact of Covid  
16 and other key things that have occurred.

17 The population deviation, however, for the  
18 2020 Census undercounted the population in rural  
19 areas, it is highly likely that the population of  
20 Orangeburg is higher. We should not let the  
21 voting power of rural communities to be diminished  
22 by an inaccurate census conducted during the  
23 Covid-19 pandemic. And to account for this, the  
24 population deviation we believe should be raised  
25 five percent -- or should be raised, that the

1 current five percent deviation is too low and that  
2 the redistricting committee should use a deviation  
3 of ten percent.

4 Orangeburg County is fortunate to have been  
5 served by several members of the General Assembly.  
6 But the fact remains that considering the size of  
7 this county, one of the largest in the state  
8 geographically, considering that fact and the  
9 seniority of its members, incumbency we believe  
10 should be considered to ensure that all the  
11 communities in which this diverse county has  
12 should be and will continue to be served. We  
13 believe that these -- our constituencies believe  
14 that we should not be pitted against one another,  
15 which is unnecessary and bad for the political  
16 influence of our area.

17 The City of Orangeburg and surrounding areas  
18 in Central Orangeburg County should continue to  
19 have a voice in their respective areas. The  
20 citizens in House District 95 believe strongly so  
21 and we would ask that you consider that.

22 In closing remarks, I'd just like to point  
23 out to the Committee that when talk about the  
24 diversity, particularly of this area and the  
25 uniqueness of it, it is the home of three

1 colleges, including South Carolina State, the  
2 Claflin University, and of course here where we  
3 are today, OC Tech. It has one of the largest  
4 public high schools in Orangeburg-Wilkinson. We  
5 also have other high schools in the county, but  
6 I'm speaking specifically in House District 95.  
7 And uniquely so, we also have one of the largest  
8 private schools in the State of South Carolina in  
9 Orangeburg Preparatory School.

10 The county seat of Orangeburg is located  
11 here, and the city has a very diverse and  
12 socioeconomic background when you consider both  
13 the inner city and the suburban areas of the  
14 district. As such, we would like to see, and I  
15 emphasize this, no retrogression in terms of that  
16 diversity and that uniqueness in terms of diluting  
17 the house district, and we would also like to  
18 suggest no retrogression when you consider the  
19 history prior to 1974 and coming forward in terms  
20 of the lack of minority representation.

21 I'd also like to acknowledge the fact that  
22 several key individuals from the city wanted to be  
23 here today and also from the county. I don't know  
24 if they had a chance to make or not, but this is  
25 Wednesday. We're in the Bible belt south, and so

1 this is church night, or in a lot of instances,  
2 folks are still doing that remotely. But the  
3 Honorable Michael Butler, Mayor of Orangeburg,  
4 wishes to submit, along with members Liz Kit and  
5 Bernard Hearn (ph). I heard from them. Members  
6 of city council would like to submit -- sends  
7 their apologizes and will submit written testimony  
8 in the next few days to the Committee. And also  
9 I'd like to acknowledge Councilwoman Dolores  
10 Frazier, Janie Cooper, and Councilman Willie Owens  
11 as well, that they will also be submitting  
12 testimony as well. And so having said that, we  
13 want to thank you. We hope you find your stay  
14 here in District 95 enjoyable. Enjoy the food on  
15 your way out. We'd love to have you spend of your  
16 money here, and I'll be more than happy to answer  
17 any questions. And I do have some written copies  
18 of some of the comments I've made for your perusal  
19 and for the record.

20 CHAIRMAN JORDAN: Thank you for your testimony,  
21 Representative Govan. And that is the last  
22 speaker, I believe, or person who signed in who  
23 indicated they wished to speak. Was there anyone  
24 who signed in that wishes to speak that, for  
25 whatever reason, didn't check the box? All right.



1 Representative Hosey?

2 REPRESENTATIVE HOSEY: Mr. Jordan, Chairman of this  
3 Committee and committee members and to all my  
4 colleagues in the house, Gilda Cobb-Hunter, Jerry  
5 Govan, Russell Ott, and the others on this  
6 platform, good evening to you.

7 I didn't plan to speak, so I didn't come  
8 prepared to give you any written document. But  
9 when I heard the one coming from Allendale that I  
10 didn't know was going to show (indiscernible), so  
11 I had to come and say thank you. Allendale is  
12 dear to my heart. 1999, when I was asked to come  
13 and join the legislative party, I don't know  
14 whether she remembered, but Gilda Cobb-Hunter was  
15 one of those persons who approached me through  
16 other means to come and fulfill the spot that Mr.  
17 Cabe (ph) was vacating to go work for the  
18 governor.

19 I had tried to run for this office in 1988  
20 and I took a solid whooping, and I said I'll never  
21 try it again. But when these folk called me to  
22 say, you need to come, I did. And I went to a  
23 store in Blackville and talked to a gentleman who  
24 owned a business, and he happened to be a white  
25 man. And he said, do you know me? And I said,

1 no, sir, I don't, but I came to try to get some  
2 funds for my campaign. He said, young man, you  
3 know, let me say this to you. It's not about how  
4 much education you have that people will help you,  
5 it's not about how much money you might have or  
6 where you have gone. But one thing they do --  
7 particular -- and they pull out above a lot of  
8 things and that is to see whether you care. Do  
9 you care? I said, yes, sir. So that's why you're  
10 running? I said, yes, sir. And that has lingered  
11 with me throughout my House career.

12 In the District in Allendale, one of the  
13 poorest in South Carolina, the population  
14 decreasing, but these are human beings. These are  
15 people with the same needs that other people  
16 across the state need. They're no different than  
17 anybody else. They've had great graduates from  
18 the school to go on to higher heights. But they  
19 can't come back to Allendale because there's  
20 nothing there for them.

21 And so we who are still there, and I live in  
22 Barnwell, have to fight daily to stay alive.  
23 Barnwell, a little better off in economics, but in  
24 the same track. Western Orangeburg, in the same  
25 track, just a little bit better. And I'll say to

1 this Committee, I don't know how much input you're  
2 going to have in reporting what you have heard and  
3 what impact it would have on drawing the  
4 districts. This is my one -- I say my third rodeo  
5 because in 2000, '99 had been passed, and I did it  
6 also there, and so we're in progress now.

7 I say to you that I hope that we do just what  
8 is designed for us to do in getting districts. If  
9 we deviate, we cause problems. And we hope that  
10 we will draw districts that people will have the  
11 same interests. I hope that we will draw  
12 districts that concern and care about each other  
13 as much as the man that told me about caring. In  
14 South Carolina, we deserve more than we sometime  
15 get, but we're getting quite a bit. Let's thank  
16 God for that.

17 So I'm not going to linger on. I just wanted  
18 Mr. Frazier and Ms. Frazier to know that their  
19 representative care. And I'm not here on a  
20 campaign, because we all have done something in  
21 our communities. But I brag about the track field  
22 that you legislators helped me get and carry to  
23 Allendale. You ought to see it. I saw it  
24 yesterday. It looks just as brand new, and  
25 they've been using it, as it was originally put

1 down a couple years ago, a DSS building that was  
2 there because they were meeting in trailers where  
3 it was really a deplorable situation. Hey asked  
4 that we get them something, and you the  
5 legislators, helped me get that for them.

6 So it's not about me, it's about us. And  
7 I'm here tonight to tell you I'd like to continue  
8 helping these people, my people. My people care  
9 about each other and care about the United States  
10 of America, and especially South Carolina. Thank  
11 you.

12 CHAIRMAN JORDAN: Thank you, Representative Hosey, for  
13 your comments, as well as your service.

14 Representative Gilda Cobb-Hunter? And then I  
15 believe we have one more gentleman who has  
16 expressed he wishes to speak.

17 REPRESENTATIVE COBB-HUNTER: I'll yield to a member of  
18 the caucus.

19 CHAIRMAN JORDAN: Okay. All right, well then we'll do  
20 that and then we've got -- Representative Ott  
21 wants to get in as well. So we'll let y'all  
22 decide who wants to go next. Yes, sir. If you  
23 would, give us your name, that we can --

24 MR. FOX: I'm Christopher Fox. I live at 2355 Beach  
25 Drive, Orangeburg, 29115. I just wanted to

1 express as a community organizer on Stop the  
2 Bondage Campaigns, and certainly during election  
3 season, going over the state.

4 And there's half a million registered but  
5 inactive black voters who don't have a reason to  
6 vote because they're pretty clear on not only how  
7 the lines are drawn but where their representation  
8 stands on any number of issues, whether it's open  
9 carry to abortion to what have you. And I'm a fan  
10 of voting for my interests above a party, and I  
11 think that the Fair Act (indiscernible) I think  
12 750 and 4229 give us the opportunity to redraw the  
13 lines to engage the electorate and give them a  
14 reason to come out. I think the senators and  
15 representatives who have long terms, they have  
16 them for a reason. They have that cache with the  
17 community, and I don't think that competition  
18 added into the mix would hurt them, you know, if  
19 they say -- if they stand for what they say for.

20 And I had a opportunity to go to a press  
21 conference with Senator Fanning and Representative  
22 Carl Hunter a couple weeks ago, and I just wanted  
23 to offer a couple points. The redistricting  
24 process should not start until there are clear  
25 laws governing the process that the House and

1 Senate must follow. The Senate and House have  
2 different redistricting guidelines, neither of  
3 which they are required to follow. This lack of  
4 accountability allows incumbents to pick their  
5 voters and to ensure their win. South Carolina's  
6 elections are amongst the least competitive.  
7 Noncompetitive elections breed corruptions as  
8 we've seen. Legislators have been indicted for  
9 corruption since the last redistricting, has  
10 raised a lot of campaign cash, with no opposition.

11 So in my closing, I'd like to say to give  
12 South Carolina opportunity to be interested and  
13 invested in the process. Let's not hold these  
14 hearings and nod our heads and then do whatever  
15 may already be intended. It is a opportunity that  
16 only comes around a decade or so, and I think that  
17 we could show the nation that South Carolina, and  
18 Orangeburg in particular, is above the legacy of,  
19 you know, just Smith, Hamm and Middleton and all  
20 the negative representation that we have. There's  
21 a lot of other stories to tell so why can't we  
22 make redistricting and Fair Act one of those  
23 stories? Thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN JORDAN: Thank you, sir.

25 REPRESENTATIVE COBB-HUNTER: Thank you so much, Mr.

1 Chairman and members of the Committee. Welcome to  
2 Orangeburg County, the largest county land wise in  
3 the State of South Carolina. You're in a county  
4 that is 1,100 square miles from one end to the  
5 other. I appreciate y'all being here, appreciate  
6 you listening to constituents who have spoken, to  
7 the ones who will be submitting written testimony,  
8 and I will also be e-mailing written testimony.

9 I want to pick up where the last speaker left  
10 off and just share with you the Fair Act  
11 introduced in the Senate by Senator Mike Fanning,  
12 and on the House side introduced by me. I think  
13 realistically in an ideal world, we would not be  
14 doing redistricting the way we're doing it because  
15 we are the only state in the union that does not  
16 have statutes governing redistricting. I think  
17 that's a mistake. I think it makes it too  
18 subjective and too open to change, and I believe  
19 the process would be a lot better if the  
20 legislature adopted codes that would govern this  
21 process.

22 I know that that is something that is not  
23 realistic this time around, but I would encourage  
24 the House and the Senate to look at guidelines,  
25 and to as much as possible, draw -- agree on the

1 same set of guidelines. And this is more so for  
2 the public's benefit than for the politicians'  
3 benefit. I would encourage you to take a look at  
4 the Fair Act. It's been sitting in committee, and  
5 perhaps not in time for this redistricting, but  
6 certainly in ten years when a whole new group of  
7 people are in here, some of which will include  
8 those of you up there I'm sure. There will be  
9 rules in place that everybody will know before  
10 hand and that will guide everyone. And so I  
11 encourage you to do that.

12 I want to offer comments on two pieces. One  
13 is the House and one is the congressional maps.  
14 And I'll start with the congressional maps because  
15 I saw something in the news that was very  
16 troubling to me. Don't know if there's any truth  
17 to it. I hope it's not, but I saw something that  
18 suggested that there would be an effort on the  
19 part of Republicans in the legislature to pack all  
20 -- as many blacks as possible into the six  
21 congressional district so that Nancy Mace and the  
22 first congressional district will be in a stronger  
23 position to win reelection. I would encourage the  
24 Committee to resist the temptation to do that for  
25 this reason. The fastest growing areas in South



1 Carolina are along the coast; Horry, Charleston,  
2 Beaufort, for the most part, and then Greenville,  
3 of course.

4 It is unfair to voters of color for any more  
5 voters of color to be packed into the six  
6 congressional district. With a significant gain  
7 in population here in this state, there is a  
8 tremendous opportunity for South Carolina's seven  
9 congressional districts to be truly representative  
10 of South Carolina. You might be interested in  
11 knowing -- it's my understanding -- I was not --  
12 I think the chair of the Black Caucus,  
13 Representative Henegan was a part of the  
14 conversation. But it's my understanding that  
15 Congressman Clyburn has publicly stated that he  
16 didn't ask for the (indiscernible) in his  
17 district, that the General Assembly chose those  
18 numbers and packed the district in that way. If  
19 that is indeed the case, Mr. Chairman and members  
20 of this Committee, I would strongly encourage you  
21 to revisit the makeup of the six congressional  
22 district to look at of course, incumbent  
23 protection, but more importantly, to look at  
24 communities of interest and contiguity.

25 By way of history, this is my fourth

1     redistricting.  When I was first elected in  
2     January of '92, the House was completing the  
3     process, had gone through, and you may recall,  
4     court challenges and all of that.  When I was  
5     first elected, I represented three counties,  
6     Orangeburg, Dorchester, and Colleton, three  
7     counties.  I represented those three counties  
8     until the next redistricting process of -- during  
9     which I wound up with Dorchester and Orangeburg  
10    Counties.  And in the last redistricting process,  
11    I wound up with Orangeburg County.  And quite  
12    frankly, I can tell you, Mr. Chairman and members,  
13    and I know Representative Kimmons is here from  
14    Colleton County.  I know how those folk from  
15    Colleton County felt when they complained about  
16    their little small county being divided up amongst  
17    five legislators.

18           I say that now because here in Orangeburg  
19    County, we have a total population county wide of  
20    84,000 people.  That's two House districts.  We  
21    currently have four House members.  I don't see  
22    how realistically that can be maintained.  What I  
23    am very hopeful that this Committee will agree to  
24    do, Mr. Chairman, is to take into account some of  
25    the comments from your opening statement where you

1 talked about the census and the fact that the  
2 census was slow. There were a number of flaws  
3 that a lot of us have recognized and have been  
4 identified for the record on the census, the  
5 undercount, and that was exacerbated in rural  
6 communities; the lack of response, particularly in  
7 communities of color; the response that was tied  
8 to the lack of Internet access, lack of broadband  
9 connectivity. Governor McMaster himself has  
10 identified the lack of broadband connectivity as  
11 a part of the problem and then the big boogeyman  
12 in the room, the pandemic and the role that Covid-  
13 19 played in the response.

14 For the reason alone, Mr. Chairman and  
15 Committee members, I think it's critical that we  
16 look at the deviation and consider increasing the  
17 deviation to ten percent. Now there are some who  
18 have argued that that can't be done. I would beg  
19 to differ. It can be done because there are no  
20 statutes. This Committee operates, as in the  
21 past, based on guidelines that you agreed on and  
22 that you accept. I would encourage you to look at  
23 raising the deviation to at least ten percent for  
24 the reasons stated, as well as that is something  
25 that would help not just Democrats, but there are

1 Republicans who also serve communities who have  
2 lost population. And so I think it's important  
3 that we recognize that for a variety of reasons,  
4 the undercount, the flawed census, the pandemic  
5 more so than anything else, that we take a look at  
6 a deviation that is more realistic.

7       The Mayor of Holly Hill has shared with you  
8 what he perceives as an undercount. I think if  
9 you go to any member of the legislature,  
10 especially those of us who represent rural areas,  
11 they will tell you that there was an undercount in  
12 their area as well.

13       So let me just close my comments by  
14 suggesting to you that from my perspective,  
15 communities of interest is critical. For the seat  
16 that I hold, when I came in -- and this is the --  
17 I saw in your guidelines that you wanted examples  
18 of differences or examples. To make the point,  
19 I'll offer two, maybe three, but real quickly to  
20 suggest to you when I came in, my district -- we  
21 talking about historical significance. When I was  
22 elected, I was elected from House District 94. As  
23 a result of redistricting, the person who I  
24 replaced was not there when the redistricting was  
25 happening. And so when I came in, being new and

1 naive, I kept looking at the maps and looking for  
2 94 and seeing precincts I did not recognize. And  
3 it was only after a while that it dawned on me,  
4 you're looking at the wrong district number. You  
5 are serving in a district that has been totally  
6 changed. That's when we had -- when I had the  
7 three counties because the person who had the  
8 district wasn't there, and so everything was fair  
9 game and this district was one.

10           What is important to residents in District 66  
11 is that as much as possible, that district focus  
12 on the eastern part of the county. I represent  
13 not just the eastern part of the county, but I  
14 represent parts of Orangeburg, the city. I have  
15 city precincts and I have suburban precincts here  
16 in Orangeburg. And so I would suggest to you that  
17 in order for that to be kept intact, they're going  
18 to have to be some tough decisions made. I don't  
19 envy y'all being in the position to have to do  
20 that because they are going to be some winners and  
21 losers. But we are where we are, and it is what  
22 it is. And if you got a county with 84,000  
23 people, that in itself makes it clear that some  
24 changes have to be made.

25           I want to assure Mr. Hosey and the people

1 from Allendale that what I'm talking about doesn't  
2 affect Allendale. Allendale can be kept whole;  
3 doesn't have anything to do with anything but  
4 Orangeburg County, and unfortunately the realty  
5 of people not responding to the census. And so I  
6 appreciate the opportunity to come before you. I  
7 strongly encourage you to look at raising the  
8 deviation to ten percent so that people who are in  
9 office now will at least have a fighting change.  
10 I don't know what the final -- and I thought, Mr.  
11 Chairman, I heard you say that y'all have received  
12 the final numbers from the census?

13 CHAIRMAN JORDAN: That's correct.

14 REPRESENTATIVE COBB-HUNTER: And so I've not seen those,  
15 but I just appreciate the opportunity to come  
16 before you. I encourage you to look at doing the  
17 right thing. I would encourage you to not yield  
18 to those who may whisper in your ear about  
19 retribution and revenge and all that good stuff.  
20 And I'm just kind of, you know, basing this on  
21 previous redistricting efforts. But thank you so  
22 much, and happy to answer any questions, and I'm  
23 sure you don't have any. I will be submitting  
24 some written testimony. Thank you so much.

25 CHAIRMAN JORDAN: Thank you very much for your

1 testimony, Representative Cobb-Hunter.

2 Representative Russell Ott? I think you get to be  
3 the final word this evening.

4 REPRESENTATIVE OTT: And I know what that means, Mr.  
5 Chairman, to be brief and I promise you I will be.  
6 Let me first just say thank you to you and the  
7 members of your Committee. Welcome to Orangeburg.  
8 Thank you for the dedication that y'all have been  
9 putting in over the course of the last several  
10 weeks traveling across the state, listening to  
11 folks that want to come out and be a part of this  
12 process and give you something to think about.

13 I'm not going to be long because you've heard  
14 a lot of what I wanted to say and ask for  
15 consideration from my colleagues. First and  
16 foremost, though, my address was 135 Ott Farm  
17 Trail in St. Matthews, South Carolina.

18 Like my colleagues before you, you know, I  
19 look around the room first and foremost and I see  
20 some folks from Calhoun County, which is the  
21 neighboring county to where we are tonight in  
22 Orangeburg County. And many of them wanted me to  
23 come up and give you something to think about, and  
24 it's what you've already heard, Mr. Chairman.

25 You're in a rural part of the State of South

1 Carolina, Calhoun County. Although it's on the  
2 outskirts of Richland County kind of sandwiched  
3 between Richland and Orangeburg, it's still a  
4 rural county, and it's a small county. You heard  
5 Representative Cobb-Hunter talk about the size of  
6 Orangeburg. Calhoun County is much smaller in  
7 land mass and much smaller in population also.  
8 And as many of you already know, when you're  
9 dealing with a small county, it sometimes is very  
10 hard to get that fair representation for that  
11 county that you may see in some larger counties.

12 Right now, Calhoun County has a delegation of  
13 three, one House member and two different Senators  
14 that split the county, and there is only one  
15 resident legislator from Calhoun County. What my  
16 constituents and folks from Calhoun County would  
17 ask you to consider is keeping Calhoun County  
18 whole because obviously if a smaller county like  
19 that is split up and goes to multiple legislators,  
20 then obviously it makes it very hard that that  
21 voice, for lack of a better terminology, gets  
22 somewhat diluted. So we would ask that on behalf  
23 of the folks from Calhoun County, that you give  
24 consideration to keeping a smaller rural county  
25 whole.



1           And then just to reiterate what  
2 Representative Cobb-Hunter and the good mayor from  
3 Holly Hill has talked about. We continue to hear  
4 from folks that submit that this was a major  
5 undercount during this particular census. You  
6 know, you can go and talk and, you know, it's hard  
7 to quantify that. It's very unfortunate because  
8 there's a lot of things that depend on that count,  
9 a lot of federal funding that I think the State of  
10 South Carolina and areas that we are going to be  
11 missing out on because of those numbers. But this  
12 is something that I think that we can look at and  
13 know that because of the coronavirus, because of a  
14 lack of broadband availability in some of these  
15 rural parts of the state, you know, this count  
16 certainly was off, and it was low.

17           And so, you know, certainly we would ask,  
18 and ask for your consideration in a different  
19 deviation. And Representative Cobb-Hunter knows  
20 this process very well. She's been spending a lot  
21 of time studying it, understands that although  
22 there may be a number that has been historically  
23 used, that is not a number that has to be used by  
24 the House of Representatives or the Senate or  
25 anyone during this process, that that deviation

1 can be what is deemed necessary taking into  
2 consideration what we certainly believe the facts  
3 would show was an undercount in this most recent  
4 census.

5 So just again want to thank you for being  
6 here. Thank you for your hard work, that, you  
7 know, again there's not going to be a lot of good  
8 answers. But please know that the efforts that  
9 you're putting forward are appreciated. Thank  
10 you, Mr. Chairman.

11 CHAIRMAN JORDAN: Thank you, Representative Ott. All  
12 right, ladies and gentlemen, as I said earlier,  
13 we started this process back I believe it was  
14 September the 8th in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina,  
15 and we've made our way from the beach through the  
16 Peedee to the Upstate, back to the coast. We were  
17 in Aiken, then Greenwood, and now we close our  
18 road -- our tour of South Carolina here with you  
19 tonight in Orangeburg.

20 I thank you to all of you who came out  
21 tonight. Thank you to the representatives who  
22 spoke in your home area. Thank you for your  
23 hospitality to us. Thank you to the members of  
24 this Committee that have made this an important  
25 part of your lives now and will continue to as we

1 continue on in the actual process. I can tell you  
2 we have two more meetings on the calendar. Both  
3 will be in Columbia at the State House. The first  
4 one is September the 28th at 4:30. That is next  
5 Tuesday. At that meeting we will review and  
6 hopefully take on map room procedures, and then we  
7 will also have another public input opportunity.  
8 If you know someone that for whatever reason,  
9 health or other plans or whatever reason couldn't  
10 be here this evening but wanted to participate,  
11 feel free to point them our way on September 28th  
12 for a virtual opportunity to give input. And then  
13 we will meet again -- we'll reconvene again on  
14 October the 4th at 4:30 for another final public  
15 input opportunity, also in Columbia, also at the  
16 State House, also another virtual opportunity.

17 So with that, I think Representative Collins  
18 wins the farthest away. He'll take it. He  
19 usually does, in Pickens. But with that, we'll  
20 call it an evening and reconvene next week in  
21 Columbia. Thank you ladies and gentlemen.

22 (END OF AUDIO)  
23  
24  
25

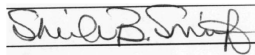
C E R T I F I C A T E

I, the undersigned, Sheila B. Smith, Notary Public in and for the State of South Carolina, do hereby certify that the foregoing transcript was prepared by me at my hand;

That I was not present at said proceeding; That the within statements are an accurate transcription of the audio file transcribed, to the best of my ability;

I further certify that I am neither counsel nor solicitor to any of the parties in said action, nor interested in the event of the cause.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 6th day of October, 2021.



---

Sheila B. Smith, CVR-CM-M  
Notary Public for South Carolina  
My Commission Expires: 2/25/2024

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