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AUDIO TRANSCRIPTION

September 28, 2021

SC HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

Columbia Redistricting Meeting

REPORTER: Sheila Smith

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

* * * * *

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTATIVE WALLACE JORDAN, JR. (Chairman)
REPRESENTATIVE NEAL COLLINS
REPRESENTATIVE PAT HENEGAN
REPRESENTATIVE JASON ELLIOTT
REPRESENTATIVE BETH BERNSTEIN
REPRESENTATIVE WESTON NEWTON
REPRESENTATIVE JUSTIN BAMBERG
EMMA DEAN, CHIEF LEGAL COUNSEL
HOUSE JUDICIARY

REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT:

REPRESENTATIVE CHRIS MURPHY
REPRESENTATIVE ANNIE MCDANIEL
REPRESENTATIVE WENDY BRAWLEY

* * * * *

DATE: September 28, 2021
TIME: 4:30 P.M.
LOCATION: SC House of Representatives
Solomon Blatt Building, Blatt Room 110
1105 Pendleton Street
Columbia, South Carolina

INDEX

	PAGE
Introduction by Chairman Jordan.....	3
Statement by Representative Annie McDaniel.....	15
Statement by Courtney McClain.....	21
Statement by Bridget Deline.....	24
Statement by Lady June Cole.....	25
Statement by Representative Wendy Brawley.....	27
Statement by Helen Bradley.....	32
By Chairman Jordan.....	34
Certificate.....	37

1 CHAIRMAN JORDAN: Ladies and gentlemen, were going to go
2 ahead and get kicked off here. I want to welcome
3 everyone, members of the audience. Thank you for
4 being here this evening. We're going to -- of
5 course, this is going to be our first opportunity,
6 virtual opportunity for folks to participate, but
7 also an in-person opportunity for folks in and
8 around the Columbia area. We're going to get to
9 that in just a minute. We're going to take up
10 some map room issues before we get too far in --
11 or before we get to the public input period
12 tonight.

13 Let me again, as I have, thank the members of
14 the Committee. It was a whirlwind couple of weeks
15 that took us all across the state. I'm glad to
16 see everyone back here in Columbia. Thank y'all
17 for making the effort to be -- to literally
18 crisscross the state. Thank you to all the folks
19 and staff that helped participate in that process
20 to make sure, whether it was from technology to
21 helping us get there, that everything worked about
22 as well as it possibly could have.

23 So as I said, and as I have said across the
24 state, this is a process that we engage in every
25 ten years. And it's an opportunity on the one

1 hand, as we have over the last nine or so
2 meetings, to hear from folks of -- our
3 constituents, the public, as to the needs and
4 issues that they believe are important to their
5 areas of the state. And that's of course of
6 crucial importance, and we'll talk about that
7 again in a minute. But another part of this
8 process is the part that, you know, we as members
9 of the House engage in on behalf of the
10 constituents we represent back home. And what I
11 mean by that is, and no one at this table or in
12 the body I believe needs education on this, but it
13 needs to be said out loud I believe, that, you
14 know, part of our responsibility to represent the
15 folks that sent us here pertains particularly to
16 redrawing the district boundaries to try and
17 achieve districts that our constituents can be
18 proud of.

19 And so as we begin the transition period to
20 the actual map room, each member will have the
21 opportunity to go in and participate in that
22 drawing process. What I will say tonight that
23 I've said across the state is, be clear to
24 everyone that our state has grown, grown
25 substantially. It has grown substantially in some

1 places more than others, and it has -- you could
2 say that about certain areas like the coastal
3 areas, York, Lancaster, Greenville. It also has
4 not grown quite as much in areas such as the
5 Peedee and the Midlands. So that is going to lead
6 to the logistics of figuring out -- and I believe
7 we'll see that. We've heard that. We've been
8 told that, and now that it comes time to the map
9 process, we'll actually see how that manifests
10 itself in front of our very eyes.

11 Of course that leads us to, as we draw lines
12 based on these -- based on our populations, you
13 know, we're frozen in a hundred -- with 124
14 members of our -- of the House of Representatives.
15 And of course that is given to us by Article 3,
16 Section 3 so that for every new district that is
17 created, an existing district must be consolidated
18 into one or more of the surrounding areas.

19 Now practically speaking, when possible --
20 and this is to give you some ideas. I think
21 everyone has received a copy of the proposed map
22 room policies and procedures that we're going to
23 talk about in just a minute and have the
24 opportunity to discuss. What I will tell you my
25 thoughts are, that when possible, members should

1 be encouraged to make appointments, and we'll talk
2 about that as well. But also, in consultation
3 with their delegations, also with the members from
4 the surrounding districts, I think that will be
5 the most efficient process in engaging in the
6 process.

7 Also, just sort of a background type
8 situation, as you of course have seen, we're going
9 to -- the Committee is going to implement a series
10 of procedures. One important reason for that --
11 or one important difference I guess you'd say that
12 I think is different than last time that this
13 process went through, we are not in Columbia. We
14 are spread out across the state. We're not
15 actively in session, so that it will -- I believe
16 it will be necessary for us to make appointments,
17 and that is also contained within the policies and
18 procedures so that that -- the requirement of the
19 advanced procedures allowing for, you know, not
20 everyone showing up at the same place at the same
21 time, so that the technicians that will be
22 assisting are manning the facility. They will be
23 able to operate the mapping software at the
24 direction of the members, and they're there to
25 assist the members in the process accordingly.

1 The map room will be open, assuming we
2 approve this plan, on Monday, October 4th. We'll
3 be available to individual members of delegations
4 by appointment till at least on or about November
5 the 5th. And of course we'll -- we have tonight's
6 public input period and then we have one more
7 scheduled for October 4th. And of course we will
8 continue to take public map submissions until we
9 get to the time period where we're in a position
10 to be able to close the map room. And at that
11 point, the Ad Hoc Committee can announce a
12 tentative schedule for finalizing the draft plan
13 for presenting to the Judiciary.

14 You know, as we've said before, our job in
15 this upcoming process is to put together sort of a
16 roadmap that we'll then send to the Judiciary.
17 Chairman Murphy, who's here with us tonight as
18 well, will then schedule it from there so the
19 Judiciary -- the full Judiciary can consider the
20 draft plan and then ultimately onto the full House
21 for consideration. As we sit here today, we
22 understand that the full House tentatively will
23 return in December and then at that point be in a
24 position to go forward.

25 With that, I think everyone's had an

1 opportunity to go over the 13 points and has seen
2 a draft of the policies and procedure. Does
3 anyone have any questions, thoughts, input as to
4 the policies and procedures? And I want to make
5 sure, too, and I've already referenced it once,
6 you know, traditionally given that we're going to
7 -- this time of the year we're spread out across
8 the state, it does become imperative that we have
9 an appointment schedule by which to operate on so
10 that we don't have that logjam of folks all
11 showing up at the same time and trying to operate
12 -- have the technicians assist the with operating
13 the equipment and things like that. So that's a
14 little unusual from what has been adopted in the
15 past, but in large part of course no need to
16 reinvent the wheel. This is tried and true for
17 the most part.

18 I think I saw a question. Representative
19 Elliott? No? Manufacturing questions; apologize.

20 UNKNOWN MALE: At the appropriate time, I'd move that we
21 adopt this.

22 CHAIRMAN JORDAN: All right. We've got a motion to
23 adopt. Is there a second?

24 UNKNOWN FEMALE: Second.

25 CHAIRMAN JORDAN: Second. All right, Ms. Dean, if you

1 would call the roll.

2 MS. DEAN: Representative Elliott?

3 REPRESENTATIVE ELLIOTT: Aye.

4 MS. DEAN: Representative Bernstein?

5 REPRESENTATIVE BERNSTEIN: Aye.

6 MS. DEAN: Representative Jordan?

7 CHAIRMAN JORDAN: Aye.

8 MS. DEAN: Representative Newton?

9 REPRESENTATIVE NEWTON: Aye.

10 MS. DEAN: Representative Henegan?

11 REPRESENTATIVE HENEGAN: Aye.

12 MS. DEAN: Representative Bamberg?

13 REPRESENTATIVE BAMBERG: Aye.

14 MS. DEAN: Representative Collins?

15 REPRESENTATIVE COLLINS: Aye.

16 MS. DEAN: Receives favorable.

17 CHAIRMAN JORDAN: All right, ladies and gentleman.

18 Well, with that, we can move on to the public
19 hearing portion of this. As I've said before in
20 the onset, this would be -- we started out on
21 September 8th in Myrtle Beach and we've been
22 literally across the state. Our last meeting away
23 from Columbia was last Thursday -- Wednesday,
24 excuse me, in Orangeburg. I can definitely say
25 we've gotten to see the state. We've truly -- and

1 I said this everywhere we went, but we were truly
2 welcomed by all the folks that allowed us, whether
3 it be some of the technical schools in our state
4 or high schools, we truly were -- found
5 hospitality across the state to let us use
6 facilities across the state.

7 So tonight, however, will be the first of our
8 virtual opportunities. We'll of course have
9 tonight and then next Monday night, as a virtual
10 opportunity, as well as the in-person opportunity.
11 But I will tell everyone tonight, whether it be
12 virtual or in person, what I've said across the
13 state, that the public input portion of this is
14 truly imperative to this process. As I've already
15 -- you've already heard me say South Carolina has
16 sustained a tremendous amount of growth. And so
17 redrawing these legislative and congressional
18 district lines is truly a serious and important
19 process of which the public input portion is key
20 to.

21 And as these Committee members have heard me
22 say, the Ad Hoc Committee of course will present a
23 plan to the full Judiciary. It may or may not
24 adopt that plan. From there, the full House of
25 Representatives may or may not adopt the plan

1 that's put in place by the full Judiciary. I can
2 say this, as I have said across the state, that
3 unlike prior redistricting cycles, the plan that
4 gains approval from the House, and later the
5 Senate, is no longer subject to advanced clearance
6 of the United States Justice Department. This is
7 because in the decade since the last redistricting
8 cycle, the law surrounding redistricting has
9 continued to evolve. And in 2013, the United
10 States Supreme Court struck down a requirement of
11 the Voting Rights Act that required some states to
12 have free preapproval of the redistricting plans.
13 And certainly, while we no longer have those pre-
14 clearance obligations, we do have the benefit of
15 working from the redistricting plan that was
16 approved in 2011 by the Department of Justice and
17 of course withstood the challenge and scrutiny
18 through the federal -- through federal litigation
19 and of course resulted in the affirmance of the
20 district lines as they're currently drawn.

21 Certainly we are here tonight, as you've
22 again already heard me say in sort of a delayed
23 posture because the 2020 census data has only just
24 become available of late and put us in a position
25 to be able to engage in this process. I would ask

1 members here tonight, just like I have in various
2 places across the state, if your -- we welcome
3 your testimony. Certainly, if you want to give us
4 written input, we welcome that as well. The
5 fundamental goal of this process, as I've also
6 said, is to adhere to the concept of a one person,
7 one vote principle, and we seek to apply that in
8 this process of redistricting. Part of what we're
9 doing tonight, and while we desperately need your
10 assistance in this process, is to understand and
11 hear from you concerning the social, cultural,
12 historical context of how you describe your
13 community so that we can better understand the
14 commonality and connections that matter to our
15 citizens.

16 This hearing of course is being recorded
17 and live streamed and will be available to the
18 public. Also, this of course, is a virtual
19 opportunity. I will tell you when you wish to
20 speak, please sign up if you haven't already done
21 so. I know we have the folks via Teams. I
22 believe we're on standby as well. But let us know
23 your name, your address, the district or districts
24 in which you plan to speak. If you're present
25 tonight on behalf of a group, please identify the

1 group on whose behalf you are appearing, whether
2 it be a political party, public interest group, or
3 other organization.

4 Also, please understand we are here to
5 receive information. And while you may hear
6 myself or another member of the Committee make a
7 comment or ask a question, we're going to limit
8 our speaking in order to maximize the time for
9 the public to -- for you the public to speak to
10 us and tell us what we need to know. If you would
11 like to, as I said before, submit anything to us,
12 whether it be a map or your testimony, you can
13 go through our Web site. That's
14 redistricting@schouse.gov, or mail to the House
15 Judiciary, 512 Blatt Building, and that's at 1105
16 Pendleton Street, Columbia, South Carolina, 29201.
17 Across the state, we've asked folks when you give
18 us your comments, if you can, try and keep to
19 about five minutes so we can make sure we get to
20 everyone. But certainly, if you need a little
21 more time than that, we certainly understand that
22 as well.

23 Also, I wanted the Committee to know some of
24 the things that we've done, as this is our first
25 of two virtual opportunities, to make sure

1 everyone was made aware we did also let the folks
2 who had already contacted us about October 4th
3 know that this meeting was taking place tonight.
4 We also contacted our notification list from folks
5 that had previously contacted us by way of the Web
6 site. We also of course updated all our Web
7 information on our Web site that I've already
8 talked about a little bit. And of course, all
9 meetings are posted on the statehouse.gov Web
10 site. Also a press release was sent out and we
11 contacted the folks who signed up at any of our
12 public hearings across the state. And of course
13 if you know anyone that couldn't be here tonight
14 but wanted to be here, as I've said at all our
15 meetings across the state and perhaps they
16 couldn't be available tonight for some other
17 obligation. Please let them know of the October
18 4th opportunity, again, another virtual
19 opportunity as well.

20 So with that --

21 (INDISCERNIBLE)

22 CHAIRMAN JORDAN: All right. First up, Representative
23 Annie McDaniel. And I think I see Representative
24 Brawley back there as well. Thank you. And I've
25 said this across the state. Thank you to the

1 members that were able to come out and talk to us
2 and be with us in and around your districts as
3 well. So thank you both for being here this
4 evening.

5 REPRESENTATIVE MCDANIEL: First, I wanted to thank God
6 for my (indiscernible) and the individuals who
7 have entrusted in me this opportunity to speak
8 here today for -- just for my existence.

9 And then to you, Mr. Chairman and to all of
10 the members of the Committee, this awesome
11 Redistricting Committee it is, I just want to say
12 good afternoon and also to everyone in attendance
13 and everyone who's listening virtually. And Mr.
14 Chairman, thank you for allowing me to go ahead
15 and speak, as I have another engagement that I
16 need to run to. And I'm going to submit in
17 writing the more detailed statements and questions
18 that I have and things for consideration.

19 I'm Representative, as you stated, Annie
20 McDaniel, and I'm the representative for House
21 District 41. I serve a portion of Richland
22 County, a portion of Chester County, and all of
23 Fairfield County. I'm a member of the NAACP and
24 many other civic organizations, but I'm speaking
25 today on behalf of many of my constituents.

1 The way my current district exists, a lot of
2 the capabilities for them does not exist. So they
3 wanted me to come and address a few things on
4 their behalf. We know broadband is a problem in
5 the rural communities, but with that I want to
6 share that there was a lot of disappointment that
7 more -- and all of the sessions were not virtual,
8 because some people are free today for this
9 session and some are not. I had planned to come
10 to the one on October the 4th, but then my
11 schedule changed and I won't be able to do that,
12 so I had to throw things together to come here
13 today; but just want to make sure that I emphasize
14 the -- with the Covid environment, that there's a
15 lot of concern in my community by those who can't
16 access the broadband and wasn't able to come.

17 And I talked to a few citizens who went to
18 some of the other sessions, and they were really
19 concerned, particularly the elders when they
20 didn't know what time they would speak and having
21 to drive and maybe was afraid they was -- they
22 would have to drive back home in the dark and they
23 did not want that to happen. So I know it's a
24 little day late and a dollar short, but I still
25 wanted to share those concerns with you that had

1 been expressed to me.

2 One question I do have, I know you all
3 approve policies and procedures for the Committee.
4 Are those available to everyone or is it just the
5 Committee?

6 CHAIRMAN JORDAN: Those will be made aware. We're going
7 to get those out via e-mail probably in the
8 morning to all the members so they can begin
9 making appointments and see exactly kind of how
10 the map room will function.

11 REPRESENTATIVE MCDANIEL: Okay, perfect. Thank you very
12 much. And of course, you know, this is my first
13 going -- first time going through this and only my
14 third year being a legislator, so I'm learning a
15 lot. And so if I ask too many questions, even
16 with those I put in writing, I apologize. But I'm
17 one of those detailed people that really like to
18 know everything that's going on.

19 I noted that you shared that the state had
20 grown, but we know that the state did not grow in
21 many of the rural areas. So I know it's a arduous
22 task and I'm going to be part of it, but we must
23 take care of our rural areas and try to ensure
24 that our rural areas have representation that will
25 allow them to partake of the many things that our

1 largest cities are able to enjoy.

2 I was listening this morning to the Senate
3 talk about the Savannah River Plant monies, and I
4 must commend the delegations from down in that
5 area and the elected officials in how they
6 attended and spoke for the -- their concerns about
7 that money being utilized in that area so that
8 that community and those communities that were
9 impacted by Savannah River Site and the plutonic
10 or whatever -- whatever the word is and all that
11 stuff that a lot of that money being given that
12 consideration for them. But I hope one of the
13 things that they request is some highway that --
14 a major highway, like a interstate to get to
15 Allendale and Barnwell and all those counties down
16 there because that is one of the reasons why they
17 do not have the kind of growth that they deserve
18 and why those communities are suffering.

19 And that is one reason why I'm stating that
20 we need to make sure that we take care of our
21 rural communities so that there's enough people
22 who are elected with the affluency to be able to
23 ensure that money goes to those areas. I
24 represent Chester -- just giving another example,
25 and most of the City of Chester, where most of the

1 black people are located, is in my district. And
2 then most of the other individuals are spread out
3 in the county. So by way of those lines being
4 drawn, the benefits for Chester is going to the
5 outer areas, which happens to be represented by
6 Caucasians.

7 So those kind of things might appear that
8 they don't make a difference, but they do because
9 the capacity for Chester to be able to enjoy the
10 same thing in the city that the county is enjoying
11 is negatively impacted by the way that the lines
12 are drawn. And I know we want to keep communities
13 together, but I think we need to consider where we
14 have low income housing and when we pack all low
15 income housing in one area, when we pack all of
16 the negative things on one area, and then one
17 representative have to come and fight amongst many
18 to try to get those areas to be able to share some
19 of the finer things that the other areas of the
20 state are able to fail -- to enjoy. That's just
21 not good.

22 And when we talk about our great State of
23 South Carolina, we need to understand that not any
24 one link -- that the state is no stronger than the
25 weakest link. And when we purposefully draw lines

1 where we have areas that's going to remain in
2 poverty and remain not productive for the state
3 and not able to contribute to the state the way
4 individuals want to, then that creates a problem.
5 So I'm just asking us to make sure that we look at
6 the economic advantages of South Carolina and when
7 we draw the lines, that all citizens will have an
8 opportunity to enjoy the economic impact of the
9 community.

10 So there are a lot of other things that I can
11 say, but I don't want to talk too long. And I
12 think I heard a few bells go off once or twice,
13 so my time may be up. But there's a lot more
14 than I can say because I'm very involved in my
15 community, and I do consider myself a people's
16 representative. So anything negative that impacts
17 the state and anyone that I represent and anyone
18 that I know, I'm the individual who doesn't mind
19 speaking up about it. And I know once we all get
20 together -- I don't understand how the whole
21 process work, but I hope I have even more
22 opportunities to give input as I read the policies
23 and the procedures and understand more how it work
24 and offer hopefully what advice that will be taken
25 and considered by you all to help make the entire

1 State of South Carolina economically strong and
2 not just pockets of the State of South Carolina.

3 So with that being said, thank y'all very
4 much. Thank y'all for your attention. Thank
5 y'all for listening. I'm leaving, so y'all enjoy
6 the rest of y'all evening.

7 CHAIRMAN JORDAN: Thank you, Representative McDaniel.

8 All right, next we're going to transition to
9 teams. And I believe we have Ms. Courtney McClain
10 on standby. Ms. McClain, can you hear us? All
11 right, bear with us just one second. We can see
12 you, but we can't hear you.

13 UNKNOWN FEMALE: I think you're muted, Ms. McClain.

14 CHAIRMAN JORDAN: It looks like you're muted. Can you
15 unmute?

16 MS. MCCLAIN (Via MS Teams): Yes. Can you hear me now?

17 CHAIRMAN JORDAN: Now we can hear you; good to go.

18 MS. MCCLAIN: Okay. Good evening everyone. My name is
19 Courtney McClain. I'm a resident of Spartanburg,
20 South Carolina, and I'm also a student at the
21 University of South Carolina-Columbia.

22 When addressing redistricting, we must take
23 into account the rich history of gerrymandering
24 and (indiscernible) depression in the State of
25 South Carolina. Prior to the Shelby Conner versus

1 (indiscernible) Supreme Court case in 2013, South
2 Carolina was among the nine states found to have
3 habitual history of discrimination against
4 minority voters and was required to receive
5 clearance from the Justice Department or a federal
6 court in Washington, D.C. before making any major
7 or minor changes to the voting procedures under
8 Section 4(b) and Section 5 of the Voting Rights
9 Act of 1965.

10 And after these sections were nullified in
11 2013, South Carolina has done nothing but
12 continuously chip away poor and minority
13 accessibility and rights with gerrymandering and
14 laws requiring at-large voting in places with
15 sizeable black and brown minorities. An example
16 of this is in Greenville who, according to the
17 AmericanforProsperity.org includes (indiscernible)
18 52 voting precincts alone, with a total of 131
19 precincts being located throughout the entire
20 state. And at that time, the closing and
21 relocation of these precincts were not publicized
22 to the voters and were instead -- these new voting
23 locations for residents were quietly updated on
24 the South Carolina Election Commission Web site.

25 Another example is in Spartanburg City, where

1 I live, where according to (indiscernible) USA as
2 of 2018, black Americans make up 47.6 percent of
3 the city's population, but that population is not
4 being reflected in the South Carolina Legislature
5 due to there are black residents being
6 gerrymandered and gentrified out of their
7 districts.

8 Following the 2020 elections, 48 states have
9 enacted or proposed restrictive voting laws with a
10 total of 300 plus bills across the United States.
11 South Carolina is one of the states on this list,
12 so to the Subcommittee, I ask you to look at South
13 Carolina's history and to give voters a true
14 chance to elect legislators that represent them
15 and not just the person whose district they were
16 crammed into to ensure another seat.

17 And I would also like to take this time to
18 push our United States senators (indiscernible) in
19 favor of the For The People Act which will ban
20 partisan gerrymandering during the redistricting
21 and influence the super pacs and dark money in
22 politics, and this will automatically register
23 citizens to vote when they become 18; just to name
24 a few of the things that it does, as well as the
25 John Lewis Voting Rights Act, which would restore

1 Section 4 and 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

2 Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN JORDAN: Thank you, Ms. McClain, for your
4 testimony. All right, we're going to shift real
5 quick to -- back to in-person. I think we have on
6 the list first Bridget Deline. Did I say that
7 correctly?

8 MS. DELINE: Yes, you did.

9 CHAIRMAN JORDAN: Excellent.

10 MS. DELINE: Good evening, House of Representatives.

11 Thank you for the opportunity to speak this
12 evening. My name is Bridget Deline, Chair of the
13 Single Parent Caucus of the South Carolina
14 Democratic Party and Founder and CEO of Family
15 Empowerment Program, a faith-based nonprofit
16 organization that was designed to help low income
17 families to become self sufficient citizens.

18 This evening, I would like to make you aware
19 of an issue directly affecting a community of
20 interest, the Richland County School District 2
21 students, parents, staff, and administrators.
22 Presently, there are five House of Representatives
23 representing this school district, Districts 41,
24 76, 77, 78, 79. Four high schools in the district
25 are represented by four different House of

1 Representatives. While it is true this district
2 has 40 schools, serve 27,000 students and consists
3 of 148,694 constituents, but having a House of
4 Representative to serve this one community -- I
5 mean, five House of Representatives to serve this
6 one community for this school district is a
7 disadvantage academically, socially,
8 recreationally, and culturally.

9 When drawing redistricting maps in the
10 upcoming year, we ask this Committee to please
11 consider decreasing the amount of representatives
12 assigned to this district. Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN JORDAN: Thank you, Ms. DeLine. Lady June
14 Cole? Yes, ma'am.

15 MS. COLE: Good afternoon to the Committee, Chairman. I
16 am Lady June Cole. I'm in District 78. I am here
17 as the President of the League of Women Voters for
18 the Columbia area, and I want to thank you for
19 allowing me to be here and speak. I thought I
20 only had three minutes, but that's fine.

21 I want to just ask that on behalf of the
22 League of Women Voters, that when you're doing
23 your maps, that you are consciously thinking about
24 the impact, the grave impact that these decisions
25 will have on redistricting and our democracy. As

1 you know, the League of Women Voters is a
2 nonpartisan organization, and what we are asking
3 is for all people, no matter what party.

4 In Union, with the voices of the League of
5 Women Voters across the country, this testimony
6 reiterates the need for putting voters first
7 through a fair and transparent process.
8 Redistricting is a serious endeavor, and it comes
9 with the explicit requirement to afford citizens
10 the opportunity to choose their representatives
11 through fair and equal access to the vote.

12 I implore you to closely monitor how the
13 district lines are drawn, keeping competitiveness
14 alive, and rejecting partisanship and incumbency
15 protections. This is particular important when
16 the outcome means incumbents have no party
17 opposition and we find that primaries are then
18 canceled. When representatives have no
19 challengers, they often tend to remain non-
20 committed to the needs of many of their
21 constituents, and then they cater to many of the
22 others.

23 Of particular concern to me is that our local
24 historically black colleges and universities are
25 not subjected to random packing or cracking, but

1 be considered as a community of interest, ensuring
2 that constituents of these communities are allowed
3 to elect leadership based upon having an informed
4 choice of candidates. Furthermore, all citizens
5 need their local precincts to remain intact and
6 accessible so voters can cast their ballots
7 without an undue upheaval in locating their
8 polling places. And this would be as a result of
9 redistricting.

10 The League of Women Voters of the Columbia
11 area is appealing to your integrity and obligation
12 to all people of South Carolina, that you will
13 draw fair lines that serve the people and reject
14 political party gerrymandering for any reason. We
15 are submitting our maps and we hope that you will
16 consider those maps seriously when you meet to
17 make your decisions and draw lines. Thank you for
18 your time.

19 CHAIRMAN JORDAN: Thank you so much for your testimony
20 today. Representative Wendy Brawley is next up.

21 REPRESENTATIVE BRAWLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and
22 thank you to the members of the Committee for your
23 diligence in this process. I know it's been more
24 than a notion. I'm Representative Wendy Brawley.
25 I represent House District 70, which is lower

1 Richland in Richland County and parts of rural
2 Sumter County, a small segment of southeast
3 Richland County. My district is primarily rural.
4 It is primarily African-American.

5 One of the things that I think I would like
6 to ask the Committee as you look at your
7 recommendation to the Full Judiciary is the
8 process that got us here. As you all know, Covid
9 impacted a great deal how people responded to the
10 census. We did things in my community to try to
11 encourage people to take part in the census. We
12 did things across the state, particularly in rural
13 communities, to encourage people to get help if
14 they had some concerns about completing the census
15 online.

16 But as you know, the rural communities of our
17 state are challenged when it comes to access to
18 the Internet, and even more so challenged when it
19 comes to getting the help that they need in the
20 event that they are able to access the Internet.
21 So I do think that as you make your recommendation
22 to the Full Judiciary Committee, that that should
23 be considered. I understand -- and this may not
24 be totally accurate. I'm sure you will correct me
25 if I'm incorrect, that the variant is about five

1 percent. And if that's the case, there will be
2 many areas who will be not represented, many of
3 them rural, many of them minority. And I think
4 you have a responsibility, as well as an
5 opportunity, to make certain that that does not
6 happen and that that variant number is increased
7 so that we will maintain the ability to have
8 representation, particularly in rural communities
9 that were unable or just could not complete the
10 census.

11 I know that is not on you specifically
12 because you all -- all of us did everything that
13 we could, but that is the reality. Even though
14 the population numbers increase significantly in
15 South Carolina, I think you, yourself said that
16 that growth was a part of the coastal area, which
17 we know a lot of northerners are moving to our
18 coast and we thank them for that. We know that in
19 the Upstate, in the Greenville-Spartanburg area,
20 you have a lot of industry. As is the case with
21 York County, my home county, there are people
22 there who live in York but work in Charlotte. So
23 it increases their population probably
24 disproportionately to the other parts of our
25 state. For all of the reasons that we all know,

1 lack of infrastructure in rural communities and
2 lack of economic opportunity in rural communities.

3 But South Carolina is still a rural state,
4 and we don't have the luxury of leaving out two-
5 thirds potentially of our population or at least
6 our ground population by not making certain that
7 we have done everything we can to make sure that
8 we have rural representation in the General
9 Assembly. And I do think that means keeping
10 communities of interest together. Rural
11 communities like mine, even though I serve two
12 counties, but those counties are very rural in
13 nature, those communities need to be together
14 because mixing them with downtown Columbia would
15 not be the best way to make certain that my rural
16 populations remain served. And I think that's
17 true, not of only just me but of probably most of
18 the people who represent predominantly rural
19 communities across South Carolina.

20 So as you look at your recommendation, I
21 would like for you to remember those things,
22 particularly if you are from a city or a
23 municipality with a tremendous amount of growth.
24 I'm proud of you, I'm happy for you, but at the
25 end of the day our job is to represent all South

1 Carolinians to make sure that there is equity in
2 what we do, including how we draw these lines
3 because that will be what we live by for the next
4 decade.

5 I also think it's important to look at the
6 historical significance of certain districts. I
7 serve in a district that we fought to get.
8 District 70 was a part of a legal battle that
9 allowed African-Americans to hold a place, a seat
10 at the table in the South Carolina House of
11 Representatives. Whether it's me or someone else,
12 I value that, and I think that we all should
13 because this is a diverse state and we need to
14 make certain that the diversity is represented,
15 not only in this Committee as it is, but also in
16 our body as a general population.

17 I think we have the ability to do that if you
18 all make those decisions with those things in
19 mind. Only you can do those things and make those
20 possible recommendations. And certainly those of
21 us who live in those rural communities who are
22 representing African-Americans and other
23 minorities who are disproportionately in our state
24 left in poor education areas who are less -- left
25 without hospitals in their community, who lack

1 broadband in their community, who lack
2 infrastructure in their community, whose roads are
3 really under the standard in our state, we can do
4 something about it and that process starts with
5 how we draw these lines.

6 So I would ask again in conclusion that we
7 look at the variant and increase that number from
8 five percent to maybe ten, maybe more so that we
9 make certain that there is equity and fairness
10 and that we continually consider communities of
11 interest, rural communities that really do need
12 to stay together. I thank you all for the
13 opportunity to hear what my concerns are, and I
14 wish you luck as you go through this process. I
15 know you will make the best decisions for our
16 state. Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN JORDAN: Thank you, Representative Brawley. I
18 apologize for the beeping. My -- it just proved
19 that my 12-year-old daughter is right, that I am
20 as incompetent with technology as everyone thinks.

21 REPRESENTATIVE BRAWLEY: No worries.

22 CHAIRMAN JORDAN: Ms. Helen Bradley?

23 MS. BRADLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and the Committee
24 for allowing me this time to speak. I just wish
25 you hadn't put me behind my representative.

1 (INDISCERNIBLE)

2 MS. BRADLEY: But anyway, we work on a lot of things
3 together, so some of the stuff that I say is
4 probably going to be what she said because we do
5 work closely together. And I have been working
6 with politicians pretty much all of my life, and I
7 was just blessed to have a birthday to turn 65 a
8 couple days ago.

9 So with that being said, I know about the
10 history of how District 70 came about. We are
11 from a rural community; wouldn't take anything in
12 the world for it. Just want to ask that you
13 consider keeping our district intact. One of the
14 main reasons is because the Covid pandemic really
15 played a role in us not being able to get out to
16 help with the census like we -- like we did in the
17 past.

18 And I know that most of you all, this may be
19 a first time for you making recommendations. I
20 know that this is a hard decision, but I want you
21 to just -- and I didn't -- I'm sorry, let me just
22 back right up and say it. You asked me to give my
23 name. Helen Bradley, 1916 Martin Luther King
24 Boulevard, Hopkins, South Carolina, and District
25 70 is the district. Also, District 80 is out in

1 our rural area. With those two districts being
2 separated, we were able to be represented a lot
3 more than we would if we only had one district.

4 Keeping that in mind, there is a lot of
5 growth that is not going to be accounted for this
6 time. With God's will and whatever else needs to
7 be done to get rid of the pandemic, by the next
8 time this is done in ten years, maybe I'll be
9 here, maybe I won't be, but I would still like to
10 see the rural community represented as they have
11 been in the past and as they need to. And like
12 it's a growing -- the numbers are really growing.
13 We all have children, grands, great grands,
14 something I didn't think that I'd be around to
15 see. But I would love for them to be treated
16 fairly and given an opportunity to be represented.
17 And again, I ask that you consider drawing your
18 lines to see that the rural communities,
19 especially that of District 70, remain. Thank
20 you.

21 CHAIRMAN JORDAN: Thank you, Ms. Bradley. All right,
22 we're going to take just a couple minutes. We've
23 had folks that signed up to speak in advance of
24 the meeting that unlike -- of course we saw Ms.
25 McClain. She went into the lobby, the Teams

1 lobby, and then ultimately was -- spoke in the
2 meeting. We don't have anyone else in the lobby,
3 but we want to make sure that we're not missing
4 anyone. So just give us a few minutes. If the
5 Committee would just stand at ease for just a
6 minute and then we'll make sure we're not having
7 any technical issues before we close the meeting,
8 or if there's someone that we can let in the lobby
9 at that point, we'll do that as well, so just --
10 let's take a couple minutes.

11 (OFF AUDIO/VIDEO)

12 CHAIRMAN JORDAN: I didn't realize, but because we
13 didn't have anyone other than Ms. McClain
14 originally in the teams waiting area, Ms. Dean
15 was able to e-mail the folks that had previously
16 signed up, got a couple of responses from folks
17 that replied back, said they couldn't do it
18 tonight after all. And we know the technology is
19 working because we, again, had Ms. McClain who
20 spoke who went through correctly.

21 So what we're going to do is we're going to
22 again e-mail the folks that had signed up for this
23 meeting and let them know of the October 4th
24 meeting. Again, we've also checked. There's no
25 one in the teams waiting room currently, so I

1 don't want y'all to have to sit around without
2 anyone needing to speak. And of course we'll push
3 it out again in the ways we talked about earlier
4 that I said we'd been letting folks know of this
5 meeting, also of the October 4th meeting. So with
6 that, again, thank you to the folks that signed up
7 to speak tonight. And thank you to the Committee
8 members for being here tonight. And we'll
9 reconvene Monday, October 4th at 4:30. Is that
10 right? 4:30. Thank you all so much. We're
11 adjourned.

12 (END OF AUDIO)

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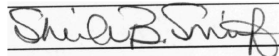
C E R T I F I C A T E

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 12th day of October, 2021.



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

1	3	6	accounted 34:5	affirmance 11:19
1105 13:15	3 5:15,16	65 33:7	accurate 28:24	affluency 18:22
12-year-old 32:19	300 23:10	7	achieve 4:17	afford 26:9
124 5:13	4	70 27:25 31:8 33:10,25 34:19	Act 11:11 22:9 23:19,25 24:1	afraid 16:21
13 8:1	4 24:1	76 24:24	actively 6:15	African-american 28:4
131 22:18	4(b) 22:8	77 24:24	actual 4:20	African-americans 31:9,22
148,694 25:3	40 25:2	78 24:24 25:16	Ad 7:11 10:22	afternoon 15:12 25:15
18 23:23	41 15:21 24:23	79 24:24	address 12:23 16:3	ahead 3:2 15:14
1916 33:23	47.6 23:2	8	addressing 21:22	alive 26:14
1965 22:9 24:1	48 23:8	80 33:25	adhere 12:6	Allendale 18:15
2	4:30 36:9,10	8th 9:21	adjourned 36:11	allowed 10:2 27:2 31:9
2 24:20	4th 7:2,7 14:2,18 16:10 35:23 36:5,9	A	administrators 24:21	allowing 6:19 15:14 25:19 32:24
2011 11:16	5	ability 29:7 31:17	adopt 8:21,23 10:24, 25	Americanforprosperity.org 22:17
2013 11:9 22:1,11	5 22:8 24:1	academically 25:7	adopted 8:14	Americans 23:2
2018 23:2	512 13:15	access 16:16 26:11 28:17,20	advance 34:23	amount 10:16 25:11 30:23
2020 11:23 23:8	52 22:18	accessibility 22:13	advanced 6:19 11:5	Annie 14:23 15:19
27,000 25:2	5th 7:5	accessible 27:6	advantages 20:6	announce 7:11
29201 13:16		account 21:23	advice 20:24	apologize 8:19 17:16

<p>32:18 appealing 27:11 appearing 13:1 apply 12:7 appointment 7:4 8:9 appointments 6:1,16 17:9 approval 11:4 approve 7:2 17:3 approved 11:16 arduous 17:21 area 3:8 18:5,7 19:15,16 25:18 27:11 29:16,19 34:1 35:14 areas 4:5 5:2,3,4,18 17:21,23,24 18:23 19:5,18, 19 20:1 29:2 31:24 Article 5:15 Assembly 30:9 assigned 25:12 assist 6:25 8:12 assistance 12:10 assisting</p>	<p>6:22 assuming 7:1 at-large 22:14 attendance 15:12 attended 18:6 attention 21:4 audience 3:3 AUDIO 36:12 AUDIO/VIDEO 35:11 automatically 23:22 aware 14:1 17:6 24:18 awesome 15:10 Aye 9:3,5,7,9,11,13, 15</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">B</p> <hr/> <p>back 3:16 4:10 14:24 16:22 24:5 33:22 35:17 background 6:7 ballots 27:6 Bamberg 9:12,13 ban 23:19</p>	<p>Barnwell 18:15 based 5:12 27:3 battle 31:8 Beach 9:21 bear 21:11 beeping 32:18 begin 4:19 17:8 behalf 4:9 12:25 13:1 15:25 16:4 25:21 bells 20:12 benefit 11:14 benefits 19:4 Bernstein 9:4,5 bills 23:10 birthday 33:7 bit 14:8 black 19:1 22:15 23:2, 5 26:24 Blatt 13:15 blessed 33:7 body 4:12 31:16</p>	<p>Boulevard 33:24 boundaries 4:16 Bradley 32:22,23 33:2, 23 34:21 Brawley 14:24 27:20,21, 24 32:17,21 Bridget 24:6,12 broadband 16:4,16 32:1 brown 22:15 Building 13:15</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">C</p> <hr/> <p>call 9:1 canceled 26:18 candidates 27:4 capabilities 16:2 capacity 19:9 care 17:23 18:20 Carolina 10:15 13:16 19:23 20:6 21:1, 2,20,25 22:2,11, 24 23:4,11 24:13 27:12 29:15 30:3,19 31:10 33:24</p>	<p>Carolina's 23:13 Carolina- columbia 21:21 Carolynians 31:1 case 22:1 29:1,20 cast 27:6 cater 26:21 Caucasians 19:6 Caucus 24:13 census 11:23 28:10,11, 14 29:10 33:16 CEO 24:14 Chair 24:12 Chairman 3:1 7:17 8:22,25 9:7,17 14:22 15:9,14 17:6 21:7,14,17 24:3, 9 25:13,15 27:19,21 32:17, 22,23 34:21 35:12 challenge 11:17 challenged 28:17,18 challengers 26:19 chance 23:14</p>
--	--	--	---	--

changed 16:11	29:18	18:8 20:9,15	4:3,10,17 15:25	Covid 16:14 28:8
Charlotte 29:22	coastal 5:2 29:16	24:19 25:4,6	25:3 26:21 27:2	33:14
checked 35:24	Cole 25:14,15,16	27:1 28:10	consultation 6:2	cracking 26:25
Chester 15:22 18:24,25 19:4,9	colleges 26:24	31:25 32:1,2 33:11 34:10	contacted 14:2,4,5,11	crammed 23:16
children 34:13	Collins 9:14,15	competitiveness 26:13	contained 6:17	created 5:17
chip 22:12	Columbia 3:8,16 6:13 9:23 13:16 25:18 27:10 30:14	complete 29:9	context 12:12	creates 20:4
choice 27:4	commend 18:4	completing 28:14	continually 32:10	crisscross 3:18
choose 26:10	comment 13:7	concept 12:6	continue 7:8	crucial 4:6
cities 18:1	comments 13:18	concern 16:15 26:23	continued 11:9	cultural 12:11
citizens 12:15 16:17 20:7 23:23 24:17 26:9 27:4	Commission 22:24	concerned 16:19	continuously 22:12	culturally 25:8
city 18:25 19:10 22:25 30:22	committed 26:20	concerns 16:25 18:6 28:14 32:13	contribute 20:3	current 16:1
city's 23:3	Committee 3:14 6:9 7:11 10:21,22 13:6, 23 15:10,11 17:3,5 25:10,15 27:22 28:6,22 31:15 32:23 35:5 36:7	conclusion 32:6	copy 5:21	cycle 11:8
civic 15:24	Committee 3:14 6:9 7:11 10:21,22 13:6, 23 15:10,11 17:3,5 25:10,15 27:22 28:6,22 31:15 32:23 35:5 36:7	congressional 10:17	correct 28:24	cycles 11:3
clear 4:23	commonality 12:14	connections 12:14	correctly 24:7 35:20	
clearance 11:5,14 22:5	communities 16:5 18:8,18,21 19:12 27:2 28:13,16 29:8 30:1,2,10,11,13, 19 31:21 32:10, 11 34:18	Conner 21:25	counties 18:15 30:12	D
close 7:10 35:7	communities 16:5 18:8,18,21 19:12 27:2 28:13,16 29:8 30:1,2,10,11,13, 19 31:21 32:10, 11 34:18	consciously 25:23	country 26:5	D.C. 22:6
closely 26:12 33:5	community 12:13 16:15	consideration 7:21 15:18 18:12	county 15:22,23 19:3, 10 24:20 28:1,2, 3 29:21	dark 16:22 23:21
closing 22:20		considered 20:25 27:1 28:23	couple 3:14 33:8 34:22 35:10,16	data 11:23
coast		consists 25:2	court 11:10 22:1,6	daughter 32:19
		consolidated 5:17	Courtney 21:9,19	day 16:24 30:25
		constituents		days 33:8
				deal

28:9	difference 6:11 19:8	draft 7:12,20 8:2	22:24	equal 26:11
Dean 8:25 9:2,4,6,8, 10,12,14,16 35:14	diligence 27:23	draw 5:11 19:25 20:7 27:13,17 31:2 32:5	elections 23:8	equipment 8:13
decade 11:7 31:4	direction 6:24	drawing 4:22 25:9 34:17	Elliott 8:19 9:2,3	equity 31:1 32:9
December 7:23	directly 24:19	drawn 11:20 19:4,12 26:13	emphasize 16:13	evening 3:4 15:4 21:6,18 24:10,12,18
decision 33:20	disadvantage 25:7	drive 16:21,22	Empowerment 24:15	event 28:20
decisions 25:24 27:17 31:18 32:15	disappointment 16:6	due 23:5	enacted 23:9	everyone's 7:25
decreasing 25:11	discrimination 22:3	<hr/> E <hr/>		
delayed 11:22	discuss 5:24	e-mail 17:7 35:15,22	encourage 28:11,13	evolve 11:9
delegations 6:3 7:3 18:4	disproportionate ly 29:24 31:23	earlier 36:3	encouraged 6:1	Excellent 24:9
Deline 24:6,8,10,12 25:13	district 4:16 5:16,17 10:18 11:20 12:23 15:21	ease 35:5	end 30:25 36:12	excuse 9:24
democracy 25:25	discrimination 16:1 19:1 23:15 24:20,23,24 25:1,6,12,16 26:13 27:25 28:3 31:7,8 33:10,13,24,25 34:3,19	economic 20:6,8 30:2	endeavor 26:8	exist 16:2
Democratic 24:14	districts 4:17 6:4 12:23 15:2 23:7 24:23 31:6 34:1	economically 21:1	engage 3:24 4:9 11:25	existence 15:8
Department 11:6,16 22:5	diverse 31:13	education 4:12 31:24	engagement 15:15	existing 5:17
depression 21:24	diversity 31:14	efficient 6:5	engaging 6:5	exists 16:1
describe 12:12	dollar 16:24	effort 3:17	enjoy 18:1 19:9,20 20:8 21:5	explicit 26:9
deserve 18:17	downtown 30:14	elders 16:19	enjoying 19:10	expressed 17:1
designed 24:16		elect 23:14 27:3	ensure 17:23 18:23 23:16	<hr/> F <hr/>
desperately 12:9		elected 18:5,22	entire 20:25 22:19	facilities 10:6
detailed 15:17 17:17		Election	entrusted 15:7	facility 6:22
			environment 16:14	fail

19:20 fair 26:7,11 27:13 Fairfield 15:23 fairly 34:16 fairness 32:9 faith-based 24:15 families 24:17 Family 24:14 favor 23:19 favorable 9:16 federal 11:18 22:5 FEMALE 8:24 21:13 fight 19:17 figuring 5:6 finalizing 7:12 find 26:17 fine 25:20 finer 19:19 folks 3:6,7,18 4:2,15 8:10 10:2 12:21 13:17 14:1,4,11 34:23 35:15,16, 22 36:4,6	forward 7:24 fought 31:7 found 10:4 22:2 Founder 24:14 free 11:12 16:8 front 5:10 frozen 5:13 full 7:19,20,22 10:23,24 11:1 28:7,22 function 17:10 fundamental 12:5 <hr/> G <hr/> gains 11:4 general 30:8 31:16 gentleman 9:17 gentlemen 3:1 gentrified 23:6 gerrymandered 23:6 gerrymandering 21:23 22:13 23:20 27:14 give	5:20 12:3 13:17 20:22 23:13 33:22 35:4 giving 18:24 glad 3:15 goal 12:5 God 15:5 God's 34:6 good 15:12 19:21 21:17,18 24:10 25:15 grands 34:13 grave 25:24 great 19:22 28:9 34:13 Greenville 5:3 22:16 Greenville- spartanburg 29:19 ground 30:6 group 12:25 13:1,2 grow 17:20 growing 34:12 grown 4:24,25 5:4 17:20 growth	10:16 18:17 29:16 30:23 34:5 guess 6:11 <hr/> H <hr/> habitual 22:3 hand 4:1 happen 16:23 29:6 happy 30:24 hard 33:20 hear 4:2 12:11 13:5 21:10,12,16,17 32:13 heard 5:7 10:15,21 11:22 20:12 hearing 9:19 12:16 hearings 14:12 Helen 32:22 33:23 helped 3:19 helping 3:21 Henegan 9:10,11 high 10:4 24:24 highway 18:13,14	historical 12:12 31:6 historically 26:24 history 21:23 22:3 23:13 33:10 Hoc 7:11 10:22 hold 31:9 home 4:10 16:22 29:21 hope 18:12 20:21 27:15 Hopkins 33:24 hospitality 10:5 hospitals 31:25 House 4:9 5:14 7:20,22 10:24 11:4 13:14 15:20 24:10,22,25 25:3,5 27:25 31:10 housing 19:14,15 hundred 5:13 <hr/> I <hr/> ideas 5:20 identify 12:25
--	---	---	---	--

impact 20:8 25:24	indiscernible 14:21 15:6		ladies 3:1 9:17	letting 36:4
impacted 18:9 19:11 28:9	21:24 22:1,17 23:1,18 33:1	<hr/> J <hr/>	Lady 25:13,16	Lewis 23:25
impacts 20:16	individual 7:3 20:18	job 7:14 30:25	Lancaster 5:3	life 33:6
imperative 8:8 10:14	individuals 15:6 19:2 20:4	John 23:25	large 8:15	limit 13:7
implement 6:9	industry 29:20	Jordan 3:1 8:22,25 9:6, 7,17 14:22 17:6 21:7,14,17 24:3, 9 25:13 27:19 32:17,22 34:21 35:12	largest 18:1	lines 5:11 10:18 11:20 19:3,11, 25 20:7 26:13 27:13,17 31:2 32:5 34:18
implore 26:12	influence 23:21	Judiciary 7:13,16,19 10:23 11:1 13:15 28:7,22	late 11:24 16:24	link 19:24,25
importance 4:6	information 13:5 14:7	June 25:13,16	law 11:8	list 14:4 23:11 24:6
important 4:4 6:10,11 10:18 26:15 31:5	informed 27:3	Justice 11:6,16 22:5	laws 22:14 23:9	listening 15:13 18:2 21:5
in-person 3:7 10:10 24:5	infrastructure 30:1 32:2		lead 5:5	literally 3:17 9:22
includes 22:17	input 3:11 7:6 8:3 10:13,19 12:4 20:22	<hr/> K <hr/>	leadership 27:3	litigation 11:18
including 31:2	intact 27:5 33:13	keeping 26:13 30:9 33:13 34:4	leads 5:11	live 12:17 23:1 29:22 31:3,21
income 19:14,15 24:16	integrity 27:11	key 10:19	League 25:17,22 26:1,4 27:10	lobby 34:25 35:1,2,8
incompetent 32:20	interest 13:2 24:20 27:1 30:10 32:11	kicked 3:2	learning 17:14	local 26:23 27:5
incorrect 28:25	Internet 28:18,20	kind 17:9 18:17 19:7	leaving 21:5 30:4	located 19:1 22:19
increase 29:14 32:7	interstate 18:14	King 33:23	left 31:24	locating 27:7
increased 29:6	involved 20:14		legal 31:8	locations 22:23
increases 29:23	issue 24:19	<hr/> L <hr/>	legislative 10:17	logistics 5:6
incumbency 26:14	issues 3:10 4:4 35:7	lack 30:1,2 31:25 32:1	legislator 17:14	logjam 8:10
incumbents 26:16			legislators 23:14	
			Legislature 23:4	

long 20:11	27:17 28:21 29:5 30:7,15	meeting 9:22 14:3 34:24 35:2,7,23,24 36:5	monies 18:3	nonprofit 24:15
longer 11:5,13	31:1,14,18,19 32:9,15 35:3,6	meetings 4:2 14:9,15	monitor 26:12	northerners 29:17
lot 16:1,6,15 17:15 18:11 20:10,13 29:17,20 33:2 34:2,4	making 3:17 17:9 22:6 30:6 33:19	member 4:20 13:6 15:23	morning 17:8 18:2	noted 17:19
loud 4:13	MALE 8:20	members 3:3,13 4:8 5:14, 25 6:3,24,25 7:3 10:21 12:1 15:1, 10 17:8 27:22 36:8	motion 8:22	notification 14:4
love 34:15	manifests 5:9	Midlands 5:5	move 8:20 9:18	notion 27:24
low 19:14 24:16	mannings 6:22	mind 20:18 31:19 34:4	moving 29:17	November 7:4
lower 27:25	Manufacturing 8:19	mine 30:11	municipality 30:23	nullified 22:10
luck 32:14	map 3:10 4:20 5:8,21 7:1,8,10 13:12 17:10	minor 22:7	Murphy 7:17	number 29:6 32:7
Luther 33:23	mapping 6:23	minorities 22:15 31:23	muted 21:13,14	numbers 29:14 34:12
luxury 30:4	maps 25:9,23 27:15, 16	minority 22:4,12 29:3	Myrtle 9:21	
<hr/> M <hr/>	Martin 33:23	minute 3:9 4:7 5:23 35:6	<hr/> N <hr/>	<hr/> O <hr/>
made 14:1 17:6	matter 12:14 26:3	minutes 13:19 25:20 34:22 35:4,10	NAACP 15:23	obligation 14:17 27:11
mail 13:14	maximize 13:8	missing 35:3	nature 30:13	obligations 11:14
main 33:14	Mcclain 21:9,10,13,16, 18,19 24:3 34:25 35:13,19	mixing 30:14	needing 36:2	October 7:2,7 14:2,17 16:10 35:23 36:5,9
maintain 29:7	Mcdaniel 14:23 15:5,20 17:11 21:7	Monday 7:2 10:9 36:9	negative 19:16 20:16	offer 20:24
major 18:14 22:6	means 26:16 30:9	money 18:7,11,23 23:21	negatively 19:11	officials 18:5
make 3:20 6:1,16 8:4 13:6,19,25 16:13 18:20 19:8 20:5,25 23:2 24:18	meet 27:16		Newton 9:8,9	online 28:15
			night 10:9	onset 9:20
			non- 26:19	open 7:1
			nonpartisan 26:2	operate 6:23 8:9,11

operating 8:12	parents 24:21	person 10:12 12:6	27:8	President 25:17
opportunities 10:8 13:25 20:22	part 4:7,8,14 8:15,17 12:8 17:22 28:11 29:16	23:15	poor 22:12 31:24	press 14:10
opportunity 3:5,6,7,25 4:21 5:24 8:1 10:10 12:19 14:18,19 15:7 20:8 24:11 26:10 29:5 30:2 32:13 34:16	31:8	pertains 4:15	population 23:3 29:14,23 30:5,6 31:16	pretty 33:6
opposition 26:17	partake 17:25	place 6:20 11:1 14:3 31:9	populations 5:12 30:16	previously 14:5 35:15
Orangeburg 9:24	participate 3:6,19 4:21	places 5:1 12:2 22:14 27:8	portion 9:19 10:13,19 15:21,22	primaries 26:17
order 13:8	partisan 23:20	plan 7:2,12,20 10:23, 24,25 11:3,15 12:24	position 7:9,24 11:24	primarily 28:3,4
organization 13:3 24:16 26:2	partisanship 26:14	planned 16:9	possibly 3:22	principle 12:7
organizations 15:24	parts 28:1 29:24	plans 11:12	posted 14:9	prior 11:3 21:25
originally 35:14	party 13:2 24:14 26:3, 16 27:14	Plant 18:3	posture 11:23	problem 16:4 20:4
outcome 26:16	past 8:15 33:17 34:11	played 33:15	potentially 30:5	procedure 8:2
outer 19:5	Peedee 5:5	plutonic 18:9	poverty 20:2	procedures 5:22 6:10,18,19 8:4 17:3 20:23 22:7
<hr/> P <hr/>	Pendleton 13:16	pockets 21:2	practically 5:19	process 3:19,24 4:8,22 5:9 6:5,6,13,25 7:15 10:14,19 11:25 12:5,8,10 20:21 26:7 27:23 28:8 32:4, 14
pack 19:14,15	people 16:8 17:17 18:21 19:1 23:19 26:3 27:12,13 28:9, 11,13 29:21 30:18	point 7:11,23 35:9	pre- 11:13	productive 20:2
packing 26:25	people's 20:15	points 8:1	preapproval 11:12	Program 24:15
pacs 23:21	percent 23:2 29:1 32:8	policies 5:22 6:17 8:2,4 17:3 20:22	precincts 22:18,19,21 27:5	proposed 5:21 23:9
pandemic 33:14 34:7	perfect 17:11	political 13:2 27:14	predominantly 30:18	protections 26:15
Parent 24:13	period 3:11 4:19 7:6,9	politicians 33:6	present 10:22 12:24	proud
		politics 23:22	presenting 7:13	
		polling	Presently 24:22	

<p>4:18 30:24</p> <p>proved 32:18</p> <p>public 3:11 4:3 7:6,8 9:18 10:13,19 12:18 13:2,9 14:12</p> <p>publicized 22:21</p> <p>purposefully 19:25</p> <p>push 23:18 36:2</p> <p>put 7:15 11:1,24 17:16 32:25</p> <p>putting 26:6</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Q</p> <hr/> <p>question 8:18 13:7 17:2</p> <p>questions 8:3,19 15:17 17:15</p> <p>quick 24:5</p> <p>quietly 22:23</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">R</p> <hr/> <p>random 26:25</p> <p>read 20:22</p> <p>real 24:4</p> <p>reality 29:13</p>	<p>realize 35:12</p> <p>reason 6:10 18:19 27:14</p> <p>reasons 18:16 29:25 33:14</p> <p>receive 13:5 22:4</p> <p>received 5:21</p> <p>Receives 9:16</p> <p>recommendatio n 28:7,21 30:20</p> <p>recommendatio ns 31:20 33:19</p> <p>reconvene 36:9</p> <p>recorded 12:16</p> <p>recreationally 25:8</p> <p>redistricting 11:3,7,8,12,15 12:8 15:11 21:22 23:20 25:9,25 26:8 27:9</p> <p>redistricting@ schouse.gov 13:14</p> <p>redrawing 4:16 10:17</p> <p>referenced 8:5</p> <p>reflected 23:4</p>	<p>register 23:22</p> <p>reinvent 8:16</p> <p>reiterates 26:6</p> <p>reject 27:13</p> <p>rejecting 26:14</p> <p>release 14:10</p> <p>relocation 22:21</p> <p>remain 20:1,2 26:19 27:5 30:16 34:19</p> <p>remember 30:21</p> <p>replied 35:17</p> <p>represent 4:10,14 18:24 20:17 23:14 27:25 30:18,25</p> <p>representation 17:24 29:8 30:8</p> <p>representative 8:18 9:2,3,4,5,6, 8,9,10,11,12,13, 14,15 14:22,23 15:5,19,20 17:11 19:17 20:16 21:7 25:4 27:20,21,24 32:17,21,25</p> <p>representatives 5:14 10:25 24:10,22 25:1,5, 11 26:10,18 31:11</p>	<p>represented 19:5 24:25 29:2 31:14 34:2,10, 16</p> <p>representing 24:23 31:22</p> <p>request 18:13</p> <p>required 11:11 22:4</p> <p>requirement 6:18 11:10 26:9</p> <p>requiring 22:14</p> <p>resident 21:19</p> <p>residents 22:23 23:5</p> <p>responded 28:9</p> <p>responses 35:16</p> <p>responsibility 4:14 29:4</p> <p>rest 21:6</p> <p>restore 23:25</p> <p>restrictive 23:9</p> <p>result 27:8</p> <p>resulted 11:19</p> <p>return 7:23</p> <p>rich 21:23</p> <p>Richland 15:21 24:20 28:1,3</p>	<p>rid 34:7</p> <p>rights 11:11 22:8,13 23:25 24:1</p> <p>River 18:3,9</p> <p>roadmap 7:16</p> <p>roads 32:2</p> <p>role 33:15</p> <p>roll 9:1</p> <p>room 3:10 4:20 5:22 7:1,10 17:10 35:25</p> <p>run 15:16</p> <p>rural 16:5 17:21,23, 24 18:21 28:1,3, 12,16 29:3,8 30:1,2,3,8,10, 12,15,18 31:21 32:11 33:11 34:1,10,18</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">S</p> <hr/> <p>Savannah 18:3,9</p> <p>schedule 7:12,18 8:9 16:11</p> <p>scheduled 7:7</p> <p>school 24:20,23 25:6</p>
---	--	--	---	--

schools 10:3,4 24:24 25:2	Shelby 21:25	2,20,21,25 22:1, 11,24 23:4,11, 12 24:13 27:12 29:15 30:3,19, 25 31:10 33:24	25 17:19,20 19:20,22,24 20:2,3,17 21:1, 2,24 22:20 28:12,17 29:25 30:3 31:13,23 32:3,16	26:25
scrutiny 11:17	shift 24:4			submissions 7:8
seat 23:16 31:9	short 16:24	southeast 28:2	stated 15:19	submit 13:11 15:16
Section 5:16 22:8 24:1	showing 6:20 8:11	Spartanburg 21:19 22:25	statehouse.gov 14:9	submitting 27:15
sections 22:10	sign 12:20	speak 12:20,24 13:9 15:7,15 16:20 24:11 25:19 32:24 34:23 36:2,7	statements 15:17	substantially 4:25
seek 12:7	signed 14:11 34:23 35:16,22 36:6	speaking 5:19 13:8 15:24 20:19	states 11:6,10,11 22:2 23:8,10,11,18	suffering 18:18
segment 28:2	significance 31:6		stating 18:19	sufficient 24:17
Senate 11:5 18:2	significantly 29:14	specifically 29:11	stay 32:12	Sumter 28:2
senators 23:18	Single 24:13	spoke 18:6 35:1,20	streamed 12:17	super 23:21
send 7:16	sit 7:21 36:1	spread 6:14 8:7 19:2	Street 13:16	Supreme 11:10 22:1
separated 34:2	site 13:13 14:6,7,10 18:9 22:24	staff 3:19 24:21	strong 21:1	surrounding 5:18 6:4 11:8
September 9:21	situation 6:8	stand 35:5	stronger 19:24	sustained 10:16
series 6:9	sizeable 22:15	standard 32:3	struck 11:10	<hr/> T <hr/>
serve 15:21 25:2,4,5 27:13 30:11 31:7	small 28:2	standby 12:22 21:10	student 21:20	table 4:11 31:10
served 30:16	social 12:11	started 9:20	students 24:21 25:2	taking 14:3
session 6:15 16:9	socially 25:7	starts 32:4	stuff 18:11 33:3	talk 4:6 5:23 6:1 15:1 18:3 19:22 20:11
sessions 16:7,18	software 6:23	state 3:15,18,24 4:5, 23,24 6:14 8:8 9:22,25 10:3,5, 6,13 11:2 12:2 13:17 14:12,15,	Subcommittee 23:12	talked 14:8 16:17 36:3
share 16:6,25 19:18	sort 6:7 7:15 11:22		subject 11:5	task 17:22
shared 17:19	South 10:15 13:16 19:23 20:6 21:1,		subjected	teams 12:21 21:9,16 34:25 35:14,25

technical 10:3 35:7	Thursday 9:23	turn 33:7	Upstate 29:19	ways 36:3
technicians 6:21 8:12	till 7:4	two- 30:4	USA 23:1	weakest 19:25
technology 3:20 32:20 35:18	time 5:8 6:12,21 7:9 8:7,11,20 13:8, 21 16:20 17:13 20:13 22:20 23:17 27:18 32:24 33:19 34:6,8	type 6:7	utilized 18:7	Web 13:13 14:5,6,7,9 22:24
ten 3:25 32:8 34:8	today 7:21 15:8,25 16:8,13 27:20	<hr/> U <hr/>	<hr/> V <hr/>	Wednesday 9:23
tend 26:19	told 5:8	ultimately 7:20 35:1	variant 28:25 29:6 32:7	weeks 3:14
tentative 7:12	tonight 3:12 4:22 7:17 10:7,9,11 11:21 12:1,9,25 14:3, 13,16 35:18 36:7,8	unable 29:9	versus 21:25	welcomed 10:2
tentatively 7:22	tonight's 7:5	understand 7:22 12:10,13 13:4,21 19:23 20:20,23 28:23	virtual 3:6 10:8,9,12 12:18 13:25 14:18 16:7	Wendy 27:20,24
testimony 12:3 13:12 24:4 26:5 27:19	total 22:18 23:10	Union 26:4	virtually 15:13	wheel 8:16
thing 19:10	totally 28:24	United 11:6,9 23:10,18	voices 26:4	whirlwind 3:14
things 8:13 13:24 15:18 16:3,12 17:25 18:13 19:7,16,19 20:10 23:24 28:5,10,12 30:21 31:18,19 33:2	traditionally 8:6	universities 26:24	vote 12:7 23:23 26:11	withstood 11:17
thinking 25:23	transition 4:19 21:8	University 21:21	voters 22:4,22 23:13 25:17,22 26:1,5, 6 27:6,10	Women 25:17,22 26:1,5 27:10
thinks 32:20	transparent 26:7	UNKNOWN 8:20,24 21:13	voting 11:11 22:7,8,14, 18,22 23:9,25 24:1	word 18:10
thirds 30:5	treated 34:15	unlike 11:3 34:24	voting 11:11 22:7,8,14, 18,22 23:9,25 24:1	work 20:21,23 29:22 33:2,5
thought 25:19	tremendous 10:16 30:23	unmute 21:15	<hr/> W <hr/>	worked 3:21
thoughts 5:25 8:3	true 8:16 23:13 25:1 30:17	unusual 8:14	waiting 35:14,25	working 11:15 33:5 35:19
throw 16:12		upcoming 7:15 25:10	wanted 13:23 14:14 15:5 16:3,25	world 33:12
		updated 14:6 22:23	Washington 22:6	worries 32:21
		updue 27:7		writing 15:17 17:16
		upheaval 27:7		written

12:4

Y

y'all

3:16 21:3,4,5,6

36:1

year

8:7 17:14 25:10

years

3:25 34:8

York

5:3 29:21,22