



1226 Pickens Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29201
info@garberreporting.com
Telephone: (803) 256-4500 | Fax (803) 256-1999

VIDEO TRANSCRIPTION

December 16, 2021

House Judiciary Committee

Redistricting Ad Hoc Subcommittee

REPORTER: Barbara Ham

1 STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

2 COUNTY OF RICHLAND

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HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

5

REDISTRICTING AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE

6

COLUMBIA

7

CHAIRMAN:

8

Jay Jordan

9

10 REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT:

11

Justin Bamberg

Bamberg

12

Neal Collins

Pickens

13

Pat Hennigan

Marlboro

14

Beth Bernstein

Columbia

15

Jason Elliott

Greenville

16

Weston Newton

Beaufort

17

18

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DATE: December 16, 2021

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LOCATION: Gessette Building

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1105 Pendleton Street

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Blatt Building, Room 110

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Columbia, South Carolina

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1 MR. CHAIRMAN: Let's go ahead and get it started.
2 So, good afternoon and thank you. I'll go ahead
3 and do the standard routine that I've had the
4 opportunity to do many times over the course of
5 this process. Thank you to those who are in
6 attendance today, here in the Blatt Building in
7 Columbia. Also, for those that are virtually
8 participating on our state house website. Of
9 course, I'm Jay Jordan and I have the pleasure of
10 chairing this Redistricting Ad Hoc Committee of
11 the South Carolina House of Representatives. We
12 have several of my colleagues here today, either
13 in person or virtually. To my immediate left,
14 Representative Pat Henegan from my home Seventh
15 Congressional District. Thank you. To my right,
16 Representative Beth Bernstein from right here in
17 Columbia. Participating virtually today, we have
18 Representative Weston Newton, excellent to have
19 you today, Weston. Good to see you, you look
20 like you're coming back to your old self and
21 that's a blessing to see. Also, participating
22 with us virtually, Representative Neil Collins,
23 who's not here in person for me to pick on, so
24 I'm upset about that. Representative Elliott has
25 communicated he will be here in any minute, as

1 will Representative Bamberg, who is also on the
2 way, but delayed by traffic. So, they will be
3 joining us shortly. I can tell you I have had
4 the pleasure of working with and introducing
5 these dedicated legislatures for the past several
6 months through this committee process. I can
7 tell you they've worked hard and they're a true
8 asset, to not just this committee, but to the
9 state of South Carolina. Also, thank you to the
10 folks on staff that have worked so hard
11 throughout this process and allowed us to do it
12 the right way. The purpose of today's hearing is
13 to receive testimony from the public on potential
14 map -- on the potential map for South Carolina
15 United States congressional districts. Again,
16 sincerely thank you for joining us and
17 participating in this important legislative
18 process. As everyone knows, we have had many
19 hearings that we've convened, such as this one
20 and they have truly been key to the process of
21 redistricting here in South Carolina. We took to
22 heart, your public input in the process of
23 redrawing our district lines, including most
24 recently, the federal congressional districts,
25 which was, of course, necessary to account for

1 the shifts in population that we've seen in South
2 Carolina since 2010. I'll remind you that back
3 on Monday, December 13th we posted our working
4 drafts staff plan for the federal congressional
5 districts. We previously received testimony from
6 the public with regard to the state house and
7 federal congressional districts, but, of course,
8 we believe it is important to include this
9 additional opportunity for public input into the
10 federal congressional plans for receipt of any
11 additional input and to specifically address this
12 staff working plan. In addition to our draft
13 plan the Ad Hoc Committee has received four
14 public map submissions for federal congressional
15 districts. And we are aware of the Senate's
16 draft plan developed by its staff. We are happy
17 to receive public testimony on any of these
18 proposed maps this afternoon as well. As I have
19 said with the state house districts, the working
20 draft plan is merely a starting point. I'll say
21 that again, it is a starting point. We will take
22 the public testimony we received today as well as
23 any written testimony that has been submitted
24 through the house redistricting website or by
25 mail and we will, of course, evaluate any

1 potential changes to the working plan before this
2 committee votes. As such, we plan to hold
3 another Ad Hoc Committee meeting sometime after
4 Christmas so that we can allow ample time for
5 additional comments and for the Ad Hoc Committee
6 members to consider potential amendments. Don't
7 want anybody to think we're rushing into a vote
8 today, there will be another opportunity to
9 participate in this. As you have heard me
10 previously say, this task is a difficult one.
11 However, it is an extremely important one. We
12 did not consider any comments as insignificant.
13 We believe all the input that has been offered to
14 us for consideration was of value. Our state has
15 been blessed to have grown tremendously since
16 2010, but we must address that the growth was not
17 consistent across the state and as such, we have
18 a number of smaller counties in more rural areas
19 that did, in fact, lose population. The legal
20 issues, the equal representation standard of
21 Article 1, Section 2 of the Unites States
22 Constitution requires absolute population
23 equality as the paramount objective in drawing
24 congressional lines. In order to fully comply
25 with federal law, we intend to draft a map with

1 all seven federal congressional districts in this
2 state within one person of the ideal population.
3 The ideal population for a congressional district
4 is 731,204 people. This according to the 2020
5 census data. The fundamental goal of this
6 committee and the house is a federal
7 congressional plan that assures the districts
8 provide for the equal voting rights, one person,
9 one vote. This is our constitutional mandate and
10 our guiding principal of law. We do not believe,
11 or excuse me, we do believe the working plan
12 realizes the fundamental constitutional goal of
13 equality in voting and likewise, accords with the
14 guidelines and criteria previously adopted by
15 this committee back on August the 3rd of 2021.
16 As with the prior proceedings to date, this
17 hearing is being recorded, it will be transcribed
18 and made available to the public. Several people
19 in groups have signed up to speak today and we'll
20 be accepting written testimony after the
21 conclusion of this meeting. And as I said at the
22 beginning, thank you for your interest in what we
23 all see and believe is an important process. So,
24 I'm told we have a few folks that have signed up
25 in person to speak. And then we have several

1 folks, I believe in the waiting room, to
2 participate virtually. We're going to start with
3 the folks here today. I believe first up is
4 Holly Hicks, on the front row. If you'll hit
5 that button for me to turn on the microphone.
6 Yeah, it's red you're up. You're recognized.

7 MS. HICKS: You can hear me? Okay.

8 MR. CHAIRMAN: You might want to pull that microphone
9 to you just so we pick up everything.

10 MS. HICKS: Okay.

11 MR. CHAIRMAN: Perfect.

12 MS. HICKS: Thank you. It's good to be in South
13 Carolina. It's good to be here in Columbia. I
14 hadn't been here in a while. Well, anyway, my
15 name is Holly Hicks. I live at 32 Bay Pines
16 Drive on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. And
17 I came up from Beaufort County today to voice my
18 opinion of redistricting. I would like to keep
19 District 1, the way it is. Lowcountry citizens
20 have many of the same concerns, hurricanes,
21 shorelines and preservation to mention a few. We
22 need a representative who will fully attend to
23 these issues. That is why I came here today and
24 ask that South Carolina Congressional District 1
25 remain as it is now. Thank you.

1 MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Thank you for
2 making the trip. I drove that drive recently
3 from your part of the world to Columbia and you
4 fought some traffic to get here, so thank you.
5 Next up, I see Ms. Lynn Teague on, I believe the
6 third row. Ms. Teague, you're recognized.

7 MS. TEAGUE: Okay. Thank you very much. We have met
8 like this before and this may be the last time.
9 Okay, many of my friends have laughed at the
10 quote in the newspaper from me that this is not a
11 terrible map and it is not one we can be
12 enthusiastic about, although we will say the
13 numbers are not terrible at all. But our
14 greatest concerns relate to the treatment of
15 regional communities of interest. Our own
16 congressional map proposal shows it's very
17 possible to draw a map that includes a reliable
18 opportunity district from minority voters. And
19 it also conforms to South Carolinas major region
20 and broad communities of interest. Everyone has
21 recognized that CD 1 and 6 are where the biggest
22 changes will happen because of their major
23 population imbalances. And I do feel like a
24 broken record on this because I've been saying it
25 since we released our plan in September. But we

1 really believe that, in fact, yes, the Lowcountry
2 is a coherent community of interest. And the
3 growth around Charleston in satellite cities and
4 suburbs, to us means, that is a coherent
5 community of interest in those satellite cities
6 and suburbs. North Charleston, we don't believe
7 belongs in with Columbia in a district, it
8 belongs with Charleston. As the league map
9 shows, when the congressional map is drawn in a
10 way that's consistent with that reality. CD 1 is
11 a naturally competitive district and we
12 acknowledge that CD 1 as drawn in your current
13 version is competitive, it's actually closer in
14 our version which keeps Charleston County whole,
15 as we believe it should be kept. We believe that
16 then as we know every thing is connected here,
17 the knee bones connected to the thigh bone, and
18 so things go on into the Midlands. And we
19 believe that drawing CD 6, with greater respect
20 for real communities of interest, means making it
21 a Midlands and upper lowcountry district where we
22 disagree with bringing District 5 down into
23 Richland County. That District 5 has really
24 become dominated by the Charlotte suburbs that
25 have come to occupy the northern tier of our

1 counties and it's a very different area than
2 Richland County. So, and the current house
3 proposal for CD 6 also gives the district a
4 slightly higher total minority population than
5 required to meet the Voting Rights Act
6 requirements. And altogether, by our estimates,
7 using a four-year composite average of partisan
8 statewide votes produces a gap of 36 percent in
9 CD 6 in between the parties. That's a
10 substantial, and we think unnecessary imbalance.
11 And my final thought is simply that we've noticed
12 that as the map proposals go through the multiple
13 stages of this process, they seem to have a
14 tendency to get worse. So, we would really love
15 to see this one get better. Thank you, any
16 questions?

17 MR. CHAIRMAN: I believe Representative Bernstein has
18 a question.

19 MS. BERNSTEIN: Ms. Teague, thank you for always
20 being in attendance and observing these hearings.
21 I just wanted some clarification. What did you
22 say about CD 6 right before you said about the
23 map getting worse. It was right at the end,
24 about the 36 percent --

25 MS. TEAGUE: Oh, at 36 percent?

1 MS. BERNSTEIN: Yes, what was the 36 percent?

2 MS. TEAGUE: If you use the composite 2016 through
3 2020 statewide elections partisan lean figures
4 for the precincts. In CD 6 as drawn here, it
5 gives you a very, very large partisan gap. I
6 mean, it's 36 percent according to Dave's
7 redistricting app. And we believe that's a
8 pretty big gap. It's more than, you know, we
9 believe extreme districts produce unnecessarily
10 extreme politics. So, we would like to see if
11 that couldn't be improved.

12 MS. BERNSTEIN: Okay, thank you.

13 MR. CHAIRMAN: I just have one question and bear in
14 mind I've seen a bunch of maps over the course of
15 this process. But the version that you're
16 talking about, tell me because I'm, of course,
17 from the Pee Dee region and we have a lot of
18 rural smaller counties around us. But, I think
19 there was a few counties that were split. I
20 think Marlboro might have been split. Tell me
21 the logic of splitting a county that's with a
22 population that's just not that many in number.

23 MS. TEAGUE: Yeah, we would, of course, prefer not to
24 split counties. You're talking about our map?

25 MR. CHAIRMAN: Correct. That's correct.

1 MS. TEAGUE: Yeah. We would prefer not to do that.
2 But we went through a review process, actually of
3 our own, sending the maps out to our local
4 leagues around the state. And we have quite a
5 few of those. And we had our own independent
6 review committee. And Marlboro, in particular as
7 I recall the way it was adjusted, was a product
8 of some of the comments we got then.

9 MR. CHAIRMAN: I believe Representative Henegan has a
10 question.

11 MS. HENEGAN: Thank you. And thank you for being here
12 today with us. Tell me some of those comments
13 because I need to know, because that's my area.

14 MS. TEAGUE: Yeah. I'm trying to recall there's been
15 a lot of water over, under the bridge here. I
16 don't think it was that anybody wanted Marlboro
17 split, it was that when we did the other things
18 people wanted, that was the consequence.

19 MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Thank you very much for
20 your testimony. All right. We're going to shift
21 gears to the virtual world. I believe we have
22 Cedric Blain-Spain. And then Mary Amonitti will
23 be on deck.

24 MS. BERNSTEIN: Mr. Blain-Spain, can you hear us?

25 MR. BLAIN-SPAIN: Yes, ma'am.

1 MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. You are recognized.

2 MR. BLAIN-SPAIN: Thank you.

3 MR. CHAIRMAN: In fact, if you want to turn on your
4 video, you're blinking. I'm not sure exactly
5 what that means. And then we're prepared to hear
6 from you when you're ready. Yes, sir, there we
7 go.

8 MR. BLAIN-SPAIN: My apologies.

9 MR. CHAIRMAN: No, sir.

10 MR. BLAIN-SPAIN: Greetings Mr. Chairman, Committee
11 and all this testimony concerns. Thank you for
12 the opportunity to address you, this
13 Redistricting Ad Hoc Committee. Once again, we
14 ask you to reach for all the districts of Horry
15 County and certainly around this state. There's
16 no justification even with the increased
17 population of Horry County to have 11 house
18 districts with the continual cranking and packing
19 that evil gerrymandering, you're doing more harm
20 than good to the underserved working core and the
21 least of these of Horry County. Why do you
22 continue to allow districts 55 Dillon, 57 Marion,
23 103 Georgetown to drift over into Horry County.
24 Fifty-six, 58, 104, 105 and 107 are too
25 gerrymandering. These elected officials have

1 severely under represented the constituents of
2 their districts because they feel they're in safe
3 seats. The majority have failed to accept
4 invitations to events and especially in black
5 communities unless it was funerals or something,
6 naming highways or something that they like
7 doing. You may use redistricting language and
8 legal jargon or should we say, plain ole
9 manipulating the law enough to get by. Never
10 forget, you never escape the laws of the
11 universe, the laws of Devine oneness, cause and
12 effect, retribution, let alone others that
13 applies shall be with you, your districts, your
14 circles. And you all shall never have the peace
15 as you move forward when you fail to answer and
16 heed to the repeated cause for constituents and
17 other organizations calling for fair districts
18 around the state of South Carolina and us here in
19 Horry County. Yes, the massive may not have come
20 out to speak, but we speak for the voices and the
21 least of these. If democracy, morals, integrity
22 and righteousness was natural, we wouldn't have
23 to plead this many times to ask for fair
24 districts, fair maps, contiguous lines. You know
25 these lines can be perfected. And to do the

1 right things, this redistricting year regardless
2 of party affiliation. There's a passage that
3 says, the fool have said in his heart; there is
4 no God, they're corrupt, they have done
5 abominable works. There is none that doeth good.
6 The Lord looked down from heaven upon the
7 children of men to see if there were any that did
8 understand and seek God. They are all gone
9 aside, they're altogether become filthy. There
10 is none that doeth good, no, not one. I'm
11 confident there are least two or more on this
12 committee that's committed to integrity, all
13 should be, men and women of integrity throughout
14 the entire general assembly in both chambers and
15 across this nation, this redistricting cycle. If
16 you fail to draw, redraw or revise these district
17 maps, you're ultimately saying the South Carolina
18 House of Representatives choose their voters.
19 Only put colleagues that they can control in new
20 competitive district or cancel their colleagues
21 out altogether that they don't like. I admonish
22 you that the universe is turning faster than we
23 think. You think you may enjoy the ten years or
24 up to with no primary opposition, but time and
25 chance happens to all. And it won't be gracious

1 because you're not arriving to these seats by
2 fair means. This 2021 redistricting is similar
3 to these days in the latest grab and go, flash
4 mob fest. If the South Carolina General Assembly
5 pass these maps, you'll forever be known, whether
6 in or out of office as redistricting grab and go
7 districts, district mob thieves. The NAACP fair
8 maps, South Carolina Democratic Party and other
9 groups have submitted far better maps than what
10 you're choosing to adopt. Go back and vote to
11 merge those competitive maps and adopt ones with
12 most competitive districts, whether congressional
13 or statewide Senate and House. You have this
14 decennium of an opportunity to do right, the
15 right thing by South Carolinians. On the state
16 and congressional levels, use it wisely. This is
17 an opportunity for all of us. We're on display,
18 not only, across South Carolina, but to the
19 world. I know sometime we hate opposition. We
20 hate to be in elections. We hate primaries, but
21 that's democracy. Why not and when we talk about
22 communities of interest, give the people the
23 opportunity to elect their voters. Let's have
24 better maps in South Carolina. Let's have better
25 lines. Let's have a chance to clean up South

1 Carolina. Thank you for this opportunity and I
2 ask you again, do right by South Carolina. At
3 the end of the day, we want to be able to sleep
4 at night and rest within ourselves knowing that
5 rather than to be liked by the status quo that
6 we've done all we can to please and do right by
7 the citizens of South Carolina. Thank you for
8 this time and we look to you, our elected
9 officials, to do the right thing by South
10 Carolina. Thank you again for this opportunity
11 to address you. Thank you. I know you sit in a
12 seat, it's not easy, but we ask you, I ask you
13 not by race, color, or creed, I ask you as a
14 human being to do right with these lines. I hate
15 seeing these maps, they are not right. And
16 everyone knows that they can be better. We can
17 perfect these lines and I'm asking you, you hold
18 the power to do it, let's do the right thing.
19 These 11 districts in Horry County, the continue
20 of the cranking of the black communities in Horry
21 County, why? Why continue to do and when you
22 talk about communities of [unintelligible],
23 respect us as communities of interest. Let's do
24 the right thing. Do the right thing by all of
25 South Carolina. And it's citizens ought to have

1 an opportunity to choose their elective officials
2 from competitive districts. Again, thank you and
3 I go back [unintelligible] my time. Thank you
4 again.

5 MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you Mr. Blain-Spain for your
6 testimony today. Next up, we have Mary Amonitti.
7 And then, so that you can be prepared, after that
8 we'll hear from, I believe Mr. Bill Consalvi.

9 MS. DEAN: Ms. Amonitti, can you hear us? Ms.
10 Amonitti, if you can hear us, you're muted right
11 now. If you see the thing that kinds looks like
12 a microphone on the top, if you could click on it
13 that unmute you. There you go.

14 MS. AMONITTI: Can you hear me now?

15 MS. DEAN: Yes ma'am. And if you could mute the
16 Scstatehouse.gov feed that you were watching us
17 on earlier and just, there you go. Thank you
18 very much.

19 MS. AMONITTI: Okay, am I in the right spot? Am I in
20 the right space?

21 MR. CHAIRMAN: You are, there's also a video camera
22 feature, if you could press that button, then we
23 could see you.

24 MS. DEAN: Ms. Amonitti, if you can hear us, you are
25 muted right now.

1 MS. AMONITTI: The camera is on guys.

2 MS. DEAN: It kind of looks like a microphone on the
3 top. If you will click on it that will unmute
4 you. There you go.

5 MS. AMONITTI: Okay.

6 MS. DEAN: If you could mute the Scstatehouse.gov feed
7 that you were watching us on earlier.

8 MS. AMONITTI: Yeah.

9 MR. CHAIRMAN: I think you just muted yourself.
10 There's a, well I'll let Ms. Dean tell you the
11 appropriate procedure.

12 MS. DEAN: So, you're hearing us twice because
13 there's a bit of a delay. So, you're hearing
14 what we're saying now and then a little bit
15 latter you're hearing it again on the
16 Scstatehouse.gov feed. So, if you can click off
17 that Scstatehouse.gov feed and just stay on
18 Microsoft teams.

19 MS. AMONITTI: Okay. I'm on this --

20 MS. DEAN: Okay. Probably the best thing to do is,
21 just whenever you feel comfortable talking, just
22 start talking. It might, you might, suddenly
23 hear us again and just ignore it. Because that's
24 just the loop.

25 MS. AMONITTI: Okay. So I can start now?

1 MS. DEAN: Yes, ma'am. You're hearing us twice
2 because there's a bit of delay. So you're
3 hearing what we were saying now and then a little
4 bit later you're hearing it again on the
5 Scstatehouse.gov feed. So, if you can click off
6 that Scstatehouse.gov feed and stay on Microsoft
7 Teams.

8 MS. AMONITTI: Okay. I'm on it.

9 MS. DEAN: Okay.

10 MS. AMONITTI: Are we ready?

11 MS. DEAN: Probably the best thing to do is start
12 talking, you might hear us again and just
13 ignore it because that's just the loop. So, you
14 can start now.

15 MS. AMONITTI: My name is Mary --

16 MR. CHAIRMAN: Ms. Amonitti, unfortunately I don't
17 think we're going to be able to understand what
18 you're trying to communicate with us unless you
19 can turn off that statehouse feed. We certainly
20 very much want to hear what you have to say.

21 MS. AMONITTI: I did.

22 MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Perfect. And now, I think
23 we're on the same page. So, go ahead and talk to
24 us.

25 MS. AMONITTI: My name is Mary Amonitti I'm a realtor

1 on Hilton Head Island in South Carolina. And I
2 was born and raised in South Carolina, West
3 Chester in Greenwood County and I lived most of
4 my adult life in Pennsylvania and I moved back
5 here and have been back in South Carolina for 21
6 years. And I've lived under a lot of
7 speculations where people think that what is fair
8 and unfair. Just to be up front, I believe that
9 we're all Gods children, we're all equal and that
10 is how I live my life. I do unto others as I
11 would have them do unto me. And I feel that
12 Beaufort County should remain in Congressional
13 District 1, as we are very similar to Charleston
14 and we share the same ideas and how our two
15 counties cooperate with each other. Sometimes we
16 don't, but we are a coastal county, the same as
17 Charleston. We share in the storms. We share in
18 these beautiful waterways that we have here in
19 the Lowcountry. And that's why it's called
20 Lowcountry because we have a lot of water. And
21 there are similarities as to what our needs are
22 and our congress person should be the one that
23 will serve both of us, as we have many storms
24 that threaten our coastal area. We have our
25 military forces here and we are a resort

1 community, family community and we are growing so
2 fast that it makes your head spin. I just feel
3 that we will be better off if Beaufort County
4 remains in Congressional District 1 because of
5 the similarities that we share and the
6 constituents services that are required and are
7 requested from our congress people here. I thank
8 you very much for this opportunity to be here
9 today. And as I said, I hope that we can come to
10 a conclusion that one day that we can all vote on
11 our character, not the color of our skin. I
12 think we put too much emphasis and we spend too
13 much time speaking about race and not speaking
14 about us being people of God and God created us
15 all equal. I thank you and I hope you all have a
16 blessed day. Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah and
17 Happy Holidays.

18 MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you Ms. Amonitti to you as well.
19 Thank you for your participation. Next, we're
20 going to try and get Mr. Bill Consalvi on the
21 line. And on deck would be Lynz Piper-Loomis.

22 MS. DEAN: Mr. Consalvi, can you hear us? It looks
23 like you're muted, sir.

24 MR. CONSALVI: Yeah, can you hear me?

25 MS. DEAN: Yes, sir.

1 MR. CONSALVI: Okay. Are you ready, I'm sorry. I
2 thought somebody else's name came up.

3 MR. CHAIRMAN: No, we're ready. You're -- go ahead.

4 MR. CONSALVI: I have an objection or a concern about
5 moving Beaufort County out of CD 1 and combining
6 it within the inlet district. I'm not sure what
7 this move will accomplish. The move should meet
8 the requirements, I guess has to meet the
9 requirements of redistricting guidelines,
10 including equal population. The 2020 census
11 showed that there was only two districts that did
12 not meet the population guidelines, CD 1 and CD
13 6. But it appears there was a lot of
14 restructuring and a lot of movement going on in
15 the districts and I'm not sure what the
16 controlling criteria was. There was another
17 guideline that says minimizing division of voting
18 precincts, neighborhoods and restructuring
19 districts and communities of interest, I'm sorry,
20 provision of voting precincts and neighborhoods
21 and community district and communities of
22 interest. And a community of interest to me
23 would be the lowlands. The Lowcountry should be
24 considered as one community and should have a
25 common representation. Beaufort County is a

1 coastal community and should be considered in CD
2 1, along with the other coastal towns. Coastal
3 communities represent a true community of
4 interest and need appropriate concentrated
5 representation in congress, and federal
6 government regulates most of our lives on the
7 ocean. Flooding, hurricanes, insurance, ecology
8 and other coastal issues are specific to the
9 coastal community. Also, there's a concern with
10 the culture and historically facts that if they
11 moved this out into another district. You know,
12 we need to consider the Gullah history and their
13 architectural, their culture and their needs to
14 be preserved. SC Legislation needs to keep
15 Beaufort County in CD 1. Thank you.

16 MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you sir for your testimony.
17 Next, we're going to stay virtual and I believe
18 we have, Linz Piper-Loomis. All right. We lost
19 Piper-Loomis, so we're going to go to Keith
20 Blandford in the meantime. And when Piper-Loomis
21 comes back, we'll double back. Mr. Blandford,
22 can you hear and see us?

23 MR. BLANDFORD: I can hear you.

24 MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. We can hear and see you. So,
25 we're ready to hear from you.

1 MR. BLANDFORD: You know, I just got through the
2 plague. How do I turn this thing off? And you
3 can tell I didn't have regular December drill
4 because I got here plus [unintelligible]. All
5 right. So, I wanted to reach in. My name is
6 Keith Blandford. I'm on Sullivan's Island, been
7 here for 21 years. And just wanted to state my
8 concerns and objections to specifically CD 1, not
9 any of the other redistricting. And I come from
10 the United States Navy, now in the Guard. And
11 one of the things that I see, the people are,
12 including myself are seeing a consistency in the
13 map along the coast because of common interests
14 in port security. One of the things that we deal
15 with here, specific to the coast, along the whole
16 coast, is a different set of priorities for
17 security. We also, you know, with the military
18 component and you're dealing with United States
19 Coast Guard and the United States Navy and the
20 Marine Corps and those values when you're dealing
21 with federal, you know, we're mostly working with
22 the federal government, in terms of common
23 defense, bigger topics, and those are, that when
24 you move inland, you know, you're working more
25 with United States Air Force, United States Army.

1 So, the funding and the, you know, who gets what
2 becomes more of a problem because these people
3 have an emphasis on coastal security. These
4 people have an emphasis on the Army. And so,
5 when we have this, and it's not uncommon for
6 counties to be broken up over separate districts.
7 And when we have this consistency, we have a
8 consistency of purpose when it comes to providing
9 for the common defense. I like that about it.
10 Secondly, with the existing as opposed to the new
11 one, I'm actually an Environmental Scientist with
12 a minor in Chemistry and Biology. I served as an
13 Environmental Enforcement Officer with the City
14 of Norfolk and I have worked with the Nature
15 Conservancy, specially with longleaf pine
16 systems, longleaf pine forest systems. So, we,
17 you know, we in South Carolina value land
18 stewardship or at least I know I do. And there's
19 very different messaging for the environmental
20 policy or environmental goals along the coast as
21 you would inland. So, as, you know, we were
22 working together in the existing Coastal District
23 1. You know, we're dealing primarily with things
24 like, salt grass, marsh, you know, we're at
25 different category with the Corps of Engineers,

1 as far as wetlands go. And as you move inland,
2 those priorities change. It has been my
3 experience that as you move inland and you're
4 dealing more with the forest system and then
5 agricultural, the value of the wetland is not
6 there. They don't understand, they think about
7 it's an invasion of property rights. And you
8 really get into people getting mad with each
9 other because they have different priorities when
10 it comes to land stewardship than we do along the
11 coast, which is understandable. So, the way that
12 we've set it up now, we all agree. I live right,
13 there's the ocean, you're right there. So, we
14 have common ideas on what we believe we need here
15 for land stewardship and we break it up, you
16 know, the concern is that you'll come across, and
17 you'll go down the county and this one's tied to
18 a bigger inland district. And they'll have a
19 whole different perspective when it comes to land
20 stewardship, than we would here in Charleston
21 County. And as you go down to Beaufort and
22 they're more tied to the inland so they're
23 talking about things that are not the same. So,
24 one of the things that I really like is I believe
25 we had Myrtle Beach before, you know, and the way

1 that this is set out is people really settled
2 into this when I think, this particular map.
3 Let's just get out of the political thing, just
4 regular folks. People liked this one because
5 they felt like we were all talking about the same
6 thing. And one of the things that I like about
7 the current map is that it brings a sense of
8 unity and solidarity, something that we really
9 need right now, everybody's so divided. And when
10 you can create, you know, different military
11 purposes. You create different views on land
12 stewardship within the district then you're
13 creating another thing that we can argue about.
14 So, right now I think the priority should be,
15 what do we have in common, not what do we have
16 apart. So, that's why I'm in favor of the
17 Senate, you know, I do not like the new district
18 map again. I'm speaking to any other maps and I
19 would like to -- I do not want this map to be
20 considered. So, Mr. Chairman, thank you so much
21 for your time. The technology can be really
22 confusing. I've got to get many computers up, so
23 I hope that I did it right.

24 MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, sir. Thank you for your
25 comments, you came through technology-wise, just

1 fine.

2 MR. BLANDFORD: If you've got any questions that I
3 talked on, I'm happy to answer.

4 MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't see any at this moment, but
5 again, thank you for your comments and your
6 testimony here today.

7 MR. BLANDFORD: Thank you, sir.

8 MR. CHAIRMAN: Next, I think we have Lynz Piper-
9 Loomis back. So with that.

10 MS. LYNZ PIPER-LOOMIS: I am here, can you hear me
11 okay?

12 MR. CHAIRMAN: We can hear and see you.

13 MS. LYNZ PIPER-LOOMIS: Awesome. So, I am actually
14 in support of keeping Beaufort in District 1.
15 And I want to appeal, actually to a different
16 portion of this, than what I think has been
17 mentioned. I want you to remember that we are a
18 republic, not a democracy. I also want to remind
19 you of a, Doctrine of the Lesser Magistrates.
20 And I'm actually going to quote Matthew
21 Trewhella. He said when tyranny presents itself
22 almost never do all the left stand and resist.
23 Whether the oppression and tyranny comes from the
24 higher magistrate or from other lesser
25 magistrates. Even when some lesser magistrates

1 take a stand, usually the majority will go along
2 with the tyranny. This is how things always go
3 when good becomes evil and evil becomes good in a
4 nation. Most go along to get along. That's what
5 sustained Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia.
6 The peoples hope is that the lesser magistrates
7 everywhere will understand their God given right
8 and duty to interpose. Stand in the gap when
9 oppression and tyranny raises its ugly head. The
10 people must then rally around those lesser
11 magistrates who actually do stand. So, I just
12 want to remind you as the lesser magistrates, the
13 doctrine of the lesser magistrates, to keep this
14 state in unity as Mr. Blandford has so eloquently
15 stated and for us to continue forward. What is
16 being proposed would bring more division and
17 would create and wreak havoc on our district here
18 in CD 1. Thank you so much.

19 MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your testimony today.
20 Bear with us for just a second on the technology
21 side. As usual I am the weak link in this
22 process, technology-wise. I do have a plan for
23 that in our next meeting. I'm thinking about
24 bringing my ten year old to help me. So, I will
25 get better. Also, while we're at pause for a

1 moment I want to recognize that Representative
2 Elliott joined us. No, certainly quite some time
3 ago, actually. And Representative Bamberg also
4 joined us a good ways back. Thank you gentlemen
5 for fighting the traffic to get here today. All
6 right. I believe we're ready to admit our next
7 presenter and that would be, I believe we have
8 Tyler Jones, on behalf of Congressman Joe
9 Cunningham, I believe. Nope, we actually have
10 the congressman.

11 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair.

12 MR. CHAIRMAN: Good afternoon, congressman. You are,
13 thank you for attending today. And you're
14 recognized.

15 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Can you hear me okay?

16 MR. CHAIRMAN: We can hear you and see you.

17 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Okay. I'm getting a little bit of
18 feedback. Yeah, I'm muted on this one. All
19 right. Well, I want to -- first of all, thank
20 you. I'm Joe Cunningham. I'm an attorney, I
21 live in Charleston and from 2019 to 2021, I had
22 the great honor, esteemed pleasure of
23 representing South Carolina's First District in
24 the United States Congress. I'm here today to
25 testify about your proposed congressional map and

1 particularly, how it affects the district that I
2 represent and the one where I live. Two and a
3 half weeks ago, I testified in front of the
4 Senate Redistricting Subcommittee in strong
5 opposition to their proposed map. It makes
6 unexplainable changes to Charleston County that
7 can only be described as blatant gerrymandering
8 in hopes of protecting one party by intentionally
9 making it less competitive. It cuts out entire
10 sections of Charleston County, which have always
11 been the anchor of this district. And it packs
12 black voters into the 6th district. It puts
13 College of Charleston and the University of South
14 Carolina, two schools separated by over a 100
15 miles in the same district. It put West Ashley
16 where I am currently and the State House where
17 you are currently in the same congressional
18 district. And, you know, despite our rich
19 diversity it gives the first district the lowest
20 black population of any district in the state.
21 And it did not include even one entire county but
22 six parts of six counties. And with surgical
23 precision, it carved out, you know, black voters
24 and crammed them into the 6th district. While
25 doing everything possible to keep white

1 Republican voters in the 1st. And, you know,
2 later on in that hearing we learned, you know,
3 that the maps or the map was indeed written by a
4 partisan act in Washington, DC. And that the
5 members of that subcommittee had no input and
6 were not made aware of the map until it was
7 released to the public right before Thanksgiving
8 break. Not only was it a bad map, but the
9 process reeked of corruption and cover up. And
10 my message to the Senate Subcommittee was to
11 throw it out and start over. And, you know,
12 since my testimony, I've heard from countless
13 former constituents who are livid at the prospect
14 of being used as a pawn in someone else's
15 political game and they're adamantly opposed to
16 being moved out of the Charleston-based district
17 and into a Columbia-based seat. Now, I know we
18 aren't here to talk about the Senate map, but I
19 suspect we are here today because everyone now
20 acknowledges that that map is unworkable, it's
21 unserious, it's unrealistic and would undoubtedly
22 lead to a successful lawsuit. And then result in
23 a Judge redrawing South Carolinas district
24 instead of this legislative body. The map that
25 you released on Monday evening, in comparison to

1 the Senate map is an improvement. The House map
2 is more compact and rightly expands its footprint
3 in Charleston County. Unlike the Senate map, it
4 keeps communities like West Ashley, John's Island
5 and the downtown peninsula in the same district.
6 And those are all good things that any fair and
7 reasonable congressional map should do. But
8 despite the improvement over the Senate map, you
9 know, which wasn't exactly a high bar, the House
10 map still falls significantly short. And, you
11 know, if I come here today with just one question
12 for this committee it's this, what does the
13 legislature not like about North Charleston?
14 There's something downright bizarre about the
15 legislatures obsession with making sure that
16 North Charleston is separated from the rest of
17 Charleston County and put into another district.
18 You know, everyday I wake up in West Ashley and I
19 drive to my office in North Charleston. It's ten
20 minutes, max. Yet in doing so, I go from one
21 congressional district to another. Anyone who
22 sits on I-26 in the mornings and afternoons in
23 Charleston understands that countless people, who
24 live in Charleston, work in North Charleston.
25 And countless people who live in North Charleston

1 work in Charleston. They're part of the same
2 community and they deserve to be in the same
3 congressional district. Now, why in the world
4 can anyone justify splitting Charleston County
5 into two districts? Let's face it, we all know
6 why. It's because North Charleston is majority
7 African American. And the goal clearly is to
8 pack as many black voters into one enormous black
9 district, so that all the other districts around
10 it are lily white. I mean, that strategy has
11 divided Charleston County into two districts, one
12 for white residents and one for black residents.
13 And not only is it wrong, but courts have said
14 it's illegal. This map goes to great lengths to
15 carve out one section of Charleston County and
16 then scrambles to make up for it by including
17 parts of other surrounding counties. And your
18 map is Colleton County. And the Senate map is
19 Colleton, Beaufort and now Jasper. Members
20 they're a -- there's an incredibly easy solution
21 to all of this, keep Charleston together, keep
22 Charleston whole. It's very simple, if you did
23 that, you wouldn't have to go find that extra
24 population in Colleton or Beaufort or Jasper or
25 any other county. In fact, it would solve all of

1 your problems. I'd also say that, the same thing
2 about Richland County. I mean, there's no reason
3 whatsoever that the 5th congressional district
4 should extend all the way into Richland County.
5 After all, what is western Cherokee County have
6 in common with Forest Acres in Richland County,
7 nothing, absolutely nothing. If you kept, you
8 know, if you simply kept Richland whole, it would
9 solve all your problems. Are you seeing a
10 pattern develop here? Now, I get it, it's
11 politics. You have incumbent members of congress
12 in your ear, telling you what they need and make
13 themselves safe. You've got national partisan
14 organizations in DC telling you what the team
15 needs, but you don't work for them. You work for
16 the people of South Carolina. And I'm not here
17 asking you to draw a democratic district. I'm
18 simply asking you to draw a map that keeps
19 communities together. Draw a map that keeps
20 counties whole where possible. It's going to
21 make your jobs easier, it will make our democracy
22 stronger and it will especially help tamp down
23 the extremism in the hyper partisanship that
24 currently exists in Washington DC. I mean, I can
25 tell you firsthand, how partisan gerrymandering

1 has turned congress into a place where people
2 like Marjorie Taylor Greene and Lauren Boebert
3 have seats for life. And, you know, where people
4 who dare to buck their own party and do what's
5 best for the people, get thrown out before they
6 finish even decorating their office. And you all
7 have been given incredible responsibility,
8 incredible responsibility here, either to make
9 things better or to make things worse. So,
10 reward extremism or to extinguish it. You know,
11 I ask that you simply do what you know in your
12 heart is right. Put people over politics. And
13 put country over party. And I do appreciate your
14 time and I appreciate your service. And I thank
15 you for taking this process seriously. And I'm
16 always open to learning, you know. I believe
17 that God gave us twice as many ears as he did
18 mouths for a reason. I think that was to listen
19 twice as much as we do speak. You know, so, in
20 light of that, you know, North Charleston has
21 been carved out of the 1st Congressional District
22 in the existing map, in the Senate map and now
23 the House map. So, I would pose this question to
24 this committee. I'm open to learning, if there
25 is any other reason, other than to divide people

1 based upon race that North Charleston has been
2 carved out of this map, I would really appreciate
3 hearing the answer to that today. And I yield
4 back.

5 MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for making time
6 and for your testimony, much appreciated. All
7 right, ladies and gentlemen, so we've had a few
8 folks that have signed up to participate
9 virtually that for whatever reason could not
10 attend today. Certainly thank you to our in-
11 person audience as well that has taken time to
12 come and testify. Let me go back, just for a
13 second and give you kind of the intention of the
14 committee, I guess we would say. We've produced
15 a starting point, a working draft plan. We've
16 taken testimony today. We will continue to
17 receive submissions and input over the next
18 couple of weeks, I guess. We'll schedule another
19 committee meeting in the not too distance future,
20 give us a little latitude. We're working around,
21 of course, the time of the season, the holiday
22 season. Once we get that solidified, then we'll
23 get the word out that we're going to meet so that
24 we can have participation again as well. And
25 we'll go from there. Thank you to the members of

1 the committee. As I've said many times, it's
2 been a pleasure and privilege to work with you
3 all. I wish you all a very happy holiday season
4 and I look forward -- my boss is cutting me off,
5 hang on one second. All right. And again, we
6 will reconvene in the very near term to once
7 again hear some additional input. Thank you all
8 so much. This meeting's adjourned.

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STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
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COUNTY OF LEXINGTON)

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In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 4th day of February, 2022.



Barbara S. Ham
Notary Public for South Carolina
My Commission Expires: 04/13/2026

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