

STATEMENT AT PUBLIC HEARING ON REDISTRICTING

Tampa, Florida

August 27, 2001

By Mr. Nicholas Morana

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, welcome to Tampa. My name is Nicholas Morana, I've lived in Hernando County for 20 years part of the 5th Congressional District, and I have made the trip here today to talk to you about the importance of maintaining the 5th Congressional District as it is currently configured.

The counties of Hernando and Pasco have been part of the 5th District for 20 years, and they have been ably represented for nearly 2 decades by Karen Thurman - first when she was in the State Senate and now in Congress. A strong community of interest exists between Pasco, Hernando, Citrus and Levy counties - we are all on the Coast, and we are all part of one community. You should not divide us or pull us apart simply to achieve a partisan political objective. In addition, this region - and in particular, the 5th Congressional District - is home to one of the largest communities of military retirees across the country.

I represent the local chapters of the Retired Officers Association, the Reserve Officers Association and the National Association of Retired Federal Employees. Karen Thurman handles hundreds of cases each year for our members. She has an outstanding record for helping our veterans and former federal and postal service employees.

Our nation's veterans have always tried to live up to the ideals of sacrifice and service. And that is why we cherish those community leaders who have honored our sacrifice and our service. Congresswoman Karen Thurman is one such leader. She knows her constituents and they in turn know that they can depend on her when important decisions are to be made in the Congress. For example: she initiated a measure that was signed into law last year to make a prescription-drug benefit available to Medicare-eligible military retirees.

That is the type of leadership that the people of Hernando County have come to rely upon. If you chop us up, or separate us from our elected representative, you will be doing us a tremendous disservice.

This is a plea to save our District so that we can retain Karen Thurman as our Representative.

These issues are enormously important to the people of our Congressional District. I ask that you not divide the community of interest that has benefited greatly from the current configuration of the district.

*Nicholas Morana*  
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The gentleman you requested  
addtl information, his contact info is on page 2

Richard Braun, Speaker #4  
Pharmerical/PMSI

Statement at Public Hearing on Redistricting, August 27, 2001, Tampa, FL.

Statement on redistricting of 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District

- Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, Good morning.
- I am Richard Braun. I am a long time resident of Hernando County, Spring Hill, Florida, part of the 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District.
- I hope the reapportionment process will be guided by our President, George Bush's message of bi-partisanship. We all know that one party controls the legislature and the governor's office, but in keeping with the President's message, the people of Florida do not want this process to be a hidden partisan exercise.
- This hearing is part of a process meant to be about citizen participation in the political system, but I submit that the process has not been living up to this ideal.
- Ten years ago when I was on the AARP State Legislative Committee there were 32 statewide hearings. This year we have only 2/3rd as many; despite the fact the State has had a huge population increase.
- The hearings are at times when most Floridians are at work and can't participate. Last week's hearing in Daytona Beach was at 10AM on a Tuesday. This hearing is a 9:30, followed by one at 5:00 in Clearwater.
- There is not one single hearing scheduled in my 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, made up of 7 Counties. Why make it so difficult for the people of the 5<sup>th</sup> District to participate in the process? It took me over two hours to get here.
- And I am here bereft the essential information. The State did not release the redistricting software until the day of the first hearing. And last month it was learned that the software does not work and it might crash one's computer.

Questions



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**Statement on the 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District.**

- We have no access to maps comparing the present and proposed districts. How is the public supposed to participate in the process if we do not have access to the data and the maps that drive this process?
- If you are serious about wanting the public's input, hearings need to be held after a proposed plan is on the table and made public. Citizens cannot be expected to comment on something they have not seen and a plan that does not exist.

**And so I ask you: If maps and plans been developed, may we the public be allowed to see them?**

- If this Committee is serious about citizen input, in keeping with our President's theme of bi-partisanship, it will hold hearings AFTER the Majority's proposed redistricting plan is introduced.
- Please do not cut people out of this process. You are custodians of the public trust. I pray that you will not abuse that trust.
- Thank you for your time and attention.

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**TESTIMONY BEFORE 2002 REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE  
TUESDAY, AUGUST 21, 2001  
DAYTONA BEACH COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

Good morning. I am Ann Smith; I live in Ormond Beach; I am speaking to you on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Volusia County. As you all know, the league is a non-partisan, grass roots organization that works very hard to educate the public about good government. Our position is very clear and concise:

- Districts should be compact
- They should be composed of contiguous territory
- They should respect county and municipal boundaries as much as possible

Ten years ago, Volusia County's districts were more compact. Presently three Congressional representatives who have portions of Volusia also have large portions of other districts to represent. This dilutes any individual's ability to truly espouse the needs and wishes of a district well. Florida is a very diverse state, so the more compact the districts within the state the easier it will be for an individual to represent his/her constituency fairly.

I have just completed the task of serving as the League representative on our local redistricting committee. We made every effort to give the people of Volusia County as much information as we possible could through our website. I noticed on your website that you said you would be posting testimony from your hearings following the hearing dates, but I could not find any testimony from either Tallahassee or Jacksonville. It is imperative that this process be as open as you can make it, and one way to do that is to post all testimony on the website so that those who cannot make these hearings can read the input this committee is getting. This must be an open process that allows all citizens every opportunity to have input and keep abreast of the process and what is taking place. We encourage you to have full disclosure of the redistricting process available to the public at all times.

THIS INCLUDED  
SAMPLE MAPS  
DISTRICT AS  
AS WELL AS  
TESTIMONY -

I strongly encourage this body to put aside political affiliations and scientifically draw the new district lines based on total numbers, not party registration, or voting pattern nor incumbent advantage. I believe that you are duty-bound as representatives of the people to continue to affect the healing process of fair representative government by not allowing partisanship to enter into this debate and decision in any measure. We have been through a trying time in the state of Florida this past year, and you, the members of the 2002 Redistricting Committee, can help bring back to the people the trust in government that is so desperately needed.

You must show the people of the state of Florida that you will draw lines that do not intentionally favor <sup>OR DISFAVOR</sup> any group, race, or religion. And even though this may not sit well with some, it is the only fair and just way.

I am sure that you have heard much of what I have said before and hopefully you will hear it again and again. As a retired educator of 33 years in the Volusia County public school system, I learned that repetition of subject matter was one of the most successful methods of teaching. Fairness, openness, and a willingness to not only listen to us, your public, but to act favorably on what you hear will help to restore our trust in our electoral process and strengthen representative government. What a refreshing idea!! Thank you for your time and consideration.

*Ann H. Smith*  
*President, LWVFC*

Good morning. Please allow me to introduce myself, my name is Kevin Tribout and I am a resident of the North Brandon area along Interstate 4. My employer is based here in Tampa and I, like thousands of others, spend the majority of my drive time traversing along Interstate 4 between my office and my home. Doing so I cannot help but notice the vast numbers of people, including many of my co-workers, that live along this area, who travel each morning and return again each night to their homes, some even as far as Orlando. There are even those I know who do the reverse, that is live in Tampa and work in Orlando or somewhere in between. We all live and work in this well-known political region called the "I-4 Corridor". I am sure that most of you are keenly aware of this region because it tends to be a bell-weather of how the state votes as a whole.

A recent article, which I am submitting for the record, entitled, "I-4 will give birth to a megalopolis" recently ran in the Orlando Sentinel, predicting that eventually Tampa and Orlando will collide at a point somewhere in between and another megalopolis will be born, similar to that found on Florida's southeast coast as the cities of Miami, Ft. Lauderdale, and West Palm Beach, have melded together. In fact U.S. census figures confirm, the growth has already begun. In the past decade alone the seven counties along the I-4 corridor added over 700,000 residents, and in the last 10 years more than 2,700 new high-tech companies have set up shop along the I-4 corridor, and these industries now employ roughly 100,000 people.

As this growth has happened socially, demographically and commercially, so too has this happened politically, with much of the Southeast Florida region interconnected by districts at all levels-----state house, state senate and congressionally. The time may or may not be now for this region to come together politically but it is not a mere coincidence that the first leg of Florida's proposed bullet train would connect Tampa and Orlando, a corridor, which is severely overcrowded. My company like many relies on the I-4 corridor as a transportation hub for our business and thousands of workers rely on it as a transportation lifeline between their home and work.

The future of the Tampa/Orlando area and all communities along the I-4 corridor will rely on many factors. Securing Federal funds for the construction of the bullet train, cooperation between state, local and federal governments to speed up the widening of I-4 to address growing traffic congestion problems, maintain the I-4 corridor as a transportation and business hub, but most importantly the continued pursuit of high-tech businesses and high-tech job growth along the I-4 corridor.

I believe that these factors and the continued positive growth for the area will rely heavily on knowledgeable strong regional leadership that can only come from regional representation. The future of the people, the communities, business, and the environment along the I-4 corridor will best be served by regional representation, at the Congressional, State Senate, and State House level. As these areas continue to grow the need for regionally knowledgeable leadership will grow with it. Our future will depend on our ability to be represented as a strong active region that works together at the Congressional and State level to address the needs of the I-4 corridor. Also with the addition of 2 new congressional seats to Florida, it is my belief that the I-4 corridor should be represented as a region by being awarded one of the two new districts. I strongly urge the committee to recognize that the I-4 corridor is a unique and important region, and to recognize our need for regional representation in Washington and in Tallahassee.

Thank you for your time.

## I-4 WILL GIVE BIRTH TO MEGALOPOLIS

*Orlando Sentinel*; Orlando, Fla.; Apr 16, 2001; Kate Santich of The Sentinel Staff;

### Abstract:

*PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: Bright lights, 1 big city This nighttime satellite image of Florida highlights the Interstate 4 corridor with a band of bright lights spanning the middle of the state. Central Florida's Polk County is positioned in the middle of the band. SHINIKO R.FLOYD/ORLANDO SENTINEL MAP: Orlando, Polk City, Tampa SHINIKO R.FLOYD/ORLANDO SENTINEL PHOTO 3: Fort Meade. Waitress [Amber Crowley] (above), knows customers' orders by heart at Carol's Townhouse Restaurant. In Fort Meade's last surviving old-fashioned barbershop, Clairene [McGuire] clips Jimmy Grimes' hair. Through it all, Leta Wright (below) keeps an eye on the past at the Fort Meade Historical Museum. PHOTOS BY JULIE FLETCHER/ORLANDO SENTINEL*

### Full Text:

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~~#124~~  
MR Tribal  
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Call it "Tamplando." Or maybe "Orlampa."

Either way, that vast stretch of land between Orlando and Tampa is like a buffet table flanked by two sumo wrestlers who skipped breakfast.

Eventually, planners say, these giants will gobble up whatever is closest and collide somewhere in the middle.

In fact, U.S. census figures confirm, the feasting already has started. In the past decade, the seven counties considered the interior of the Interstate 4 corridor added 700,000 residents -- much to the delight of pro-growth and business types in Polk County, that thick slab of prime real estate smack-dab in the middle.

"We like to say that Copernicus and Galileo were wrong. Polk County is the center of the universe," says Jim DeGennaro, the highly enthusiastic senior vice president of the Central Florida Development Council, based in -- you guessed it -- Polk County. "Within a 100-mile radius of us reside 7 million people. No other point in the Southeast can say that -- not even Atlanta."

That fact isn't lost on corporate distribution centers, warehouse owners and high-tech companies looking for cheap land not too far from the demand of big cities. At almost every major exchange along I-4, there is a massive industrial park, commerce center or subdivision springing up.

"Land costs are lower, housing costs are lower, impact fees and taxes are lower, labor costs are lower and unemployment is higher," says Steven Scruggs, executive director of the Lakeland Economic Development Council, explaining the lure of the once-sleepy burg. "There's also a pro-growth government and a good infrastructure here. You're not going to go anywhere in Lakeland and sit through two red lights -- and you certainly can't say that in Orlando."

Lakeland is growing by nearly 4,000 people a year. And although it has yet to snare a Starbucks -- that icon of upscale development -- the downtown has witnessed a boom in cafes, restaurants, hotels and high-tech workers.

Elsewhere, too, the city is seeing a wave of expansion. GEICO Insurance is adding 1,000 workers.

Publix will break ground on a new headquarters in May. And Rooms To Go just finished a 1.5 million-square-foot distribution center.

## SPRAWL MARCHES ON

Should you doubt the march of the megalopolis, just talk to Randy Berridge, president of the Florida High Tech Corridor Council, an alliance of the University of Central Florida, the University of South Florida and the high-tech industry in between. Berridge likes to point to a NASA satellite photo of the Florida by night -- a striking image showing a wide, diamond-studded belt of lights across the state's midsection.

"You see all the development and traffic along the central [I-4] corridor," he says.

In the last 10 years alone, 2,700 new high-tech companies have set up shop along the I-4 corridor, and the industry now employs roughly 100,000 people.

"Inevitably, it will be one large community between Tampa, Orlando and the Space Coast," Berridge says.

On that point, most government planners and even environmentalists agree.

But how long the "inevitable" will take isn't clear. South Florida required several decades to sprawl the 70 or so miles from Miami up to West Palm Beach. Orlando and Tampa have 84 miles to cover, and the stretch is punctuated by a couple of tracts of particularly fragile land, including the vast Green Swamp, likely to spawn battles between developers and conservationists.

"The danger is that development in the state of Florida is going to metastasize like one big tumor," says Charles Lee, senior vice president of Audubon of Florida. "But we're trying to introduce a little chemotherapy."

Audubon pushed for a bill, now in committee in the state Legislature, called the Rural and Family Lands Protection Act -- an annual \$100 million fund to buy development rights for family farms and pasture land. If passed, it would help keep orange groves from being turned into strip malls.

## THE PEOPLE COME LATER

For now, the growth is more warehouses than town houses. But no one expects it to stay that way for long.

What will happen -- what already is happening on the outskirts of the big cities -- is simple: People looking for affordable housing in a more rural, peaceful setting move farther and farther away from their jobs. Eventually, subdivisions are built -- followed by gas stations and grocery stores -- and Blockbusters and Pizza Huts and Wal-Mart's.

Already, in fact, the third-largest employer for Polk County isn't even in Polk County. It's Walt Disney World, with 5,400 workers who call Polk home.

There also are a growing number of two-income couples who divide their respective commutes to Orlando and Tampa by living in between. Still others make the daily trek all the way from one end of the corridor to the other.

"There are plenty of workers who don't see that as a prohibitive drive," says Bill Owen, president of the Orlando-based Real Estate Research Consultants and a real-estate economist. "In good conditions, you can make it in an hour and fifteen minutes or so. For people moving down here from the Rust Belt, that's nothing."

## GROUND ZERO

If you want to know how the people feel in the epicenter of all this growth -- the center of the center of the universe, if you will -- take a drive to the tiny town of Fort Meade in the heart of Polk County.

If every person in Florida were a dot on the map, census officials say, the central dot would land in a lake right next to this former military outpost just south of Bartow (slogan: "Touching Tomorrow Together"). Census people call it "The Centroid."

Like so many of the small towns bound one day to be overrun by "progress," Fort Meade -- population 5,500 -- feels like a time warp, with century-old plantation-style mansions next door to '70s ranch-style suburbia. The main drag features a going-out-of-business hardware store, a barbershop decorated by a Confederate flag, and a diner where the priciest entree is the \$4.95 liver-and-onions plate.

The Fort Meade Historical Museum, paying tribute to the oldest settlement in the county, is open only every Tuesday for two hours and every third Saturday.

"I've been around these parts a long time, and it's just a friendly little town," says 65-year-old Clairene McGuire as she's cutting hair in her nephew's barbershop. The place, decorated with the mounted heads of hunted deer and wild boar, has been here for 100 years. It's the last one left in Fort Meade.

"The town actually used to be bigger than what it is now, but the small stores here just can't compete anymore with the bigger ones in Bartow and Lakeland," McGuire says, shaking her head.

Like a lot of people here, she would welcome growth. The locals need the money. Despite evidence to the contrary, though, they're skeptical it will come anytime soon.

## SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE

"They try to make it bigger. They try to make it grow. But I think it'll always be nice, little, quiet Fort Meade," says Amber Crowley, the 17-year-old waitress at Carol's Townhouse Restaurant. She knows the patrons so well she fetches their drink orders as soon as they walk in the door.

"Two unsweetened iced teas," she says, nodding toward an elderly man pushing a woman in a wheelchair. "He's diabetic."

But down the road, taking a break under an old oak tree, is a 65-year-old bicyclist who calls himself Fred C. Dobbs -- after the obsessed, paranoid Humphrey Bogart character in *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*. With a spanking-new Fuji, a collapsible fishing pole, two big gear bags and a hand-rolled cigarette, "Dobbs" has no doubt that Fort Meade one day will balloon like all the other once-small towns he has pedaled through.

"It's Florida," he says, as if that explains everything. "They're eating it up right and left. What we need is a [major] hurricane to come through here and clean everything out from Naples on up."

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August 27, 2001

Mr. or Madam Chair,

My name is Gilbert Williams from Spring Hill in Hernando County. I am a proud native of Marblehead, Massachusetts, birthplace of the American Navy, the men who rowed General George Washington across the Delaware River that bitterly cold Christmas night back in 1776, and a signer of the Declaration of Independence, who was elected to the Vice Presidency in 1812: Elbridge Gerry.

Gerry was a great patriot who committed one grave error to my way of thinking. What error you ask? Well, in 1810 and 1811 he was elected Governor of Massachusetts and redistricted the state to the advantage of his own party.

He redrew the district lines so that they formed a shape which greatly resembled a salamander and thus was born the term "Gerrymander" or as it is now pronounced [REDACTED]. Along with this new word, came a bad habit which most politicians are completely unable to resist: carving up districts for personal and partisan gain.

I come before you today, to ask that you NOT follow in the footsteps of my long ago fellow townsman, Elbridge Gerry, but, rather that you follow the guidelines of the redistricting law, which says that districts should be contiguous, compact, and have common interests. I ask that you take care NOT to dilute the votes of our minority citizens, and to treat all citizens fairly.

The 5th Congressional District as it is now drawn, is one which is served by a great public servant, Congresswoman Karen Thurman. Representative Thurman has assembled a fantastic group of people to serve her constituents, and I dare say that there is not another office holder who works harder for ALL of us here in Florida, whether we are Democrats or Republicans. And she votes for the good of the whole nation.

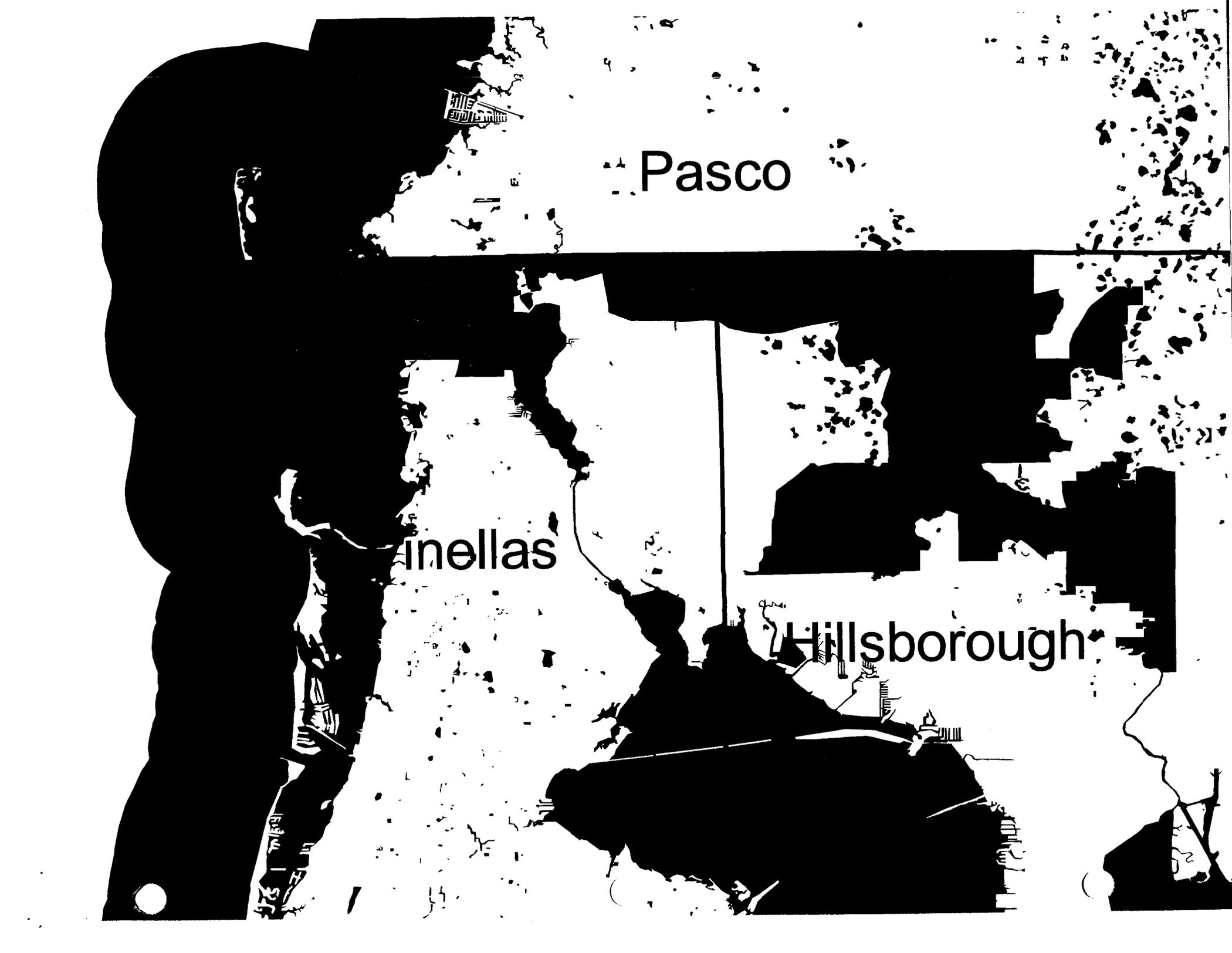
I urge you to leave the 5<sup>th</sup> District essentially as it is currently configured so that we may continue to be served by our outstanding Congresswoman, Representative Karen Thurman.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

  
Gilbert S. Williams



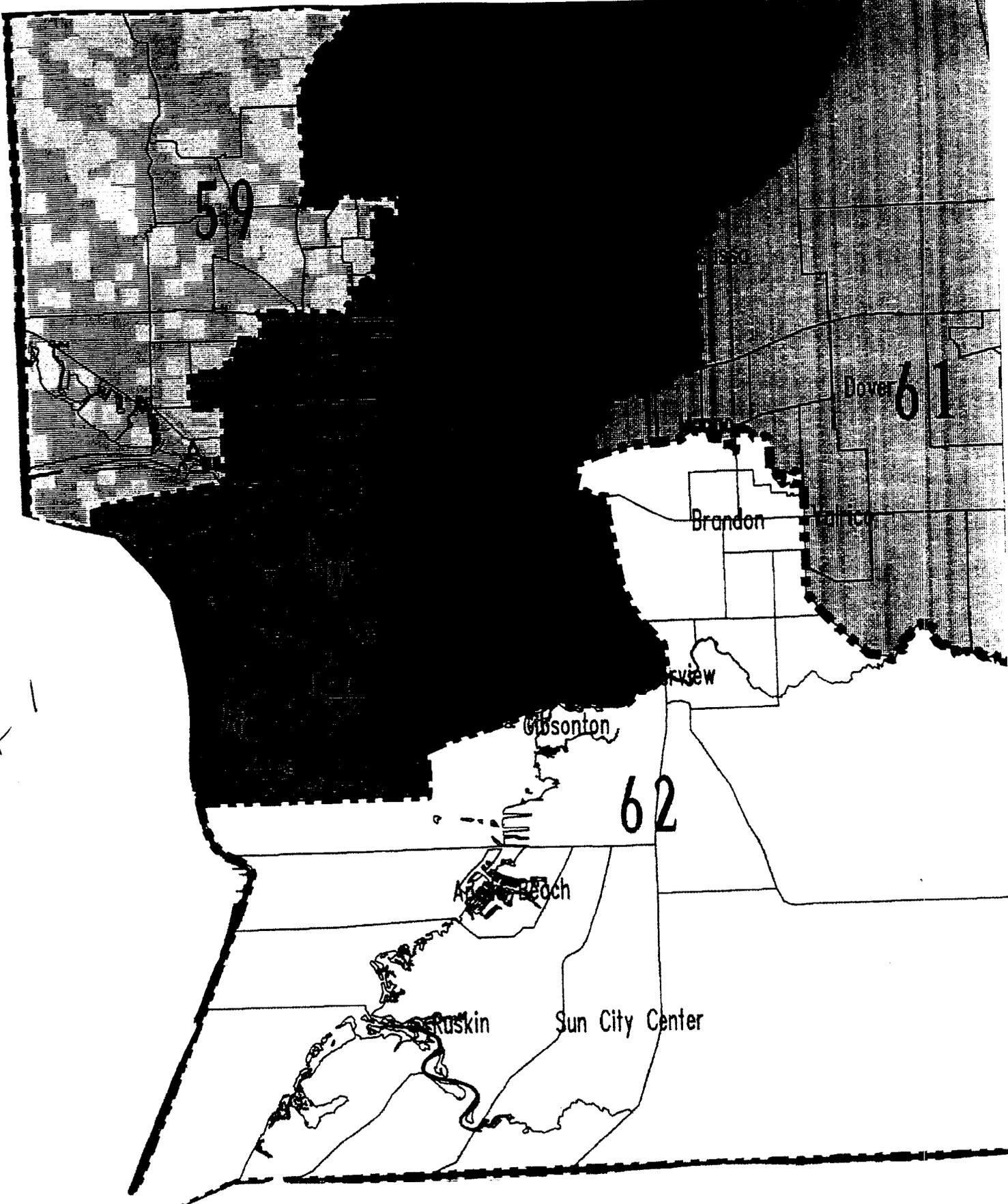


Pasco

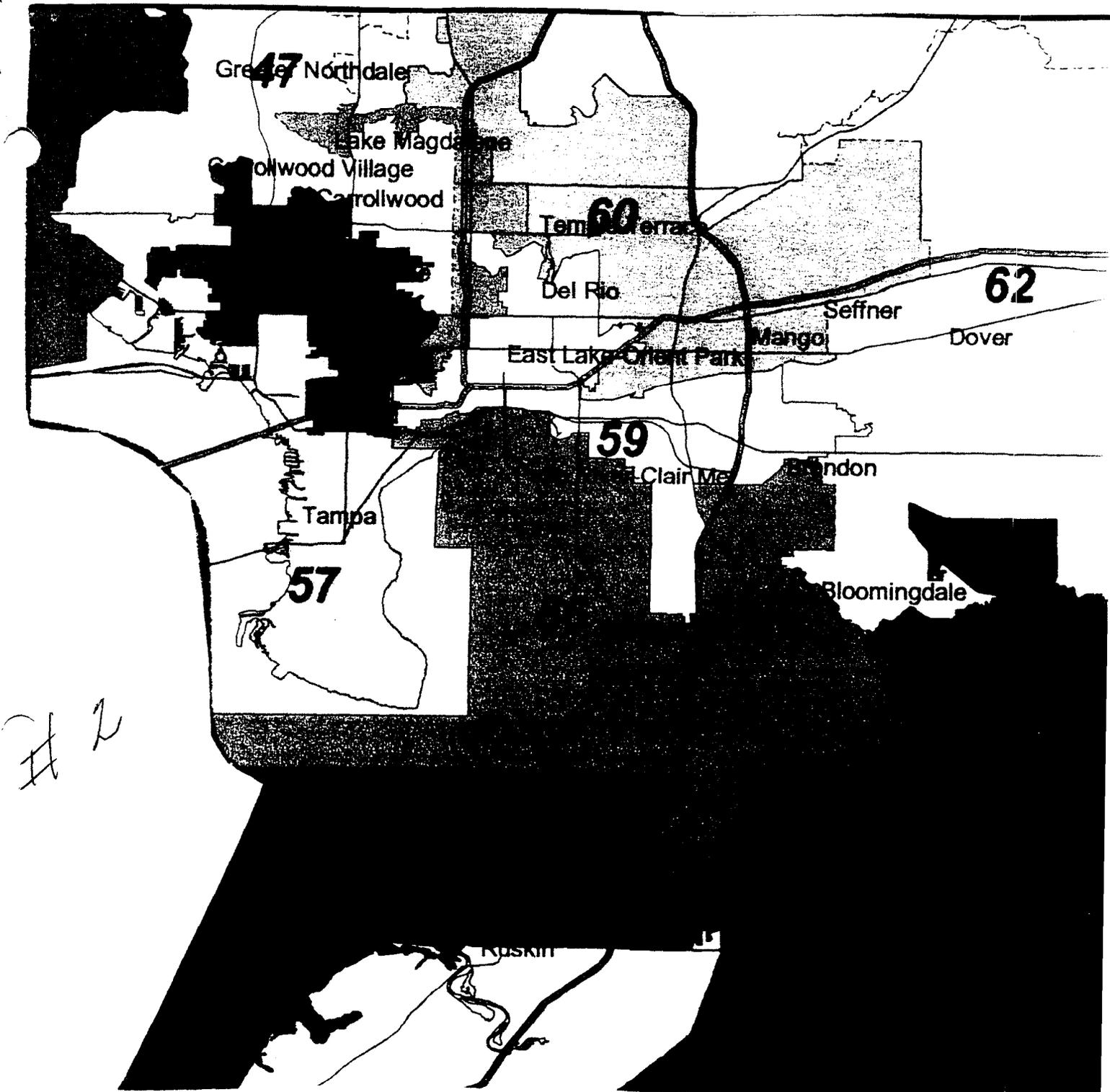
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PRE 1992



POST 1992