

STATEMENT AT PUBLIC HEARING ON REDISTRICTING

By Albert H. Linden Jr.

Ocala, Florida

August 7, 2001

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, Good afternoon, and welcome to Ocala. I am Albert H. Linden Jr., a combat wounded Vietnam veteran living in Gainesville, Florida. This region and in particular, the 5th Congressional District is home to one of the largest communities of veterans across the country. 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. Let me briefly describe three major accomplishments in the areas of veteran's affairs. First, she has helped change the way that federal dollars come into the state and she has helped direct some of those funds to build clinics in the four counties that do not have hospitals. This is so that veterans can get access to health care in their own communities Second, she initiated a measure, that was signed into law last year, to make a prescription-drug benefit available to Medicare-eligible military retirees. And third, she has helped bring honor and respect to those of us who were fortunate to wear a military uniform and fight for our democracy. Her work has truly honored the bravery and commitment of our armed forces, our veterans, and their families. These issues are enormously important to the people of our Congressional district. I ask that you not divide the community of interest of veterans across the 5th District that has benefited greatly from the current configuration of the district and the leadership of Karen Thurman.

Good Afternoon, my name is Jean Grant, Elderly citizen from Citrus County

As you are well aware, one of Florida's primary public policy challenges is how best to meet the needs of our growing senior population. This is especially important in the 5th Congressional District, where we have a VERY large population of senior citizens.....but, they are much more spread out than they are in.....say....South Florida—making it an even greater challenge to service their needs.

As a member of the Board of Directors of the Area Agency on Aging, I know first hand about this challenge. Through our efforts, and in coordination with our elected representatives, we have been able to service the large aging communities in Citrus, Alachua, Levy, Hernando, Marion, and Columbia counties—all but one of these counties is currently represented by Congresswoman Karen Thurman.

This regional effort to provide services to seniors has been greatly enhanced by the fact that we all share the same congressional district. The senior population in this region has benefited from having one member of Congress who is able to address all of its needs across these six counties. Congresswoman Thurman's seat on the Ways and Means Committee, and her advocacy for health care for seniors, has helped us obtain critical resources for this effort. Simply put, we would not be able to provide these services were it not for the configuration of the 5th Congressional District and Karen Thurman's representation of that district.

Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the tens upon tens of thousands of seniors in this district, and the people who provide care and services for them, I ask that you preserve our community of interest and preserve our district and do not alter the district lines in any way that would force us to diminish our commitment to the aging population in this region.

Thank you.

I have copies of my statement should you need them for your records.

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTING PUBLIC HEARING

August 7, 2001 – Ocala

Submitted by

**Professor Richard K. Scher
Robin and Jean Gibson Professor
Department of Political Science
University of Florida
Gainesville, Florida**

My name is Richard K. Scher. I am professor of political science at the University of Florida in Gainesville. I am a legal resident of Alachua County. I am also a nationally recognized expert on voting rights, redistricting and reapportionment, and electoral systems.

As you contemplate plans for redrawing existing congressional districts, may I respectfully but urgently ask you to consider the following points:

- **Alachua County in general and the University of Florida in particular** have been extremely well served by Congresswoman Karen Thurman. She has proven to be responsive and helpful to her constituents, and a strong advocate for the interests she represents throughout her District, including the University of Florida. Republicans, Democrats, and Independents alike agree that she has done an exceptional job as our representative. We desire and trust that her future district will allow her to continue to represent us in Washington, D.C.
- **Political fairness** requires that Alachua County not be torn apart or chopped into pieces fitting into several different congressional districts under any new districting plan. I state this for the following reasons:
 - **Respect for existing political jurisdictions and boundaries.** This is an old standard with a distinguished tradition. As recently as 1995, in *Miller v. Johnson*, the U.S. Supreme Court stated that respecting existing political jurisdictions and boundaries is a preeminent standard in drawing congressional districts. Counties are arguably the preeminent political jurisdiction in Florida, at least for the purpose of local governance, and wherever possible their integrity should be maintained;
 - **Respect for communities of interest.** The University of Florida is an extraordinary economic, social, and even political engine which impacts on virtually all aspects of life in Alachua County and indeed a number of adjacent ones. It truly forms the hub of a community of interest in north central Florida. Again, in *Miller v. Johnson* the U.S. Supreme Court stated that protecting communities of interest is an important standard in drawing congressional districts, and I urge that those areas of north central Florida

where the University's influence be felt be kept in the same congressional district;

- **Narrowly tailoring district boundaries** from existing ones should be a desirable goal of the redistricting process. The same argument advanced by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Miller v. Johnson* and the various *Shaw v. Reno* decisions on drawing district lines based on racial criteria should also be utilized in creating new boundaries for existing districts: they should be narrowly tailored, and do only the minimum necessary, to satisfy the requirements of equal population, maintaining contiguity and compactness, respecting political boundaries, and protecting communities of interest. Moreover, in the past federal courts have held that voters have a right to expect continuity in their representation, and that areas previously joined together be maintained whenever possible as new lines are drawn. Wholesale change merely for the sake of change, or to satisfy partisan pressures, violates the standard of narrowly tailoring new district lines to meet compelling state interests as well as legal requirements.
- **Partisan fairness.** Redistricting is first, last, and always a political process. Partisanship cannot, and probably should not, be removed from it. Yet the temptation of the dominant political party, in this case the Republicans, to squeeze as much as possible the minority party, now the Democrats, can be almost irresistible. But a reasonable inference from the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Davis v. Bandemer* (1986) is that one party cannot simply gerrymander the other party out of existence. Moreover the tradition in Florida, especially during the 1982 redistricting process, was for Democrats to respect those areas of Republican strength, and not dilute or bleed them into oblivion. A return to this kind of "gentleman's agreement" would be highly desirable. Alachua County represents one such major concentration of Democratic voters in north central Florida, and this fact should be taken into account, and respected, during redistricting. These considerations achieve greater prominence because of the high concentration of Democratic voters among African-Americans. The U.S. Supreme Court held in *Miller v. Johnson* that minority voters should not be diluted to the point at which their vote no longer counts as new congressional district boundaries are drawn

For these reasons, therefore, fairness requires that Alachua County not be splintered into several congressional districts, but its integrity maintained. And because of the close and productive relationship Alachua County has developed over the years with Congresswoman Karen Thurman, common sense as well as political fairness require that it remain in her district.

Thank you.

GOOD AFTERNOON LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.MADAM CHAIRLADY AND MEMBERS OF THE FLORIDA LEGISLATURE REDISTRICTING/RE-APPORTIONMENT COMMITTEE THANKS FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO APPEAR BEFORE THE COMMITTEE AND READ FOR THE RECORD THIS PRESENTATION.

I AM WHITFIELD JENKINS 1ST VIC E-PRESIDENT OF FLORIDA STATE CONFERENCE OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE AND A LIFE MEMBER OF THE MARION COUNTY BRANCH-NAACP.I RESIDE AT 2200 NW 24TH ROAD,OCALA FL.34475.

THE NAACP BELIEVESTHAT THE REDISTRICTING PROCESS MUST PRESERVE THE CONCEPT OF MINORITY REPRESENTATION.

EVERY EFFORT MUST BEMADE TO INSURE THAT VOTERS WHO RESIDE IN PREDOMINANTLY MINORITY COMMUNITIES HAVE A FULL AND REAL OPPORTUNITY TO ELECT CANDIDATES OF THEIR CHOICE TO OFFICE.

THE REDISTRICTING PROCESS MUST ADHERE TO THE CONCEPT OF NO REGRESSION FROM THE CURRENT LEVEL OF MINORITY REPRESENTATION.

THE LEGISLATURE HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT THE LEVEL OF REPRESENTATION AFFORDED TO MINORITY COMMUNITIES IN PREVIOUS REDISTRICTING SESSIONS.

THE LEGISLATURE HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO ENHANCE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINORITY COMMUNITIES WHEREEVER POSSIBLE. AS THE LEGISLATURE GOES THROUGH THIS PROCESS IT MUST KEEP THIS CONCEPT BEFORE IT AT ALL TIMES.THIS PROCESS MUST PLACE THE CONCEPT OF PROVIDING EVERY VOTER WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO ELECT CANDIDATES OF THEIR CHOICE AHEAD OF ALL EFFORTS TO OBTAIN ANY PARTSIAN ADVANTAGE DURING THE REDISTRICTING PROCESS.

ABOVE ALL ELSE,THIS PROCESS MUST PROVIDE EVERY FLORIDA VOTER A REAL OPPORTUNITY TO BENEFIT FROM THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS.EVERY VOTER MUST BE GUARANTEED THAT THEIR VOTE WILL COUNT.THEY ALSO MUST BE CONVINCED THAT THERE IS POWER IN THEIR VOTE.THIS MEANS THAT THEY MUST BE ABLE TO INFLUENCE THE ELECTION OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO WILL MAKE PUBLIC POLICY IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.

AGAIN I WANT EXPRESS THANKS AND APPRECIATION TO THIS
DISTINGUISH COMMITTEE FOR THE OPPORTUNITY AFFORDED
ME ON BEHALF THE CITIZENS AND COMMUNITIES I ADVOCATE
FOR IN THIS REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY..

GOOD EVENING LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. I AM L.C. STEVENSON, PRESIDENT OF THE MARION COUNTY BRANCH OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLES.

I RESIDE AT 333 NWTH 46TH AVE. OCALA FL. 34482

MADAM CHAIRLADY, AND MEMBERS OF THE FLORIDA REDISTRICTING AND REAPPORTIONMENT COMMITTEE, THE NAACP IS PLEASED TO APPEAR BEFORE THE COMMITTEE TODAY TO GIVE INPUT TO THIS IMPORTANT PROCESS OF DEMOCRACY WHICH ALLOWS CITIZENS OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA AND OCALA/MARION COUNTY TO PETITION OUR GOVERNMENT FOR FAIR REPRESENTATION IN THE PROCESS WHICH GOVERNS OUR LIVES.

THE NAACP IS REQUESTING THE COMMITTEE TO CONTINUE THE WORKS FOR WHICH HARRY TYSON MOORE AND COUNTLESS OTHERS DIED FOR: WHICH IS PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR FAIR REPRESENTATION OF AFRICAN-AMERICANS INTERESTS IN THEIR REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT.

DURING THE 1990 REDISTRICTING/REAPPORTIONMENT PROCESS, THE NAACP WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN INFLUENCING THE FLORIDA LEGISLATURE TO DRAW A NUMBER OF MAJORITY/MINORITY AND MINORITY INFLUENCE DISTRICTS. AS THE RESULTS OF THIS ACCOMPLISHMENT AFRICAN-AMERICANS AND OTHER MINORITIES WERE BETTER ABLE TO EXPRESS THEIR COMMUNITY INTERESTS.

THE NAACP RESPECTFULLY REQUEST THE STATE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2001 LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS TO AT MINIMUM MAINTAIN EXISTING MINORITY DISTRICTS AND WHERE POSSIBLE DRAW ADDITIONAL ONES.

SINCE THE COMMITTEE IS HERE IN OCALA/MARION COUNTY, I PROVIDE FOR THE RECORD LOCAL HISTORICAL EXISTING CONDITION RELATING TO THE IMPORTANCE OF THE STATE COMMITTEE DECISIONS. ALTHOUGH AFRICAN-AMERICANS COMPRISES APPROXIMATELY 13% OF MARION COUNTY AND 24% OF THE CITY OF OCALA'S POPULATION, AFRICAN-AMERICANS

HAVE NOT BEEN ELECTED TO THE MARION COUNTY COMMISSION OR SCHOOL BOARD SINCE RECONSTRUCTION. THE PRIMARY REASON FOR THIS CONTINUED RESULTS IS THAT WHITE VOTERS TENDS TO VOTE AGAINST CANDIDATES WHOM MINORITY VOTERS CHOOSE.

ON BEHALF OF THE MARION COUNTY BRANCH-NAACP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS, I WANT TO THANK THE FLORIDA REDISTRICTING/REAPPORTIONMENT COMMITTEE FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO APPEAR AND READ INTO THE RECORD THE EXPECTATIONS DREAMS AND ASPIRATIONS OF OUR PEOPLE FOR FULL AND FAIR REPRESENTATION IN FLORIDA'S GOVERNMENT FOR THE PEOPLE AND BY THE PEOPLE.

Florida Voters League

A Non-Partisan Organization Striving for 100% Voter Registration
And An Active And Informed Electorate



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DATE: August 8, 2001
TO: Members of the Redistricting Committee of Florida
FROM: Eugene A. Poole
RE: Redistricting of Florida

The Florida Voter's League, Inc. is a Community based Non-Partisan, Non-Profit Florida Corporation/ Organization dedicated to Freedom, Fundamental Fairness and Due Process, provided for in the Florida and United States Constitution for all Citizens. Therefore, as you review and evaluate urban sprawl growth and the concentration of residents in Florida, please keep the following concerns in mind as you craft new districts and modify existing districts.

1. The United States Constitution prohibits Taxation without Representation.
2. Fairness must be the benchmark for all of your decisions.
3. Do not allow partisan Politics to influence your decision.
4. I strongly caution all of you not to dilute or split Minority Districts, better know as gerrymandering in order to accommodate partisan advances.
5. Is there a State Plan for redistricting if not will there be Public Hearing afterward?
6. Ensure that adequate notifications of scheduled Public Hearings are well advertised for all Citizens throughout Florida.
7. Make every effort to hold Hearings where it is convenient and without fear or discomfort for the citizens. Example; Public Facilities etc..
8. Allow all citizens who desire to participate in the Hearings.

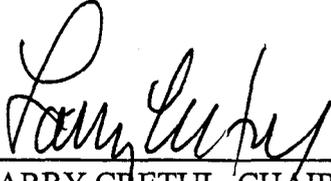
Thanks for your consideration

Sincerely,

Eugene A. Poole
President

**STATEMENT OF THE MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
TO THE LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION RE: REDISTRICTING**

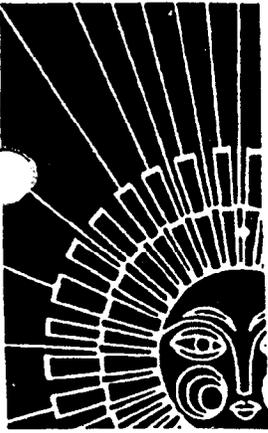
The Marion County Board of County Commissioners believes that the division of Marion County into numerous legislative districts results in the diminishing of the ability to present issues common to all Marion County citizens to the Florida Legislature. Therefore, the Board desires that this be taken into account in future redistricting decisions.



LARRY CRETUL, CHAIRMAN

Michael Malone, President, Marion
County Chamber of Commerce

Ocala • Marion County Chamber of Commerce



August 7, 2001

Chairman
Procedural & Redistricting Council
203 HOB
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Dear Chairman:

The Ocala/Marion County Chamber of Commerce has reviewed the opportunity and aspects of redistricting. Following our study we wish to offer the following recommendation.

In as much as Marion County and portions thereof are represented presently by 4 Senators (Mitchell, Smith, King, and Cowin) and 8 Representatives (Kendrick, Pickens, McGriff, Jennings, Baxley, Baker, Gibson, and Agrenziano);

Where as we appreciated the efforts and representation presently presented by these elected representatives; The Ocala/Marion County Chamber of Commerce recommends a reduction in the number of representatives. This request for reduction of representatives is based upon the need to have Marion county representatives represent more of the Marion County population. Marion county representatives need to have a majority of their constituents in Marion County. Furthermore we would like our representatives to live in Marion County.

Marion County is a growing community with specific needs. This also requires the allocation of a State Senator from Marion County. The population is on the brink of meeting the necessary required number of individuals and will soon arrive at this benchmark.

The Chamber expects these changes to allow a stronger representation of Marion County needs for the next decade and the development of a strong partnership between its citizens and government.

The Chamber wishes to thank the Council for their consideration of this request and we look forward to the successful reallocation of Representative and Senatorial districts.

Sincerely,


Michael D. Malone
President



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