

TESTIMONY TO THE REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE

Tuesday, October 02, 2001

Presented by: Anthony E. Munroe, MBA, FACHE
President & CEO of Economic Opportunity Family Health Center, Inc.

MR. MUNROE: Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, good afternoon and welcome to Miami-Dade County. My name is Anthony E. Munroe. I am the President and Chief Executive Officer of Economic Opportunity Family Health Center, Inc. EOFHC is the largest minority employer in North Miami-Dade County, with an annual budget in excess of \$20 million. EOFHC is very proud of the fact that we have served our urban communities for 34 years, next year June we celebrate 35 years of providing quality healthcare and social services to our diverse, yet commonly linked, communities. We are accredited by the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations and have for many years been a national model community health center, being one of the largest and most comprehensive in the nation. We owe a great deal to the community and community leaders for helping make EOFHC who we are today. We owe a special thanks to those community leaders like Congresswoman Carrie P. Meek, that have helped us meet the vast needs of our community, a community of common interests and issues. We are extremely honored to have Congresswoman Carrie P. Meek as our representative. Congresswoman Meek has always, and continues, to listen and act on our concerns and needs – we can count on her at all times.

Economic Opportunity Family Health Center, Inc. has 16 service sites throughout North Miami-Dade County. We employ 310 professionals, including doctors, dentists, nurses, psychologists, etc. and paraprofessionals, the vast majority of which live within the current Congressional District 17. We provided quality and comprehensive primary healthcare and social services regardless of race, ethnicity, immigration status or insurance coverage to close to 29,000 individuals during 2000. This meant we provided about 125,000 patient visits during the same year. The vast majority of our 29,000 individual patients live in the current Congressional District 17 – they are mainly women and children. They are a community of common interests and issues – they want quality, accessible and affordable healthcare and social services – the Congresswoman understands that. They are a community of common interest and issues – although ethnically diverse with 40% African-American, 20% Hispanic, 15% Haitian, 10% Caucasian and 15% Caribbean – the Congresswoman appreciates this and celebrates our unified diversity. They are a community of common interests and issues – they want a responsive and representative voice in Washington, DC --- they want and need Congresswoman Carrie P. Meek!

Our community of common interest and issues is disproportionately impacted by such healthcare crisis as HIV / AIDS and substance abuse. Liberty City, Little Haiti and Brownsville has the highest HIV / AIDS rates in the County; Opa Locka has the second highest rates in the County. Through the tireless support of Congresswoman Carrie Meek and in proactive response to the HIV / AIDS epidemic, the Congresswoman organized an

extremely successful public forum on HIV / AIDS. She, and only she, was able to bring together many national leaders to talk about and most importantly do something about the toll HIV / AIDS has been having on our communities of common interests. Don't take our cohesiveness, commonness, closeness and identity away from us – leave Congressional District 17 the way it is --- we want Congresswoman Carrie P. Meek to remain in Congress as our champion in Washington, DC.

Since I have been in Miami, Florida the Congresswoman has continued to impress me with her compassion, dedication, commitment and drive. She is truly entrenched and working very hard on our behalf. As part of a major Miami-Dade County revitalization project, we must replace and rebuild our very first satellite – The Scott Medical Center. The Miami-Dade County project does not provide for adequate funding to replace the desperately needed medical facility. The current medical facility is an old warehouse, it is old, dark and in disrepair – the community want this no more; we at EOFHC wants this no more; the Congresswoman has insisted no more and has pledged her immediate support --- Please note, we have provided healthcare services in the Scott-Carver Public Housing, which is the State of Florida's largest public housing complex, for 30 years. We must have a modern medical center in this community. During my first meeting with the Congresswoman in her District Office on this issue earlier this year – after my presentation, the Congresswoman emphatically said my community must have the very best – they deserve it, it is long overdue and I am glad EOFHC is doing this. The Congresswoman got on the phone with her Washington, DC staff and made it clear that providing a state of the art medical facility for our community was her top priority, no ifs ands or buts. That is the type of leadership and responsiveness we have in Congresswoman Carrie P. Meek – that is the type of leadership we insist on having. We respectfully request there be no changes in Congressional District 17, to the extent possible. We request that our communities of common interest not be further disenfranchised.

I hope you seriously consider my remarks, keep our County united, maintain and safeguard our communities of common interest within Congressional District 17, and continue the great spirit of American pride.

God Bless America.

Respectfully,

Tony Munroe

Redistricting For Miami-Dade

By Paullette Sims-Wimberly

17351 NW 29th Avenue
Miami, Florida 33056
305 624-1441

Good Afternoon Panel members **I am Paullette Sims Wimberly**,
Miami-Dade Councilwoman from Area 4-45 in the north Dade area.

In the year 2000 the Census was taken. The reapportionment information was given, now we are about to draw the voting representative, federal, state, and local, voting "Redistricting Lines." What does that mean to the Miami-Dade Black Community? This means, we in the State of Florida will get only two new congressional seats with only one seat in Miami-Dade County. On October 2, 2001, the State of Florida will hold a public hearing on how are district-voting lines should be drawn.

We were asked to come out and give your testimony as to how the lines congressionally should be drawn. Should we squeeze seventy five to ninety seven percent of our eligible black voters in one voting district area? Doing this will win only one district area in Miami-Dade County, diluting our representation in the legislature. Our Congressional, State Senate and House Representative seats will all come from one area only. Or should we draw the voting district lines putting forty seven to fifty percent of black eligible voters in one district and another thirty to forty percent in another district to maximize our strength. Thereby, winning two or more voting district areas, and increasing our political representation.

This is a numbers game and we need to make the numbers count for us. This won't happen for another ten years so we need to do our work now. We need to claim our political representation boundaries while we can.

We in the Democratic Black Caucus want to educate our voters. We will not take our voters for granted. No longer will elections be a "walk in the park." The candidates need to earn our votes, and to respect their constituents.

Voter education, registration and getting out the vote are what we need to be doing for the governor's race in 2002 and the presidential race in 2004 elections. If we fail to get this done our civil rights will be turned around forever.

So, if you are asking what can I do? I can come out and testify, support those that will be testifying before the redistricting committee. Call the committee members, your state representatives to find out what are the *guidelines for the drawing of the lines in your area. We must get involved today. And On behalf of my constituents in the North Dade Area I think you for hearing me on behalf of my Voters.*

TESTIMONY

PRESENTED TO THE FLORIDA STATE

LEGISLATIVE REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE

Presented by

Roy G. Phillips, Ph.D.
Retiring Founder of Miami-Dade Community College
Homestead Campus

October 2, 2001

Miami Central High School

Good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen, and members of the Florida State Legislative Redistricting Committee, my name is Roy G. Phillips. I reside at 12725 S.W. 218 Street, Miami, Florida 33170.

Today, I appear before you as the Retiring Founding Campus President of Miami-Dade Community College, the Homestead Campus.

It is my honor and distinct privilege to speak before you on behalf of our most Honorable Congresswoman, Carrie Meek, Democratic representative for the 17th Congressional District of the State of Florida.

I have known the Congresswoman for a period of twenty years as her former supervisor, friend and co-worker. During that period, I have observed her as a person of the highest integrity, moral character, dedication and commitment in serving all people.

I will speak of her outstanding work in serving the constituents of her district in the areas of Education, Housing, Senior Citizens care

and Economic Development.

Firstly, in her role of Florida State Representative and State Senator in the North Dade Community she advocated and promoted the following initiatives;

1. Funding for the construction of the South Florida Five Science Academy, an innovative partnership between Miami-Dade Community College and Miami-Dade County Fire Department for the training of firefighters;
2. Leadership in the funding of the construction of the Liberty City Education and Entrepreneurial Center to provide education and training to residents in Liberty City, Little Haiti and small businesses in North Dade.
3. Leadership in much of Florida's current housing finance policy initiatives, establishing a broad array of public policy guidelines, thus making the dream of home ownership a reality for thousands of families. Moreover,

her legislative efforts resulted in the construction of thousands of affordable rental units—providing an opportunity for many residents to move out of public housing units into decent and affordable rental units.

Secondly, in her role as Congresswoman representing the constituency of Florida's 17th Congressional District, she has served as a most effective public servant in the following areas:

Provided major leadership for Hurricane Andrew Relief Funding for the revitalization and economic recovery of the South Dade Community. Her leadership efforts led to the following;

- a. Continuation of the Homestead Air Reserve Base as a potential economic engine for the development of the South Dade economy;
- b. Legislative appropriation of approximately 13 million dollars to Miami-Dade Community College Aviation program to construct an aviation simulation training

center at its Homestead Campus;

- c. Legislative appropriation of \$915,000. for a NASA Grant awarded to the Miami-Dade Community College, Homestead Campus for the establishment of a Business Incubator program in partnership with the city of Homestead to promote economic development.
2. Her amendment to the FY'98 funding bill for the Department of Housing and Urban Development added \$195 million to the section 202 elderly housing program for senior citizens.

Based upon her outstanding public service to the citizens within the 17th Congressional District, I am strongly recommending that the District in which she represents be left intact in its entirety without any modifications.

Thank you for entering into the public record my testimony on

this 2nd day of October in the year 2001.

10/2/01

Carline Paul, Speaker #15
Haitian-American Youth for Tomorrow

My name is Carline Paul

MR. CHAIRMAN AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS, I RESIDE IN SENATE DISTRICT 36 WHICH INCLUDES LIBERTY CITY, LITTLE HAITI, NORTH MIAMI, MIAMI SHORES, NORLAND, CAROL CITY, EL PORTAL, AND ALLAPATTAH. THIS SENATE DISTRICT IS VERY DIVERSE AND WE NEED TO CONTINUE TO HAVE SOMEONE REPRESENT US WHO UNDERSTANDS THE DYNAMICS OF ALL THOSE DIVERSE CULTURES. WHEN HAITIAN REFUGEES COME TO SHORE OFF THE COAST, SENATOR MEEK IS ONE OF THE FIRST TO RESPOND. WHEN THE HAITIAN COMMUNITY WANTED TO GO WASHINGTON TO PROTEST CURRENT IMMIGRATION LAWS, OUR SENATOR HELPED TO ORGANIZE OUR COMMUNITY. WHEN THE HAITIAN COMMUNITY SAID THERE WAS A NEED FOR A PROGRAM FOR CANCER SCREENING AND AWARENESS OUR SENATOR SPONSORED APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE HAITIAN AMERICAN CANCER ASSOCIATION. SENATOR MEEK RESPONDS TO THE NEEDS OF ALL HIS CONSTITUENTS. I ASK THAT YOU REFRAIN FROM DRAWING ANY DISTRICT THAT WOULD TAKE AWAY OUR CURRENT REPRESENTATION. IN FACT, EXPANDING HIS DISTRICT TO COVER

ALL NORTH MIAMI WOULD JUST ENHANCE OUR REPRESENTATION.

Rep. Mendigual, Rep. Wilson, Rep. Holloway
House District #108, where we got our first Haitian-American Representative.
Congressional district #17 needs to remain. In closing
Please MR. Chairman I am requesting that the Committee comes back and show us the maps so we can also put our input.

Marleine Bastien, LCSW
710 N.E. 152 Street
North Miami Beach, Fl. 33162
(305)756-8050
(305)756-8221
fanmayisyen@juno.com

My name is Marleine Bastien, I live at 710 N.E. 152 Street. I'm an immigrant from Haiti and I speak Creole. I left work early today so that I have a chance to address all of you. Thank you for the opportunity. I'm one of over a million Haitian-Americans living in the United States. I'm part of a group that was not welcomed here. In fact, we were prevented from coming in, we were detained for months, sometimes years, after being released from detention, we fought to stay. We crossed many hurdles, broken down many barriers, we beat the odds to become U.S. citizen...and yet, we have been disenfranchised over and over again. Those of you who voted in the last presidential election know the anguish and the pain of being disenfranchised...it's unbearable. I'm standing here in front of you today to urge you to help us preserve our identity, and to ask you to be careful when you draw the lines, so that you don't erase an entire group of people just like the 2000 census did. ...draw the line in a way to help us maintain our extensive numbers, political cohesiveness, geographic compactness, and most importantly, the possibility to elect our own.

In essence, I'm urging you to designate areas of Little Haiti, North Miami, and North Miami Beach as community of interests so as to fulfill the above-stated requirements. Doing so, will give us, Creole speaking minorities, the opportunity to participate in the political process and to elect representatives of our choices.

Please help us maintain district 108, and through the community of interest designation based on language and culture, create a new district at the house level.

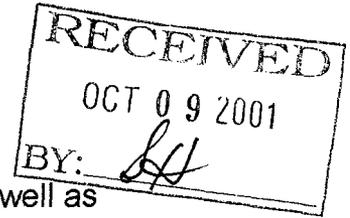
At the Senate level, help us maintain district 36, if at all possible, draw a new district so that minorities can have a stronger voice in the Senate.

Do your utmost best to maintain Congressional district 17. We also want to support our allies, they've helped us a lot in our struggle with immigration.

Mr. Chair, committee members, thank you again for the opportunity, and please, help keep hope alive for a group of people who have been denied so much, and yet, so desperately want recognition through participation in all electoral processes!

STATEMENT GIVEN AT PUBLIC HEARING ON REDISTRICTING

By Elvis T. Brazil
October 2, 2001



Thank you, Chairman Byrd and members of this Committee as well as Representative Frederica Wilson Chair of the Florida Conference of Black State Legislators and those who are responsible for coordinating this historic event. My name is Elvis T. Brazil and I am a register voter in the respective Congressional, Senate and House districts of 17, 36, and 104. Congresswoman Carrie P. Meek, State Senator Kendrick Meek and State House of Representative Frederica Wilson are doing an awesome job of representing these districts and I want to say publicly to them, keep up the good work. I am also a student fulfilling the initial requirements in pursuit of my Law Degree at Miami Dade Community College North Campus and currently serves as the Student Government Association Vice President where the diverse student body at MDCC are quite concerned with the implications that redistricting will have on their educational opportunities and quality of education they can expect to receive relative to the policies that will be forthcoming after the redistricting process is complete. I would be remiss if I did not mention that I also represent the Church of God by Faith body as well, were my father, Elder William Brazil is the pastor. I indeed, count it an honor to represent these bodies politic as I address this panel.

As you have sat and listened to those who have addressed this panel, you probably have already come to the realization that those who have spoken before me as probably, many of those who will speak after me, are in opposition of redistricting and wish to maintain, if not to expand, the status quo. You may feel and believe that our opposition to redistricting is negating progress and denying growth. However, and

lamentably so, these communities have seen and experience first hand the spasms of progress and the pains of growth that have been proposed and enacted by others outside the this community. All too many times have we been amongst the *last* to bask in the rays of prosperity realized from progress, but conversely, amongst the *first* to feel the victimization of flaws from changes not attributable to our own doing. I wish to call to your attention a few recent issues, which were proposed to better serve the citizenry, but and unfortunately, blacks and other minorities have suffered tremendously as a result of their application

The first example of this victimization, which I wish to call to your attention, is occurring right now. Nationally, as you may be aware, affirmative action policy, relative and specific to college admissions, which were means for redressing the many years of past and present discrimination by institutions of matriculation against blacks, women and other minorities is, taking a beating and constantly being challenged in the courts as to its constitutionality and effectiveness. In some states, which have removed and replaced it with a more "colorblind" policy, black and other minority enrollment has plummeted even to zero as in the case of recent enrollment in the University of Texas at Austin's School of Law.

Secondly the State of Florida has implemented Governor Jeb Bush's *One Florida Initiative* and the *Talented Top 20-guarantee*, which was argued by him and others in his administration as a plan to boost diversity in state universities which would be more representative of the stratified sampling of our citizenry. However, the statistics show that instead of being progressive, this initiative to replace a system that once consider

admissions of those from historically disadvantaged backgrounds, has proven to be regressive for blacks and other minorities (Miami Times, 9/26/01).

My sole point of being here is to call to your attention the special concerns that the citizens and voters in these communities are challenged with. I am sure that on paper, the redistricting plan looks kosher. However, I respectfully request that you re-examine it to determine its fairness to a people who historically have not experienced fairness. I humbly suggest that by diluting the current districts will not produce fairness but will result in one group unfairly being over represented while another is under represented. And again historically, the group of citizens which suffer, more times than not have been of dark complexion. ***This ladies and gentlemen is not fair!***

In closing, this community is not asking for anything that we have not asked aforetime. What we ask. No! What we require, during this redistricting process is that which is guaranteed to all Americans by its Declaration of Independence and Constitution. We ask again for fairness and an opportunity to shape our own future. ***Currently we believe that our districts are configured to offer fairness and to effectively maximize our representation on issues that will directly affect our community.*** We believe we are already configured to have a political voice by and through those who are elected and can feel our infirmities and best understand our plight. I urge you, not to take away our right to have a voice through presumptuous redistricting and call each of you to consider the fairness of redistricting.

Thank you and may God Bless America!

51

Mr. Chairman, members of the Redistricting Committee, ladies and gentlemen:

I am David Canta, chairman of the Board of the Florida Golden Dreamers Association, located at 9823 Northeast, Miami Shores, Florida. I come from the scattered but numerous fast-growing Filipino American and Asian communities. Our communities, composed mostly of doctors and nurses, are located within the length and breadth of the 17th Congressional District, for on these sites are hospitals, clinics and nursing homes where they work.

Likewise, in these areas are several crewmen working on different cruise lines. They locate in these areas for they work in the Port of Miami.

These workers, with H-I visas, have had different immigration problems. The doctors and nurses, in order to maintain their working status, must have to take and pass the State board examinations. ~~Those who failed or were unable to secure their licenses were terminated, thus causing problems with the INS.~~ Crewmen, who were terminated had the same problems.

The crewmen, who in order to be employed through the various agencies in the Philippines, must have to put enormous sums of money. To raise the needed amount, those who had no sufficient funds, had to either mortgage or sell any disposable property, particularly even the only treasured land that they own. Some unscrupulous exploiting agencies cunningly and subtly, in ambiguous terms, prepare contracts that are too onerous or cloaked with deceptive phrases, in order to take advantage over the applicants. Most of these workers, after working for a month or so, found themselves jobless, as the agencies terminated their contracts. With these precarious and despondent state, some found their way into the office of Rep. Meck., where they aired their grievances. With their tales of woe, our empathizing representative took the cudgels for them and sponsored the Legal Immigration and Family Equity Act, which was signed into law by President Clinton on December 21, 2000. These unfortunate workers, through our representative's efforts, were able to find solutions to their immigration problems and were given good jobs, as well.

Personally, I was also extended a helping hand. After working for more than 16 years with AARP, with good and excellent performance and Evaluations, when a new project director took over, under the guise of charity, she inappropriately ordered my assignment to a host agency--

a demotion and a discriminatory act. Forced to litigate, I secured counsel from the office of Congresswoman Carrie Meek, and with her invaluable assistance, I was successfully able to pursue my course of action.

Upon becoming aware that Florida has the highest number of HIV/AIDS among 44 States, Rep. Meek held a HIV/AIDS Summit on July 28, 2001. Effective solutions were evolved to combat this scourge.

Knowing the plight of the Filipino veterans, who fought side by side with America during World War II, she co-sponsored ~~the passage of~~ the Filipino Veterans Equity Act.

With a dedicated public servant, who is sensitive to the needs of her constituents, I ask that the needs and concerns of our communities be amply protected by the committee's fair, just and non-partisan exercise of its discretion in effecting the needed redistricting to the extent possible and not materially dilute the present set up. Fittingly, it is worthy to quote Thomas Jefferson, when he said, "I know of no safer depository of the powers of society than the people themselves. And if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control of those powers with wholesome discretion, then the remedy is not to take it away from them but rather to motivate and to direct that discretion with Wisdom, Prudence and Insight."

Remarks By:

Dr. M. A. Ebadian

Director of The Hemispheric Center for Environmental Technology at
Florida International University

Florida Congressional Redistricting Public Hearing
(District Seventeen)

October 2, 2001

Good Afternoon. Mr. Chair and committee members, my name is Doctor Ali Ebadian. I serve the community as Director of the Hemispheric Center for Environmental Technology at Florida International University. We perform environmental services that assist our community and are helping the community by ensuring a stable economic foundation for the Seventeenth Congressional District.

The Center is a key player in performing environmental assessments, developing remediation plans, and designing information tools that assist in the improvement of the environmental condition of the District. Congresswoman Meek has been a strong proponent for the efficient and effective clean-up of environmental insults that have occurred in years past within the District. It is evident from the widespread phase 1 and phase 2 assessments that we have performed, and as illustrated by the map we have prepared for you, that the District has a significant accumulation of perceived and actual environmental impacts. Unfortunately, this density of problem properties is all too representative of the environmental inequity that poorer communities have experienced in the past.

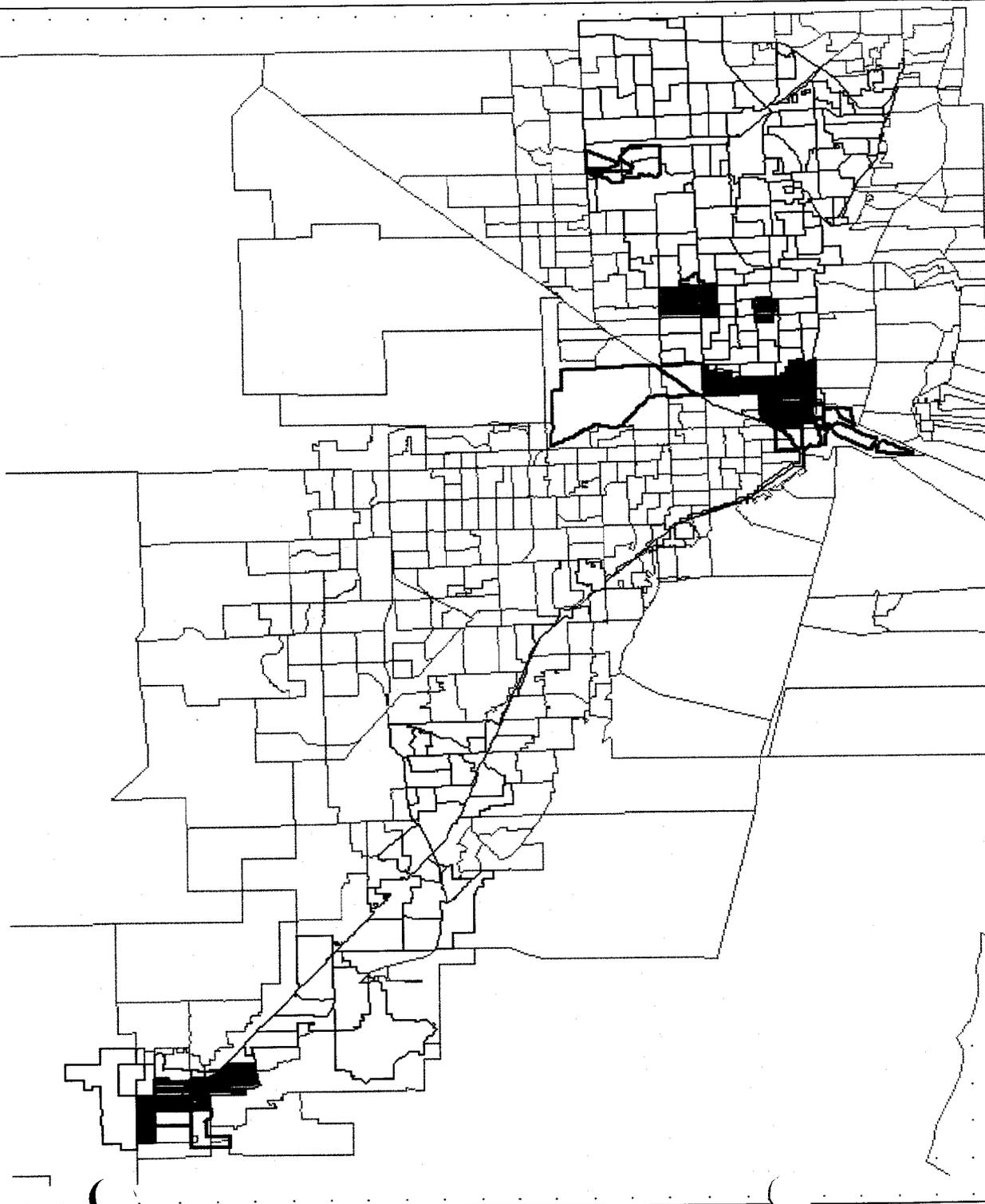
This is why I am here today - Our role as independent assessors and experts in the clean-up of contaminated communities is greatly enhanced by the knowledge and experience, and actions of Congresswoman Meek. She is a strong advocate for addressing these concerns and I feel that re-districting will expose the residents of this community to a political arena in which these significant priority issues will again be de-emphasized and will negatively impact the inroads we have made towards Environmental Justice!

Within the geographic boundary of the Seventeenth Congressional District are over 244 Brownfield properties; and an additional 144 perceived Brownfields. The variety of contamination events, both from inadvertent contamination, and from deliberate contamination as a consequence of unwise and careless industrial processes is a major inhibition to economic re-vitalization. Our efforts to initiate the economic cycle to remediate these derelict and abandoned properties is in large part aided by the representational continuity of the district.

Many of these areas are just now at the cusp of seeing some true redevelopment activities, and much of that redevelopment momentum is directly attributable to Congresswoman Meek. She was a key player in directing funding for the Empowerment zone to Miami, she has assisted in ensuring completion of the Poinciana Park clean-up, and is the key legislative advocate for the utilization of that park as a small business resource for the community. Of course she is responsible for countless other projects that have improved and will improve and promote economic revitalization in the District.

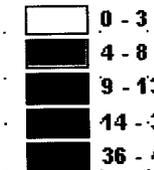
I therefore, urge you to consider the essential fact that; communities require community leaders and representatives who share the experiences and intimate knowledge of those communities. I believe we should maintain the District as currently bounded, and let the community retain its strongest advocate and most effective voice.

District 17 Brownfield Data

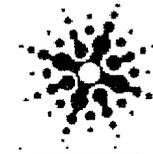
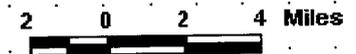


Empowerment Zone and
Dev Area Boundaries

District17 : Brownfields



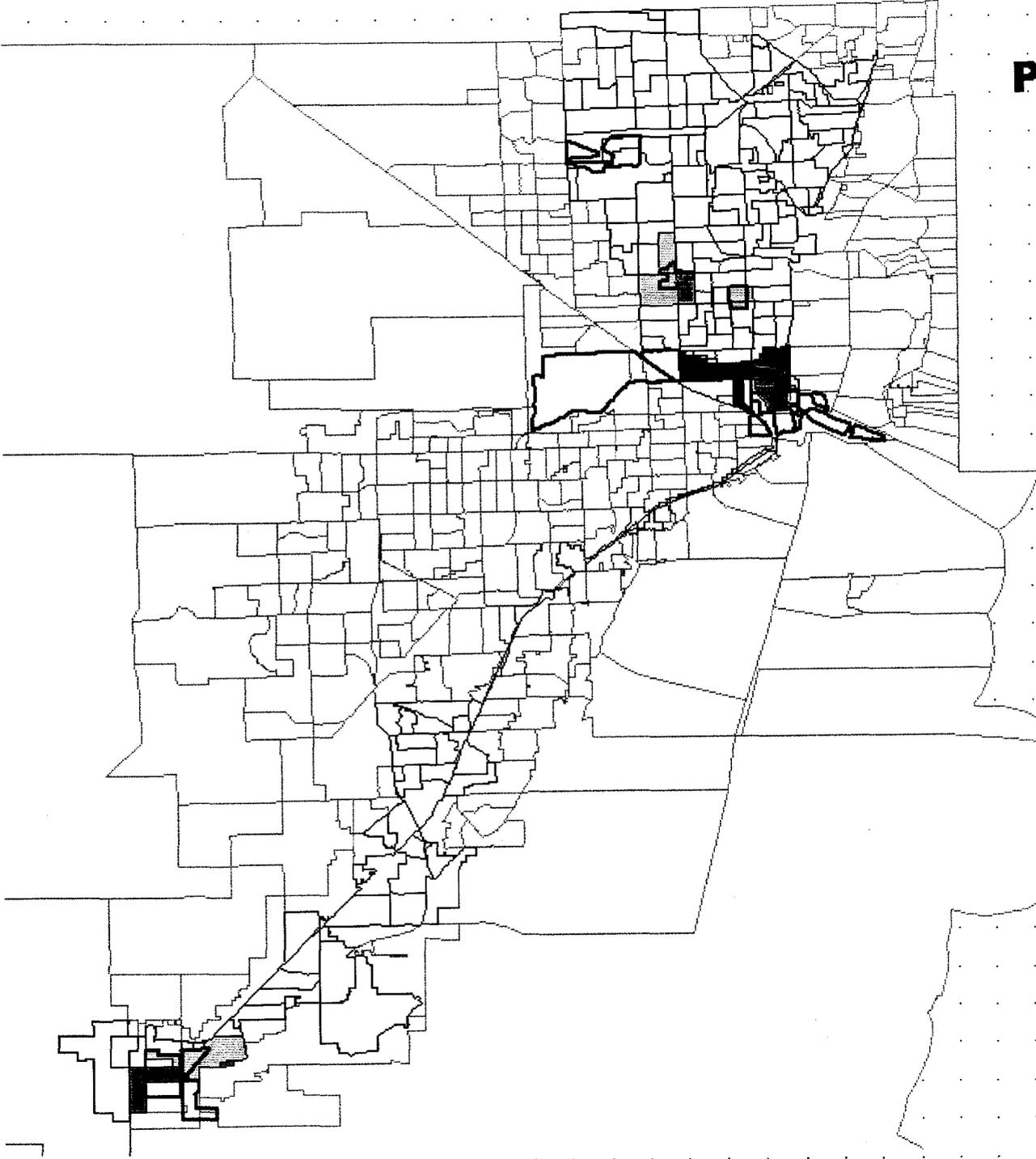
Miami-Dade County Precincts - 98



HCET
Hispanic Center for
Environmental Technology
www.hcet.org • 305.455.1100

District 17

Potential Brownfield Data



□ Empowerment Zone and Dev Area Boundaries

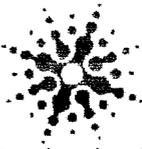
District 17: P-Brownfields

- 0 - 1
- ▨ 2 - 4
- ▩ 5 - 7
- 8 - 10
- 11 - 41

□ Miami-Dade County Precincts - '98

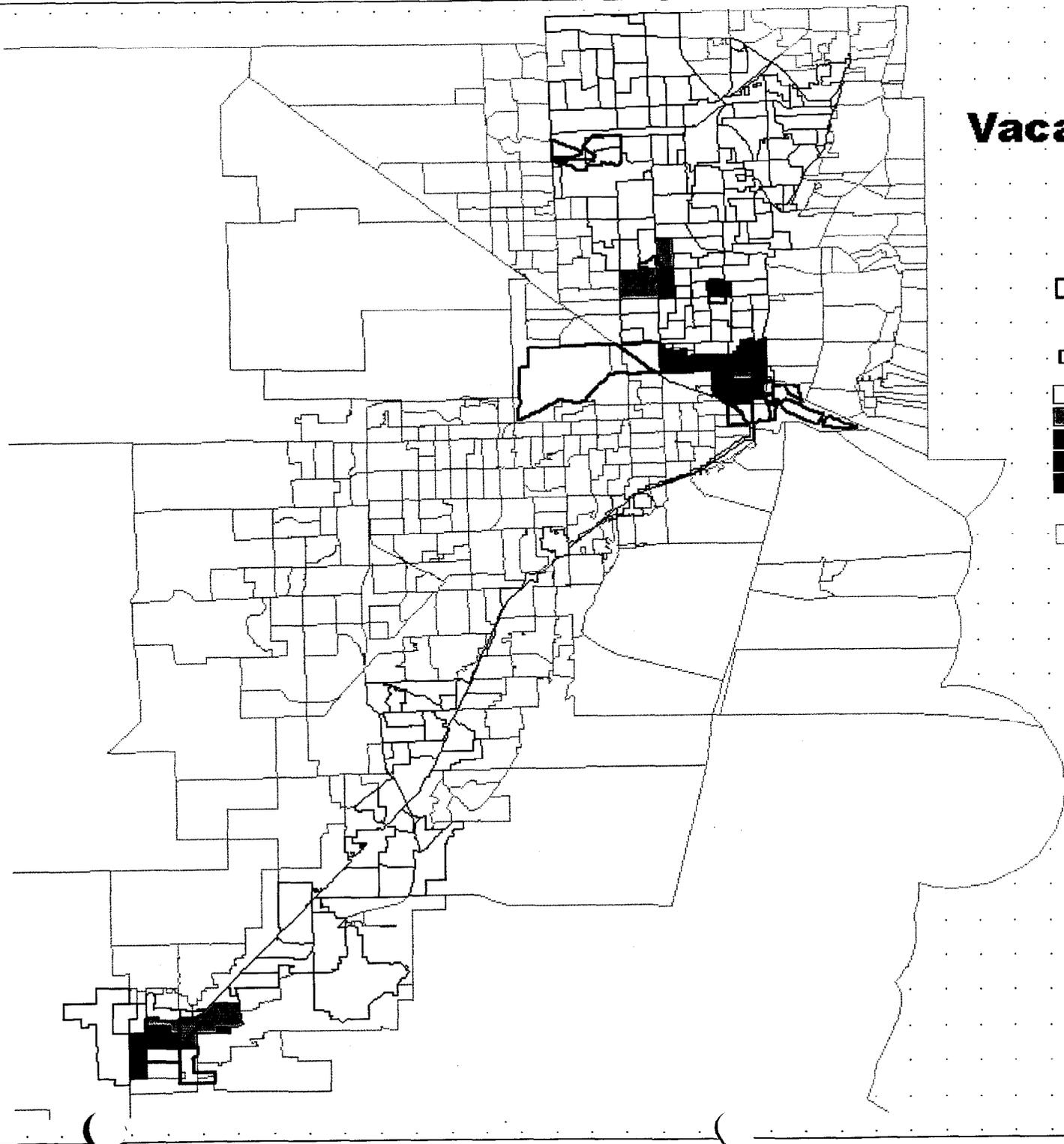


2 0 2 4 Miles



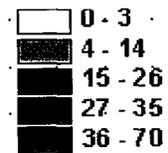
H CET
Hemispheric Centre for
Environmental Technology
www.hcet.org

District 17 Vacant Property Data

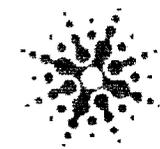
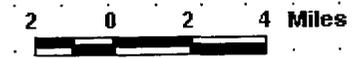


 Empowerment Zone and
Dev Area Boundaries

District 17: Vacant Properties



 Miami-Dade County Precincts - '98



HCEET
Hispanic Center for
Environmental Technology
reducing energy, increasing productivity



Haitian-American Grassroots Coalition

P.O. Box 381416

Miami, Fl. 33238

Phone: 305-785-4248

Fax: 305-576-7769

www.hagcoalition.freehosting.net
e-mail: hagcoalition@lycos.com

October 2nd, 2001,

Honorable Senator Daniel Webster, Chairman of the Redistricting Committee and
Honorable Member, good afternoon.

My name is Jean-Robert Lafortune, residing at 13235 N.W 2 Avenue. I am currently
Chairman of the Haitian-American Grassroots Coalition, an umbrella group of 23 local
organizations in South Florida, advocating for immigrants' rights and political
empowerment for Haitian nationals.

We welcome the opportunity to address this Committee today. Before I go further I
want to urge all of you the need to maintain as is the current boundary for Congressional
District 17th, Senate District 36, and House District 108. I want to stress as well the need
to modify the boundary of House District 104 so that it becomes more compact and
provides an opportunity for community of interest sharing the same language, cultural
background, and similar immigration status to elect a candidate of their own.

My presentation will put in perspective 2 major arguments.

- I.- Criticism about the Redistricting Process as it relates to minorities and Community of
Interest.
- II.- Does the Haitian Community meets the test to be considered as a Community of
Interest?

Even though I lived in South Florida for the past 21 years, this is the very first time that I
have the privilege to ~~know and~~ participate in the Redistricting process. No institution or
agency from the State gave proper notification to my community. For some reason, the
power to be always managed to keep that process far away from the public scrutiny, and
way from public participation. A process so important, crucial for our community
should not be conducted as an esoteric ritual or exercise left to the discretion of a few
individuals motivated solely by political self preservation. It must be people driven, it
must be fair and just for all. In this debate, non-hispanic immigrants with different
language and cultural heritage must be provided with appropriate political space to
represent our own community of interest as long as that community fulfills some the

criteria of the Civil Rights such as contiguity, compactness, and sharing a set of common values and interest.

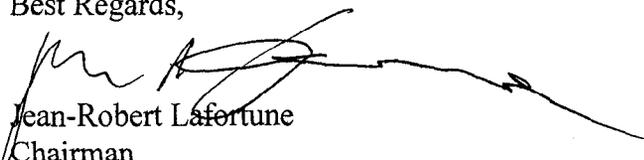
Recent data published by the U.S Census shows the State of Florida has experienced tremendous population growth in the past 10 years. Most of this growth is attributed specifically to immigrants who chose the Great State of Florida to be their permanent home. For instance, in Miami-Dade County, 2 out of 3 residents are foreign – born. Today this Committee can seize the occasion to make decision so that Miami-Dade can reflect its true diversity by maintaining members of community of interest together.

II.- Why should the Haitian Community be considered as a community of Interest?

The Haitian Community represents a community of immigrants whose members are linked through collective historical experience, language, and cultural heritage, and collective consciousness. To understand our community, it is important to do a time travel. Imagine it is the early 1980's. The tallest building in Downtown Miami is the County Court House. Along Biscayne Bay and the Miami River are score of refugees from Cuba and Haiti yearning to be . While one group is received in triumph, the other is received with big sticks and discrimination by federal and state agencies. Hundred of thousands of those refugees have settled in this community. While one group became successful and enjoys the sweet fruit of American Democracy through representation, the other was still kept in the shadow of anonymity. In the mid 1980's, through several federal court rulings with Judge James Lawrence King and Judge Alcee Hasting, two heroes of our community, those refugees started to settle as immigrants in Florida. Today in 2001, we are over 500,000 strong Haitian nationals living in Florida but the Census estimates our population to be 268,000 in the State. Most of our population is centered in the Congressional district 17th, where Congresswoman Carrie Meek serves. Part of our success today is linked with her efforts and other policymakers like her who sympathized and empathize with our cause. We are here today to urge you and your colleagues and your colleagues in Tallahassee to not break up our community, to not dilute our vote, and considers our community as a community of interest based on the criteria of the Civil Rights of 1965.

Today 500,000 Haitian Nationals come here with a blank check. It is in your hand the decision to charge that check or send it back with insufficient funds 3 months from now. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your attention.

Best Regards,



Jean-Robert Lafortune
Chairman
Haitian-American
Grassroots Coalition

FLORIDA REDISTRICTING

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 17

Good afternoon. Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the House Redistricting Committee for allowing me to testify on some of the critical aspects of redistricting and democratic reform, and to offer my insights into what this state can do to ensure fairness in its election process, by guaranteeing that all citizens are represented at the table of governance.

My name is Rick Glasgow, I am the Director of the Community Development Division of Miami-Dade County's Office of Community and Economic Development.

Miami-Dade County is the second largest recipient of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), in the country. Second only to Los Angeles County. HUD awards grants to entitlement jurisdictions on a formula basis – as determined by three factors: **the number of people with incomes below the poverty level; age of the housing stock and the low-mod population.** To ensure that these awards are utilized to empower the people for whom they are intended, HUD defined certain classifications, within the entitlement jurisdictions, as Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Areas, or more commonly referred to as “**focus**” areas. There are nine such focus areas in Miami-Dade County, four of which (Opa-Locka; West Little River; Model City and Brownsville) are included in Congressional District 17.

(Let me put these facts in the context of this public hearing)

The significance of having this number of lower income communities within the district is that, from a Regional Planning perspective, the elected representative for the district can engage in a more holistic and comprehensive approach, to address the needs of her constituents. The geographic and demographic homogeneity of the District affords a macro approach to analysis of the infrastructure (through the County's Capital Plan),

transportation, housing, economic development and public service needs (through the Social Service Master Plan), of the district's communities. In short, the current configuration of the district affords its representative and constituents the opportunity to engage in collaborative regional planning for a sustainable community. Conversely, should you elect to reapportion District 17 in any manner that fragments and consequently dilutes the concentration of these very similar communities, such action would concurrently disturb the existing elements which contribute to a seamless community revitalization strategy.

The litmus test for this body is whether in fact, its final decision ignores such considerations as geography and contiguity which has provided an established framework for undertaking community development and place some of these communities in a gerrymandered district, where the constituents' fundamental concerns are de-emphasized.

District 17 as configured, is delineated by some very natural boundaries. Its elected officials reflect its communities. Traditionally, its neighborhoods and groups share common characteristics and encounter similar challenges. While there is a recognition that the district's population has grown since the last census, the principles of redistricting as measured by preservation of communities of interest, contiguity and compactness clearly exist to support the current district boundaries. The District as configured provides its constituents, through their representative, "equal access", a fundamental right of each American. Let us not conspire to deprive these constituents of their rights.

Thank you.

Rick Glasgow, Director
Community Development Division
140 W. Flagler Street
Miami, FL. 33130
TEL: (305) 375-3418
e-mail: glasgow@miami-dade.gov

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, good afternoon. My name is Opal Jones and I am the Executive Director of the Miami-Dade Affordable Housing Foundation. I am here today to impress upon you the need for a redistricting plan which protects the rights of Miami's low-income housing community. Unfortunately for low-income families across this state, affordable housing is not a concept that most elected officials bring to the forefront of policy debate.

However, Congresswoman Carrie Meek has long been a stalwart voice in the struggle for affordable housing programs. In fact, from the mid 80's through today she remains the people's

champion and a voice for the homeless and the under housed.

Throughout her legislative career she has promoted some of the most innovative housing programs and financing mechanisms in

Florida. In fact, earlier this year the Foundation's Board of

Directors honored Congresswoman Meek as our Second Housing

Hero -- *an honor predicated upon her years of dedicated service*

in the affordable housing arena.

The Foundation has created first-time homebuyer clubs that span

the length of the County. These clubs are in places such as Florida

City, Perrine/Goulds, Overtown, Liberty City, and Opa-Locka. As

for your redistricting process, it is imperative that you maintain

communities of interest so that our voices will continue to be heard. The families in these neighborhoods share many common interests — *just one of them being the need for affordable housing programs*. If you draw district lines to disburse this population you will deprive us of the leadership that has brought us together and that has helped us to develop the political prowess to pursue *unpopular*, but critical low-income housing interests. I implore you, *at all cost*, not to dilute the political representation of the County's low-income housing community. Please keep us closely aligned so that we may continue our partnership under the leadership of Congresswoman Meek. Thank you for your time and attention.

As I understand it, you have not yet established criteria for drawing maps. As you all know the criteria that you ultimately decide to use will be vitally important in any lawsuit that is filed challenging the validity of the districts that you draw. In addition to the standard criteria of contiguity, compactness, and following municipal and county boundaries, and respecting communities of interest, I urge you to also adopt the following criteria when you draw districts.

First, you should start with the core of existing districts, and keep those cores in tact to the extent possible. I also urge you to draw districts that will protect incumbents. People in the existing districts have learned to work together over the last decade, and have come to know and depend upon the elected officials in their local areas. By keeping the core of the existing districts, and drawing the districts in a manner that will likely result in the same people representing the districts, you will promote stability, which is greatly needed in times such as these.

It is also important that there be no retrogression with respect to the gains made by Black voters during the last decade. The 1992 redistricting cycle was the first time that many of the people in the Black community were able to elect candidates who were sensitive and responsive to their particular concerns. Many of our communities were neglected by our state and congressional officials for so long that there continues to be much work that needs to be done to help those communities reach their full potential. In order for the work of rebuilding these communities to continue successfully, we need to keep the core of the existing districts and the same elected officials, or officials with similar philosophies and sensitivity to their issues. Please do not turn back the clock on the gains that we have made to date. Keep our existing districts to the largest extent possible.

Now is not the time for change



National Car Rental
4680 Conference Way S.
Boca Raton, FL 33431
(877) 530-6142 x7422

URGENT FA

Preston Walker
National Accts. Receivables

TO: State Representative/ Ms. FROM: Preston Walker
Fredricka S. Wilson

FAX: 305-919-1862 DATE: 10-01-01

PHONE: 887-530-6142, ext. 7422 PAGE: 1 of 1

RE: To radio announcement this ACCT:
morning

Urgent For Review Please Comment Please Reply Please Recycle

COMMENTS:

Ms. Fredricka S. Wilson,

Please except the following as a letter of opinion, which is due to be recorded. I am strongly against changing offices. I agree that the current position should stay the same. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated! Upon receipt please contact me at (877) 530-6142, ext. 7422 to confirm recording.

Thank-you,
Preston Walker
National Accts. Receivables
(877) 530-6142 ext. 7422
Fax (561) 893-7445
E-mail: WalkerP2@NationalCar.com

NOTE: Please send all payments to: P.O. Box 930728 Atlanta, GA 31193-0728