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REAPPORTIONMENT PUBLIC HEARING

OCTOBER 17, 2001 - 6:00 P.M.
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA HARN MUSEUM
GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA

REPORTED BY:
MONA L. WHIDDON
COURT REPORTER
Division of Administrative Hearings
DeSoto Building
1230 Apalachee Parkway
Tallahassee, Florida

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1 MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE
 2 SENATOR ANNA P. COWIN
 3 SENATOR JOHN F. LAURENT
 4 SENATOR ROD SMITH
 5 SENATOR DANIEL WEBSTER
 6 REPRESENTATIVE JOHNNIE B. BYRD
 7 REPRESENTATIVE MARIO DIAZ-BALART
 8 REPRESENTATIVE DENNIS BAXLEY
 9 REPRESENTATIVE GUS BILIRAKIS
 10 REPRESENTATIVE FRED BRUMMER
 11 REPRESENTATIVE EDWARD L. JENNINGS, JR.
 12 REPRESENTATIVE MITCH NEEDELMAN
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1 PROCEEDINGS
 2 CHAIRMAN BYRD: Thank you everyone for coming. We
 3 would like to begin the meeting by saying the Pledge of
 4 Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, if
 5 you would rise and join me.
 6 (Pledge of Allegiance.)
 7 CHAIRMAN BYRD: Thank you ladies and gentlemen, my
 8 name is Johnny Byrd and I am the Chairman of the Procedural
 9 and Redistricting Committee in the Florida House of
 10 Representatives. It's my pleasure to welcome all of you
 11 today to this public hearing. The Senators and
 12 Representatives are here to listen to the residents of this
 13 area and consider your input into this very important
 14 process.
 15 Since these are joint hearings we have divided our
 16 responsibilities throughout the many public hearings that
 17 we have held around the State of Florida. And it's my
 18 pleasure at this time to introduce Senator Dan Webster who
 19 is the Chairman on the Senate Committee on Reapportionment.
 20 Chairman Webster will preside over today's public hearing.
 21 Chairman Webster.
 22 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you, Chairman Byrd. It's
 23 also my pleasure to welcome you to the public hearing, the
 24 last one of our summer and fall trip around Florida. We
 25 have had 24 hearings, this is the 24th. Let met first

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1 explain the procedure we will be using at this public
 2 hearing. This is a public hearing, the sole purpose and
 3 only purpose of which is to hear from you, the public, on
 4 matters of redistricting. This is not a committee meeting,
 5 we are not taking legislative action at this public
 6 hearing, instead this is the public's forum where we have
 7 the opportunity to receive citizen input about your
 8 electoral districts. It's not a time for legislative
 9 debate. All Representatives and Senators will have
 10 numerous opportunities in the subsequent committee hearings
 11 and floor debates to address the members' concerns or
 12 wishes. Today, however, is for our constituents. We must
 13 not diminish their voice by taking up valuable time today
 14 in debate.
 15 Following my brief remarks counsel will give a brief
 16 overview of considerations in redistricting, legal
 17 considerations. Staff will then provide some specific
 18 information about the census results in this region and the
 19 state. The rest is reserved for you, the citizens.
 20 Every ten years after the completion of the National
 21 Census, the Constitution requires that the state of
 22 Florida, the Legislature, in particular, redraw boundaries
 23 for districts of the House, Florida House, Florida Senate,
 24 and United States Congress.
 25 The Legislature will take up this action beginning in

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1 the session that starts January 22nd, 2002, and ends
 2 March 22nd, 2002. These districts will first be used in
 3 the election of November 2002.
 4 Redistricting is a central element of our
 5 representative democracy. We take this job on with
 6 humility and due regard for the importance of the difficult
 7 task we have. We are committed to the process in that it
 8 will be open and fair and inclusive. These public hearings
 9 represent a first crucial step in this process. We
 10 appreciate that we are doing the work of the people. We
 11 want to hear from you and help you participate in a
 12 meaningful way.
 13 To encourage public participation, House Speaker Tom
 14 Feeney and Senate President John McKay have scheduled at
 15 least 24, which this is the final, as I said, public
 16 hearings throughout the state. All members of the
 17 legislative redistricting committees as well as local
 18 delegation members have been invited to these hearings.
 19 The House and Senate have designed web sites as a tool
 20 for public input and will broadcast select hearings on
 21 Florida's public television stations. The web addresses
 22 for the House and Senate are available at the information
 23 table as you came in the door. A link is also available
 24 from the Florida Legislature's web site.
 25 The redistricting plan from the State House and the

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1 State Senate will be done in the form of a joint
 2 resolution. That resolution will not be subject to the
 3 approval of the Governor or his veto, but it will be
 4 reviewed by the Florida Supreme Court.
 5 The Congressional plan will be passed in the form of
 6 the bill and will be subject to the approval or veto of the
 7 Governor; however, it will not be reviewed by the Florida
 8 Supreme Court. I encourage everyone to take careful review
 9 of the 2000 Census, it is the essential building block on
 10 which Florida's redistricting plans will be built. The
 11 address of the U.S. Census web site is available at the
 12 information table.
 13 We are here to listen and consider your voice. We
 14 encourage each member of the public to testify and to help
 15 us craft your legislative districts. We also encourage
 16 written submissions in addition to testimony heard -- that
 17 will be given at the public hearing. Everyone wishing to
 18 speak must fill out a speaker's card like this which are
 19 also available at the sign-in table. This is the only way
 20 we will know who has spoken when the meeting is over and
 21 who actually wants to speak as we move along.
 22 Speaker cards are available, as I said, at the sign-in
 23 table. We want to hear from everyone and as many people as
 24 possible; therefore, we must limit your comments to four
 25 minutes.
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1 On behalf of Senate President John McKay and House
 2 Speaker Tom Feeney and the members of the Florida
 3 Legislature, I look forward to working with you and all of
 4 you on this historic and important task.
 5 At this time I would like to recognize Don Taylor who
 6 is a partner in the law firm of Trip, Scott, the law firm
 7 of former Senator Jim Scott, lead counsel for the Senate
 8 during the redistricting process. Mr. Taylor, you are
 9 recognized.
 10 MR. TAYLOR: Thank you. As the Chairman has
 11 indicated, I am Dan Taylor, special counsel for the Florida
 12 Senate for redistricting and reapportionment matters.
 13 Mr. Miguel DeGrandy is legal counsel to the Florida House.
 14 Pursuant to the protocol that we have established I will be
 15 making a short presentation. My job tonight is to give you
 16 and members of the public an overview of the law regarding
 17 redistricting and reapportionment.
 18 This presentation is by no means intended to be a
 19 comprehensive or a complete review of all of the issues
 20 related to the topic, but it is intended to give each of
 21 you an introduction to the basic principles and constraints
 22 that will guide the decision-making of our state
 23 Legislature as it proceeds with this very important task.
 24 The task of redistricting and reapportionment is the
 25 process of dividing the residents of a jurisdiction, in
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1 this case, the residents of the entire state of Florida
 2 into different electoral seats or districts. Redistricting
 3 is a constitutional requirement, both the Florida
 4 Constitution and the United States Constitution require
 5 redistricting commencing every ten years after the census.
 6 Because of Florida's population increase over the last
 7 ten years Florida will have two additional members in the
 8 United States Congress, a total of 25 seats. The State
 9 Legislature, therefore, will need to create 25 separate,
 10 contiguous districts to cover the entire state, one for
 11 each of those members of the Congress. The Legislature
 12 will also need to divide the state into 40 State Senate
 13 Districts and 120 State House of Representative Districts.
 14 Although the Legislature may, if it chooses, reduce
 15 the number of State Senate and House Districts to as low as
 16 30 and 80, respectively. The Florida Constitution also
 17 requires the State House and Senate Districts be
 18 consecutively numbered and, quote, of either contiguous,
 19 overlapping or identical territory, end quote.
 20 In Florida, as we have already discussed, the task of
 21 redistricting is entrusted to the State Legislature.
 22 Commencing with this public hearing process, the State
 23 Legislature will begin considering the opinion of Florida's
 24 citizens. Legislative committees will convene this fall,
 25 and beginning in January the full Legislature will begin
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1 the process of developing and considering different
 2 redistricting plans. The regular session ends in March
 3 2002. If the regular legislative session ends without a
 4 redistricting plan the Governor is required by the Florida
 5 Constitution to convene the Legislature in a special
 6 session, which session should not exceed 30 consecutive
 7 days.
 8 If the special session ends without the adoption of a
 9 redistricting plan for the State Legislature, the Attorney
 10 General must petition the Florida Supreme Court to commence
 11 deliberations on the establishment of a redistricting plan.
 12 Within 60 days of this petition the Florida Supreme Court
 13 must file an order sitting forth such a plan. If during
 14 the regular session or the special session reapportionment
 15 plans are adopted by the Legislature for Congress, then the
 16 Governor has an opportunity to approve or veto the adopted
 17 plans.
 18 If the Legislature adopts redistricting plans for the
 19 State House and Senate districts, then 15 days after
 20 passage, the Florida Attorney General is required to
 21 petition the Florida Supreme Court for a determination of
 22 the validity of the Legislature's plan. If the Florida
 23 Supreme Court declares invalid the Legislature's plan,
 24 within five days of such determination, the Governor must
 25 reconvene the Legislature in an extraordinary session of no
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1 more than 15 days, at which session the Legislature adopts
 2 a joint resolution conforming to the judgment of the
 3 Florida Supreme Court.
 4 In adopting a redistricting plan, the Legislature will
 5 be guided by several factors including, first, the
 6 principle of one person, one vote. And secondly, the
 7 requirements of the Florida Constitution, the United States
 8 Constitution, and Federal Statutes.
 9 The principle or idea commonly referred to as one
 10 person, one vote developed from a series of landmark United
 11 States Supreme Court cases in the 1960s. Generally this
 12 principle stands for the proposition that each person's
 13 vote shall count as much as anyone else's vote. These
 14 cases embody a reaction against the practice in several
 15 states of maintaining districts for state legislative
 16 offices that were substantially different in population.
 17 For example, there would be a district containing
 18 250,000 people electing one representative to the State
 19 House of Representatives and a rural district in the same
 20 district containing 75,000 people also electing one
 21 Representative to the State House of Representatives. The
 22 Supreme Court concluded that these types of differences in
 23 district populations resulted in each vote in the district
 24 with the smaller population carrying more weight than a
 25 vote in the larger districts.
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1 The one person, one vote cases forbid these
 2 discrepancies in the creation of districts; however,
 3 neither the Constitution or the Supreme Court requires
 4 exact or precise mathematical equality amongst
 5 Congressional Districts and amongst State Legislative
 6 Districts.
 7 For Congressional Districts, the courts have
 8 instituted the strictest standard. As a rule of thumb, the
 9 population amongst different districts in one state will be
 10 substantially less than 1 percent. In other words, if you
 11 take the state's total population and divide it by the
 12 number of Congressional Districts, the result would give
 13 you an ideal size for each Congressional District in that
 14 state, and typically Congressional Districts in any given
 15 state will be well within the 1 percent of this ideal
 16 number.
 17 For State Legislative Districts, the courts have
 18 permitted a greater deviation amongst districts. The
 19 courts will accept differences between districts of up to
 20 10 percent in certain circumstances. The Voting Rights Act
 21 of 1964 and the Equal Protection Clause of the United
 22 States Constitution have become, over the course of the
 23 last 30 years, important elements of any Legislature's
 24 deliberations regarding redistricting.
 25 Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act prohibits any
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1 practice or procedure including certain redistricting
 2 practices that impairs the ability of a minority community
 3 to elect candidates of choice on an equal basis with
 4 nonminority voters.
 5 Florida is also one of the states containing certain
 6 jurisdictions that are subject to review under Section 5 of
 7 the Voting Rights Act. Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act
 8 requires that the covered jurisdictions submit prior to
 9 implementation any proposed change to their practices or
 10 procedures affecting voting, including any changes to
 11 election districts resulting from the redistricting process
 12 for approval by either the Attorney General of the United
 13 States or the Federal District Court for the District of
 14 Columbia.
 15 This process is known as preclearance. In Florida the
 16 covered jurisdictions include Collier, Hardee, Hendry,
 17 Hillsborough and Monroe Counties. The vast majority of
 18 preclearance requests are made to the Attorney General's
 19 Office. Preclearance is obtained if the Attorney General
 20 affirmatively indicates that the office has no objection to
 21 the change, or if at the expiration of 60 days, no
 22 objection to the submitted change has been made by the
 23 Attorney General. Either through the court proceeding or
 24 the Attorney General's office, the covered jurisdiction
 25 bears the burden of demonstrating that the proposed voting
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1 change, quote, does not have the purpose and will not have
 2 the effect of denying or abridging the right to vote on
 3 account of race, or color, or membership in a language
 4 minority group, end quote.
 5 In conclusion, the legal rules regarding the
 6 redistricting and reapportionment process are somewhat
 7 complicated and unfortunately this short presentation only
 8 scratches the surface of some rather delicate legal issues,
 9 some of which have not been fully decided by the courts.
 10 Mr. Chairman, I stand ready to provide you with any
 11 assistance you might need throughout this meeting. Thank
 12 you.
 13 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. At this time, I would
 14 like to recognize John Guthrie, who is the technical staff
 15 director of Senate redistricting who will give some
 16 information about the State census, but also, for this
 17 particular area, some details about it. Mr. Guthrie.
 18 MR. GUTHRIE: Thank you, Chairman Webster, Chairman
 19 Byrd, members of the House and Senate. My task in the next
 20 few minutes is to review the numbers from the 2000 Census
 21 that will provide the context for redistricting in 2002.
 22 The first fact that we need to be aware of as we approach
 23 redistricting is that Florida is a rapidly growing state.
 24 The state population increased by more than 3 million
 25 people between 1990 and 2000, and it now stands at nearly
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1 16 million people. As a result of this rapid growth,
 2 Florida's delegation in the United States House of
 3 Representatives will increase by two to a total of 25
 4 members of the U.S. House.

5 The other key fact that we need to keep in mind in
 6 looking at Florida's growth over the past decade is that
 7 the growth has not been uniform, different areas have grown
 8 at different rates. For instance, Flagler County, on the
 9 northeast coast was the fastest growing county in Florida;
 10 it grew at the rate of the 73.6 percent. And four other
 11 Florida counties grew at a rate of 60 percent or greater.

12 At the other end of the spectrum, Monroe County, the
 13 Florida keys, grew the slowest in the state at a rate of
 14 only 2 percent during the ten-year period. And there were
 15 four Florida counties that grew at a rate of less than
 16 10 percent.

17 Looking at the numbers for the local area we see that
 18 Alachua County, the population increased by 20 percent to
 19 the 218,000 people in Alachua County. Alachua County now
 20 ranks 20th among the 67 counties in Florida. Levy County,
 21 the population increased by 33 percent to 34,000 people.
 22 Dixie County, the population increased by 31 percent to
 23 14,000 people. And in Gilchrist County, the population
 24 increased by 49 percent to 14,000 people. In Lafayette
 25 County, the population increased by 26 percent to 7,000

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1 people.

2 And in Suwannee County, the population increased by
 3 30 percent to 35,000 people. Columbia County, the
 4 population increased by 33 percent to 57,000 people. Union
 5 County, the population increased by 31 percent to 13,000
 6 people. Bradford County, the population increased by
 7 16 percent to 26,000 people. Putnam County, the population
 8 increased by 8 percent to 70,000 people. And Marion
 9 County, the population increased by 33 percent to 259,000
 10 people.

11 As we heard earlier, the Constitution provides the
 12 predicate for the redistricting process. Article 1 of the
 13 United States Constitution says that there shall be a
 14 decennial census for purposes of providing for equal
 15 representation. And based on the census that was taken in
 16 2000, Congressional, Senate, and Florida House Districts in
 17 our state will be adjusted during the 2002 session.

18 Districts that now have substantially too many people
 19 will need to shrink in order to have an equal population.
 20 And districts that are substantially underpopulated will
 21 need to gain territory in order to pick up the necessary
 22 population. Based on the 1990 Census the population of a
 23 Congressional District was 562,519 people. This will
 24 increase by 14 percent based on the 2000 Census to a
 25 population of almost 640,000 people per Congressional

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1 District.

2 Similarly, for Senate Districts, the population was
 3 323,000 based on the '90 Census. This will increase to
 4 almost 400,000 based on the 2000 Census. And the
 5 population for a House District was 108,000 in 1990.
 6 That's going to increase by 23.5 percent like Senate
 7 Districts to 133,000.

8 We have a graphic that shows the relative growth of
 9 Congressional, Senate and House Districts in Florida during
 10 the ten-year period. The 1990 populations are indicated in
 11 the green color, and the 2000 populations are indicated in
 12 blue. Another way to look at the growth of population is
 13 to see which areas has the density gotten larger, have more
 14 people per square mile come in, and in which areas has the
 15 density decreased.

16 This graphic shows that the urban areas in Gainesville
 17 and Lake City have actually lost density, whereas the
 18 suburban areas have gained density. The next map we have
 19 looks at population growth not in terms of density or
 20 people per square mile, but rather in terms of the relative
 21 growth or decline in population. Areas that are in red
 22 here grew at a rate slower than the state average. And
 23 areas in blue grew at a rate larger than the state average.

24 Now, what is the effect of this on Legislative
 25 Districts? Well, based on the overall growth that has

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1 occurred during the decade, Congressional District 5
 2 currently is 50,000 people over what the target population
 3 will be based on the 2000 Census. Similarly, Congressional
 4 District 2 is almost 39,000 people over the target
 5 population. And Congressional District 6 is 117,000 people
 6 over the target population. Similar pattern for the Senate
 7 Districts in the area. Senate District 5, which Senator
 8 Smith just noticed, is very near the target population for
 9 a Senate District, while Senate District 2 is a little bit
 10 underpopulated, approximately 69,000 below what the target
 11 population will be for a Senate District.

12 Senate District 4, which also touches Alachua County,
 13 also is very near the target population for a Senate
 14 District. And we see really the same pattern with the
 15 Florida House Districts in the area. This same
 16 information, the over/undercounts is available on a handout
 17 that is available on the tables for all of the public.

18 Using the FREDS 2000 software that is available from
 19 the Legislature and can be ordered through the
 20 Legislature's web page, you can put together counties,
 21 tracts, block groups and blocks in order to determine what
 22 new districts might look like based on the 2000 Census.
 23 For instance, if we pick the counties surrounding Alachua
 24 County and add up that population, assign them all to one
 25 district, the population of the green area here would be

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1 approximately 644,000 people or just a little bit more than
 2 what is required for one Congressional District, just to
 3 give you an idea of how that process might work.
 4 For more information on all of the census figures, for
 5 archives of the 24 public hearings that have been held
 6 around the state this summer and fall, and to order the
 7 FREDs software, I would encourage citizens to visit the
 8 Florida Online Sunshine web site and follow links to Senate
 9 Redistricting or House Redistricting from that site. Thank
 10 you.
 11 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you, Mr. Guthrie. Ladies and
 12 gentlemen, as I stated earlier, each person who wishes to
 13 speak needs to fill out a speaker's card. If you notice in
 14 the bottom right-hand corner there is a number. We will
 15 call you by number in ascending order. If there's anyone
 16 who wishes to speak, there's staff available outside to
 17 assist you in doing so. Please remember, in order to
 18 ensure that everyone has an opportunity to speak we will
 19 limit your comments to four minutes. But also remember
 20 that we welcome any written submission that you would like
 21 to present. And if you have any handouts, if you will lay
 22 them on this front table we will make sure that they get
 23 entered into the record. So, we are ready to begin and we
 24 will begin with Number 1 if Number 1 is ready.
 25 (Pause.)
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1 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: You are recognized.
 2 MR. BOE: Thank you. First of all, I would like to
 3 thank Chairman Webster and the members of this committee
 4 for the courtesy that you have extended to Gainesville and
 5 Alachua County by providing us this forum this evening. My
 6 name is William Boe, I am a resident of Alachua County and
 7 registered Republican in a predominantly Democratic county.
 8 Want to talk to you specifically about our county's
 9 representation in Florida Senate District 5. I do not know
 10 what the committee has in mind with regards to the current
 11 Senate seats, but like most residents, I desire a seat that
 12 is fair and practical and enables Alachua County to have
 13 effective representation in state government.
 14 I, for one, do not believe that the best interest of
 15 Alachua County would be well served by trying to manipulate
 16 the current Senate seats to benefit any specific party,
 17 office holder, or political candidate. We have all seen
 18 extensive slicing and dicing of maps to create districts
 19 that serve personal political ambitions with disregard to
 20 the interests and needs of the public that the districts
 21 should serve.
 22 As a Republican I object to the shape of U.S.
 23 Congressional District 3 which became a national
 24 embarrassment for the State of Florida. I do not wish for
 25 our Senate seat to be another case study in creative
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1 geographic designs that resemble an over-cooked pretzel or
 2 a bug splattered on a windshield on Payne's Prairie.
 3 It is essential to me that residents of Alachua County
 4 have a direct influence in determining who represents us in
 5 the Senate without having our influence diluted by cutting
 6 our county into small political slivers that restrict our
 7 abilities to elect people who understand our specific
 8 legislative needs. I would like our district to include
 9 the committee of our counties, I would like the district to
 10 include the communities of our county which have become
 11 political orphans.
 12 Specifically, High Springs should be united in the
 13 same district with its neighbor Alachua and reunited
 14 politically with the rest of the county. The tri-county
 15 communities of Dixie, Gilchrist, and Levy are best served
 16 by a shared Senator. Our district currently is part of
 17 Levy County; it would be practical to unite Alachua with
 18 its tri-county neighbors who share a common historical and
 19 cultural heritage. In conclusion, I seek a district that
 20 enables my vote to actually count.
 21 I would also like to say our current Senate district
 22 served me well, the conservative Republican, and it serves
 23 me well as a moderate Democrat, Rod Smith, who I believe
 24 represents my family well. I hope the decisions made
 25 regarding the shaping of this district are focused on
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1 improving government and nothing else. Anything else would
 2 be a disservice to the people of our city and county.
 3 Thank you.
 4 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 2.
 5 MR. MARSH: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members
 6 of the committee, my name is Matthew Marsh, I am a resident
 7 and registered voter in the City of Gainesville and have
 8 been so since 1982. I am employed at the Social Security
 9 Administration, but I'm not here representing Social
 10 Security here today, I'm here just as a private citizen and
 11 a resident of Alachua County and also as the president of
 12 the Florida State Council of the American Federation of
 13 Government Employees, which is the Federal Employees Union.
 14 Here in North Central Florida, AFGE represents a large
 15 number of employees at the Veteran's Administration, USDA
 16 Federal Bureau of Prisons, Social Security Administration
 17 Offices, HUD, Department of Labor, just to name a few.
 18 This opportunity to make a contribution to the
 19 redistricting process is welcome and I will confess that I
 20 had serious doubts that the hearing would take place in
 21 Gainesville, but here I am and there you are, and on short
 22 notice also.
 23 To digress just a bit, I've never missed an
 24 opportunity to vote. I am a native of Alabama, I spent my
 25 formative years there in the 1950s and '60s. I learned the
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1 lessons of those turbulent times. I gained an appreciation
 2 for the value of political participation and a strong
 3 dislike and contempt for those who seek to deny or cheapen
 4 that participation. So, I take the right to vote in
 5 representative government very seriously, and I thoroughly
 6 expect that y'all, through this process, will do the same.
 7 My specific request of the committee is simple, and
 8 rather specific. I request that the 5th Congressional
 9 District be maintained as it is now or as near as possible
 10 to that. The voters of the district identify with the
 11 district, take pride in the district. It is our district,
 12 it is our community. We have worked hard to make it that
 13 way and maintain it. By a huge majority, majorities, we
 14 have selected our own Congresswoman, Congresswoman Thurman.
 15 She represents us, she fights for us, and she tells it to
 16 us straight even if it's not what we want to hear. But we
 17 have worked long and hard to pick someone who represents us
 18 and I think our judgment has been rewarding.
 19 The City of Gainesville Alachua County and Alachua
 20 County is an integrated community. It draws on the same
 21 economic base. The people who live here share many issues
 22 of concern. We want Gainesville to be represented by a
 23 single member of Congress, not two or three. If you chop
 24 up the district our political power will be severely
 25 diminished. The people of the region have greatly
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1 benefited from the current configuration of the 5th
 2 Congressional District.
 3 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thirty seconds.
 4 MR. MARSH: Thank you. So, my message is simple, if
 5 you draw district lines all over our community, if you chop
 6 us up in a way that distances us from our legislators, and
 7 you will have weakened the community, much of the progress
 8 that we have made will wither. Please do not alter the
 9 districts, do not cheapen and do not devalue our
 10 participation in the political process. Thank you.
 11 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 3.
 12 MR. TAYLOR: Good evening, my name is Ed Taylor,
 13 President of Save Rodman and it's good to see all of you
 14 again. I'm from Putnam County and that's where Rodman
 15 Reservoir is located. Rodman Reservoir is very, very
 16 important to Putnam County. It means a lot to the
 17 citizens, especially financially.
 18 Senator Rod Smith ran on his platform that he would
 19 help protect Rodman Reservoir, and he has done just that,
 20 and we feel that he will continue to do so. That's one of
 21 the reasons that he's setting here is because of his
 22 backing of Rodman Reservoir. And on behalf of all of the
 23 Rodman supporters, especially those in Putnam County, we
 24 ask you to leave District 5 intact and let Senator Rod
 25 Smith continue to be our Senator.
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1 Now, I need to change hats just a little bit before I
 2 run out of time. I am also vice-chairman of the Putnam
 3 County Democratic Executive Committee. We are a small,
 4 poor rural county. Senator Smith knows that, he has
 5 recognized it and he has addressed many of the issues that
 6 we need. So, on behalf of the democratic party in Putnam
 7 County, I again ask you to leave Senate District 5 intact
 8 and let Senator Smith remain our Senator. Thank you.
 9 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 4.
 10 MS. BAUER: Good evening. My name is Sharon Baur, I
 11 live in Gainesville and I am president of the staff union
 12 here at the University of Florida, Local 3340 of the
 13 American Federation of State, County and Municipal
 14 Employees. And I want to thank the committee for holding
 15 this hearing on redistricting and I'm grateful that you
 16 held this hearing in the evening when my coworkers and I
 17 can attend.
 18 As far as redistricting in this area, I think that you
 19 will find that most members of the public in this area,
 20 including myself, are very happy with our Congressional
 21 lines. The 5th Congressional District, as it currently
 22 exists, is fair and we don't want it changed. It
 23 represents people with similar interests and who live in
 24 one part and commute to other parts of the same district.
 25 Economically, socially, and geographically this is a fair
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1 district that should be kept intact.
 2 Also, please hold more of these hearings after you
 3 have made a first draft of the lines. It's hard to make
 4 specific comments before the lines are drawn. If you
 5 really want valuable public input, you should let us speak
 6 to specific proposals.
 7 Finally, please consider using adjusted census data.
 8 We all know that the census misses thousands of people and
 9 we want as accurate a count as possible so we get our fair
 10 share of representation in Gainesville. Thank you for the
 11 chance to speak here today.
 12 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 5.
 13 MR. CERVONE: Senator Cowin, and gentlemen, thank you
 14 very much for the opportunity to be here. My name is Phil
 15 Cervone, I am a long-time resident of Alachua County and it
 16 is also my privilege to be state attorney for the 8th
 17 Judicial Circuit. That circuit includes Alachua,
 18 Gilchrist, Levy, Baker, Bradford and Union counties, and I
 19 would like to address specifically Senate District 5 this
 20 evening for just a few seconds of your time. It is, I
 21 believe, in the interest of my constituents throughout that
 22 judicial circuit to have Senate District 5 represent as
 23 many of them as is possible. The reason that I say that is
 24 the compatibility of interest between those various
 25 counties.
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1 For example, Levy and Gilchrist counties have
 2 historically always shared the same interests. Bradford
 3 and Union counties historically were once one. Baker
 4 County shares the same interests as all of those counties
 5 and issues that are important to all of them with things
 6 like courthouse financing and other issues that are
 7 important to criminal justice people throughout the
 8 circuit.

9 I believe that it is important to me to be able to
 10 represent my constituency in those counties to have Senate
 11 representation that is speaking for all of them and not
 12 fragmented into different areas. For those reasons, my
 13 hope would be that whenever you redistrict, Senate District
 14 5 can grow to include other areas right now that are
 15 geographically virtually next door to what now comprises
 16 the district but are excluded from the district in terms of
 17 my judicial circuit. I think that that would best enable
 18 us to have a strong voice in Tallahassee for that district.
 19 Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 6.

21 MR. MOELLER: My name is Robert Moeller, I am the town
 22 attorney for the town of Cross City, Florida, I am also the
 23 coordinator of the Nature Coast State Trail Coordinating
 24 Committee, I'm also active in the Dixie County Chamber of
 25 Commerce. I've come to address you today, however, as a
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1 private citizen. And I would like to address primarily the
 2 issues of the State Senatorial Districts and the State
 3 Representative Districts.

4 I'm advocating that the Dixie, Levy and Gilchrist
 5 counties be included in both the State Senatorial Districts
 6 and in the State Representative Districts. Historically we
 7 share a lot of interests together. We share the -- Dixie
 8 and Levy counties share the Suwannee River estuary, we are
 9 all bordered by the Suwannee River.

10 We have cooperated over the years in many, many
 11 endeavors and these include things like a Suwannee River
 12 livestock fair and an association that's been running a
 13 fair for our children for over 50 years now. We also, as a
 14 recent example, entered into an inter-local agreement
 15 wherein we committed our iced tea funds from the federal
 16 government to construct and donate to the state of Florida
 17 the Nature Coast State Trail, which is 31 miles of
 18 recreational trail which stretches between Dixie, Levy and
 19 Gilchrist counties and links the towns of Cross City,
 20 Fanning Springs, Chiefland and Trenton.

21 We are also in a cooperative effort which is called
 22 the Tri-county Tourism and Development Board wherein we are
 23 seeking to encourage ecotourism in our area. So, we share
 24 a lot of mutual interests. If we have an issue, it's very
 25 common for members of one county to come to the social
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1 groups, the Chambers of Commerce, the Rotarians and seek
 2 their support. So we would like to see you put us all
 3 three together. Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 7.

5 MR. HILL: Thank you for holding this hearing. My
 6 name is John Hill and I am a resident and commissioner of
 7 the City of High Springs. High Springs is a community of
 8 3800 souls. We are located in the northwest corner of
 9 Alachua County, we are adjacent to Gilchrist County and
 10 Columbia County.

11 Our little city is divided into several groups. In
 12 the Senate we are represented by Senator Mitchell and he
 13 has been extremely supportive of our wastewater project,
 14 however he lives near Jasper, a number of miles away. We
 15 are also represented, a small portion of our town, by
 16 Senator Smith who lives adjacent to the City of High
 17 Springs. He knows our town well, he grew up around there,
 18 he's been a great support for our projects, not only in the
 19 Senate but also locally that had nothing to do with the
 20 Senate.

21 In the House, we are divided. We have a
 22 representative who lives, I believe, in Dunnellon,
 23 Representative Kendrick, and we also have a local person by
 24 the name of McGriff who lives in Gainesville. Both of
 25 these people have been supportive in our projects and we
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1 greatly appreciate their support, however Representative
 2 Kendrick, as I have said, lives many miles away from our
 3 city. Our sympathy goes with Beverly Hill who has to try
 4 to tell voters in High Springs how they may vote, and also
 5 to the constituents who may have one computation, and their
 6 neighbor another, on who to vote for, either Smith or
 7 Kendrick, Kendrick or McGriff, it gets so very complicated.
 8 Our request is that High Springs be considered as one unit,
 9 included in one area for the Senate and one for the House,
 10 preferably in Alachua County where we believe that we are
 11 part of that community. Sometimes we are not always sure.

12 But anyway, we would like the confusion to end. I
 13 know that a number of people that did not vote last year or
 14 the last voting session because it was very confusing.
 15 Others believed that they voted incorrectly, so probably
 16 their vote didn't count. We also request and recognize
 17 that geographical boundaries that may be used, like major
 18 roads, rivers and so on, and no such thing as power line
 19 right-of-ways, which we understand now goes forward. So,
 20 thank you very much, and please consider High Springs as a
 21 unit and not four little pieces. Thank you very much.

22 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 8.

23 MS. MACLEISH-WHITE: Evening, my name is Odetta
 24 Macleish-White and I am here as the first vice-president of
 25 the League of Women Voters of Alachua County, Gainesville.
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1 Alachua County, I had the opportunity to read the statement
 2 that I am about to make into record at the Ocala hearing,
 3 but I'm certainly thrilled to read it again here in
 4 Gainesville and I thank all of you for coming here and
 5 wrapping up your public hearings with a visit to
 6 Gainesville.

7 "The League of Women Voters believes that voting is a
 8 fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed.
 9 Further, the League believes that Congressional Districts
 10 and government legislative bodies should be apportioned
 11 substantially on population and in a manner that does not
 12 dilute the effective representation of minority citizens.
 13 In the upcoming reapportionment process, the League of
 14 Women Voters of Alachua County, Gainesville would like to
 15 see the creation of compact, single-member districts, equal
 16 in population that take into account local characteristics
 17 such as political and geographical boundaries whenever
 18 possible.

19 "We believe that such districts create in citizens a
 20 feeling of connection to and influence over their
 21 legislators who would be better able to understand the
 22 unique communities they represent. People vote when they
 23 feel their voices will be heard by someone who knows their
 24 issues and will be more directly accountable to them. The
 25 League of Women Voters in Florida supports People over
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1 Politics, a drive to amend the Florida Constitution, by
 2 providing for an independent commission to redraw districts
 3 every ten years and mandating that the districts be
 4 compact, contiguous and honor county and municipal
 5 boundaries to the extent possible. There's no denying the
 6 extremely self-protective and political nature of the
 7 process on which you are about to embark, therefore, we
 8 call on you to keep the best interests of your constituents
 9 always before you." And I thank you for this time.

10 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 9.

11 MR. LANDER: Good evening, thank you, Chairman
 12 Webster, members of the House and Senate, I want to thank
 13 you for giving us this opportunity to come and address you
 14 regarding redistricting. My name is Joseph Lander, I am a
 15 life-long resident of Dixie County, and I come before you
 16 tonight asking that we look at not only what computers can
 17 do with numbers regarding redistricting but more the
 18 culture and ideology of what those numbers cannot show us.

19 Dixie, Levy and Gilchrist County, as Mr. Moeller spoke
 20 about earlier, have a long-standing history of working
 21 together, cooperation, of building projects together for
 22 the benefit of our community. Dixie County works with Levy
 23 and Gilchrist County through our many services, often
 24 covering for each other, providing backup service and then
 25 bringing -- unfortunately, we don't have medical facilities
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1 out in our rural area, we transport them to Gainesville, we
 2 do our shopping in Gainesville, we do shopping in Levy
 3 County, we work together to ensure that our communities
 4 have those things that alone we could not have.

5 Our school systems in our rural areas are in desperate
 6 need of representation that understands the unique nature
 7 of a rural community. I am an attorney in Cross City, I
 8 represent the Dixie County School System, I also represent
 9 Dixie County, and I can tell you what goes on in
 10 Tallahassee affects our rural communities much more
 11 differently than it may in some other areas.

12 Senator Smith and his staff ought to be commended in
 13 working with us, although they don't represent us now, in
 14 helping us to solve and work through some of those
 15 problems. We would respectfully request that in looking at
 16 redistricting, that that be taken into account and that
 17 Senate District 5 and also our State House District look to
 18 include Dixie, Levy and Gilchrist counties together as a
 19 cohesive unit so that our voice can be heard strong and
 20 loud in Tallahassee. And we thank you for your time.

21 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 10.

22 MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, committee members.
 23 My name is Charlie King, I am retired military, I live in
 24 Chiefland and by now you know how much the tri-county area
 25 would like to stay together from the number of speakers
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1 that have been before you and talked about the similarities
 2 that we have in so many different ways. The farming
 3 community, Levy, Dixie and Gilchrist, is all very similar
 4 and they have so many different commodities and different
 5 things and needs that are so similar and we would like to
 6 keep our representation together.

7 I would also like to speak to the Congressional
 8 District. Being military, the representation that we have
 9 in Congress to support the Veterans' Hospital here in
 10 Gainesville is unprecedented. We could not ask for better
 11 than what we have, we would like to keep what we have in
 12 that respect. I know that there probably will have to be
 13 some changes in some aspects of redistricting, but as near
 14 as possible in all cases, we would like to see our
 15 Congressional District, our Senatorial District, and our
 16 State Representative stay as near as possible to what we
 17 have today. We have so many similar areas on the coast
 18 with the fishing industry and the clam industry that we
 19 have, we would like to have the same representation for
 20 those three counties especially. Thank you very much for
 21 this opportunity.

22 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 11. Former
 23 Representative, Bob Casey.

24 MR. CASEY: Chair, Chair Byrd, members, thank you very
 25 much for coming to Gainesville. The Gainesville Sun had a
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1 little editorial today and they wanted to give this process
2 back to an independent nonpartisan commission. The League
3 of Women Voters have stated that they also favor that. The
4 state of Florida and indeed the world has yet to see the
5 composition of a nonpartisan commission resulting from the
6 political process, it just doesn't happen, you can't
7 separate politics from politics. I must say, and in 1978
8 when the revision, Constitution Revision Commission came
9 together, they put this issue on the ballot and it was
10 defeated.

11 So I would say to them, if they want to work and make
12 it a part of a Constitution by an amendment process, then
13 go to it. But right now, that process is guaranteed to the
14 Legislature and I believe that the people need to remain in
15 control of reapportionment. And we do that through our
16 elected representatives. A nonpartisan commission would be
17 composed of whoever, and they certainly don't represent the
18 people.

19 I must say that the composition of this committee here
20 tonight differs significantly from the one that I testified
21 before in 1992 and I'm pleased that that's happened. I
22 think that if we went back to the good old days in the late
23 1800s and 1900s, each county would have their own Senator,
24 each county would have their own Representative, but the
25 Supreme Court intervened there and said that can't happen
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1 anymore, that it has to be based on one person, one vote.
2 And I'm pleased with that recommendation.

3 And, in the recent past, Alachua County had two
4 members of the House. Highway 441 divided us half and
5 half. We had two Representatives in the House, we had a
6 single Senator. Those were the good old days. That can't
7 happen again because of Alachua County, what you have to do
8 to obey the Court's decisions. I hope you will continue to
9 consider the close affinity that Alachua County and Marion
10 County have. We are sort of sister counties. We have a
11 lot of things in common and we would like to continue to
12 work with Marion County. Thank you very much for coming.

13 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 12.

14 MS. HILL: Good evening and welcome to Alachua County,
15 my name is Beverly Hill and I'm the Supervisor of Elections
16 in Alachua County, and I would like to thank Mr. Hill for
17 his sympathy. And I would like to kind of pick up on what
18 he said about the community of interest and show you what
19 High Springs is like. These are my maps and I know these
20 are hard for you to see, but these are the State Senate
21 Districts in our county, and this is Senate District 4,
22 which is Senator Mitchell, and then the white in here is
23 Senate District 5, which is Senator Smith. And you see
24 where this line is, this dark area here is High Springs,
25 and this little bit of dark area up here, that line was
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1 significant to someone I'm sure, but it's way up there and
2 this little piece then is represented by Senator Smith.
3 And then this part down here is represented by Senator
4 Mitchell. And this is the type of thing that they are
5 saying. This is a meaningless division to most folks.
6 Even Highway 441 which goes here, it's much easier to tell
7 voters, Everyone north of 441 in this district, everything
8 south of 441 is in this district. So I just want to show
9 you this.

10 And then one other thing, this is Hawthorne and
11 Hawthorne is on the other side of the county, and this is
12 what we call an E space and -- my mind is not working real
13 well -- this is one Senate and one House District put
14 together, this is another Senate and another House District
15 put together. These are little streets here that really
16 aren't wide enough almost for two cars to pass, but people
17 across the street are in different districts. And this is
18 extremely difficult for people to remember and to explain
19 when they get to the polls and wonder why their next-door
20 neighbor has different people on the ballot than they do.

21 So this is the kind of thing that was done in 1992,
22 and this was one I brought before. This is Congressional
23 3, which we do not have anymore, but this is a mobile home
24 community and these are lots, and this little strip of lots
25 right here was in Congressional 3 and this little bunch
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1 right here but, I mean, they have the same address off of
2 39th Avenue, they are all in the same thing. But don't do
3 this thing, this is what I'm trying to say, don't do this,
4 don't do this.

5 So, the community of interests, I think, has come
6 forth loud and clear from the city. Keep our
7 municipalities together and please, I know you have to make
8 divisions but use major arteries, I mean, don't use creek
9 beds and power line right-of-ways and things like that,
10 those are not things that people pick up on right away.

11 So, I would ask you to use major arteries. We will
12 have the problem afterwards, as Commissioner Hill alluded
13 to, of telling people what precinct they are in, where
14 their district is, and also we are going to have to change
15 some of those precincts. Most of my precincts now are
16 divided by major arteries so I will have less work if you
17 use the major arteries, that would just be very helpful to
18 us. I think that's much more understandable, and preserve
19 the communities -- the municipalities as a community of
20 interest. That is my message.

21 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Number 13.

22 AUDIENCE MEMBER: He had to leave to teach a class but
23 he will be back later.

24 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Okay. Number 14.

25 MR. FLOYD: Good evening, and thank you for coming to
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1 Gainesville. My name is Chuck Floyd and I am a chair of
 2 the Alachua County Democratic Executive Committee, and I'm
 3 speaking on behalf of the Democratic party tonight. The
 4 issue of redistricting is vital to our county since we have
 5 to live with this for the next ten years. The State
 6 Legislature is presently controlled by the Republican
 7 party. Alachua County is a Democratic stronghold. Our
 8 registration in round numbers at the moment is 52 percent
 9 Democratic, 28 percent Republican, and 28 percent
 10 Independent or other.

11 We ask you from the Democratic party not to break up
 12 our county in order to give the Republicans an advantage to
 13 elect candidates. We currently only have two elected
 14 Republicans in Alachua County. We are very happy with the
 15 ones we have, Senators Smith, Jennings, and Mr. McGrief,
 16 and Karen Thurman and others.

17 Most citizens recognize gerrymandering when they see
 18 it. Some of the things we ask you, and we ask you first of
 19 all, to be aware of being guilty of this. Some of the
 20 things that we ask you to consider are, do not split
 21 communities of interest, keep our county as intact as
 22 possible, draw contiguous, reasonably-shaped boundaries.
 23 Protect the interest of minority voters who live in
 24 discrete neighborhoods, explore ways to maximize
 25 compactness.

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1 In those districts involving multicounties keep as
 2 many counties as intact as possible. Use existing, natural
 3 and manmade, as well as city and county boundaries whenever
 4 possible. We request that Alachua County be kept in its
 5 entirety in Congressional District No. 5.

6 Since you have encouraged public participation in this
 7 process, please listen to what the people have to say
 8 tonight and do not get bogged down in partisan politics.
 9 Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 15. Number 15.
 11 Number 16.

12 MR. POPE: Good evening. Thank you very much for
 13 being here, my name is David Pope and I live in the City of
 14 Alachua. I serve as the chairman of the board, governing
 15 board for the Suwannee River Water Management District;
 16 however, I'm not here in that capacity tonight, although I
 17 will touch on some aspects of that. I just have a few
 18 things to say and they basically echo several things you
 19 have already heard. I have lived for eight years in -- on
 20 a road in the City of Alachua that when I looked across the
 21 fence I was looking at a different House District, so
 22 Alachua as well as High Springs and other communities have
 23 been split.

24 I believe that as a resident of the City of Alachua, I
 25 wanted to let you know that I would like to see our city in

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1 Congressional and Legislative Districts along with much of
 2 the rest of Alachua County. In other words, I would not
 3 like to see Alachua and High Springs' communities in
 4 districts separate from the majority of Alachua County. I
 5 prefer local representation.

6 Again, and this is from a personal standpoint and from
 7 following the district for many years and being on the
 8 governing board for two, I think that recognizing the
 9 Suwannee River as an important state resource is important.
 10 And recognizing the counties along the river share many
 11 common goals and programs is also pertinent as you
 12 redistrict the state. I appreciate that legislators
 13 representing large portions of the counties or all of the
 14 county that they live near can best relate back to the
 15 Legislature the needs of the region.

16 I appreciate all of the hard work that y'all have
 17 done, I know that you have a lot of hard work to do. And I
 18 just wanted to let you know. Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 17.

20 MR. HINES: Good evening, welcome. My name is Tommy
 21 Hines, I am a city commissioner with the City of Newberry.
 22 My family has lived in Alachua County since 1874, we have
 23 strong roots here, we have been here that long and we are
 24 not planning on leaving. Our concern for the City of
 25 Newberry is twofold. One, you have us in Senate District

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1 4. That puts us out like a little island. The rest of
 2 Alachua County is represented by my good friend Rod Smith.
 3 We, the citizens of Newberry, would like to be in District
 4 5, taken away.

5 We have been called Alachua County West. We have been
 6 called the Little Switzerland, we have been called several
 7 things. But in the House Districts, in the House, we are
 8 split right down the city, right in the middle of the city.
 9 If you live on the east side of the city you are in one
 10 district and if you live on the west side you are in the
 11 other district. We would like to see us move into one
 12 district. Either one, it really doesn't matter to us. I
 13 mean, we would rather be in the Alachua County District,
 14 which is District 22, than we had the other.

15 Mr. Kendrick has been a good friend of the City of
 16 Newberry, along with Senator Smith, Mr. Jennings and Mr.
 17 McGriff have all represented us well. But I would like to
 18 keep your attention on this because this is an island. And
 19 if you are going to do redistricting, please consider
 20 these. Ms. Hill showed you these maps up here before.
 21 Other colleagues have come up from High Springs and other
 22 areas. You know, we would like to be, if we are going to
 23 be in a district, we want to be in the district that we are
 24 paying our tax money to and that's Alachua County. And we
 25 would like to be represented by those folks. Thank you

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1 very much.

2 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 18.

3 MR. McCULLOUGH: Hi, my name is Mark McCullough. I am

4 a senior here at the University of Florida and during my,

5 well, almost four years now, I have been drawn to this

6 field that we call politics, kind of a little game. And

7 tonight I would like to speak on behalf of my fellow

8 students to ask you to keep our districts intact. We have

9 an amazing situation here in Gainesville where, as

10 students, we know our representatives. I mean, I know

11 Mr. James very well, I know Senator Smith very well,

12 Congressman Thurman and Representative McGriff, and they

13 know us well. That is because they are our neighbors, they

14 share our concerns and they face the same problems we face

15 day in and day out.

16 Think a little bit of your districts and the

17 universities or community colleges that you have and if you

18 have the same relationship with your students who you

19 represent and who vote for you. I certainly hope you do or

20 you will have in the future. But for now I am asking you

21 to not take away what we have here and to allow our

22 districts to stay intact so that we can have such great

23 representation and have such a good communication with our

24 representatives. Thank you.

25 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 19.

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1 MR. GRINER: Chairman Webster, Chairman Byrd, members

2 of the House and Senate, good evening. My name is Ken

3 Griner, I guess I'm here to beat a dead horse. I live in

4 Levy County and as a resident of Levy County, I want to

5 express my desire that our county be fairly represented in

6 both Congress and the Legislature. I believe it's

7 extremely important that you look at Levy, Dixie, and

8 Gilchrist County as a tri-county community. And I know

9 that that's something that you haven't heard tonight but a

10 thousand times.

11 We are all rural in nature, we share many of the same

12 resources and we share many of the same goals for this

13 region of our state. Highways 19, 27, and the Suwannee

14 River pass through all three of these counties and they are

15 the focal point of many of our economic development

16 efforts, such as the Nature Coast Trail and other things

17 that have been alluded to here this evening.

18 We also have a mutual interest in water issues because

19 we have a substantial agricultural industry in this area.

20 We simply feel that because we share many of the same

21 interests in working with our Congressional and Legislature

22 representatives it's more productive if we can do so as a

23 single team.

24 The city of Fanning Springs is actually located in

25 both Levy and Gilchrist Counties, so working with one

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1 member, or one delegation is more desirable for that

2 reason. Currently part of Fanning Springs is represented

3 by Senator Smith and part of it is represented by Senator

4 Mitchell. So I think that is a common theme emerging here

5 tonight.

6 We are pleased with our current representation, but if

7 changes are going to be made we want to be sure that our

8 collective vote will not be diluted and that we remain able

9 to vote in races where we believe the members representing

10 us understand the unique rural character of our three

11 counties. Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 20.

13 MS. LANCASTER: Chairman Webster, committee members,

14 thank you for allowing input on the redistricting. My name

15 is Sherie Lancaster, I am a 20-year resident of Gilchrist

16 County; however, I am a sixth-generation Levy Countian.

17 I'm married to a gentleman whose family came to Gilchrist

18 County from Dixie County and we own property in Gilchrist

19 County and Dixie County. So, you have heard from lots of

20 people here tonight from Levy County and from Dixie County,

21 and I would just like to go on record and say that

22 Gilchrist County wants to be the tri-county area. We want

23 Dixie, Gilchrist and Levy to be in the same Representative

24 District and the same Congressional District, and we

25 appreciate the opportunity that you have given us to give

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1 input. Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 21.

3 MR. deMONTWOLLIN: Good evening. My name is Steve

4 deMontwollin. The redistricting web sites and also the

5 FREDS 2000 are excellent sources and give citizens an

6 unprecedented opportunity to participate in the process,

7 and we appreciate very much having that resource available

8 to us. One of the issues that is very important to the

9 people of our area is health care. Alachua County is a

10 center of excellence in health care, and is the health care

11 delivery center for some 1.2 million Floridians in the 15

12 counties surrounding Alachua County. Shands Teaching

13 Hospital, North Florida Regional Medical Center, the VA

14 Hospital, Meridian Behavioral Health Care, North Florida

15 Hospice, University of Florida College of Medicine, the

16 College of Pharmacy, the School of Dentistry, College of

17 Allied Health Professions, private physician offices,

18 clinics, biomedical research and development at the

19 progress center, Alachua County Health Department, and the

20 District 3 of the Department of Children and Families make

21 up this health care delivery system. And it's very

22 important, not only to the people of Alachua County but the

23 surrounding counties as well.

24 Residents of neighboring and more rural counties

25 depend upon Alachua County's substantial health care

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1 resources to supplement the limited health care options
2 available to them locally. As a result, a strong community
3 of interest exists between Alachua County and these
4 surrounding counties. Alachua County is also the
5 headquarters of the North Central Florida Health Planning
6 Council which was established to assist county agencies and
7 community groups with planning and implementing ways to
8 improve access and quality of health care services.

9 Under the aegis of the Florida Department of Health,
10 the council serves as the local planning council for a
11 16-county area in North Central Florida, and the region
12 includes Alachua County, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie,
13 Gilchrist, Levy, Putnam and Union. The counties depend
14 greatly on Alachua County for health care services. We ask
15 that you recognize that community of interest between
16 Alachua and surrounding counties when drawing the district
17 lines and that you will keep Alachua County aligned with
18 these more rural counties. Thank you very much.

19 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 22.

20 MS. SUGGS: I am also 21, so I guess they liked both
21 of us, so you will have two 21s speaking tonight. I'm Sue
22 B. Suggs from Gilchrist County, and first of all I would
23 like to just say thank you for being here and thank you,
24 Rod Smith, for inviting Gilchrist County over. Currently
25 you have heard the cry from Gilchrist, Dixie and Levy. And
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1 I can tell you that I am a fifth -- seventh-generation
2 Floridian and a fifth-generation Gilchrist Countian.

3 My dad's family came -- well, they were there when
4 Alachua County split us off and we became Gilchrist County.
5 So, we have a long-standing history in Gilchrist County.
6 Gilchrist, Dixie and Levy counties and very small, rural
7 districts. We need representation of comradery, we need to
8 be able to utilize the resources in Alachua County as well.
9 We don't want to be drawn out of Alachua County, we would
10 like to join Alachua County. The only misfortune that we
11 have is that Senator Richard Mitchell has been a great hero
12 to Gilchrist, Dixie and Levy County. So we don't wish to
13 lose him.

14 We currently have two representatives in Gilchrist
15 County. On one side of 26, Representative Will Kendrick
16 serves us. On the other side of 26 Representative Dwight
17 Stansel serves us. They are great representatives, we do
18 not wish to lose anyone. But, however, we do plead to you
19 that, do not separate counties, do as much as you can to
20 draw the lines around county lines so that these folks are
21 not represented by several different representations but
22 that we are all of one. Thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Okay. The first 21 was really 22,
24 and then the real 21 spoke. So, we are ready for 23.

25 MS. EDWARDS: Thank you, Chairman Webster, and all of
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1 you for coming tonight. I appreciate the town meetings
2 that you have been having, the open forums that you have
3 been having to let the citizens give input. You can see by
4 the crowd here that it's much needed and we really
5 appreciate it. I'm chairperson of the Lincoln Estates
6 Neighborhood Watch Committee. Lincoln Estates is a
7 neighborhood of about 500 homes and we are strategically
8 located east of Waldo Road. There are also several other
9 neighbors east of Waldo Road that are in Senator
10 Holzendorf's district from Jacksonville.

11 Now, we in Alachua, we live in Alachua County, we pay
12 our taxes in Alachua County, and we would also like to be
13 part of Senator Rod Smith's Senate District 5 so that we
14 can also have the pluses that are going on. We are like
15 this little forgotten area, the little area that nobody
16 knows we are there. We see all of the good things that the
17 Senator is doing and we are not included. We would like to
18 be included.

19 I was born here in Gainesville some 25-plus years ago.
20 I am also a State of Florida employee for 35 years. And
21 don't add that up. And so, I have seen a lot of changes,
22 and this is one change that I would like to see happen so
23 that the east side of Waldo Road is incorporated into
24 District 5 so that we can have the enhancements, so that we
25 can have the support because we are a struggling area, we
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1 really need someone locally to represent that side of
2 Gainesville and Alachua County.

3 Senator Holzendorf, a wonderful person, has done as
4 much as she can do, but it's spread pretty thin when you
5 are in Jacksonville, Florida. Please, when you do the
6 redistricting, remember east of Waldo Road should be in
7 District 5. Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 24.

9 MR. FALK: Hi, my name is Carlton Falk, and I am the
10 superintendent of schools in Union County, which is part of
11 the Senate District 5. In today's competitive climate with
12 a shrinking pool of government resources available to meet
13 the ever-increasing demands of our State's fast-growing
14 population, smaller and rural districts like ours usually
15 get the short end of the stick. I'm pleased to tell you
16 that those of us who live in the rural communities of
17 Alachua and neighboring counties have not fallen prey to
18 that fate. That is because we have, in State Senator Rod
19 Smith, a legislator who has worked very diligently to
20 understand and be responsive to the unique needs of our
21 rural communities.

22 For example, Union County was one of 13 counties in
23 the State of Florida that has been involved in the reading
24 initiative. Senator Smith has worked very hard and close
25 with NEFC, which is the Northeast Florida Consortium, to
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1 help us gain funds from the State. We had gone through a
2 period of time in Union County where we were 1.4 million in
3 deficit. We have overcome it. We have lost 100 students
4 in the last two years, that's approximately \$3,500 a
5 student. Our budget this year was \$200,000 less on top of
6 the \$3500 per student and we are, to this day, going to be
7 able to give a 4.2 percent increase for our teachers which
8 have gone through some rough times.
9 And because of the war and tragedy we are now going to
10 be cut probably a million-four again. But even so, Senator
11 Smith I would like to personally thank you on behalf of
12 Union County School System for your dedication, caring and
13 loyalty to the small and rural districts. And on behalf of
14 Union County, we beg you to keep the district intact.
15 Thank you.
16 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 25.
17 MS. GEDLEY: Good evening. Thanks for being here.
18 I'm Karen Gedley, and I am a mom, I am a community
19 volunteer, I am an advocate for children, and just so you
20 know, I do have an occupation, I am the Director of the
21 Child Advocacy Center here. I live in State Senate
22 District 5, and one of the many issues that I'm concerned
23 about, as other residents are, is the number of our young
24 people who end up in the juvenile justice system and how it
25 impacts their lives both in the short-term and the
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1 long-term. District 5 closely mirrors the 8th Judicial
2 Circuit and we want to keep it that way because the circuit
3 funds allow the programs for juveniles in that area.
4 We also want to keep the current configuration of
5 District 5 because we want to maintain Senator Rod Smith
6 working on juvenile justice issues as he has in the past.
7 This benefits us and it benefits our children. As you
8 know, Senator Smith has a long, distinguished history of
9 working with the juvenile justice system, starting with his
10 service as state attorney. Senator Smith has also served
11 on the State Juvenile Justice Advisory Board, and locally
12 he's helped start the Juvenile Assessment Center and the
13 Pace Center for Girls. Senator Smith's service and
14 attention to the needs of our youth has been exemplary and
15 it would be a tremendous loss to the children of our
16 community, and to all of us adults as well, for you to
17 dismantle District 5 and deprive us of his capable
18 leadership.
19 So, before I run off to feed my kids, I would like to
20 thank you for being here again, and please keep District 5
21 as intact as possible. Thanks.
22 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Okay, right here we are
23 going to take a break. Our court reporter usually needs a
24 little bit of a break. And then we will be back shortly
25 with Number 26.
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1 (Brief recess.)
2 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: If you will take a seat we will
3 continue with the hearing. Number 26.
4 MS. RUSSELL: Good evening, and I do thank you for
5 coming to Gainesville tonight. My name is Mildred Russell
6 and I am the chairman of the local Republican party and
7 currently we have no local representation in Tallahassee.
8 The six people who represent Alachua County are all
9 Democrats, and then to further hinder our ability to be
10 heard in Tallahassee, of course, they are all in the
11 minority up there.
12 So in the interest of representative democracy, we
13 would like to ask you to please consider giving a voice to
14 local Republicans and other conservative voters in Alachua
15 County. Some possibilities are the western part of Alachua
16 County being included in U.S. Congressional District 6,
17 which would give us a voice in Washington. Some other
18 possibilities for the state are possible including western
19 Alachua County in Senate District 11 or in House District
20 24. And that would give the Republicans an ability to be
21 heard in Tallahassee and to have someone that we could
22 share our concerns with locally in order to be heard.
23 And we would really appreciate that. I know other
24 conservative voters would appreciate that as well. And it
25 would give us really a better representation in keeping
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1 with the idea of one person, one vote and the whole idea of
2 representative democracy. So thank you for the
3 consideration.
4 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 27.
5 MS. ALLEN: Good evening, members of the committee.
6 I'm Elsie Allen, I am a registered voter of Alachua County
7 and business representative for Carpenter's Union Local 75.
8 As members of the committee you are well aware that this
9 community faces several policy issues and challenges. It
10 bears the unsteady economy, increasing uncertainty in the
11 labor market, the difficulty of earning a living wage, the
12 lack of health benefits for all, and the problems in our
13 schools. I could go on.
14 The way you go about this redistricting will have an
15 impact on all of these issues. Here in Gainesville we have
16 been fortunate. We have excellent representation in
17 Congress. I'm specifically talking about Congresswoman
18 Karen Thurman. We have gained a great deal from sharing a
19 Congressional District with others in Alachua County. We
20 share many of their interests and concerns and they share
21 ours. We are a community of interests.
22 Our interests are heard and represented by our
23 legislators. Gainesville is one city, we need one member
24 of Congress. My message is simple. Do not divide our city
25 or our county. If you divide us in some way, it separates
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1 us from our legislators, much of the progress that we have
 2 made will evaporate.

3 Our working families, most of whom don't pay much
 4 attention to politics every day, have enough trouble
 5 getting to know their legislators, don't make it even
 6 harder for them by switching districts around, particularly
 7 when it is just to achieve some political objective. On
 8 that note, I ask you to please do not use redistricting
 9 power just as a mechanism to increase your political power.
 10 You are doing the people's business, and for that reason I
 11 ask you to maintain Gainesville as part of the district
 12 represented by Representative Thurman. And I ask you to
 13 refrain from redrawing any district that would break our
 14 communities or deprive us from the leadership that has
 15 brought us together. Thank you very much for your
 16 attention.

17 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 28.

18 MS. HAINES: Good evening, I'm Susan Haines, I am the
 19 Chair of the Levy County Executive Democratic Committee. I
 20 appreciate the opportunity to speak to you again. I had
 21 the opportunity to speak to you in Ocala. I appreciate
 22 y'all adding these additional hearings to hear us. You
 23 have heard from my neighboring counties, Dixie and
 24 Gilchrist County and they emphasize the same thing that I
 25 had addressed in Ocala and I will address tonight. We are
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1 a rural area, we have needs that stand out. We need to be
 2 combined. We have representatives that respond to our
 3 needs. We need to keep those. We do not need to be a
 4 divided county. We would like to retain our representation
 5 by Congresswoman Thurman, Senator Rod Smith and
 6 Representative Will Kendrick, they are there to support us.

7 We would like you to keep in mind, to keep our
 8 compactness of our communities, forgo political
 9 subdividing, don't create pie shapes. We would also like
 10 to be able to be informed if maps are available to have
 11 input on when reapportionment redistricting maps are
 12 available. Those are critical to us. We have, in the last
 13 ten years, been divided in many ways. We need continued
 14 support and representatives that support our needs. Thank
 15 you.

16 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 29.

17 MS. HANRAHAN: Thank you, Chairman Webster, Chair
 18 Byrd, and members of the committee. My name is Pegeen
 19 Hanrahan and I am a member of the Gainesville City
 20 Commission. And I would like to thank you so much for
 21 taking the time when you have so very much on your plates
 22 to come and visit us here in Gainesville and Alachua
 23 County. I really agree for the most part with the previous
 24 speakers so I'll try not to be too long-winded. I'm not
 25 burdened by the difficulties that you are, really
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1 understanding the details of this process. So it's easy
 2 for me to go on the very simplistic situation with regard
 3 to the issue of one person, one vote.

4 And if there's one thing that we learned from our
 5 ill-fated presidential vote-counting situation it's that we
 6 are very close to a 50/50 state. Yet when we look at our
 7 State House and our Senate and our Congressional
 8 delegation, and taking the Congressional delegation as an
 9 example, with 23 members, only eight of those are
 10 Democrats, it's easy for me to question how well we did
 11 with redistricting last time in terms of one person, one
 12 vote.

13 As you have heard, one of the most important things
 14 for Gainesville and Alachua County is retaining our county,
 15 and our city and our small cities, in particular, as
 16 communities of consistent interests. And I'll give you
 17 just a few examples as to why we urge you to retain Alachua
 18 County as a whole and all of the representation that you
 19 are able and to retain each of our cities as a whole.

20 Alachua County is among the lowest percentage of
 21 property on the tax roll in the State of Florida, and the
 22 City of Gainesville is as well. And there are many reasons
 23 behind that, but that creates some special challenges for
 24 us to try to deal with. One other example in which
 25 Congresswoman Karen Thurman has been putting forth tireless
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1 effort for us is that -- well, as you have saw, we are the
 2 20th largest county and the 11th largest city. We carry, I
 3 believe now, the third largest number of passengers on our
 4 transit system, and transit funding is not divided
 5 according to how many people you have on the bus. If you
 6 are a small community, it's divided by how many people you
 7 have living in your community. So it's important for us to
 8 get that type of representation.

9 Just a few other issues that I would like to mention.
 10 With regard to the census, I would very much urge you to
 11 take a close look at using those adjusted census numbers.
 12 I happen to live seven blocks from the university football
 13 stadium and I saw the census workers working in my
 14 neighborhood, which is a predominantly student area, after
 15 the university let out for spring session, and we have
 16 reason to suspect and we are working hard to try to get
 17 those numbers corrected and clarified.

18 I also just want to mention one other thing for you to
 19 consider in terms of identifying communities of interests
 20 for some of the larger districts is that there are a lot of
 21 preexisting communities of interest, water management
 22 districts, as Mr. Pope mentioned, are one. Regional
 23 planning councils are one. DOT districts are one. I could
 24 go on and on with that, but you have a lot -- and we have
 25 heard about the judicial circuits as well.
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1 Finally, I do also just want to mention to you that we
2 have a lot of special needs because of the things that I've
3 called out and the fact that we are one of the youngest
4 populations in the state due to our large student
5 population, and for that reason, it is very helpful for you
6 to keep us together as one.

7 I thank you again for your time, you have a very
8 difficult job ahead of you. And I think if there's one
9 thing that we have all learned in the last month or so is
10 that our democracy is extremely important to us and it's
11 something for us all to be proud of.

12 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 30.

13 MR. NIELSEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My name is Warren
14 Nielsen. I'm also on the Gainesville City Commission and I
15 had the pleasure of appearing before this committee several
16 weeks ago in Tallahassee requesting that you come here and
17 make this visit. Commissioner Rodney Long and Commissioner
18 Robert Hutchinson also appeared with me. And I think it's
19 rather symbolic that we have this continuity of county,
20 city requesting that you come here. And I think it's also
21 rather significant when you consider the testimony so far,
22 what you have heard from a broad mosaic of our respective
23 communities, not only Gainesville, not only Alachua County,
24 but all of the surrounding counties in this area.

25 And the appeal seems to be very, very consistent that
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1 we maintain this sense of identity, sense of contiguous
2 representation. There is a broad mosaic of cultures here
3 and differences and peoples. And we yield to no one in the
4 rest of the state in terms of the intensity of our
5 squabbles. But I think that intensity is a reflective over
6 our passion, for what we feel about the sense of our
7 community here in North Central Florida. We are very
8 concerned that we are represented with a sense of
9 completeness with respect to our representatives on the
10 state and federal level.

11 This is very risky for an elected official to do, but
12 I am going to read a paragraph that came out of the
13 editorial today of the Gainesville Sun. And in response to
14 last point, it says, "Please keep the districts compact and
15 logical. The best way to keep the promise of fairness is
16 for lawmakers to draw districts that, to the extent
17 possible, keep neighborhoods and communities together."
18 You are hearing that tonight. You are hearing that, not
19 just from Gainesville and Alachua County, you are hearing
20 that from a broad group of people.

21 Respect existing boundaries and political
22 jurisdictions and do not slice up precincts into smaller
23 fragments. You hear the poster city of High Springs
24 speaking to the fact that what can be done to a community
25 in terms of the fragmenting it. Please let's learn a
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1 lesson from that. Ultimately any plan will have to pass
2 judicial muster and a flawed, politically-driven
3 reapportionment process will be more vulnerable to court
4 challenge than one that meets the test of fairness.

5 In addition to addressing the micro-level, that is
6 High Springs, let's talk about the macro-districts of
7 Congressional District 5. I think Congressional District 5
8 serves this community very, very well in terms of reaching
9 out and bringing together that broad representation and
10 diversity that is, in fact, representative, and really the
11 charm and character of North Central Florida.

12 Bottom line is, I think probably -- it is time for us,
13 I think this is a bit of wishful thinking, in terms of
14 histories, but maybe it is the time to really strive to
15 rise above partisanship. And I think the statements made
16 by the Alachua County League of Women Voters speak true to
17 my sense of what our community can be in terms of our
18 political boundaries. So, again, thank you very much for
19 being here and please enjoy the rest of the comments of our
20 community, which I think you will see identifies itself as
21 North Central Florida.

22 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Number 31.

23 MS. STANLEY: Honorable Chairs, Honorable Senators,
24 Representative Jennings, Senator Smith, gentlemen, my name
25 is Paula Stanley. I am a resident of Gainesville, Florida,
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1 and I have lived here for 16 years. I wish to thank the
2 committee for having scheduled this additional hearing to
3 receive testimony regarding reapportionment in the State of
4 Florida. I speak to you tonight on behalf of the
5 Democratic Executive Committee and as a citizen. I have
6 been involved in community and political initiatives
7 affecting this town, Alachua County, and the State of
8 Florida.

9 Prior to moving to Gainesville I lived and worked in
10 Washington, D.C., where I was a United States government
11 employee during the administrations of Presidents Ford,
12 Carter, and Reagan. From this combined experience I have
13 had the opportunity to observe the interaction between
14 citizens and their local, state and national governments.
15 I have witnessed from the inside the difficulties of
16 crafting legislation, administering executive agencies, and
17 implementing and enforcing criminal and civil laws.

18 I have worked with both elected and appointed
19 officials, with partisan and nonpartisan, public and
20 private and interest groups and advocates for various
21 causes, including citizen and professional organizations.
22 Fundamental to the comradery among them all has been an
23 underlying trust that all voices could participate in the
24 ever-evolving and ongoing discourse between citizen and
25 government. Disappointments and even anger could be
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1 overcome by the implicit trust that no person or group was
 2 arbitrarily excluded from the democratic process.
 3 It immediately becomes apparent to anyone actively
 4 engaged in the political process that a democratic
 5 government functions on the basis of the grace granted to
 6 it by its citizens, breaks the covenant of implicit trust
 7 and the expectation on both sides that each will forebear
 8 and patience will be lost. The margin of grace, the
 9 latitude for error will be dramatically diminished and
 10 opposition will only stiffen. We can't imagine that the
 11 original failure to schedule hearings in the City of
 12 Gainesville was brought on by the competing pressures of
 13 accommodating the needs of a very large and populous state.
 14 We all expect that the Florida Legislature will be
 15 mindful of its duty to achieve a reapportionment pattern
 16 that safely reflect, reflects, excuse me, the realities of
 17 established social and political communities.
 18 To do otherwise would only undermine that margin of
 19 grace referred to above and almost certainly weaken your
 20 ability to govern effectively. I thank you for permitting
 21 me to speak.
 22 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 32.
 23 MR. QUINCEY: Thanks for the opportunity to come speak
 24 to you tonight about reapportionment. My name is Don
 25 Quincey and I am a Republican and I am also a resident and
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1 business owner in Levy County. So I'm here simply to ask
 2 you to keep the voters in our county in mind as you work
 3 through the redistricting process. Levy County has been
 4 represented in the State Legislature very well and we want
 5 for that to continue to be the case. We feel that it's
 6 extremely important that the county be placed in
 7 legislative districts where we feel like we have a voice.
 8 My business interests are connected in an agricultural
 9 industry in Levy County and also in Dixie and Gilchrist
 10 counties. Several years ago these counties were all in the
 11 State Senate District and I think that it was beneficial
 12 for both, for the Senators and the voters, that this still
 13 be the case. I prefer that Levy County have representation
 14 from people who live in our district. Thank you very much.
 15 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 33.
 16 MS. HIGMAN: Good evening, and I would also like to
 17 add my thanks to you for adding Gainesville to the hearing
 18 sites. I believe that that occurred very recently. I'm
 19 sorry that it didn't happen before that. My name is Carol
 20 Higman, I am a local resident of Gainesville and Alachua
 21 County. I have been here and registered and an active
 22 voter since '77. I hail from parts north of here, as many
 23 other citizens do. I would like to probably just endorse
 24 many things that have been said. One is that the State
 25 Senate Districts need to better represent the citizens of
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1 individual communities within our county. And I think our
 2 supervisor of elections made that point. I would just like
 3 to add my endorsement to that.
 4 Additionally, I would support retaining the integrity
 5 of Congressional District 5. In my period of activism here
 6 it's been very healthy, what has developed here in the city
 7 and in the county and we have developed a strong sense of
 8 unity. And that's reflected within our Congressional
 9 District.
 10 The district currently protects the established
 11 political community, including long-established voting
 12 precincts and represents the entire of our county. The
 13 final thing that I would like to add is, this is just
 14 listening, but I have been listening to members who have
 15 been attending these hearings across the state and I
 16 understand that the proposed maps are not yet ready. When
 17 they are ready I would ask that you allow citizen input
 18 with a minimum of four regional meetings in the state.
 19 Thank you very much.
 20 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Number 34.
 21 MS. FOXX: Good evening, I'm Evelyn Foxx, the first
 22 vice-president of the Alachua County branch of NAACP. I'm
 23 speaking on behalf of my president, Dr. Michael Bowie, who
 24 is not present today, and the entire Alachua County branch
 25 membership.
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1 There are a number of things that concern us about the
 2 redistricting process. The standards that you establish
 3 will impact the state and your constituents for the next
 4 ten years. These standards will determine whether the
 5 state adheres to the concept of one person, one vote, and
 6 they will certainly determine whether all of the voters of
 7 this state have an equal opportunity to elect the
 8 candidates of their choice to the State House, the State
 9 Senate, and the United States Congress.
 10 It is equally important to the NAACP that you develop
 11 a process that respects the principle of no regression.
 12 The past two redistricting sessions created a number of
 13 opportunities that allowed various communities to be able
 14 to elect the candidate of their choice for the first time
 15 in the history of the state. We believe that those
 16 opportunities must be protected and enhanced. The
 17 redistricting process that you will undertake will
 18 drastically reshape the map of the state.
 19 A brief review of the current map shows that most of
 20 the districts currently considered to be majority minority
 21 districts are currently underpopulated. It is important
 22 that care be taken to ensure the character of these
 23 districts and to ensure that the communities with common
 24 interests be kept together.
 25 We look forward to working with the members of this
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1 committee and your staff persons during the next few months
 2 on behalf of the National Association for the Advancement
 3 of Colored People. It is also important that when this
 4 process is completed, that your constituents are convinced
 5 that there is power in their votes. This means that the
 6 standards that you apply to this process as well as the
 7 process itself must be true to our democratic principle.
 8 We thank you for this opportunity.
 9 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 35.
 10 MR. LIPSEL: Good evening, Mr. Webster, other
 11 Honorable Representatives, Senators. My name is Vincent
 12 Lipsel, I am a resident of the City of Gainesville for
 13 these past 17 years. And I would like to state that our
 14 county, being home to the university, is more politically
 15 cohesive than most counties and we seem to form a logical
 16 community, and in that this county's population is but a
 17 fraction of a U.S. House or State Senate District, I urge
 18 that Alachua County not be split into multiple districts
 19 for those two bodies, or for the sake of the State House
 20 any more districts, which would be two, than is necessary.
 21 To do otherwise, I contend, is tantamount to denying
 22 certain persons their right of one person, one vote. It
 23 seems that in the current districting situation that we
 24 have right now we have a corner of the county which has
 25 about 9500 registered voters represented by a State Senator
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1 who lives in Jacksonville. There is another corner of the
 2 county with about 3500 registered voters that has a State
 3 Representative that lives in Carabelle.
 4 And I contend that this is ludicrous, that it's very
 5 hard for certain people to gain access to their elected
 6 officials because of these oddly-shaped districts and would
 7 urge that things be more compact in this reapportionment.
 8 Likewise I would like to again repeat what other speakers
 9 have said, that municipalities not be divided in so much as
 10 that's possible.
 11 I would also like to state that there's a side effect
 12 of having an unnecessarily large number of districts within
 13 a county, in that there is a rule of the State Legislature
 14 that if one wants to have a bill that effects only a single
 15 county filed, the legislators and senators, all of them of
 16 that county, must cooperate in having such a bill filed and
 17 that earlier this year there was a referendum in this
 18 county of which 68 percent of the voters approved, a
 19 nonbinding referendum simply urging that a certain bill
 20 dealing with campaign financing and home rule for that,
 21 which two other counties in the state already have, be
 22 submitted, but mostly because of the fact that we needed
 23 cooperation between people who, senators and
 24 representatives who only represented only very small parts
 25 of the county. This was unable to be submitted.
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1 And I can see that this has caused a lot of cynicism
 2 among some of our younger people and our students who feel
 3 like their voices in our democracy are being said for
 4 naught. And the will of the people is and so on by virtue
 5 of this somewhat arcane process. And I would think that
 6 having less people, no more people than necessary
 7 representing the county would expedite things of that
 8 nature. And that's all, really, I have to say. Thank you.
 9 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 36. Number 36.
 10 Number 37.
 11 MR. JONES: Senator Webster, and this committee, I
 12 come to speak to pretty much echo what's been said tonight.
 13 First of all, I thank you all for coming to Gainesville. I
 14 would like to say that I hope that we do not provide or
 15 bring multiple districts within the City of Gainesville. I
 16 would hope that we let our districts remain intact. I'm
 17 very pleased with Senator Smith, Rod Smith, Representative
 18 Jennings, and Representative -- Congresswoman Thurman.
 19 I think that the way that the districts are drawn
 20 presently, they are accessible to the residents of
 21 Gainesville, and particularly east Gainesville where I live
 22 at, that we can access our representatives. And I think
 23 that they did a tremendous job as far as addressing some of
 24 our needs. So I ask that we keep them intact. Thank you.
 25 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 38.
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1 MS. WILLIAMS: Good evening, I would like to thank you
 2 for being here so people can address you on this
 3 reapportionment. I am Rosa B. Williams, I am the
 4 chairperson of Black-on-black Crime Task Force. I would
 5 like to say I would like for you to keep this congressman's
 6 district the same as it is. Also Representative Jennings
 7 who serves in District 23 has the largest minority district
 8 of voting minorities. I would hate to see that district
 9 broke up into pieces because them peoples have really has a
 10 chance to stand up and go out and vote for who they want to
 11 support.
 12 Senator Smith has did an outstanding job since he's
 13 been a Senator, so I would go further in asking that you --
 14 Senator Holzendorf has served us really well, but we have
 15 so many problems in Gainesville, especially in the eastern
 16 side of town with our young peoples, drugs and prostitutes,
 17 we need to have a Senator what live in Alachua County so
 18 they can be here, be out in the community like Senator
 19 Smith is and aware of the problem, what's going on.
 20 So I would ask that you move him on over into Senator
 21 Holzendorf's area rather than letting someone else come
 22 here who don't live in Alachua County.
 23 I also would like to say that Congressman Thurman has
 24 represented Alachua County really, really super good. She
 25 has worked with us, she has gotten funds in for young
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1 peoples and juvenile justice. And I would really like to
 2 see her remain part of this delegation from Alachua County.
 3 Thank you.
 4 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 39.
 5 MR. WELBORN: Good evening, Chairman, and committee
 6 members. My name is Paul Welborn, I am a representative of
 7 Florida PBA and here on behalf of the State Correctional
 8 Officers' chapter. On behalf of the State Correctional
 9 Officers' chapter in this area, I would like to address --
 10 there's approximately 3,000 in this area. We want to
 11 address the issue that correctional institutions are a key
 12 business within this area, and Bradford County, Columbia
 13 County and also Union counties, Union County, which forms a
 14 community of interest. And between these communities I
 15 want to conclude that we request that you take these in
 16 consideration when you are drawing your lines for your
 17 district in keeping this community of interest intact for
 18 the correctional officers. There's a critical need to
 19 protect the community of this interest.
 20 And basically, the correctional officers of 3,000 all
 21 have the same interests and we want to ensure that these
 22 interests stay intact and give them an opportunity to have
 23 a voice. Thank you.
 24 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 40.
 25 MR. LONG: Chairman Byrd, and members of the
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1 reapportionment committee, on behalf of the nearly
 2 230,000-plus citizens of Alachua County, our nine
 3 municipalities, the University of Florida, Santa Fe
 4 Community College, I'm Rodney J. Long, member of the Board
 5 of County Commissioners here in Alachua County. I am a
 6 former member and mayor and commissioner of the City of
 7 Gainesville and I welcome you to Gainesville and Alachua
 8 County.
 9 Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you and the members of
 10 this committee for the opportunity to speak at your first
 11 hearing in Tallahassee. As you may recall, Mr. Chairman, I
 12 requested along with others that you consider Alachua
 13 County as a public hearing. We appreciate that very, very
 14 much. We thank our members of our delegation, Senators
 15 Mitchell, Holzendorf and Smith, and Representative
 16 Jennings, Representative McGriff and Kendrick for making
 17 that happen, we thank y'all very, very much.
 18 In my brief comments, Mr. CHAIRMAN, I would like to
 19 reiterate some of the concerns and proposed criteria that I
 20 shared with you in Tallahassee in hopes that you will take
 21 them under advisement. First is my hope that each of you
 22 place the citizens of this great state above partisan
 23 politics and personal agendas by conducting a fair and
 24 impartial process. I'm encouraged, Chairman Webster, by
 25 your remarks that this will be a fair and impartial
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1 process.
 2 It is also my hope that the census data be used to
 3 draw the most equitable congressional and legislative
 4 districts possible. Secondly, it's important that you be
 5 clear what the standards or the criteria that this
 6 committee and the Legislature will use in drawing the
 7 lines. For example, if it's your intent and the
 8 Legislature's intent to protect incumbents, if so, then the
 9 citizens of this state deserves the right to know that.
 10 Lastly, Mr. Chairman, I would like to offer, once
 11 again, the following standards or guidelines for this
 12 committee to consider in this process. Number one, keep
 13 all communities with similar interests together. Two, all
 14 districts should be as equal in population as possible,
 15 with a standard deviation of no more than 1 to 4 percent
 16 between the largest and smallest districts. Avoid
 17 splitting cities and counties. The districts should be
 18 compact. If at all possible, Alachua County should have at
 19 least one senator that represents the entire county and not
 20 leave a portion of it to another senator. The logical
 21 person for that, of course, is Senator Smith.
 22 Congressional District No. 5, which is held by
 23 Congresswoman Thurman, which represents communities of
 24 interest in North Central Florida should remain intact.
 25 You should recognize significant natural and man-made
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1 boundaries. Avoid backsliding, retrogression and diluting
 2 of minority voting rights under Section 5 of the Voting
 3 Rights Act. And also you should avoid discriminating
 4 against minority groups by packing them all in one district
 5 or by splitting them or cracking communities which could
 6 minimize or cancel their ability to elect their preferred
 7 candidate which could violate Section 2 of the Voting
 8 Rights Act.
 9 Even though House District 23 is not one of the
 10 minority access districts we appreciate the service of
 11 Representative Jennings and hope that he continues to be a
 12 part of our representation in Alachua County.
 13 In closing, Mr. Chairman, you all have a very awesome
 14 task ahead of you. We ask that you be fair and that you be
 15 just in this process. Once again, I would like to
 16 personally thank you all for making Gainesville and Alachua
 17 County a stop on the redistricting train that you have been
 18 on around the State of Florida. If there's anything that
 19 we can do while you are here, we ask that you allow us to
 20 do that for you. I hope you enjoyed Alachua County and I
 21 hope that you spend a lot of money because we can use it at
 22 this point in time. If you need to stay overnight, we
 23 could use some bed tax dollars as well. We thank you for
 24 your consideration.
 25 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 41. Number 41.
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1 Number 42.
 2 MR. OTT: Good evening, my name is Chris Ott, I am a
 3 public schoolteacher and I appreciate this opportunity to
 4 talk. And I am one of those citizens in Florida that's
 5 trying to battle cynicism. And I just want to say that I'm
 6 really happy with the representatives that we have right
 7 now, they understand. I personally teach in a rural
 8 school. They understand that rural schools need help in
 9 construction. That's been happening in my school, we have
 10 some major improvements and that's made a big deal of
 11 difference in the morale and what we are able to offer our
 12 students, so we appreciate that. I appreciate Senators
 13 Smith and Jennings and Perry McGriff because they
 14 understand some other things too.
 15 Rural health care is the responsibility of the State
 16 because they don't have -- rural areas don't have the tax
 17 base to support funding those things. And rural health
 18 care affects student absenteeism and student performance.
 19 We have got a lot of kids -- I teach kindergarten -- a lot
 20 of kids with bad teeth. And parents have to lose a day of
 21 work to get them to the hospital and this and that and the
 22 other thing. Our representatives here understand those
 23 issues. And I think some people in rural areas don't get
 24 that.
 25 And I am mostly here to say that they also understand
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1 the importance of education. And we have, in this county,
 2 because of the University of Florida, we have one of the
 3 highest numbers of teachers with master's and other
 4 degrees, and yet we struggle to attract teachers. And
 5 again, I'm going to say the same old thing, if you pay
 6 them, they will come.
 7 I want to talk about my own situation. I have two
 8 teachers at third grade that are retiring this year, they
 9 are really good, they have taught a lot of kids to read and
 10 I have another teacher who is leaving this county. Our
 11 county has a problem with the way that state dollars in
 12 funding of education currently goes on. And I have gone to
 13 Tallahassee and I have talked and I haven't felt like I
 14 have been listened to.
 15 So, if you feel like I'm not talking on the subject,
 16 well I'm taking my chances. We need to fund education
 17 differently because it's not fair, and hopefully other
 18 folks will listen. If you shift everything to the local
 19 property taxes in counties that don't have a lot of
 20 industry or something, you are not going to be able to
 21 attract the 2.7 million teachers that you are going to
 22 need. And I'm losing the best teachers because they
 23 thought things would be different and they are not, they
 24 need to change.
 25 And I want to say thank you for the good things that
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1 the representatives have done. When you give teachers
 2 money with no strings attached to reimburse them for
 3 out-of-pocket expenses, which according to the commercial
 4 is \$400 a year, and it's probably much more than that, we
 5 appreciate that. But we need to take care to make sure
 6 that teachers that are hired are not making more than the
 7 teachers that have been teaching for ten years, and also
 8 other employees too. And we know that that has a lot to do
 9 with the morale.
 10 And educating young people is an important job and I
 11 am very happy that our representatives get it and
 12 understand it. Thank you.
 13 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 43.
 14 DR. PAUSSON: I'm Dr. Gunter Pausson, I'm president of
 15 the Local Teacher Employee Union. I would like to
 16 identify -- what I would like to state tonight is that I've
 17 been a resident of Alachua County and Gainesville for the
 18 past 36 years. Our community is a community of unique
 19 problems and unique interests. I am urging you tonight to,
 20 please, don't split up and realize -- don't split up our
 21 delegation to the Legislature. We would like to have at
 22 least one Senator that would encompass our whole county and
 23 we are very well satisfied with the two districts that we
 24 have for our local legislative delegation on the other side
 25 in the House.
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1 You have to realize, this county has the University of
 2 Florida. I am a University of Florida graduate and very
 3 proud of it. We have unique problems and the University of
 4 Florida is a showcase for this state nationwide. We are
 5 now heading into a unique situation in the future and we
 6 need people that understand the problems of the University
 7 of Florida and understand the problems of our community.
 8 Rod Smith, I would like to say, as Senator, is a
 9 person that is very easy to work with. And I think just
 10 watching him up in Tallahassee I think he's worked well
 11 with other people from both sides of the aisle in
 12 Tallahassee. We are also very happy with our legislative
 13 delegation, and Ed Jennings, from one of our House members,
 14 and Perry McGriff, our other House member.
 15 I think that you need to realize, and I have heard
 16 other people say this, that Gainesville is the hub of North
 17 Central Florida. To split us up into many different
 18 districts I think would be very detrimental to Gainesville
 19 and Alachua County. So, I urge you to please keep us
 20 together, not have us split up in many different districts,
 21 and to do the best that we can to keep the delegation that
 22 we have at this time. I appreciate the opportunity to
 23 speak before you and thank you very much.
 24 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. There was one person
 25 that had to go teach a class. Did he come back? Number
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1 13, he or she -- he.

2 Okay, that concludes the public testimony portion of
3 our hearing. As we have done in each of the other 24
4 hearings, we have allowed the members of the delegation to
5 address their constituency, if they would like, they don't
6 have to but they can, and then any other member of the
7 panel can do so also.

8 So, if there's any member of the delegation that would
9 like to speak, I would be glad to recognize you. Senator
10 Smith.

11 SENATOR SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to
12 extend on behalf of this community our gratitude to you.
13 In our first meeting we requested that you bring this
14 series of hearings to Gainesville, Florida, and we
15 appreciate your work to make sure that that happened. I
16 know that it wasn't easy for you and I want to extend,
17 again, our gratitude. I think it was important, I think
18 that you have heard some very important issues discussed
19 here about North Central Florida, its unique character. I
20 want to thank all of my family members who testified here
21 for me.

22 But I do want to tell you that I think it is extremely
23 important to us as we make this decision over the next few
24 months, here and elsewhere throughout the state, on how we
25 configure this state in its elective future. I do believe
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1 that it's critical that North Central Florida have
2 districts that make sense, that all of Florida have
3 districts that make sense, but certainly in those where we
4 know we have more than one county, they need to make sense,
5 we need to focus on those communities of interest.

6 You have heard from several representatives from the
7 various counties about that today. I'm sure that will be
8 taken into consideration. I want to thank the public for
9 your coming out tonight. I appreciate all of your work on
10 short notice to be here. I know I speak for the rest of
11 the delegation in saying that we know that it's not easy to
12 get you out here tonight. Thank you so much. And,
13 Mr. Chairman, thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Representative Jennings.

15 REPRESENTATIVE JENNINGS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for
16 agreeing to host this meeting, also Chairman Byrd. I have
17 to say, we welcome you into this community today even
18 though you have degrees from a different institution in the
19 State of Alabama that we are not really mentioning today,
20 but you have the right colors, though, Mr. Chairman.

21 We are happy to have the reapportionment,
22 redistricting committee here, the members of the House and
23 Senate. This was a long journey going from the first
24 hearing in Tallahassee to culminating here in Alachua
25 County. Those of us who pride ourselves as alumni to this
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1 great institution. This is an appropriate end to end here
2 at this institution, the hearings, on this campus.

3 The State of Florida has been good to this university.
4 We hope that, in this process as we go forward in the next
5 couple of weeks, but in the genral session that we start in
6 January, that it continues to look to this university to
7 lead, the university system, it is a very important part of
8 this area.

9 I'm so happy that the citizens of Alachua County and
10 neighboring counties that are represented by this district
11 and this delegation saw fit to come and make comments in
12 front of this committee. Alachua County is truly a major
13 part of the heart of North Central Florida and I'm glad to
14 have my colleague from Ocala, Representative Baxley, here
15 with us as well as we are trying to reach across the bridge
16 and divide between Alachua and Marion counties so that we
17 can truly be that region that we are beginning to talk
18 about.

19 Thank you, guys, and hopefully, those of you who are
20 not flying back this evening, you will add to the bed tax
21 that Commissioner Long talked about and enjoy our great
22 hospitality in Alachua County and I look forward to seeing
23 you all tomorrow morning in Tallahassee.

24 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Anyone else? This is our last
25 hearing, which this chairman who has attended all of them
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1 and I am sure Representative Needelman, who has also
2 attended all of them are very glad. We have had better
3 attendance than we had ten years ago. As a matter of fact,
4 we have had twice as many Senators on average attend the
5 hearings. We had more than 3500 attend. We had over, I
6 believe, almost 1200 speak, not counting this time we have
7 had hundreds of letters and E-mails and other
8 communications which we are continuing to get, all of which
9 are, including the audio of every single hearing, are
10 posted on the web as well as lots of other items. If you
11 would like to review what's already happened, you can do
12 so.

13 And for those, I know a lot of people have talked
14 about input and how we can have that and how we can have
15 hearings after the plans are proposed. Well, just
16 understand, every member of the Legislature has the
17 opportunity to file a joint resolution or a bill, and so do
18 members of your delegation, they have opportunities to
19 amend. I would tell you that the best input you can have
20 is through your own elected officials, that's what they are
21 there for. I come around, I am at these hearings, but I'm
22 looking for regions and for areas and for commonalities of
23 interest, not whether or not a particular city or town like
24 High Springs gets divided or not. That's going to be left
25 to your local representatives and senators. And I would
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1 encourage you to speak to them about what you would like or
2 not.

3 I personally, as I have said at other hearings, I
4 voted against this plan that you have before you, the House
5 and Senate. I felt like it was a butcher job of the State
6 of Florida and opposed it and spoke against it ten years
7 ago. But again, as it was said, I think in Marion County
8 there was a mobile home area that had 50 units and they
9 were divided maybe into two or three House seats. If those
10 things happen, you will have your local representative or
11 senator to blame because they are the ones who are going to
12 have the input into those things to make sure that they do
13 not happen. So I encourage you to stay close, stay in
14 touch, and I know you will.

15 Thank you for coming. And the meeting is adjourned.
16 (Meeting concluded.)
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1 CERTIFICATE
2

3 STATE OF FLORIDA:

4 COUNTY OF LEON:

5 I, MONA L. WHIDDON, Court Reporter, certify that I
6 was authorized to and did stenographically report the
7 foregoing proceedings and that the transcript is a true and
8 complete record of my stenographic notes.

9 DATED this _____ day of _____, 2001.
10

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