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REAPPORTIONMENT PUBLIC HEARING

OCTOBER 3, 2001 - 3:00 P.M.
FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
MIAMI, 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 LEE CONSTANTINE
 3 SENATOR DARYL L. JONES
 4 SENATOR DANIEL WEBSTER
 5 SENATOR ALEX VILLALOBOS
 6
 7 REPRESENTATIVE RAFAEL ARZA
 8 REPRESENTATIVE RANDY JOHN BALL
 9 REPRESENTATIVE ANNIE BETANCOURT
 10 REPRESENTATIVE EDWARD B. BULLARD
 11 REPRESENTATIVE JOHNNIE B. BYRD, JR.
 12 REPRESENTATIVE GASTON I. CANTENS
 13 REPRESENTATIVE MARIO DIAZ-BALART
 14 REPRESENTATIVE RENE GARCIA
 15 REPRESENTATIVE CARLOS A. LACASA
 16 REPRESENTATIVE CINDY LERNER
 17 REPRESENTATIVE JERRY G. MELVIN
 18 REPRESENTATIVE SANDRA L. MURMAN
 19 REPRESENTATIVE MITCH NEEDELMAN
 20 REPRESENTATIVE MACRO RUBIO
 21 REPRESENTATIVE TIMOTHY M. RYAN
 22 REPRESENTATIVE ELEANOR SOBEL
 23 REPRESENTATIVE MARK WEISSMAN
 24
 25
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1 PROCEEDINGS
 2 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: If the audience members would rise
 3 for the pledge.
 4 (Pledge of Allegiance.)
 5 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Good afternoon. Welcome to the
 6 meeting. My name is Daniel Webster, Senator from District
 7 12 and chairman of the Senate Redistricting Committee.
 8 It's my pleasure to welcome you here today to this public
 9 hearing. The Representatives and Senators are here to
 10 listen to the residents of this area and consider your
 11 input in this very important process.
 12 Since these are joint meetings, we have divided the
 13 responsibilities throughout the many public hearings that
 14 will be held around the state in the next few weeks. It's
 15 my pleasure right now to introduce Johnnie Byrd,
 16 Representative from Plant City, who is chair of the House
 17 Procedural and Redistricting Council. He will be chairing
 18 today's meeting, Chairman Byrd.
 19 CHAIRMAN BYRD: Thank you, Senator Webster. I'm
 20 Johnnie Byrd, Representative from House District 62, and
 21 chairman of the Procedural and Redistricting Council in the
 22 Florida House. It's my pleasure to welcome you to this
 23 public hearing, it's one of over 20 held throughout Florida
 24 this summer and fall.
 25 Let me explain the procedures that we will use first
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1 throughout these public hearings. This is a public
 2 hearing, the sole and only purpose of which is to hear from
 3 the public on matters of redistricting. Do not expect a
 4 legislative committee meeting. We will not be taking
 5 legislative action in this or subsequent public hearings.
 6 Instead, today is the public's forum, where we have
 7 the opportunity to receive input about your electoral
 8 districts. It's not and will not be the time for
 9 legislative debate. All of the Representatives and
 10 Senators will have numerous opportunities in subsequent
 11 committee meetings and on the floor of the House and Senate
 12 to debate and address the wishes and the concerns and
 13 wishes of the Senators and Representatives. Today, however
 14 is for our constituents. And we will not diminish your
 15 voice by taking up your valuable time today in debate.
 16 Following my brief remarks, our legal counsel will
 17 give an overview of the legal considerations in
 18 redistricting. Our staff will then provide some specific
 19 information about the census results in this region and the
 20 state. The rest is reserved for you, the citizens.
 21 Every ten years, after completion of the updated
 22 national census, the Constitution requires that the Florida
 23 Legislature redraw boundaries of all districts of the
 24 Florida House, the Florida Senate, and Florida's
 25 Congressional districts. The Legislature will take up this
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1 task in the next legislative session beginning January the
 2 22nd, 2002.
 3 The districts that the Legislature draws will first be
 4 used in the elections of the fall in 2002. Redistricting
 5 is an essential element of our representative democracy.
 6 We take this on with humility and due regard for the
 7 importance and difficulty of the job. We are committed
 8 that the process will be fair, open, and inclusive. These
 9 public hearings represent a crucial first step in this
 10 process.
 11 We appreciate that we are doing the work of the people
 12 and we want to hear from you and help you participate in a
 13 meaningful way. To encourage public participation, House
 14 Speaker Tom Feeny and Senate President John McKay have
 15 scheduled these public hearings throughout the state. All
 16 of the members of the Legislature's redistricting
 17 committees as well as local delegation members have been
 18 invited to these public hearings. These hearings will be
 19 taped so they can also be made available to all members of
 20 the Legislature. The House and the Senate have designed
 21 web sites as a tool for public input and will broadcast
 22 select hearings on Florida's public television stations.
 23 The web address for the House and Senate legislative
 24 redistricting are available at the sign-in table. A link
 25 will also be available from the Florida legislative web
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1 site.

2 The redistricting plan for the State House and Senate

3 will be passed in the form of a joint resolution which will

4 not be subject to the Governor's approval or veto, but will

5 be reviewed by the Florida Supreme Court. The plan

6 determining Congressional Districts will not be reviewed by

7 the Supreme Court, but will be subject to the Governor's

8 approval or veto. I encourage everyone to carefully review

9 the 2000 census. It is the essential building block on

10 which Florida's redistricting plans will be built. The

11 United States Census' web site is available at the sign-in

12 table.

13 We are here to the listen and consider your voice. We

14 encourage each member of the public to testify and help us

15 craft your legislative districts. We also encourage

16 written submissions in addition to the testimony during the

17 public hearing.

18 Everyone who wishes to speak must make sure to fill

19 out a speaker's card. That's the only way we will know who

20 wishes to speak, and after the hearing who actually spoke.

21 Speakers' cards are also available at the sign-in table.

22 In addition, because we want to the hear from as many

23 people as possible, we must limit your comments to four

24 minutes.

25 On behalf of House Speaker Tom Feeney, Senate
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1 President John McKay and the members of the Florida

2 Legislature, I look forward to working with all of you on

3 this historic and important task.

4 At this time I would recognize former State

5 Representative Miguel DeGrandy, who is a member of the

6 House legal team, for a brief legal presentation regarding

7 redistricting. Attorney DeGrandy, you are recognized.

8 MR. DEGRANDY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and welcome to

9 my former legislative district.

10 For the record, my name is Miguel DeGrandy and I am

11 counsel for the Florida House of Representatives on

12 reapportionment and redistricting matters. And I'm here

13 together with my colleague, Senator Scott, in the back, who

14 is counsel for the Florida Senate.

15 I will be giving you a brief overview of the law

16 regarding reapportionment and redistricting for the benefit

17 of the members, who I'm sure have heard them many times,

18 but also, and very importantly, for the members of the

19 public.

20 This presentation is by no means intended to be a

21 comprehensive or a complete review of the issues related to

22 the topic, but it is intended to give you an introduction

23 to the basic principles and constraints that will guide the

24 decision making of our State Legislature as it proceeds

25 with this very important task.

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1 The task of reapportionment and redistricting is a

2 process of dividing residents of a jurisdiction, in this

3 case the residents of the entire state of Florida, into

4 different electoral seats or districts. Reapportionment

5 and redistricting are Constitutional requirements. And

6 both the Florida Constitution and the United States

7 Constitution require this process to commence every ten

8 years after the census.

9 Because of Florida's population increase over the last

10 ten years, Florida will have two additional members in the

11 United States Congress, for a total of 25 seats.

12 Therefore, with regards to Congressional redistricting, the

13 State Legislature will need to create 25 separate,

14 contiguous districts to cover the entire state, one for

15 each of those members of Congress.

16 The Legislature will also need to divide the state

17 into 40 State Senate districts and 120 State House of

18 Representative districts, although the Legislature may, if

19 they choose, reduce the number of State Senate and House

20 districts to as low as 30 and 80, respectively.

21 The Florida Constitution also requires the State House

22 and Senate districts be consecutively numbered and either

23 contiguous, overlapping or identical territory.

24 Commencing with this public hearing process, which is

25 well advanced, the State Legislature will begin considering
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1 the opinion of Florida citizens. Then the legislative

2 committees will convene this fall, and beginning in January

3 the full Legislature will begin the process of developing

4 and considering different districting plans. The regular

5 session ends in March of 2002.

6 Although the legislative process can be concluded in

7 the regular session for redistricting, the Constitution

8 does provide for additional sessions and review processes

9 in the event that the work of the Legislature on

10 redistricting is not completed within the regular session.

11 For example, the Florida Constitution requires the

12 Governor to reconvene the Legislature in a special session,

13 in the event the redistricting plans are not adopted in the

14 regular session. This special session on redistricting

15 shall not exceed 30 consecutive days.

16 From there the processes become a little more tedious

17 and technical, but let me attempt to explain them by

18 talking about the Congressional process first and then the

19 State legislative process.

20 If during the regular or the special session

21 reapportionment plans are adopted by the Legislature for

22 Congress, the Governor will have the opportunity to approve

23 or veto the adopted plan. Under Section V of the Voting

24 Rights Act, which we will discuss in a minute, the Justice

25 Department of the United States Federal District Court for
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1 the District of Columbia must also review certain parts of
 2 the plan in a process known as preclearance.
 3 Now with respect to the State House and Senate seats,
 4 if the Legislature adopts redistricting plans, then 15 days
 5 after passage, the Florida Attorney General is required to
 6 petition the Florida Supreme Court for a determination of
 7 the validity of the Legislature's plan.
 8 If the Florida Supreme Court declares the
 9 Legislature's plan to be invalid, then the Constitution
 10 mandates that within five days of such determination the
 11 Governor must reconvene the Legislature in an extraordinary
 12 session of no more than 15 days, at which session the
 13 Legislature adopts a joint resolution conforming to the
 14 judgment of the Florida Supreme Court.
 15 Assuming the regular and special sessions end without
 16 the adoption of a redistricting plan for the State
 17 Legislature, the Attorney General must petition the Florida
 18 Supreme Court to commence deliberations on the
 19 establishment of a redistricting plan. Within 60 days of
 20 this petition, the Florida Supreme Court must file an order
 21 setting forth such plan.
 22 And with Congressional redistricting, there must also
 23 be a preclearance analysis on selected portions of
 24 Florida's plan.
 25 In an effort to recap the two different processes,
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1 with respect to Congressional redistricting, the Governor
 2 is empowered by the Constitution to sign or veto the bill,
 3 subject, of course, to a legislative override. But with
 4 respect to State redistricting, it is the State Supreme
 5 Court and not the Governor that will review the plans to
 6 determine their validity.
 7 Now let's talk a little bit about redistricting
 8 principles. In adopting a redistricting plan the
 9 Legislature will be guided by several factors, including
 10 the principle of one person, one vote, and the requirements
 11 of the United States Constitution and federal statutes.
 12 The principle commonly referred to as one person, one vote
 13 developed from a series of landmark United States Supreme
 14 Court cases in the 1960s. Generally this principle stands
 15 for the proposition that each person's vote should count as
 16 much as anyone else's vote.
 17 In the context of redistricting, this principle was
 18 used to defeat the practice of several states in
 19 maintaining districts for legislative offices that were
 20 substantially different in population. The Supreme Court
 21 concluded that significant disparities in district
 22 populations resulted in each vote in the district with the
 23 smaller population actually carrying more weight than the
 24 vote in the larger district.
 25 In effect, the one person, one vote standard forbids
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1 major disparities in the creation of Congressional and
 2 State legislative districts.
 3 Now for Congressional Districts, the courts have
 4 instituted the strictest standards. As a rule of thumb,
 5 the population among different districts in one state
 6 should be substantially less than 1 percent overall
 7 deviation. Deviation is analyzed based on the concept of
 8 the ideal district size.
 9 For example, in the case of Florida, if you take the
 10 state's total population and divide it by 25 Congressional
 11 Districts, the resulting number would be the ideal size for
 12 each district in the state. Congressional Districts should
 13 then be drawn well within this 1 percent of the ideal
 14 number. For State legislative districts, the courts have
 15 permitted a greater deviation among districts and courts
 16 have accepted differences between districts of up to 10
 17 percent total deviation in certain circumstances.
 18 Another important factor to consider is set forth in
 19 the Voting Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Protection
 20 Clause of the United States Constitution. Section 2 of the
 21 Voting Rights Act prohibits any practice or procedure,
 22 including certain redistricting practices, that impair the
 23 ability of a minority community to elect candidates of
 24 choice on an equal basis with nonminority voters.
 25 Another section of the Voting Rights Act, Section 5,
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1 applies to certain jurisdictions that have previously met
 2 the criteria for this type of review.
 3 The courts have stated that Section 2 and Section 5 of
 4 the Voting Rights Act entail a different process of
 5 analysis. Under Section 5, covered jurisdictions are
 6 required to submit any proposed change to their practices
 7 or procedures affecting voting, including any changes to
 8 election districts resulting from redistricting, for
 9 approval by either the Attorney General of the United
 10 States or the Federal District Court of the District of
 11 Columbia. This must be done prior to implementation. This
 12 process is what is known as preclearance; and in Florida,
 13 the covered jurisdictions include Collier, Hardee, Hendry,
 14 Hillsborough and Monroe Counties.
 15 The vast majority of preclearance requests are made
 16 directly to the United States Attorney General's Office.
 17 Preclearance is obtained if the Attorney General
 18 effectively indicates that the office has no objections to
 19 the change, or if at the expiration of 60 days from
 20 submission no objection to the submitted change has been
 21 made by the Attorney General.
 22 Whether it is through the court proceeding or the
 23 administrative process through the Attorney General's
 24 Office, the covered jurisdiction bears the burden of
 25 demonstrating that the proposed voting change, quote, does
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1 not have the purpose and will not have the effect of
 2 denying or abridging the right to vote on account of race
 3 or color or membership in a language minority group. The
 4 analysis performed under Section 5 is also at times called
 5 a retrogression analysis.
 6 In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, as some of us well know,
 7 the legal rules regarding the redistricting and
 8 reapportionment process are indeed complex, and this short
 9 presentation can only provide very general guidance on some
 10 of the delicate legal issues that will apply to the
 11 process, some of which have still not been fully decided by
 12 the courts.
 13 Mr. Chairman, on behalf of my Senate colleague and the
 14 House legal team, we thank you for the opportunity to make
 15 this presentation, and turn it back to you, Mr. Chairman.
 16 CHAIRMAN BYRD: Thank you, Attorney DeGrandy. At this
 17 time, I would recognize Todd Thomson of the House
 18 Redistricting Committee to make a brief presentation on
 19 some of the information from the 2000 Census. You are
 20 recognized, Mr. Thomson.
 21 THOMSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
 22 As the Chairman said, I will give a brief overview for
 23 the State of Florida census, and then I'll give some
 24 specific numbers for the Miami-Dade County area.
 25 Florida's population has grown over the past ten
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1 years. According to the 2000 census, Florida has just
 2 under 16 million people now. This is an increase of just
 3 over 3 million from the 1990 census where we were just
 4 under 13 million. This is a rate of percentage growth of
 5 23.5 percent. As a result of this growth, Florida has
 6 gained two new Congressional seats.
 7 Miami-Dade County, where we are today, is Florida's
 8 most populous county and has remained that way the past ten
 9 years, with now just over 2.25 million people. Broward is
 10 second with 1.6 and then followed by Palm Beach,
 11 Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties.
 12 Flagler County, up on the Atlantic coast, experienced
 13 the greatest rate of growth over the past ten years.
 14 Flagler County grew at a rate of 73.6 percent over the past
 15 ten years, and is followed by Sumter, Collier, Wakulla and
 16 Osceola as the top five counties in terms of percentage
 17 rate of growth since 1990.
 18 Jacksonville remains Florida's most populous city with
 19 a population of over 735,000. Miami is number two, with a
 20 population of 362,470, followed by Tampa, St. Petersburg
 21 and Hialeah, Hialeah's population of 226,419.
 22 The minority population in Florida has grown as the
 23 state has grown as well. The African-American population,
 24 according to the 2000 census, is 2.3 million or
 25 14.6 percent of the state's population. And the Hispanic
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1 population in Florida is just under 2.7 million or
 2 16.8 percent of Florida's population. And the Hispanic
 3 population has surpassed the African-American population as
 4 the largest minority in the state of Florida.
 5 The median age in Florida has risen over the past ten
 6 years from 36.3 in 1990 to 38.7 years according to the 2000
 7 census. Age 65-plus, seniors, are our most valuable
 8 resource. According to the 2000 census, there are now over
 9 2.8 million Floridians aged 65 and above. And while this
 10 is an increase of over 400,000 since 1990, the actual
 11 percentage of the population age 65 and above has decreased
 12 from 18.3 percent to 17.6 percent.
 13 As Mr. DeGrandy touched upon, there will be an ideal
 14 population of each State House, State Senate, and
 15 Congressional District that is drawn. For 120 State House
 16 Districts, based on our population, an ideal population for
 17 a State House District would be just over 133,000 per
 18 district. For 40 State Senate Districts, an ideal district
 19 would have a population of about 400,000. And an ideal
 20 population for a Congressional District, based on 25
 21 Congressional Districts, would be 639,295.
 22 And now I'll give you some specific numbers for the
 23 Miami-Dade County area. Once again, Miami-Dade County is
 24 the largest county population-wise in the state of Florida,
 25 just over 2.25 million residents in Miami-Dade County.
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1 That's an increase of 16.3 percent over the 1990
 2 population.
 3 And, once again, the City of Miami's population is
 4 just over 360,000. Monroe County, to the south, according
 5 to the 2000 census has a population of just under 80,000.
 6 This is only a 2 percent increase over the 1990 population.
 7 And Monroe County experienced the slowest percentage rate
 8 of growth over the past ten years.
 9 And Broward County to our north, the second-most
 10 populous county in the state of Florida, has a population
 11 of just over 1.6 million and experienced an increased
 12 percent, an increase of 29.3 percent over 1990.
 13 You can find all of this information and more at the
 14 State House and State Senate redistricting web sites, which
 15 you can find at the information desk where you signed in.
 16 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
 17 CHAIRMAN BYRD: Thank you, Mr. Thomson.
 18 Ladies and gentlemen, as I stated earlier, I will be
 19 using the speakers' cards to call upon members of the
 20 audience who would like to provide us with comments on this
 21 process. If you will look at the speaker's card, there is
 22 a number at the bottom right-hand side, and we will go by
 23 first come, first served and start with the first number.
 24 Now, I would like you to remember that we have to
 25 limit your comments to four minutes. And if you have any
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1 written information that you would like to submit to the
 2 committee, you are welcome to do so. We also have
 3 interpreters available if anyone needs the assistance of a
 4 language interpreter.
 5 So, at this time, we will start with card number one,
 6 speaker Number 1. Welcome to the public hearing, you are
 7 recognized.
 8 MS. TANG: Thank you. Good afternoon, Chairman and
 9 committee members. My name is Venghan (Winnie) Tang. I
 10 have lived in Miami-Dade County for nearly 15 years in
 11 State District 116. Currently, I am the president of the
 12 Organization of Chinese Americans, South Florida Chapter,
 13 and chairperson of the Asian-American Alliance.
 14 As you know, the Asian population, according to census
 15 2000, is the fastest-growing group. We are working very
 16 hard to educate the Asian Pacific American community about
 17 good government. One person, one vote, citizen input in
 18 the redistricting process is very important to us in the
 19 OCA, and that is why we are grateful for your being here
 20 today.
 21 All citizens should be actively involved in the
 22 redistricting process; however, it is hard for working
 23 people to attend many of the daytime hearings such as this.
 24 On their behalf, we urge the redistricting committee to
 25 adopt standards that will ensure that a fair and just
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1 redistricting will guide the final drawing of the voting
 2 map. Standards of fairness in this process should honor
 3 already existing political subdivisions such as cities,
 4 counties, and neighborhoods.
 5 The goal should be to keep the community as intact as
 6 possible to, to unite the communities and best protect
 7 their citizens' interests. Fairness means a lot to all of
 8 us because we elect you, vote for many of you. So, we all
 9 expect all of you to be very, very fair when the
 10 redistricting happens.
 11 During this process, we sincerely ask that you protect
 12 the voting rights of minorities throughout the state and
 13 our community. District boundaries need not be
 14 dramatically changed, only adjust as necessary to balance
 15 the new population differences, and to satisfy the
 16 statutory requirements. In this manner, we can ensure that
 17 districts remain compact, keep our communities together,
 18 our city intact, and contiguous to other cities and
 19 counties.
 20 Florida is a very diverse state. So, the more compact
 21 the district is within the state, the easier it will be for
 22 an individual to well represent his or her constituency.
 23 We can only hope that once the new proposal map is released
 24 we can again meet With you in Miami-Dade County, where the
 25 public will have an opportunity to comment.
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1 Again, we appreciate your efforts going around the
 2 state seeking our input. Thank you very much.
 3 CHAIRMAN BYRD: Thank you. Speaker Number 2, Card
 4 Number 2.
 5 (No response.)
 6 CHAIRMAN BYRD: Card Number 3.
 7 MS. BRAVO: Hello, Mr. Chairman, committee members.
 8 My name is Lourdes Bravo and I represent here today a group
 9 that's called the Family Care Council and it's for District
 10 11A, which is the Children and Families District for
 11 developmental services.
 12 But I'm here to speak about three different
 13 minorities. I'm here to speak about the minority of the
 14 community of individuals that resides here in Miami-Dade
 15 that have developmental disabilities. Secondly, I would
 16 also like to also address the fact of the Hispanic
 17 minority, and I happen to be one of the Hispanic minorities
 18 that's not a Republican in Dade County, I happen to be a
 19 Democrat. And I would hope that you would look closely at
 20 those districts which represent Democrats in this county
 21 that are also Hispanic representation. My district happens
 22 to be 116, which is Annie Betancourt's district.
 23 And the third area that I wanted to talk about is
 24 about women. She represents an Hispanic woman, who is also
 25 a Democrat, which is what I am. And I would really like
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1 for that to be preserved. So one of the things that I'm
 2 hoping is that we will be able to protect our incumbents.
 3 This district voted predominantly Democratic, and I know as
 4 we look at all of our House Districts and all of our Senate
 5 and our Congressional, we are going to be looking at the
 6 numbers and shifting lines. And I would hope that we
 7 preserve those particular districts that have voted in
 8 particular ways in the past.
 9 Like I said before, the whole idea of political
 10 subdivision and community of interest is one of the most
 11 important things that I would like for you to look at. The
 12 community of interest that I represent is the disabled
 13 community.
 14 And by the way, if you are giving extra points today
 15 for finding this place, it's really -- you should. One of
 16 the things that maybe you should consider in the future in
 17 something like this is those individuals that are in
 18 wheelchairs. I know this is supposed to be an accessible
 19 place, but getting here is quite an interesting feat in
 20 itself. So, some of us that really want to bring this
 21 message to you aren't here because it is too difficult to
 22 get out. And I want you, please, to think about that fact.
 23 We work very hard educating our legislators. I know
 24 most of you that are in our district on a first-name basis.
 25 And the reason for it is that our issues are very unique,
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1 and they take some educating, whether it is the Medicaid,
 2 or Medicaid waiver or Ticket to Work, or any of those
 3 issues of quality assurance for individuals with
 4 disabilities, they take time and they take educating, and
 5 we already have certain districts and certain
 6 Representatives that know our issues well. And we would
 7 hope that you would preserve that kind of matter as you go
 8 about your district.

9 So, the community of interest is something that's very
 10 important. Protecting our incumbents is very important,
 11 and respecting the political subdivisions also. We have --
 12 like I said, Cindy Lerner is here, she is District 119,
 13 Mr. Bullard is here. I'm in the south, in Kendall, and a
 14 lot of our individuals that have disabilities that are in
 15 our Family Care Council are in the south. We work in and
 16 out of all of the districts with our issues, as well as in
 17 the north. And we would hope that you would preserve those
 18 districts that already exist, and those numbers of voters
 19 that are already there. Thank you very much.

20 CHAIRMAN BYRD: Thank you. Number 4.

21 MR. MATOS: Mr. Chairman, and members, I am Gabriel
 22 Matos, president of (Inaudible). I have lived in this
 23 country for 15 years. I would like to thank you,
 24 Mr. Chairman, for scheduling public hearings before plans
 25 are drawn. It is nice to know that unlike ten years ago,
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1 you are asking for public input before the decision on how
 2 to draw the lines are made. And I would also like to thank
 3 the leadership for ensuring that the redistricting process
 4 is open, fair and inclusive.

5 I have looked at both the House and Senate web sites
 6 and find them to be extremely helpful and user friendly. I
 7 strongly urge any members of the public listening who have
 8 not used these web sites to do so as soon as possible.

9 I appreciate the legal review that your attorney gave
 10 the public and to us. And you have stated that you will
 11 proceed through this redistricting process pursuant to
 12 established legal and Constitutional principles.

13 As you consider the redistricting plans that affect
 14 South Florida, I ask you to maintain communities of
 15 interest together. There are a number of Hispanic
 16 residents in South Florida, and I am concerned that there
 17 may be dilution of minority voting in this state.

18 As you know, South Florida is extremely diverse. We
 19 have large numbers of families from various countries in
 20 Latin America. South Florida Hispanics who live in Dade
 21 County, Broward, Collier and Monroe County have very strong
 22 family values and some very unique concerns and issues.
 23 So, it is important for us to have Representatives in the
 24 House, Senate, and Congressional Districts who understand
 25 us and our issues.
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1 Our delegation in the State House and Senate as well
 2 as our Congressional, Lincoln Diaz-Balart, and
 3 Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen transcend geographic and
 4 district boundaries, representing all Hispanics. We need
 5 to be able to chose someone who understands our culture,
 6 our needs, and our concerns. We respectfully ask you to
 7 consider increasing Hispanic representation in order to
 8 reflect the growth in numbers in our state.

9 Thank you very much.

10 CHAIRMAN BYRD: Ladies and gentlemen, at this time we
 11 will ask the president of Florida International University
 12 Modesto Maidique, Mr. President, you are recognized to
 13 address the public hearing. Thank you for your
 14 hospitality.

15 MR. MAIDIQUE: Thank you very much, Representative.
 16 We are honored to have you here. And at a time when
 17 America is reaffirming its commitment and the strength of
 18 its democracy, I think there are very few things that we do
 19 that are more important than decide how and in what way and
 20 through what structures the people will vote. So I thank
 21 you for your good work, we are honored to have you here,
 22 let me know if there's anything at all that we can do.

23 I just looked through the audience and there are
 24 friend after friend after friend. So, we are honored to
 25 have you here.
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1 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

2 CHAIRMAN BYRD: Thank you for your hospitality.
 3 Card Number 5.

4 MS. ALVAREZ: Good afternoon. I'm sure Mr. Jerry and
 5 his imaginary salamander are throughly enjoying media
 6 coverage. My name is Rosa Alvarez and I live within
 7 District 119. I vote for people, not political parties.
 8 As far as I'm concerned, history shows the mechanics of
 9 politics are the same regardless of party affiliation.

10 During this particularly trying time in our country,
 11 when voters alertness is sensitized, we need to walk the
 12 bipartisan talk and truly listen to the individual voter.
 13 Years ago, citizens were handed predisposed boundaries, we
 14 complied, we reshuffled, and we accommodated. We got to
 15 know each other and elected the leadership that we valued.
 16 Our district is blessed with a Representative that is a
 17 proven communicator and with people united by the tragedy
 18 of Hurricane Andrew.

19 In many ways, we are the ideal community, the very
 20 community mentioned in the redistricting guidelines. We
 21 are a well-balanced group racially, and economically.
 22 Local media, through their recent coverage of proceedings,
 23 states that the very people that are against gerrymandering
 24 are practicing it. I disagree. That's not why I'm here
 25 today.
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1 The act of gerrymandering requires action, and I'm
 2 here, ladies and gentlemen, to ask that you do nothing
 3 about House District 119. I appreciate your time.
 4 CHAIRMAN BYRD: Thank you. Number 6.
 5 MR. ALVAREZ: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, and
 6 members of the committee. My name is Jorge Alvarez, I am a
 7 Miami-Dade County resident of 40 years, and I'm also proud
 8 to be a Miami-Dade County Republican committeeman for
 9 District No. 27, which encompasses the beautiful city of
 10 Coral Gables.
 11 I want to first thank the committee for the openness
 12 and the fairness that you have shown throughout this
 13 process. You will have and you have had some nay-sayers,
 14 and some of those that will be critical. Ironically, those
 15 people would not have had a forum ten years ago as they do
 16 today. And that's again thanks to the leadership and the
 17 fairness that you all have shown.
 18 I want to speak specifically to the communities of
 19 interest. Coral Gables right now is represented by at
 20 least four State Representatives. We're fortunate that two
 21 of them are in leadership positions, and one of them is
 22 Majority Whip Representative Rubio and we also have
 23 Chairman Carlos Lacasa. But in reality our community of
 24 interest, as many others, are looking to have
 25 representatives that are accountable and specific to the
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1 community they live, worship and work in.
 2 So, we hope as you go forward in this process you are
 3 able to look at these different communities and you are
 4 able to look at where people live and give people an
 5 opportunity to choose their own qualified representatives
 6 from within their own communities.
 7 So, once again, I want to thank you for this process,
 8 I want to thank you for your openness and your fairness,
 9 and for the opportunity you have given everyone in the
 10 state of Florida to be part of this process. And I
 11 congratulate you for that. Thank you.
 12 CHAIRMAN BYRD: Thank you. Number 7.
 13 (Pause.)
 14 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Members, while they are fixing
 15 that, I would like to remind you that these microphones are
 16 voice activated. They are different from the ones we've
 17 had before that are switch activated. So when you speak,
 18 they come on. So if you're speaking, we will hear you.
 19 You are recognized.
 20 MS. KASSE: Good afternoon. My name is Rosa Kasse, I
 21 am the president of the Hispanic Coalition, a nonprofit
 22 community serviced in Dade County, since 1987. And I have
 23 lived in Dade County since 1974 when I came down from New
 24 York City in order for my children to grow in a very
 25 healthy and prosperous city like Dade County. And I'm very
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1 happy to be here today for the first time in my 26 years
 2 being an active citizen of this country.
 3 So, I would like to thank the chairman and the members
 4 of the committee for giving us the opportunity for the
 5 first time to express our concern and to tell you how the
 6 people that I represent, over 35,000 families per year,
 7 that is the count of the Hispanic correlation which
 8 provides jobs for those that don't have jobs, immigration
 9 status for those who qualify, probation of juvenile
 10 delinquency, and protection to those who don't have the
 11 voice and the vote to be heard by all our elected
 12 officials.
 13 I can say that I'm in the district of Senator Rudy
 14 Garcia, which I have never been able to see because his
 15 district is so big that even though to share some concerns
 16 of so many county citizens of Dade County taxpayers it is
 17 not possible to get in touch. I had to get in touch and
 18 present our community problems to many different senators
 19 and representatives, Mario Diaz-Balart, Cindy, and some
 20 others who can listen to our citizen problem.
 21 Hispanic community, and the Latino and the Caribbean
 22 and Haitian communities are very -- grow, prosper and are
 23 hard workers, citizens of Dade County. We need, we need
 24 the redistricting of our state to be fair, inclusive.
 25 Because we have cultures, values, and families that we
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1 would like to keep together.
 2 We want to be able to -- the citizens of this county
 3 can be able to recognize their elected official. We want
 4 to be able that they can feel inclusive, that they can be
 5 represented really. And at the same time, we want them to
 6 be able to understand the system so they can be taught how
 7 the government and our system works.
 8 So, that is the reason why I am here representing not
 9 Rosa Kasse as a very active voter, representing so many
 10 Latinos, Caribbeans and Haitians and Asians that don't have
 11 the opportunity to be here today. Because a lot of them
 12 has two and three jobs in order for them to support their
 13 family.
 14 I am very active on your web site, I do get a lot of
 15 information out of the system, but this is very, very
 16 important that when you are --
 17 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Ten seconds.
 18 MS. KASSE: -- making your final decision, please do
 19 not divide our Hispanic community. Thank you.
 20 CHAIRMAN BYRD: Thank you. Number 8.
 21 MR. ANDRADE: Mr. Chairman, and members, thank you
 22 very much for this opportunity. Mr. Chairman, thank you
 23 for making this a democratic process and for coming out and
 24 listening to us, that's very important for our community.
 25 And desperately we all want to work together and we want to
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1 be participants of that work.
 2 My name is Fabio Andrade, I'm an activist in the
 3 community. I am the founder of the Colombian-American
 4 Political Action Committee, I am a member of the
 5 Colombian-American Coalition in the state of Florida, I am
 6 also a member of the Colombian-American National
 7 Organization across the country. I'm also a very active
 8 political member in our community, some of the members here
 9 present.
 10 I'm here to speak to you in regards to the needs of
 11 the Colombian-American community in regards to our
 12 representation in our state at this time. Our community
 13 has grown tremendously in the last few years, and
 14 desperately we are now ready and able to be part of that
 15 work to service our community, to lead with you and move to
 16 the next step. We want to work as hard as the two
 17 representatives here in the state of Florida, which is
 18 Lincoln Diaz-Balart and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, that has
 19 worked tremendously for the Colombian-American community.
 20 We want to be able to the represent and service our
 21 community as well as they have done in the past.
 22 Our census at this time shows a great number of
 23 Colombian-Americans living in the state of Florida. Even
 24 though we agree with those numbers, we definitely know that
 25 those numbers are low to the reality of what's happening
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1 here today. So, with those numbers there today, it does
 2 reflect the need for us to move forward and to really, once
 3 again, I'm probably repeating myself, but that is the
 4 intent of this couple of minutes and I'm going to take, is
 5 to ensure that we are ready, we are able, we have got the
 6 numbers, we have got the talent to be able to work as a
 7 team, as we have talked many times in the past.
 8 I want to once again thank you all for this
 9 opportunity to listen to us. Desperately we are very
 10 committed to ensure a proper process, and we would like to
 11 be part of that process to participate in any committees
 12 that you wish to set up to bring the community once again
 13 to look at the boundary lines and those numbers and see how
 14 we could all help each other to make our city, to make our
 15 state the best there is in the country. Once again, thank
 16 you, and may God bless you all. Good day.
 17 CHAIRMAN BYRD: Thank you. Number 9.
 18 MR. ZELLER: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, members of
 19 the committee, my name is Ray Zeller and I'm the state
 20 committeeman for the Miami-Dade County Democratic Party.
 21 Our chairman was going to be here today and couldn't make
 22 it, so he asked me to make the statement on behalf of
 23 himself and our Democratic Executive Committee.
 24 It is our understanding that the current law as it
 25 applies to redistricting prohibits the exclusive use of
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1 race as a redistricting criteria. However, the courts have
 2 held that there is nothing improper about drawing lines
 3 based upon political affiliation and to protect incumbents.
 4 While I understand that redistricting is primarily a
 5 legislative and political function, we request that this
 6 committee exercise fairness, be fair to the residents of
 7 Miami-Dade County in the discharge of your important
 8 responsibilities.
 9 As we all know, Miami-Dade County is Florida's most
 10 populous county with a 23 percent increase in population
 11 from 1990 to 2000. Miami-Dade has a stated population over
 12 2,253,362. Miami-Dade County also has 404,096 registered
 13 Democrats and 342,540 registered Republican voters. The
 14 voter registration data also shows that there are slightly
 15 more registered Democrats statewide in Florida than there
 16 are Republicans. The last election also demonstrated that
 17 when it comes to actual voting, Floridians are closely
 18 divided.
 19 Yet, the makeup of our Legislature does not reflect
 20 these facts. Republicans held overwhelming majorities in
 21 both the House and Senate and in the Florida Congressional
 22 delegation. Mr. Chair, we urge you and this committee to
 23 be fair to Florida voters and draw lines that are
 24 respective of Florida's voters and their political
 25 affiliation. Given that Florida's voters are more evenly
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1 split between Democrats and Republicans, our state's
 2 districts should be drawn to reflect that split.
 3 Finally, Mr. Chair, we also urge you and this
 4 committee to ensure its compliance with the Voting Rights
 5 Act and be fair to our state's diverse minority
 6 communities. To fulfill this important objective, this
 7 committee should adopt fair and meaningful criteria to
 8 avoid a dilution of retrogression of minority voting
 9 strength.
 10 This committee should provide our citizens the
 11 opportunity to comment on any proposed plans prior to their
 12 final adoption. Thank you all for coming to seek our input
 13 today. Please come back and give us a meaningful
 14 opportunity to comment on this committee's decision for our
 15 state.
 16 That was the statement from the party. One thing that
 17 I want to add is, Congresswoman Carrie Meek has become a
 18 beacon for our community and our Congressional district.
 19 We need desperately to ensure that she is safe and secure
 20 in this process. Thank you very, very much.
 21 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 10, Number 10.
 22 (No response.)
 23 CHAIRMAN BYRD: Number 11.
 24 (No response.)
 25 CHAIRMAN BYRD: Number 12.
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1 MR. VELASQUEZ: Mr. Chairman, committee members, my
2 name is Rafael Velasquez and I live in District 107, which
3 encompasses South Beach, Downtown, Brickell, South Little
4 Havana, Key Biscayne, Coconut Grove and parts of South
5 Miami. Most importantly, I am here as a citizen and
6 resident of this district, and that's what I want to talk
7 to you about.

8 One person, one vote. One person, one vote. Let me
9 repeat it, one person, one vote. That is what it's all
10 about, that's what we all worry about. Each and every vote
11 must count. On what basis? Not on a party-line basis, we
12 are not here to have a partisan war in achieving
13 Constitutional purpose. There's much more at stake; that
14 is, that the democratic process and the United States of
15 America gets achieved fairly, justly and provides everybody
16 with an equal right to vote and be counted.

17 I want to remind you of what happened in the past. I
18 don't have to go too far. You know what I'm talking about.
19 You know what I'm talking about. It is not a partisan war,
20 it is a democratic process. As a governmental official,
21 you have the responsibility to your constituency to fulfill
22 your governmental duty fairly, accurately and
23 constitutionally. It is not about how another Republican
24 or Democrat is that correct gets elected, no. It's about
25 how one person will count one vote. That's all it is

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1 about.

2 Take factors into consideration, take the census into
3 consideration, take demographics into consideration, but
4 this is not a partisan war. Please keep this in mind, this
5 is not a partisan war. Thank you very much.

6 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 13.

7 MR. FERNANDEZ: Mr. Chairman, members of the
8 committee, good afternoon. My name is Alvaro Fernandez,
9 and I am the Florida director for Southwest Voter
10 Registration Education Project, a national nonpartisan
11 organization whose focus is the empowerment of Latino and
12 other underserved communities.

13 When I speak of underserved, there are many here in
14 South Florida that fall in that category. For example,
15 yesterday I attended your hearing at Central High School
16 where a number of our Haitian brothers and sisters spoke on
17 behalf of their efforts for empowerment. I must emphasize
18 that we support their efforts. I have heard many
19 African-Americans speak around the state. And again I say,
20 we support them. I know that in return, we will get the
21 same cooperation from these communities in an effort to
22 empower many of the new Latino communities now surging
23 throughout Florida.

24 As was mentioned, Florida's population grew by over
25 3 million persons according to the 2000 census.

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1 Interestingly enough, 1.1 million of those new residents,
2 or 74 percent, were Hispanics. In fact, again as was
3 mentioned, 16.8 percent of the total population of the
4 state of Florida is now Latino, making us the largest
5 minority group in Florida. Here in Miami-Dade County,
6 Hispanics represent 57 percent of the population, those
7 1.2 million-plus people are divided almost evenly between
8 Cuban and other Hispanic communities, like the Puerto
9 Ricans, Nicaraguans, Colombian, Mexican, Peruvian, Honduran
10 and others that together represent the other one half.

11 As a Cuban-American, I'm also here as a member of a
12 group formed in Miami known as a Latin American Voters
13 League. This organization has representatives from almost
14 every Hispanic community in the county. Our aim is that
15 through voter registration and voter participation, new
16 Latino leadership will take its rightful place by way of
17 the electoral process so vital to our democracy.

18 Many of us are motivated to participate in this
19 process because redistricting has an important significance
20 for the civil rights of Latinos and other minorities as
21 demonstrated over and over by the federal Voting Rights
22 Act. Based on these figures I've quoted, and I'll now
23 leave you with a challenge, make sure this process ends up
24 reflecting the new Latino communities' dramatic growth in
25 terms of our ability to elect representatives of our
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1 choice.

2 Finally, I would hope that when you do present your
3 maps, you will allow us the input we deserve. I have been
4 to a few of these hearings already. My greatest fear is
5 that you will not listen to the people of Florida who have
6 told you how they want their redistricting lines drawn.
7 Let me say that it is often disheartening when one speaks
8 and no one answers. I keep asking myself, what are they up
9 to?

10 I finish as always by thanking the committee for this
11 opportunity. And we continue to look forward to working
12 with all of you, both Democrats and Republicans, to ensure
13 that the process is carried out in a just and fair manner.
14 Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Number 14.

16 MR. HYMAN: Good afternoon Mr. Chairman, members of
17 the committee. My name is Tim Hyman, and I'm here today to
18 represent myself as a citizen of Miami-Dade County. I've
19 thought about the proceedings that this committee is
20 putting on for the public to become involved, I felt that
21 it was important to stand up and give you my opinion as
22 well. Your effort to involve the public is to be
23 applauded. The time and effort shown by this committee is
24 indeed showing that you have our community's best interest
25 at heart.

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1 I feel confident that you will take into consideration
 2 the growth in Dade County, and especially southwest Dade
 3 County, when you, in fact, have to redraw these district
 4 lines. Groups with similar interests, I'm sure, will be a
 5 part of your equation. District compactness and continuity
 6 have a chance to be realized in this process.

7 As I listened to Opa Locka speakers yesterday, I was
 8 very proud. Their spirit showed up in force to voice their
 9 concerns. This is a natural right that we as Americans
 10 have and should protect. Unfortunately, I was dismayed by
 11 statements that leaders and their constituents should have
 12 to look alike. The color or skin should not matter. If
 13 this were to be our only guide, then we would all be
 14 segregated to the point of no return.

15 Equal representation is a Constitutional right, not a
 16 definition of skin color, whether it be black, brown,
 17 yellow or white. I, for one, believe in the democratic
 18 process and am proud to be an American, not an
 19 Anglo-American.

20 Again, I give this committee my full support in its
 21 reapportionment decisions. I will speak out either for or
 22 against our political leaders based on their commitment,
 23 beliefs and dedication, not the color of their skin. I
 24 would like to end this with a thought that has occurred to
 25 me. America has been forever changed since September 11th.

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1 I read an e-mail that was basically worded better than I
 2 thought I ever could.

3 It's called, The Power of One. As the soot and dirt
 4 and ash rained out, we became one color. As we carried
 5 each other down the stairs of the burning building, we
 6 became one class. As we lit candles of waiting and hope,
 7 we became one generation. As the firefighters and police
 8 officers fought their way into the inferno, we became one
 9 gender. As we fell to our knees in prayer for strength, we
 10 became one faith.

11 As we whispered or shouted words of encouragement, we
 12 spoke one language. As we gave our blood in lines a mile
 13 long, we became one body. As we mourned together the great
 14 loss, we became one family. As we cried tears of grief and
 15 loss, we became one soul. As we re-tell the pride of the
 16 sacrifices of heroes, we became one people.

17 Again, I applaud you for your commitments and your
 18 efforts. Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 15.

20 MS. MAZZAGATTI: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, members
 21 of the committee. I'm Cora Mazzagatti from District 20 and
 22 the State House 112 District. I live in a very rural area,
 23 the last agricultural district in Dade County.

24 And I am sincerely hoping that in the effort to
 25 redistrict that you don't mix apples and oranges so that

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1 one political party will be dominant. I would also like to
 2 ask that Districts 118 and 119 remain as they exist.

3 Gerrymandering for predominantly political reasons would
 4 not be appreciated by the citizens.

5 I thank you in advance for your work, for your
 6 endeavor. Make us proud to be Floridians again. Please
 7 don't give us anything else that the national press can
 8 blow out of proportion. Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 16.

10 MS. CHILLAR: I am Eulene Chillar and I live in the
 11 Redlands. In the Redlands, we have one of the rarest
 12 districts in Florida, agriculture, a lovely place to live,
 13 and we want to keep it that way. So, if you can, let's
 14 don't change 112's district.

15 And while I'm standing here, I would like to reiterate
 16 what Cora said and tell you that District 118 and 119, the
 17 residents are very content with their district and they
 18 would like to have it stay that way.

19 Thank you for your work and thank you for being here
 20 in Dade County for us. And let's think of not politics as
 21 usual, but let's think about building a Florida, again,
 22 that we don't get all over the papers and everybody is
 23 saying, What in the world is wrong with you people down
 24 south. Let's get it together. Thank you, and have a good
 25 day.

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1 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 17.

2 MS. VAZQUEZ: Good afternoon, my name is Angela
 3 Vazquez. I would like to thank the chairman and the
 4 members of the leadership for ensuring that the
 5 redistricting process is open, fair, and inclusive. As you
 6 consider plans that affect South Florida, I ask that you
 7 maintain communities of interest together.

8 Those of us who are South Florida Hispanics, living in
 9 Miami-Dade County have very strong family values and some
 10 very unique concerns and issues. It is important for us to
 11 have representatives in the House, Senate, and
 12 Congressional Districts that understand us and our
 13 problems.

14 I respectfully ask that you consider increasing
 15 Hispanic representation so that it reflects our population
 16 growths in Florida. Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 18.

18 MS. PENEDO: Good afternoon. My name is Marla Penedo.
 19 I have been a resident of Miami-Dade County for 40 years,
 20 and a resident of District 115 for the past 16 years. I
 21 want to thank the chairman for scheduling these public
 22 hearings. It's very nice to see that the public has input
 23 into this process before all of the districts are drawn.

24 As you know, South Florida and by the census figures,
 25 has a large number of Hispanics living in the area. And

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1 Hispanics from different nationalities who have very
 2 diverse needs. And we need to be able to choose
 3 representatives who understand our culture, our needs and
 4 our concerns. And I sincerely hope that you take this into
 5 consideration during the redistricting process. Thank you.
 6 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 19.
 7 (No response.)
 8 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Number 20.
 9 MR. BORONAT: My name is Orlando Gutierrez Boronat. I
 10 live in District 115, I have been a Dade resident for 30
 11 years.
 12 First of all, I would like to thank the chairman for
 13 scheduling public hearings before plans are drawn. I think
 14 that it's very important that you ask for public input
 15 before the decisions on how to draw district lines are
 16 made. As a South Floridian involved in foreign policy
 17 issues, I believe that the growth of Florida's Hispanic
 18 population is paralleled by the increased importance of
 19 Florida in Latin American.
 20 The Hispanic populations in Florida often represent
 21 the necessary balance and positive force in the areas of
 22 promoting democracy and defending human rights in the area,
 23 which in turn have a direct hearing on immigration to our
 24 state.
 25 Representatives Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and Lincoln
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1 Diaz-Balart have been key in defending these pillars of
 2 democracy and human rights in the region. Therefore, I
 3 respectfully ask that for the sake of Florida's Hispanic
 4 population and of Florida's regional importance, that you
 5 not divide Hispanic populations and increase Hispanic
 6 representation. Thank you.
 7 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 21.
 8 MR. PARRISH: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, and
 9 members of the board, Senators, Congressmen. My name is
 10 Robert Parrish and I would like to greet you all in the
 11 name of the most high God because without God none of us
 12 would be here today.
 13 I come as a direct descendent of an African that was
 14 forced into slavery in America. I grew up in Dade County,
 15 which I love Dade County, the state of Florida. Everywhere
 16 you go, you also see Florida, it stands alone. And the
 17 last time that redistricting was done, I was in Los Angeles
 18 California. I was a volunteer with inner-city gangs with
 19 Mr. Arnold Schwarzenegger and Mr. Danny Hernandez. Their
 20 slogan was, All kids are a lifetime investment.
 21 Like I said, I grew up here in Dade County, and Dade
 22 County is now very diverse. I've never seen it like this
 23 here before. But I know that the tourist industry is one
 24 of the blessings of South Florida. And I'm asking that
 25 when you draw the lines in your redistricting plans, keep
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1 our incumbents protected and safe and give them the
 2 opportunity to grow, especially in the inner-cities so that
 3 the tourists, when they do come to America, they do want to
 4 go to the inner-cities, because I know this from personal
 5 experience in Los Angeles.
 6 That's why I came today again to speak to ask that, if
 7 the State of Florida and the County of Dade, when giving
 8 out contracts to private contractors, the contracts be as
 9 diverse as our community. It should be mandatory that --
 10 it should be that way. That's from my layman's point of
 11 view. And as we are rebuilding America, like everybody
 12 said, what happened on 9/11, we must rebuild America so
 13 that the state of Florida could be an example for all of
 14 the world to see.
 15 So I ask and I say to you all, God bless each and
 16 every one of you all. So, when you draw your redistricting
 17 line, remember, protect our incumbents.
 18 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 22.
 19 MR. DRASCHNER: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and
 20 members of the board. This is my first time here, I thank
 21 you for having all of this. I have been a member of this
 22 institution, FIU, for over two years now. And I have seen
 23 it grow and I have seen the surrounding areas grow.
 24 I like Dade County, I like Miami in particular, but it
 25 needs work, it needs help, especially in the intercity
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1 areas, as touched by the man who was just speaking. We
 2 need two things overall, to keep Democrats with Democrats
 3 and Republicans with Republicans, to ensure their voices
 4 are heard, and we need special attention toward the
 5 intercity areas. We need to give them a bigger voice,
 6 mainly for the reasons that he touched on for a couple of
 7 seconds.
 8 Miami is a tourist city, it needs to look good, it
 9 needs to have security, and it needs to have safety.
 10 Otherwise, we lose potential money. We lose potential
 11 money, we lose potential tourists. That's basically all I
 12 wanted to say. Thank you for your time.
 13 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 23.
 14 (No response.)
 15 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Number 24.
 16 MR. de la TORRE: Good afternoon. Good afternoon, Mr.
 17 Chairman, and members of this committee. My name is Raul
 18 de la Torre, chief of staff for Miami-Dade County
 19 Commissioner Rebeca Sosa, and I apologize for her for not
 20 being able to make it here due to a last minute conflict.
 21 I'm here to relay Commissioner Sosa's message to this
 22 committee. I would like to thank the chairman for
 23 scheduling public hearings before plans are drawn. It is
 24 nice to know that unlike ten years ago, you are asking for
 25 public input before the decision on how to draw the lines
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1 are made. I would also like to thank the leadership for
 2 ensuring that the redistricting process be open, fair and
 3 inclusive. And I have looked at both the House and Senate
 4 web sites and find them to be extremely helpful and user
 5 friendly. I strongly urge any members of the public
 6 listening who has not utilized this web site to do so as
 7 soon as possible.

8 I appreciate the legal overview that your attorney
 9 gave the public and to us. And you have stated that you
 10 will proceed through this redistricting process pursuant to
 11 established legal and Constitutional principles.

12 As you consider redistricting plans that affect South
 13 Florida, I ask that you maintain communities of interest
 14 together. As you know, South Florida is extremely diverse
 15 with increasingly large numbers of Hispanics from various
 16 Latin American countries. With a growing number of
 17 Hispanic presence in South Florida, I'm concerned that
 18 there may be a dilution of minority voting strength.

19 We South Florida Hispanics who live in Dade, Broward,
 20 Collier and Monroe Counties have very strong family values
 21 and some very unique concerns and issues. So it is
 22 important for us to have representatives in the House,
 23 Senate, and Congressional Districts who understand us and
 24 our issues. Our delegation in the State House and Senate
 25 as well as our Congressman Lincoln Diaz-Balart and
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1 Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen transcend geographic and
 2 district boundaries, representing all Hispanics.

3 We need to be able to choose representatives who
 4 understand our culture, our needs and our concerns. And we
 5 respectfully ask that you please consider increasing
 6 Hispanic representation in order to reflect the growth in
 7 numbers in our state. Thank you for this opportunity.

8 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 25.

9 MS. REGUIERO: Good afternoon, thank you. My name is
 10 Maria Christina Reguiero and I'm the vice-president and
 11 assistant CEO for Florida National College, an institution
 12 of higher learning designated by the U.S. Department of
 13 Education as a Hispanic-serving institution.

14 Look at me, this is first time that I've attended one
 15 of these functions. And I assure you that next time I am
 16 going to be Number 1. Because after being 25, I have been
 17 changing my speech over and over again, and I want to be
 18 creative and unique, and I want to say something different
 19 from what everyone else here has said.

20 So, not to bore you, all I'm going to say is please,
 21 you already know the census, you already know who we are,
 22 you already know our needs, our culture, our passion and
 23 who we represent. Therefore, we urge you to give us the
 24 opportunity when you are considering the boundaries of this
 25 new district to represent us and make sure that we are
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1 going to be able to have a fair representation of us,
 2 Hispanic, Latinos in Dade County.

3 Thank you very much.

4 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Number 26.

5 MR. PINA: Good afternoon, committee, my name is
 6 Alicia Pina. I am a resident of Miami Lakes, which is up
 7 in the northwest part of the county, and I happen to think
 8 it is one of the best places in South Florida to live. I
 9 am sure a couple of you agree because you represent it.

10 Basically, I really wanted to thank Mr. DeGrandy for
 11 his little overview that he gave the committee. I
 12 remember, I graduated from law school, I haven't practiced
 13 law, I'm in the family business of real estate development,
 14 but I wanted to follow a little bit about ten years ago the
 15 committee and what you -- what the committee did back then.
 16 And it was hard to follow.

17 And this year it has certainly been a lot more easy to
 18 follow, not only we have had some press coming, but I know
 19 that the committee has really gone out of their way to show
 20 the citizens of different areas of the state that you
 21 really care for our views and our concerns. And I really
 22 want to thank you for those that are here from Dade County,
 23 and those that are from other places for actually taking
 24 that.

25 I'm really interested in trying to keep Miami Lakes
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1 one community. Miami Lakes is represented by two
 2 representatives and it's also represented on the border by
 3 two Senators. I don't know if there is a way that we could
 4 somehow keep that one community.

5 But also I want to the make sure that we keep our
 6 Hispanic community in South Florida all together, not only
 7 in Dade County, but in Broward, in Monroe County, and also
 8 Collier County. In Broward, the growth of the Hispanic
 9 community in Broward is incredible. I mean, you go there
 10 and, you know, you see it, in Weston.

11 And it's important that we keep, I mean, our issues,
 12 our concerns are all the same, whether we are Colombian, we
 13 are Cuban, we are from Argentina, our issues, our values we
 14 have are all just about the same. And we really would like
 15 for you to try to keep those, all of those Hispanic
 16 citizens together, not only in the state but also in the
 17 Congressional delegation, of course.

18 As some of us have said here, we have got really three
 19 great Congress people that represent us mainly in
 20 Congresswoman Carrie Meek, and Ileana Ros, and of course
 21 our great leader, Lincoln Diaz-Balart. So I really -- we
 22 have great representation there and also at the state
 23 level, but if we could somehow keep it together, our issues
 24 and concerns would be greatly appreciated.

25 Our growth in the last ten years has been incredible.
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1 And I think it's important that we keep -- again, it
 2 doesn't matter what country you are from, keep us together
 3 so we can be well represented not only in Congress but in
 4 the state. Thank you.
 5 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 27.
 6 MR. CABRERA: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman,
 7 distinguished members of the panel. In the wake of this
 8 terrible tragedy that our nation, our great nation, and the
 9 world is going through, we are also celebrating this
 10 afternoon one of the things that puts us apart from the
 11 rest of the world, which is our great democracy.
 12 And I am here to remind all of you who have this great
 13 responsibility of ensuring representation for all of the
 14 citizens of the state of Florida and in the next districts
 15 that are going to be redesigned based on the past census
 16 2000, I want to remind you that you are not only Americans,
 17 you are not only Democrats or Republicans, but you are
 18 human beings. And your job, your main job today and in the
 19 following months is to be fair, to ensure that all citizens
 20 of the state of Florida are duly represented in the Senate
 21 and in the Florida House.
 22 We have, like many other people who have preceded me,
 23 people from different ethnicities, different races and
 24 different national origins. For this great democracy of
 25 ours to be preserved, to continue being what it is now,
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1 fairness has to be the order of the day.
 2 I am president of the Democratic Hispanic Caucus of
 3 the Democratic Party of Miami-Dade County, I'm also
 4 vice-president of the Colombian-American Coalition of
 5 Florida, and I'm a member of the Democratic Executive
 6 Committee of Miami-Dade County.
 7 I thank you for your time, I really beg you to please
 8 make sure that all nationalities, all regionals, all
 9 ethnicities, all qualities and all kinds of Floridians are
 10 duly and properly represented in the next redistricting of
 11 the Senate and the House. Thank you very much.
 12 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 28.
 13 MR. WILLIAMS: Ladies and gentlemen of the committee,
 14 good afternoon. My name is Anthony Williams, I reside at
 15 5455 Northwest 169 Terrace in Carol City, Florida. I'm
 16 currently the political action chair for the Miami-Dade
 17 NAACP, as well as president of the Dade County Democratic
 18 Black Caucus.
 19 Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today,
 20 but I would suggest that the voters of this community and
 21 across the state are far more interested in getting a fair
 22 map at the end of this process than having a fair hearing
 23 at the beginning of it.
 24 Towards that end, I would like to speak to you on two
 25 fronts. First, coming to you from a perspective of reason.
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1 There are communities in this county that have natural
 2 boundaries, and I'll speak from personal experience. I
 3 live in Carol City. And historically that area is from
 4 17th Avenue, N.W., to 57th Avenue, N.W., from the Palmetto
 5 Expressway North to the county line.
 6 That community is commonly referred to by everyone as
 7 Carol City, although it is not an actual municipality.
 8 This community is identified by two elementary schools
 9 bearing the Carol City name, a middle school bearing that
 10 name, and a high school bearing the same name. If you ask
 11 anyone within those boundaries, they will tell you they
 12 live in Carol City.
 13 Consequently, it wouldn't be reasonable to divide that
 14 community between two districts. Currently, we are
 15 fortunate to all be in House District 103; however, we are
 16 divided when it comes to our Senate District. Another
 17 community immediately to our south is the municipality of
 18 Opa Locka. That city is only made up of 13,000 residents,
 19 give or take. And yet that small municipality is divided
 20 between two House districts, 103 and 109. We ask that as
 21 you look at the districts across this county and across
 22 this state, that you keep in mind the importance of keeping
 23 natural communities of interest together.
 24 The next thing that I would ask is that if at that
 25 time, end of the day you cannot see clear to draw these
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1 lines based on reason, then draw these lines based on
 2 self-interest. The electorate in this state is frustrated.
 3 The last election being so close and so divisive is still
 4 very fresh in the minds of many Floridians.
 5 With that frustration in place, the electorate is also
 6 somewhat distrustful of government. It's up to you and
 7 your colleagues in the Legislature to re-instill that trust
 8 in the voters. The electorate is equally divided. Census
 9 data tells us that, voter registration data tells us that,
 10 turnout tells us that, performance tells us that. The
 11 districts should also tell us something very similar.
 12 I recognize that this is largely a political process,
 13 and in the minds of many, to the victor go the spoils. But
 14 I would suggest it is far better to hold the majority in a
 15 state of peace than to overreach and try to hold a super
 16 majority in a state of the war. Consider this carefully,
 17 please, for the residents of our state and re-instill
 18 confidence in our government to all of us. Thank you.
 19 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Twenty-nine.
 20 MS. SECADA: Good afternoon. I'm Irene Secada and I
 21 have been a lifelong resident of Miami-Dade County,
 22 currently living in the unincorporated South Miami area.
 23 Today I want to raise some points that I don't think have
 24 yet been addressed. And that is that as an activist for
 25 women's groups and environmentalists' groups and parks
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1 activists that there are a lot of communities of interest
 2 that really need to be represented.

3 Today I want to talk to you about the fact that ten
 4 years ago, in the reapportionment process, there were very
 5 few women who were already elected to office. And from one
 6 election cycle to the next, we lost four in the State
 7 Senate, four women. I hope, with all of my heart, that you
 8 think about the fact that 51 percent of the voting
 9 population, or 51 percent of the population in the state of
 10 Florida are women. Yet, our population in the House and in
 11 the Senate is far below that.

12 And I hope that as you redesign districts in the
 13 House, Senate, and Congress that you protect the seats of
 14 women that do exist and you think about what needs to be
 15 done in order to create opportunities for more women to
 16 become elected to office. Because, quite frankly, I don't
 17 feel, and I think a lot of the women in this state, don't
 18 feel that our interests are being duly represented by the
 19 population that currently holds the seats in the State
 20 House, the State Senate, and Congress.

21 I hope that you accept that. I'm sure it's not an
 22 easy thing, since most of you are men, to hear, but I think
 23 that it's very important. And it's the reason that I've
 24 been involved in politics since 1984. When I was in
 25 college, the Equal Rights Amendment failed, that was a very

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1 critical phase of my political reality. It truly awakened
 2 me and my consciousness.

3 And I hope that somehow something I have said today
 4 makes a difference as you are entering into this very
 5 important process of redesigning the districts in the state
 6 of Florida.

7 I thank you for your time. I thank you for the
 8 opportunity to be able to say these things, I don't believe
 9 that there was such an opportunity ten years ago. I was a
 10 lobbyist at that time, and I witnessed it in Tallahassee.
 11 Thankfully, at least in my view, I don't go back to
 12 Tallahassee as a lobbyist. I love staying in Miami. But I
 13 appreciate all that you do from one day to the next as our
 14 representatives. And, again, please remember the ladies.

15 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Number 30.

16 MR. VROOMAN: Good afternoon, my name is Paul Vrooman.
 17 And I'm speaking to you today from two different roles;
 18 first as a representative from Chamber South, the chamber
 19 of commerce serving the majority of southern Miami-Dade
 20 County, between Coral Gables and Homestead. I want to
 21 emphasize the community of interest economically,
 22 functionally, and historically represented by the area's
 23 current legislative districts.

24 As the chamber serving the regions destroyed by
 25 Andrew, we have found it critically important to have our

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1 needs represented through a point person in the House. To
 2 this day and beyond, that person was needed to galvanize
 3 our concerns on issues such as hurricane recovery and
 4 windstorm insurance.

5 Dilution of that voice is not in the interest of
 6 citizens or economic growth in our area. The disaster
 7 area's northern boundary extended to Southwest 88th Street.
 8 Windstorm insurance issues are focused east of U.S. 1. By
 9 overlaying these two boundaries, House District 119 is
 10 shown to be almost an ideal district to represent those who
 11 face the lingering effects of Hurricane Andrew.

12 Furthermore, as the future of our economy hinges more
 13 and more on utilizing our environmental assets, maintaining
 14 districts representing some coastal areas along southern
 15 Biscayne Bay and southeastern Everglades areas will help us
 16 retool our economy from the loss of military facilities.

17 My second role is as an elected member of Miami-Dade
 18 Community Council 15. There are over 80,000 citizens in
 19 the council district which I represent. The majority of
 20 these citizens are represented within one House district.
 21 Because of the time of this meeting I was almost unable to
 22 attend, and I'm sure most of them are unable to attend as
 23 well.

24 The labor study completed by Chamber South in 1997,
 25 which I placed on the chair, states that most residents in

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1 South Miami-Dade are hourly workers, with lower education
 2 levels than other areas of the county, creating another
 3 community of interest which should be maintained.

4 These people are not in positions that allow them to
 5 leave work and participate in public meetings held out of
 6 the area during work hours. Furthermore, as an elected
 7 official, I would like to urge you to return to our
 8 community when our citizens can participate and present a
 9 preliminary plan for redistricting that will continue to
 10 take their input. Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Number 31.

12 MR. LEBRIJA: Mr. Chairman, members of the committee,
 13 thank you very much for the opportunity to speak with you
 14 today. My name is Lorenzo Lebrija and I'm a private
 15 citizen who resides in District 116 here in Miami-Dade
 16 County. I have been a resident of Miami-Dade County for
 17 over 16 years now.

18 First let me take a moment to speak generally about
 19 District 116. The district, as many of you know, covers
 20 the area we know as Kendall here in Miami-Dade County. The
 21 district is very unique indeed, especially in an area like
 22 Miami, because it encompasses many municipalities. There
 23 are no cities, no towns, villages or other form of local
 24 municipality within the district's boundaries. Aside from
 25 being a part of Miami-Dade County, it is on its own. And

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1 that, I would argue, makes it unique.
 2 When the Legislature drew the district ten years ago,
 3 it, in effect, created a political subdivision. The fact
 4 that there are no municipalities within the district means
 5 that for a decade now when people have wanted to access
 6 their local government, they have done so through their
 7 State Legislature, in this case being Annie Betancourt.
 8 This is evidenced by the fact that people call
 9 Representative Betancourt's office with what are really
 10 local issues, from traffic to potholes, schools, and even
 11 zoning.
 12 Any redistricting which would affect District 116 must
 13 be sensitive to this fact so as to not needlessly disrupt
 14 or silence the voice of the community or weaken and
 15 obstruct the political avenues known to the residents in
 16 Kendall for over a decade now. It is, after all, these
 17 avenues that have formed a community of interest in
 18 District 116.
 19 The Kendall area cannot and must not now be dismantled
 20 simply for political reasons; however, since District 116
 21 needs to be redrawn to gain some 10,000 residents, permit
 22 me now to take another minute or so to suggest how the
 23 district may be redrawn. Most importantly, these
 24 suggestions are fair and in the best interest of those who
 25 live in Kendall.
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1 To the west of District 116 lies District 112, which
 2 needs to lose itself approximately 52,000 residents in the
 3 upcoming redistricting. I would strongly encourage the
 4 Legislature to extend the boundaries of District 116
 5 further to the west to gain some residents that the
 6 overpopulated District 112 must shed. The solution is
 7 simple in that it adds the necessary voters to District 116
 8 without unnecessarily changing the political landscape as
 9 Kendall residents have come to know it.
 10 Allow District 116 simply to expand to the west. Do
 11 not redraw the whole district. Do not destroy the
 12 political subdivision, which you, the Legislature, created,
 13 and which we, the voters, have enjoyed over the past
 14 decade.
 15 I applaud your effort to get the public's insight into
 16 their political future. As Representative Diaz-Balart
 17 mentioned just yesterday, it would be irresponsible not to
 18 do so. But quite honestly, we need additional public
 19 meetings after you have settled on some proposed new
 20 district boundaries so that we can encourage -- so that we
 21 can engage in a true political discourse based on real
 22 facts and real boundary lines. To speak hypothetically is
 23 one thing, but to be capable --
 24 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Twenty seconds.
 25 MR. LEBRIJA: -- of speaking on the suggested or
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1 proposed political division in district boundaries in an
 2 informed manner is a completely different thing.
 3 As I leave here, let us remember that District 116 is
 4 the only political subdivision in the area and the only one
 5 that was expressly created by you, the Legislature. Thank
 6 you so much.
 7 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Number 32. 32.
 8 (No response.)
 9 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Number 33.
 10 MS. IGLESIAS: Good afternoon, Chairman, committee
 11 members. My name is Jessica Iglesias, and I would like to
 12 thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak to you on
 13 behalf of the Cuban-American National Council, a nonprofit
 14 social service agency organization here in Miami-Dade
 15 County.
 16 First, I would like to talk to you about the results
 17 of the Census 2000. The 2000 census revealed dramatic
 18 changes in growth and distribution of the nation's Hispanic
 19 population in the last decade. The Hispanic population
 20 increased by 58 percent, and there were 35.3 million
 21 Hispanics in the United States on April 1st, 2000.
 22 Hispanics comprise 12.5 percent of the population or one
 23 out of eight of our nation's residents.
 24 Hispanics now comprise a significant portion of the
 25 population and more than one-fourth of the nation's 435
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1 Congressional Districts. In 122 of these districts a
 2 Hispanic share of the population exceeded the national
 3 share of the Hispanic population.
 4 First of all, I would like to acknowledge the
 5 Hispanic -- the Hispanic -- I would like to acknowledge the
 6 Hispanic population growth in the districts represented by
 7 Lincoln Diaz-Balart, which increased from 56 percent to
 8 77 percent. And Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, which also increased
 9 to 70 percent. I would also like to acknowledge the
 10 exemplary representation of their districts.
 11 And on behalf of the Cuban-American National Council,
 12 I would like to take note and make mention that there is an
 13 increasing need to continue providing services that will
 14 enhance the lives of our Hispanic community. The
 15 Cuban-American National Council has been providing these
 16 services throughout the community since 1978.
 17 In 1993, the Cuban-American National Council started
 18 providing employment program services, educational program
 19 services, and day care services to our participating group.
 20 We have at this moment offices located in Hialeah, Miami,
 21 and a center in Niranja that offers services to dislocated
 22 workers.
 23 Also, we also have currently a youth opportunity
 24 center that provides services to disadvantaged youth. In
 25 addition to that, we have two alternative schools in Miami
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1 and in Hialeah.
2 We would like to see more of these services increase
3 in our community since there is a great need for employment
4 as to the amount of unemployment rates that continue to
5 increase here in Dade County. And I thank you very much
6 for this opportunity to speak.
7 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 34.
8 MR. MORALES: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and
9 committee members. My name is Luis Morales, I'm a member
10 of the Peruvian Civic Unity, a nonprofit organization based
11 in Miami. And I want to thank you for the opportunity that
12 you are giving me to speak to you.
13 Looking in retrospect, back in 1979 when I first came
14 to Miami, I noticed that there was only one or two Peruvian
15 restaurants in the area of Miami, maybe one or two
16 Brazilians, with my fingers, I counted one, two or three
17 Colombians, and I continued looking into restaurants from
18 central Americans and South Americans. Toward the end of
19 the last millennium there are more than 50 restaurants,
20 Peruvian restaurants in Miami, there are a number of
21 Colombian restaurants in Miami, and so I would speak --
22 Central American, South American.
23 What I want to address is that the Hispanic community
24 in South Florida has gone through a strong metamorphosis
25 from going on one type of community to a diverse community
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1 which makes it very, very difficult for representatives to
2 deal with.
3 But I would like to address the excellent job that our
4 Representatives Lincoln Diaz-Balart and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
5 have done with the Hispanic community in South Florida.
6 Our organization is thankful to both because we have a
7 project in the House of Representatives in Washington to
8 benefit thousands of Peruvians and Colombians that have
9 come to the United States in early '80s due to terrorist
10 activities. It is very difficult, once again, to deal with
11 diversity and they have done a tremendous job.
12 The Peruvian community is quite large in South
13 Florida. It is estimated to have about 50- to 75,000
14 people in South Florida. And we are quite concerned that
15 representation might be diluted. Therefore, I request that
16 your concentration -- or please look into fairness to have
17 representation for the Hispanic community.
18 Thank you very much.
19 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 35.
20 MR. ROBAINA: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, committee
21 members. My name is Julio Robaina, I am the mayor, if you
22 will let me brag for a minute, of the All-American city of
23 South Miami -- thank you, there's a fan of South Miami.
24 First of all, I'm here, of course, to speak about the
25 redistricting of the State House and Senate boundaries. I
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1 will make it very brief, I know what it is to be on the
2 other end there and listening to a number of wonderful
3 comments and suggestions. And I think you have heard it
4 all. I have been making notes and I have had to scrape
5 away some of these from my notes because a lot of people
6 have spoken about it.
7 I'm just here to ask you to please remember to be
8 considerate to the residents especially in House District
9 117 who currently are enjoying such a wonderful
10 relationship with their representatives. We also are
11 enjoying a wonderful relationship with the Miami-Dade
12 delegation who does so much for Miami-Dade County and also
13 for the state in general.
14 You know, as elected officials, I just want to remind
15 you, as you understand, that it is so important to have a
16 good working relationship and be in close proximity to
17 where you live and work with your community so you really
18 know the issues at hand. That's the only thing that makes
19 me nervous when redistricting comes up. Where are we going
20 to go? Are we going to lose focus? Do I have to learn a
21 new area that I really know very little about?
22 So that's basically it, I think you have heard it all.
23 Thank you for the opportunity, and I just want to thank you
24 for being public servants. Thanks again.
25 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 36.
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1 MR. BELLO: I am Enrique Bello. Some people call me
2 Henry that can't pronounce Enrique.
3 I would like to thank all of you for giving us the
4 time to come and listen to our views and our feelings. And
5 after I have heard everybody speak here, I don't want to
6 dwell on other things that you have already heard. To give
7 you a little brief idea of where I'm coming from, I came to
8 this country in '62 through California, and I came back to
9 Miami in 1971. I will tell you a reason I came to Miami.
10 In 1971 I came to Miami because I felt Miami was going
11 to be a bridge to Latin America. As a matter of fact,
12 sometimes, in the United States, we all call ourselves just
13 Americans but there are other Americans. And that is the
14 Central Americans and the South Americans that are coming
15 to our town to spend money. And they are coming for a
16 reason, they are coming for the reason that the communities
17 of interest attracts them to come here, to come here to
18 live, to come here to spend money in tourism, to come and
19 spend money in commerce.
20 I want to echo the gentleman from Peru. When I came
21 to Miami in 1971, the Cubans held the majority of the
22 Hispanic population. Now we all need to be concerned with
23 other Hispanics. And what I heard today is that the other
24 Hispanics from Peru, Columbia and other countries feel very
25 good about the representation that we are having from our
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1 representatives, both on the Federal and the State level.
 2 With that in mind I feel, and I think that most of my
 3 American friends feel, that the Hispanic community has
 4 contributed to not only South Florida but the whole state,
 5 not only with our values, especially with our family
 6 values, but also with our culture. The beautiful part
 7 about Miami is now you see Americans eating rice and beans,
 8 and you see Cubans eating hamburgers. And that is a good
 9 thing, that is a good thing for all of us.
 10 On the other hand, I feel that I needed to come here
 11 because of one main issue. And the one main issue is we
 12 have a great city, a great community that is influenced by
 13 our Hispanic tradition that we want to keep alive. I mean,
 14 if we want to keep the State of Florida in a good position
 15 for the rest of the Latin American countries, and I think
 16 we are doing that through our representation both at the
 17 State level and the Federal level, I think that we need to
 18 keep our values, we need to keep our -- we need to keep
 19 people interested in coming to South Florida.
 20 The numbers have shown that we are the majority, and
 21 the distribution of the numbers show that we need to be
 22 represented. And the Hispanic community needs to have an
 23 increase in the numbers of its representation both at the
 24 Federal and State levels. With that in mind, again, I want
 25 to thank all of you for coming here to Miami and listening
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1 to all of us. Thank you very much.
 2 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Thirty-seven.
 3 MS. BRADDOCH: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, and
 4 members of the committee. My name is Virginia Braddock and
 5 I am an American, born and bred, and a Democrat. I vote in
 6 District 112 of the House and Senate District 37.
 7 Partisan politics are part of the democratic process
 8 that we all believe to be the finest in the world. Whether
 9 we are Democratic, Republican or Independent, we all have a
 10 say in our government. Now we get to the reality.
 11 Depending on who is in office at the time of redistricting,
 12 the reality is one party's voice speaks louder than the
 13 other one does. I read with interest Senator Webster's
 14 letter in the Miami Herald yesterday and a couple of other
 15 articles in the past few days that talk about how, quote,
 16 fair, open, and inclusive, end quote, these proceedings are
 17 going to be.
 18 Let me say, there seems to be a great deal of
 19 legislative arrogance in this whole process. To say these
 20 meetings are meant for meaningful community input is
 21 insulting. Meetings held in the middle of the day or early
 22 in the morning in places difficult to reach, with
 23 inadequate parking, except for you members, don't seem to
 24 be very conducive to community input.
 25 Most people directly impacted by boundary changes in
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1 the legislative map and the process work during the day.
 2 It is not likely that an employer would be willing for them
 3 to take time from their jobs to express concern that they
 4 are being boundaried out of their districts.
 5 I read the rules or the suggestions regarding these
 6 meetings and noted the fact that there are no proposed maps
 7 available to the general public. Of course, I can
 8 understand that if there really were maps, you could be
 9 accused of just going through the motions of listening and
 10 compiling information. Personally, I believe that the
 11 committee must have draft maps available to study or why
 12 would the Legislature have a rule exempting such drafts
 13 from public scrutiny. So much for government in the
 14 sunshine.
 15 This certainly lends credence to the possibility that
 16 our opinions and concerns are of no consequence to the
 17 committee, and, for that matter, the Legislature.
 18 The FREDs 2000 software that has made available at the
 19 cost of \$20 is supposed to help cover the above lapse in
 20 open government. However, unless you have a computer, and
 21 are extremely computer literate with lots of time to work
 22 with the software, it, too, would seem to be another
 23 roadblock to citizen input.
 24 I would quote from Senator Webster's letter this
 25 morning, or yesterday, quote, "Ten years ago I participated
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1 in the redistricting as a member of the minority party in
 2 the House of Representatives. And during that time I
 3 observed a process that was flawed and unfair. Most
 4 Legislators were denied access to information, public
 5 testimony was ignored and ultimately the district lines
 6 were drawn by hired political operatives." End quote.
 7 Ladies and gentlemen, now is the time to put your
 8 money where your mouth is, live up to all the fine
 9 pronouncements that have been made here and elsewhere, and
 10 don't repeat past history.
 11 Real life tells me that I can't expect you to forget
 12 that the Republicans are in office and that they want to
 13 get even. However, I can expect our elected officials to
 14 be as fair as possible to the electorate in drawing lines.
 15 They should be aware of community interest, try very hard
 16 to have continuity of districts and to keep the population
 17 of the districts as close as possible. And, of course,
 18 keep incumbents in both parties in office.
 19 Therefore, in light of my above comments about the
 20 existence or nonexistence of maps, it is my suggestion that
 21 this committee reconvene in public settings that are
 22 convenient --
 23 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Twenty seconds.
 24 MS. BRADDOCH: -- in time and place to the concerned
 25 citizen as soon as possible after redistricting maps are
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1 made available so that our opinions may be heard.
2 With a hard copy, so to speak, it would be much easier
3 to be precise in our agreement, disagreement or suggestions
4 for a plan for our district. Thank you for your attention.
5 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thirty-eight.
6 MR. BEJAR: Good afternoon, members of the committee.
7 And I would like to say a special hello to my friends,
8 Representative Garcia, Senator Meek, Representative Arza,
9 Representative Needelman, thank you and welcome you all to
10 Miami.
11 My name is Rafael Bejar and I am a member of the
12 Miami-Dade Republican Executive Committee. I've been
13 involved in Republican politics for almost 20 years. I've
14 done everything from being a campaign volunteer to
15 legislative staffer to being a press secretary for a member
16 of Congress. I've done it all except to run for public
17 elected office. I guess I'll let you all do that.
18 I now have my own campaign consulting business where I
19 do local elections and elections across the state. Most
20 recently I helped Senator Howard Futch get elected in
21 Melbourne.
22 I have had the opportunity to see some of the other
23 public hearings across the state and hear the comments on
24 redistricting in other parts of Florida. Here in
25 Miami-Dade County, the situation is a little different than
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1 in other parts of the state. For the most part, there
2 exists an equitable balance between Republican and Democrat
3 districts. There are Republican districts where there
4 should be Republican districts and Democrat districts where
5 there should be Democrat districts.
6 And the problem here, however, is that although
7 Miami-Dade has had an increase in population of
8 approximately a little over 16 percent, the majority of the
9 growth has occurred in the western half of the county. By
10 taking a look at your own maps and figures, almost every
11 single Senate and House district in the eastern portion of
12 the county has significant population shortfalls.
13 What does this all mean? Well, it means that more
14 than likely you are going to have to shift all of the
15 boundaries of almost all of the districts of Miami-Dade
16 westward. Why is this a concern? If done inappropriately
17 you are going to throw many current incumbents into
18 competing districts.
19 While this might be good for my campaign consulting
20 business, I think it would cause unnecessary political
21 upheaval in Miami-Dade. So, my one request is to, when you
22 draw the lines for this particular county, be extra careful
23 not to throw popular elected officials together.
24 One other special request that I have is for my friend
25 Representative Arza who has to spend much time between Dade
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1 County and Collier County, and I think he would much like
2 to represent Dade County. And I'm sure from the comments
3 that we heard in Naples that the Naples folks would like
4 that also. (Laughter.)
5 Other than that, I would like to thank the efforts of
6 the Republican leadership for reaching out to the public.
7 I think that you have done a tremendous job, despite the
8 comments from some other speakers. And we have to remember
9 that -- compare this process to the process ten years ago,
10 and I think this one has really gone the extra step and
11 taken the extra mile to reach out to the public in
12 conducting fair and open meetings. Thank you very much.
13 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 39.
14 MS. NAVARRO: Hello, and good afternoon to you all.
15 It strikes me that, for those of you who are not from
16 Miami-Dade, as you sit here, you are probably thinking that
17 you are in a meeting of the Organization of American
18 States. And that's what Miami-Dade is all about, and
19 that's why it's great that you are here to listen to us and
20 actually get our input before drawing the lines. So I
21 congratulate you for doing that and taking the time.
22 My name is Ana Navarro, and I have lived in Miami-Dade
23 for over 21 years. Due to a Communist revolution in my
24 native Nicaragua, I had to come here and find a new
25 homeland. I found a new home in Miami-Dade, in Florida,
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1 and the United States. And today I am proud to call myself
2 a Nicaraguan-American. There are today more than 250,000
3 Nicaraguan-Americans in Florida, and the majority of us
4 reside in the Congressional Districts of Congresswoman
5 Ros-Lehtinen and Congressman Diaz-Balart.
6 We have the support of the entire Miami-Dade
7 legislation and its fair to say that, from Peter Deutsch to
8 Clay Shaw to Congresswoman Meek. However, it is because of
9 the support and united presence in the Congressman Lincoln
10 Diaz-Balart and Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen's districts that
11 we are able to find in them great champions.
12 I also want to say that we have had the consistent
13 support of Senator Bob Graham and former Senator Connie
14 Mack. I don't think Senator Bill Nelson knows we exist
15 yet, but I'm sure that he will by the time the election
16 comes.
17 Because of our united presence in the Congressional
18 Districts, we have found true advocates in our
19 Congresspeople. And in 1997, because of enormous changes
20 in the immigration law, over 100,000 Nicaraguans who lived
21 here we are facing the threat of deportation or living in
22 hiding and in the shadows of our society.
23 Through the leadership and sponsorship of Congressman
24 Lincoln Diaz-Balart and Senator Connie Mack in the Senate,
25 we were able to pass the NACARA, the Nicaraguan
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1 Adjustment and Central American Relief Act. That law has
2 helped over 70,000 Nicaraguan families gain legal status in
3 the United States. It has enabled over 70,000 families to
4 have access to legal work, to open businesses, to obtain
5 higher education and to live out the American dream.

6 I was involved in the legislative process for NACARA
7 and I am convinced that law passed in a very anti-immigrant
8 climate in Congress primarily, if not only, because we have
9 the unwavering support of our elected officials. I saw
10 Congressman Diaz-Balart and his staff work day and night to
11 get NACARA enacted. It was because these officials had
12 seen us arrive in this community as refugees and work
13 tirelessly to open doors for ourselves and contribute to
14 our community that we had their support. It was because
15 they knew us and understood us so well that they in turn
16 were able to speak and act on our behalf.

17 It's made a huge difference and today I respectfully
18 request that the Hispanic vote not be divided or diluted.
19 We in Miami-Dade get the really bad hurricanes, we get the
20 really bad traffic, we get the really bad press. So, I'm
21 going to ask that you draw us some really good districts.

22 And, finally, I'm going to say something that perhaps
23 others don't want to say specifically, but I think we have
24 done pretty darn well in this community with one
25 Diaz-Balart, and I'm all in favor of anything that will
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1 meeting two weeks before it happened, which is surprising,
2 and I congratulate you and your agencies for that.

3 I want to congratulate you all for your open
4 mindedness. It's wonderful to come to these hearings of
5 this type and not get to see wonderful pictures on the wall
6 of what you are going to do, and then let us tell you
7 what's right or wrong with it and then go back and do what
8 you were going to do to begin with. The fact that you are
9 asking for our input is terrific, and I thank you for that.

10 We have talked about fairness here today, I think this
11 is very fair, absolutely. We need to think about how the
12 districts were drawn ten years ago. Somebody said earlier
13 that we now have an overwhelming number of Republicans in
14 the House and an overwhelming number of Republicans in the
15 Senate, and those districts were drawn by an overwhelming
16 Democrat majority in both houses, and an overwhelming
17 number of people in each of those districts decided they
18 wanted to change their representation. So, that's what
19 they did.

20 And today, we have a House and Senate and a
21 Congressional delegation that is reflective of the voters
22 in those districts. We had one close election last year,
23 the other ones weren't nearly as close. And that truly is
24 reflective of the people who are sending their folks to and
25 from Tallahassee.

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1 send another one to Washington. Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Number 40. Number 40.

3 MR. CASEY: Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, my
4 name is John Casey, resident of Miami-Dade County, House
5 District 113, Senate District 40. I want to thank you for
6 this opportunity to be here. It is a lot different than it
7 was ten years ago. I didn't get an opportunity to speak
8 ten years ago. They knew me better than you all do
9 together today.

10 There are more members of the House and Senate
11 involved in this process than there were ten years, at
12 least there are more here today than were here ten years
13 ago. I don't know, but that speaks well for both sides of
14 the aisle in taking the time to come this far south. I
15 noticed some of you didn't come this far south. Thank you.

16 As to the process itself, having seen what (Inaudible)
17 went on ten years ago, and seeing where we are today, we
18 are way ahead of the curve today. The software has made a
19 night and day difference than it was ten years ago. I am
20 not particularly a whiz when it comes to computers, I
21 couldn't tell you what's inside those boxes, but I can tell
22 you what the software does and how it works and your FREDs
23 software works well, even for me.

24 The number of hearings you are having around the state
25 is exemplary. Notification, I actually found out about a
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1 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Twenty seconds.

2 MR. CASEY: Finally, I just ask you to go through your
3 process quickly. Ten years ago, couldn't decide on how to
4 draw Congressional lines. So what happened was they turned
5 it over to the Democrats in the Federal government. That
6 was a quick 20 seconds if that's what it was.

7 As a result, we have districts that meandered from
8 Jacksonville to Orlando -- I'm almost done -- and then
9 through Broward County way out to western Dade County and
10 then zip-zag, zigzag and curve all the way down into Monroe
11 County and end up -- and end up in the Conch Republic of
12 Key West.

13 If we design our districts here in Florida, we ought
14 to know where they are going to go. So let's do it a
15 little quicker than we did ten years ago, and maybe we'll
16 get to decide where we want our Congressional Districts to
17 be.

18 I thank you for this opportunity and thank you for
19 coming to South Florida.

20 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 41.
21 (No response.)

22 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Number 42.

23 MR. MISRA: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, and members.
24 My name is D.P. Misra, I have lived in Miami-Dade County
25 for over 20 years, in the All-American city of South Miami,
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1 as the mayor said.

2 I have served the community as the president of the
3 Asian-American Chamber of Commerce, and as the president of
4 Associates of Indians in America in this capacity as part
5 of the White House briefing/debriefing system.

6 At this time, naturally, I want to speak on behalf of
7 the Asian-Americans in knowing how small the representation
8 is at this time in Florida. There is really hardly any
9 protection I can look for them. But coming out of the
10 minority groups I will always be, quote, a minority, and
11 when you do something, please do look after the minority
12 interest when you do the redistricting.

13 The other thing that I will say, may or may not sound
14 very pleasant, if these speeches were being made in January
15 or February, the tones would be different. But today we
16 are united since the September 11th, there are no
17 Republicans, there are no Democrats, we are all combined
18 under one banner, one God, one state. So I would imagine
19 and I would expect that although both the House and the
20 Senate is Republican controlled, when you do the
21 redistricting you will do it impartially so that it's not
22 geared to one group or the other. Thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Number 43.

24 MR. VILAR: Good afternoon, distinguished Chair, and
25 honorable committee members. I have the distinct honor of
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1 serving the residents of the All-American city of South
2 Miami as the vice-mayor. I'm also a Cuban-American and a
3 Democrat. I say this because I'm keenly aware that
4 Democrats are a minority on your committee. Party
5 affiliation, however, should not interfere with fairness,
6 and I stress the word "fairness."

7 Contiguity needs to be embodied in your guiding
8 principles, and our incumbents need to be protected and
9 treated with fairness to ensure that our citizens do not
10 feel disenfranchised.

11 And I thank you for listening.

12 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 44.

13 MS. SALAZAR: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, members of
14 the committee. I'm an attorney who had the opportunity to
15 run for the Florida House of Representatives back in 1989.
16 I can tell you that it was a very challenging campaign
17 because, and I commend Mr. DeGrandy, who fortunately won
18 and of course I lost, because our district was all the way
19 from Southwest 40th Street, 132nd Avenue, Southwest Dade
20 County, all the way, meandering through Sweetwater, West
21 Hialeah, into Palm Springs North, Northwest Dade County.
22 It was very, very challenging.

23 And just about everything has been said, being one of
24 your last speakers, but I would ask this committee to look
25 at the physical boundaries as well as the demographics and
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1 all the other issues that you have to look at. Thank you
2 very much.

3 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 45.

4 MR. SANTA-MARIA: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman. My
5 name is Peter Santa-Maria, I live at 8415 Southwest 210th
6 Street. I'm a resident of the Sigo Bay (phonetic)
7 Community and hopefully the new Village of Cutler Ridge.

8 I come here today, I'm an employee of the Miami-Dade
9 County Public Schools, I'm a teacher of government. And
10 the school that I teach at is 8141, which is a Juvenile
11 Justice Center school. I'm here to ask you to consider as
12 you are drawing up redistricts not the forget the residents
13 of those districts who cannot vote, children less than 18.
14 I teach anywhere between the fourth grade at the juvenile
15 center, we have fourth graders there, to 12th graders.

16 And since September 11th, all of lesson plans as a
17 government teacher have changed because I have to answer
18 questions every day from concerned children about what's
19 going to happen tomorrow, is there going to be another
20 terrorist act. And every day we work through that in a
21 regular lesson. Tomorrow they are going to get a lesson on
22 state redistricting and state legislation, and who's who.

23 I am asking you to consider the equity of children.
24 Children learn best when they see other children do well.
25 Parents do also, but children very much absorb this. When
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1 you consider the district, consider the equity in the
2 neighborhood, not necessarily all of the main ideas of the
3 adults in the neighborhood.

4 Children need good parks. Notice that there are no
5 theaters south of Cutler Ridge all the way to Homestead.
6 So those kids who live there don't really get to do
7 anything on the weekend except hang out. And, you know,
8 that causes them to make really bad mistakes, and sometimes
9 end up in my school. Because they are great kids, all of
10 them.

11 As a teacher, I thank you for the cost of living
12 increase that you allowed Miami-Dade County Public Schools
13 to give us, the extra bonus that you gave all the
14 twenty-some-thousand teachers in the school district, which
15 I can assure you mine went to pay for a trip to China in
16 February where I intend to meet with local educators there,
17 if I can make sure I have a translator.

18 I'm very, very concerned that when you consider all of
19 these issues that these adults have brought to you, adult
20 issues, that you consider the kids in this committee. They
21 need attention. They will not call your office and ask you
22 for information at the age of 12 and 13. They don't trust
23 you very much at the age of 14, 15, 16, 17.

24 But I have got some seniors who will be voting in a
25 year, and today they may not care whether you exist or not,
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1 but in a few years, they will know you. And those that are
 2 in the Miami-Dade Coalition, they already know you.
 3 Whether like it or not, they are getting it tomorrow who
 4 was here and who wasn't, and who got to speak and what
 5 mayors were here and who wasn't.
 6 So, please consider the interest of all children that
 7 are minority groups, religious backgrounds, whether they
 8 enjoy holidays or holy days or, you know, the needs that
 9 they have in the community; parks, street lights, heavy
 10 roads, transportation from the south end down by Florida
 11 City, Homestead, all the way up to Cutler Ridge where the
 12 first theater is, where the first place where they can have
 13 some entertainment during the weekend.
 14 I thank you much for coming. I don't have special
 15 needs, and I live in a great county, and I have a great
 16 job. It beats me up sometimes, but, you know, that's the
 17 way jobs are. Thank you very, very much for coming,
 18 gentlemen.
 19 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 46.
 20 (No response.)
 21 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Number 47.
 22 DR. GARCIA: Good afternoon, welcome, Mr. Chairman.
 23 I'm Dr. Firpo Garcia and I reside here in Miami, Florida.
 24 Until this point in time, I was basically listening to all
 25 the speakers before me, and all that compelling arguments
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1 as far as what redistricting is all about.
 2 I do take exception and deference to one of the
 3 speakers that you all are arrogant. I don't think you are
 4 arrogant because I remember ten years ago, we didn't even
 5 have a forum such as this where we could actually give our
 6 input to you all so you could listen to the different
 7 points of view.
 8 What a wonderful country we live in that we can
 9 actually, even though sometimes it's hard for us to get to
 10 the venue, and for me it's kind of hard because I am a
 11 dentist so I took time out from my practice, but I feel
 12 that democracy is important. And for you all to take the
 13 time and, again, to listen to people, sometimes lashing out
 14 is not fair to you because I know that you will do a fair
 15 and equitable job when it comes to redistricting. And
 16 that's what you all are about.
 17 And I know some of you. And I know the kind of
 18 individuals you are, and you are public servants. I know
 19 it's very tough. And I hope and pray that you will do the
 20 right thing for -- for the citizens of the state of
 21 Florida. And I thank you.
 22 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 48.
 23 MS. BALBIN: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman. My name is
 24 Maribel Balbin, I'm a resident of Miami Lakes.
 25 First, I just wanted to say that I just made it here.
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1 And this is supposed to be a hearing for the Hispanic
 2 community, I know the African-American community had a
 3 wonderful hearing last night in a very accessible place,
 4 this was not accessible, not even to me. I drive around
 5 all day and I have a flexible schedule and I almost did not
 6 make it. So I just want to put on the record that the
 7 Hispanic community is really not here today to represent
 8 their interest.
 9 And though there are representatives, and there are
 10 Hispanic representatives, whether or not they are the right
 11 representatives is another question. I just wanted to put
 12 on the record that.
 13 And the fact that, secondly, as I was reading the
 14 Miami Herald today and NPR news segments all day long,
 15 coming here today really makes no sense or has no meaning
 16 because the input that is being collected will not be used
 17 for the decision-making process. The decision-making
 18 process if not already made will be made just by those
 19 people that have been elected already. So, I did not
 20 listen to the Herald and I did not listen to NPR and I
 21 still came.
 22 And my only request would be that the committee looks
 23 favorably into the existing women's seats. They were very
 24 difficult to acquire, they were very difficult to get for a
 25 long time. And we are 51 percent of the population. And
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1 if you look around, what you see in the House and in the
 2 Senate, you know that 51 is not there.
 3 So my only request would be to ask that some thought
 4 be given to keeping women elected and keeping districts in
 5 a way that women can get elected. And I thank you very
 6 much for being here today.
 7 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Number 49.
 8 MR. MASSA: Good afternoon, I welcome all of the
 9 members of this forum. And my name is Sergio Massa,
 10 president of the Peruvian-American Coalition. I represent
 11 a minority group of voters from Peru. And my organization
 12 is also part of the Latin-American Voters League, which
 13 groups more than 12 countries. And why I'm here is to ask
 14 you to be fair in the redistribution of the districts and
 15 consider our concerns about our needs as minority
 16 communities, especially in our representation to all
 17 bodies. And I would like to ask you to give equal
 18 representation to all bodies if it is possible. Thank you
 19 very much.
 20 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 50.
 21 MR. LAGOS: Good afternoon, my name is Jose Lagos. I
 22 am president and founder of the Honduran Unity (Non-English
 23 word), also assistant executive director for the Nicaraguan
 24 Fraternity (Non-English word), and also with member of the
 25 League of Latin-American Voters (Non-English word).
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1 I am surprised and I'm glad that I was able to make
2 it, and I found out thanks to the League of Latin-American
3 Voters, I am a member. And also, I feel that there was
4 short notice, and the accessibility that one previous
5 speaker was mentioning. And adjust the time as well
6 because from 3:00 to 5:00, it is almost impossible for many
7 of us that we do it on a voluntary basis without a salary
8 to come here and to really speak on behalf of our
9 community. So, please, since this is every ten years, take
10 this into account.
11 We founded the League of Latin American Voters because
12 we feel that not only our population has continued to grow,
13 but also the Hispanic population. And we have had drives
14 for voter registration, but also we strive for voters to
15 have representation. And I think that this is what it is
16 about, the redistricting, for finally for the voters to
17 have representation, particularly whether we have not only
18 little Havana, but now we have Little Managua, we have
19 Little Honduras, we have Little Haiti.
20 You know, so, we need representation for crying out
21 loud and that's why I'm here. And I'm happy that I'm here
22 and I want to welcome you and I want to thank you for this
23 opportunity. And please take this into account.
24 So, it would be the notice, and for all of us to have
25 representation. I thank you so much and I welcome you once
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1 again.
2 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. I thought we were going
3 to make it without a break, but we keep adding people, so
4 we are going to have to take a break for our court reporter
5 who needs just a little bit of rest. So we'll take a short
6 break, we'll be back in a minute.
7 (Brief recess.)
8 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: If everyone will take their seats,
9 we can finish in short order. We are ready for Number 51.
10 MR. VILAR: Good afternoon, I hope the break wasn't on
11 my behalf anyway. I am a resident of Kendall, I am an
12 attorney with a practice in Coral Gables. I am a member
13 and member of the board of directors of COSA, Colombian
14 Service Association, with several branches, I am a member
15 of COBAR, Colombian Bar Association, and, lastly, I am an
16 elected official, I'm a community council member, District
17 12, Kendall Community Council, I am the chairman.
18 Today I speak as a Colombian. I believe that the
19 recent numbers of Colombians I've experienced both working
20 at COSA and at COBAR, I realize that the numbers of
21 Colombians currently stated at around 70,000, it's clearly
22 underestimating the real numbers.
23 I believe this is a community that needs
24 representation. I think redistricting is the time. And
25 it's not just Colombian community, it is the Colombian
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1 community, the Venezuelan community, the Peruvian
2 community, the Honduran community, the Nicaraguan
3 community.
4 All of these communities have some elements in common.
5 Commonality is something that we look for when you want to
6 redistrict. The element is that they probably all arrived
7 mostly in the last ten years. Other Hispanics have been
8 here a lot longer. The economical background that they
9 have is different. When you have been here for 20 years,
10 you have been able to develop a career, and it's a
11 different background than when you're starting off.
12 I have been fortunate enough to have been here a long
13 time, but I can see these communities, our communities,
14 need representation. Put them all together. It is an
15 opportunity to give us not help, but give us the
16 opportunity to help ourselves. The communities are ready,
17 and they need representation for themselves.
18 Again, it is lumping these communities, if put
19 together the numbers are clearly noticed. You know, when
20 you add Colombians, Venezuelans, Nicaraguans, Hondurans and
21 so forth. Now, they are spread out over the county,
22 unfortunately they are not concentrated like other
23 communities in the past. But, still, they need
24 representation. And I think it is an opportunity now to
25 bring together districts and give them the opportunity.
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1 Thank you very much.
2 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 52.
3 MR. MOREL: Good afternoon. My name is Rafael Morel.
4 I'm here as a member of the Latin-American Voters League, I
5 believe that you have heard some of my other fellow
6 members.
7 We have been very intimately involved keeping track of
8 how the process is going for redistricting with the help of
9 the Southwest Voter Registration and Education Project who
10 we have partnered with during this process, as well as the
11 Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund, which they
12 believe that they can be our partner in making sure that as
13 part of the community that lives here in this county are
14 represented fairly when the new districts are drawn.
15 One of the key things that I would work on is voter
16 registration. And aside from having to fight the apathy
17 that we sometimes encounter when we are doing voter
18 registration, we also have the added issue now of the new
19 districts. People are wondering, are these new districts
20 going to affect us or help us.
21 Most of the areas where we do our voter registration
22 are areas that are our most impoverished areas, those that
23 are particularly east or very close to I-95 in this county.
24 Those are the people that unfortunately couldn't be here
25 today. And in no way will I ever do justice to their
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1 remarks. Those are the people that couldn't be here
2 because they are the ones that work.
3 And I'm sure you have heard by now about the time
4 issue and I can tell you, being in these communities on a
5 daily basis, you don't have anybody here and you probably
6 will not have anybody here from those communities that work
7 and live in that area. The same thing with the distance.
8 Needless to say, I spent 20 minutes trying to find parking.
9 It is a great institution from which I am an alumni.
10 But besides those issues, I think that the biggest
11 issue is the fact that please have a clear conscious when
12 you decide and draw these districts that the people that
13 you probably will hear the least from are the ones that are
14 greatest affected by it. And those are the people that we,
15 the Latin-American Voters League, hope you keep in mind.
16 All of the recent immigrants that have been here, all the
17 ones that have been here for a long time.
18 I myself being a Puerto Rican, which is the second
19 largest Hispanic group in this county and the South Florida
20 area, we also believe, as well as our other fellow Latin
21 Americans, that this redistricting process could be an
22 opportunity for this great body to make justice and make
23 sure that everybody is being represented.
24 I'm not anybody to tell you that that's not happening
25 right now. I'm sure you guys can judge that on your own,
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1 but please keep those things in mind. That this process is
2 not being seen as one that is fair to those that it is
3 going to affect the most, and that's our communities.
4 Thank you.
5 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Number 53. Number 53.
6 MS. FULTON: Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon,
7 almost good evening. My name is Marcia Fulton, I'm a
8 councilwoman in the City of Miami Springs, I see some heads
9 nodding yes.
10 First, I want to thank you for making this
11 opportunity. I really am surprised to see as many people,
12 because I think NPR has been working against you. I heard
13 on the way out that nobody was going to come because this
14 wouldn't make a difference. But you and I both know that
15 any time that you listen, it makes a difference. You have
16 decisions to make, they are always tough decisions, we all
17 do who are elected officials. But the listening process is
18 absolutely crucial.
19 There's just a couple of things that I would like to
20 suggest that you consider. One is be reasonable. That's
21 probably easy to say, your definition of that might be a
22 little bit different than mine, but then again, it may not.
23 Connect areas that have common interests. You know,
24 watch out for the urban, the rural, et cetera, and try not
25 to gerrymander so that areas are pulled together that it's
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1 going to be absolutely impossible for you to represent
2 those kinds of interests.
3 And, finally, take the high road, don't close out any
4 area. I think our state's diversity is the most wonderful
5 thing that we have. I especially want to make sure that
6 there is no segment or no party that is left out. And it's
7 up to you to do those kinds of protections.
8 I thank you for what you do, your job is a hard job, I
9 realize that. In my very young life, I served as a
10 legislative aide so, you know, I have kind of been there
11 and done that and I know how hard you work. And I
12 appreciate you and look forward to seeing you in
13 Tallahassee.
14 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 54.
15 MR. BEASLEY: Good afternoon. My name is Tom Beasley,
16 I'm an employee here at FIU, I live in Country Walk, and I
17 am a member of AFSCME.
18 I am most concerned that the information that you are
19 going to be using to draw the district lines may not use
20 the most accurate census data. I would be very hopeful
21 that the census data you use is extremely accurate or
22 possibly utilize the adjusted census data.
23 We do want to make sure that the information is
24 accurate and that the districts are set up with contiguous
25 areas, and that, hopefully, you won't consider districting
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1 the lines from one side of the state all the way over to
2 the other side of the state. That would, I think, harm the
3 ability of representation for the citizens.
4 And I would hope that after the initial lines are
5 drawn up, that we are able to come back and have a hearing
6 that the citizens could look at what the ideas of these new
7 districts would appear so that we could give comments and
8 respond to what you would come up with. Thank you very
9 much.
10 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 55.
11 MR. D'ARCE, JR.: Hi, good afternoon. My name is Juan
12 D'Arce, I am a member of the Overtown Advisory Board.
13 Also, I'm a chairperson for a community club which is
14 called the Miami-Dade Lion's Club. And through membership
15 in this club I have noticed the different -- the points of
16 views of different members, the members throughout Dade
17 County. And I see the needs of Overtown and as seen by
18 those members who may live in North Miami, Homestead, Miami
19 Lakes.
20 And I feel that redistricting should take into effect
21 and think about those communities that are not -- that are
22 presently seen as District 109, which is the district that
23 I live in.
24 And the ethnic background that I heard the speakers
25 speak about, Colombians, Nicaraguans, Cubans, and
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1 African-Americans and the Haitian-Americans, and the fact
 2 is that the more you try to go ahead and put groups
 3 together, grouping Puerto Ricans and African-Americans, the
 4 more isolated those groups become to the other members of
 5 the different districts, and their needs are not met.
 6 As a result, we isolate and forget the needs. And
 7 I'll tell you, from living in 109, there is a lot of needs
 8 and I see a lot of districts, the Pine Crest area, the
 9 Miami Beach area, different areas that are getting all the
 10 benefits because the districts are strong for the offset.
 11 Second of all, they have the financial means. And if
 12 these district maybe took part of, you know, 109 and other
 13 districts of the sort, maybe there will be some help and
 14 recognition as to needs that are not being met.
 15 Once again, I do believe some of the other
 16 communities, like the Colombians and Puerto Ricans,
 17 Nicaraguans, that you have some sort of representation.
 18 And that calls for small districts and I don't think that's
 19 going to happen. But I just want you to go ahead and think
 20 about the fact that, you know, we all need to transcend and
 21 know what's going on with our neighbor. Because if we
 22 don't know what's going on with our neighbor, you know, we
 23 are never going to help the whole county and the whole
 24 state. And that's all I have to say and I thank you for
 25 your time.
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1 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 56.
 2 MR. BECERRA: Good afternoon, my name is Francisco
 3 Becerra, and I represent the Colombian-American Coalition.
 4 We are organizing for action. We are bringing together
 5 Colombians throughout the United States, throughout
 6 Florida, and throughout South Florida. We are moving full
 7 steam ahead to organize ourselves for action and we look --
 8 we hope to obtain your support. And we hope to support you
 9 in the upcoming years. Thank you.
 10 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. That was the final card
 11 we had for public appearance.
 12 As is custom, we have allowed the members who would
 13 like to make comments at the end of the hearing, starting
 14 with the local delegation first. Are there those that
 15 would like to say anything? Representative Lerner, you are
 16 recognized.
 17 REPRESENTATIVE LERNER: Thank you, Senator. I am
 18 sorry that more of my constituents were not here today, as
 19 many indicated an interest in having an opportunity to have
 20 input into this process. But the timing of this hearing at
 21 3:00 p.m. is very inconvenient for those who work and for
 22 those who don't work but have children school-aged and
 23 would have to pick them up.
 24 I would hope that the committee listened carefully and
 25 will respond appropriately and fairly to the concerns that
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1 were raised by the people who spoke today.
 2 I will tell you that for the area in South Dade, it is
 3 very important that the issues that were raised today be
 4 taken into consideration by the committee. The aftermath
 5 of Hurricane Andrew is still being felt very significantly
 6 in South Dade.
 7 And you heard from constituents today who indicated
 8 that the rebuilding is still going on in terms of there
 9 being a community of interest, the economic redevelopment,
 10 the creation of a viable middle class, again, is a
 11 significant issue from Kendall Drive south. And it's very
 12 important for them that that issue be fairly represented by
 13 somebody who lives within that area, has gone through those
 14 concerns and is a strong advocate for them.
 15 In addition, in the area south of Kendall Drive, the
 16 incorporation of municipalities is a significant issue.
 17 Pine Crest is now a municipality. It was not one in 1992
 18 at the last redistricting and it is now represented by
 19 three different members of the House, only one of which,
 20 myself, lives in Pine Crest.
 21 Palmetto Bay is an up-and-coming, soon-to-be
 22 incorporated municipality south of Pine Crest and also
 23 should have the right to have the representation of
 24 somebody who understands those issues.
 25 Environmental and agricultural concerns are also a
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1 significant community of interest. You heard from some of
 2 the people who testified today that that is an issue that
 3 somebody who spends time in the area of South Dade and
 4 understands how significant it is that the county and the
 5 state provide the kind of support to the agricultural
 6 economy which is a strong and viable economy for Dade
 7 County, and for the state, and doesn't get the kind of
 8 advocacy it needs unless somebody devotes their time to the
 9 area.
 10 So those are issues that are communities of concern
 11 that were raised today that I hope the committee will take
 12 into account.
 13 The Democratic performance in District 119 was
 14 54 percent. The 2000 presidential vote was 19,000 and some
 15 odd for Gore and 16,000 and some odd for Bush.
 16 And, finally, you heard from many people today that
 17 are critical that when there is a draft of maps that the
 18 public have an opportunity to have input and critique those
 19 maps. Just as any other public ordinance is put out there,
 20 a zoning or an ordinance by a municipality, the data is put
 21 out there, the specifics are put out there for public input
 22 and it's incumbent on this committee to make sure that it
 23 does that. Thank you.
 24 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Anyone else from the delegation?
 25 Representative Ryan.
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1 REPRESENTATIVE RYAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As we
 2 have moved to the more urban areas in our public hearing
 3 schedule, we begin to hear a little bit more about the
 4 adjusted census data. And it's really -- it hasn't been
 5 important in those areas where we either had a very good
 6 response with the initial census forms that went out or the
 7 follow-up captured almost all of the residents in other
 8 areas of the state.

9 But as we get into the urban core areas, we find that
 10 it is a concern. And this is not an issue that is a
 11 political issue because it cuts across political lines.
 12 When we talk about an undercount in Hispanic districts and
 13 African-American districts in the urban core area, we are
 14 talking about Republican and Democratic legislative seats.

15 If, in fact, we have some accurate, empirical data as
 16 to what the adjusted census figures are, they should be
 17 taken into consideration. I'm well aware that with respect
 18 to Congressional seats, we are not permitted a deviation
 19 from the number of more than 1 percent, but if there is a
 20 logical purpose then we can, with respect to our State
 21 House and our State Senate seats, we can have a deviation
 22 of up to 10 percent, which would be 5 percent on the low
 23 side or 5 percent on the high side. And with a House seat
 24 then you are talking perhaps 6- or 7,000 below the 133,000
 25 resident level.

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1 And if we do so, I think we can preserve a lot of the
 2 core seats and core constituency and communities of
 3 interest that are in these present seats.

4 So, I would hope, Mr. Chairman -- we had some
 5 discussion about the Price Waterhouse study, I heard about
 6 it in two of our hearings -- if you could instruct staff to
 7 make available to the members of the committee a copy of
 8 this Price Waterhouse study, this would give us at least a
 9 basis to begin looking at this issue because I think it's
 10 important enough for us as we begin our deliberations on
 11 the maps that we find whether there is this type of
 12 information that is both accurate and can send us on a
 13 logical course in considering this issue when we redraw the
 14 maps. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

15 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you, Senator -- or
 16 Representative.

17 Representative Diaz-Balart.

18 REPRESENTATIVE DIAZ-BALART: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
 19 I am going to be very brief, but I do want to take the
 20 opportunity of highlighting for those of you that have come
 21 from a long way that we are in one of the finest
 22 institutions of higher learning in the state, in the heart
 23 of one of the fastest-growing minority areas in the state.

24 And, again, I just want to make sure you look around,
 25 because we are going to be hitting you up for funds for FIU

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1 later, number one.

2 And more importantly though, more importantly is thank
 3 the people who have taken their time to come out and speak
 4 to us. If you will give me a second.

5 (Presentation in Spanish.)

6 Just thanking them for coming and spending their time
 7 so we could listen to you. Thank you very much and thank
 8 you for being here.

9 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Anyone else?

10 For those that have come out and made remarks today,
 11 from time to time I want to explain that every member of
 12 the Legislature, House and Senate, has the right to file a
 13 bill and/or a joint resolution dealing with reapportionment
 14 or an amendment to a particular bill that's been filed.

15 So, therefore, there are those who are -- address
 16 their comments to me, I am just a member of the Legislature
 17 just like anyone else. And I would encourage them, if they
 18 have a concern, if they have an idea, if they would like to
 19 circumvent the public hearing and do that before we go to
 20 the next public hearing, do that. If they would like, as I
 21 would, to wait until after the public hearing has taken
 22 place before they file bills, then do that.

23 But I would encourage everyone to take upon themselves
 24 the rights they have as a member. And then if there is a
 25 plan that turns out to be a plan that's offered, I would

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1 encourage them and you as the public to get with your
 2 member. They are the ones that are going to be responsible
 3 for the way the lines come out, not me as the chairman.

4 I have said over and over again, I'm coming to areas
 5 to find out what the regional concerns are, what the
 6 regional commonalities are. But as far as actually drawing
 7 the individual district lines, the members should be, as
 8 opposed to the public looking at some map I draw, I'm from
 9 Orlando. Instead it should be the members of the local
 10 delegation who put together a plan that hopefully they can
 11 agree on.

12 And as they do that, they will be held accountable by
 13 you as the public. You can't hold me accountable, I am
 14 from Orlando. Unless -- my district may come down here,
 15 who knows. (Laughter.) I kind of like it.

16 So, I would encourage every member to use the rights
 17 that they have as a member of the Legislature and make
 18 their voice heard and then also get with their constituents
 19 and make sure what they're saying is what their
 20 constituents want.

21 With that, the meeting is adjourned.
 22 (Meeting concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

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STATE OF FLORIDA:

COUNTY OF LEON:

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

DATED this _____ day of _____, 2001.

MONA L. WHIDDON
Court Reporter
Division of Administrative Hearings
1230 Apalachee Parkway
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3060
(850) 488-9675 Suncom 278-9675
Fax Filing (850) 921-8453
www.doah.state.fl.us

DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675