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STATE OF MINNESOTA

SPECIAL REDISTRICTING PANEL

A21-0243
A21-0546

Peter S. Wattson, Joseph Mansky,
Nancy B. Greenwood, Mary E. Kupper,
Douglas W. Backstrom, and
James E. Hougas, III, individually
and on behalf of all citizens and
voting residents of Minnesota similarly
situated, and League of Women Voters
Minnesota,

Plaintiffs,

and

Paul Anderson, Ida Lano, Chuck Brusven,
Karen Lane, Joel Hineman, Carol Wegner,
and Daniel Schonhardt,

Plaintiff-Intervenors,

vs.

Steve Simon, Secretary of State of
Minnesota; and Kendra Olson, Carver
County Elections and Licensing Manager,
individually and on behalf of all
Minnesota county chief election officers,

Defendants,

and

Frank Sachs, Dagny Heimisdottir, Michael
Arulfo, Tanwi Prigge, Jennifer Guertin,
Garrison O'Keith McMurtrey, Mara Lee Glubka,
Jeffrey Strand, Danielle Main, and
Wayne Grimmer,

Plaintiffs,

and

1 Dr. Bruce Corrie, Shelly Diaz,
2 Alberder Gillespie, Xiongpaoo Lee,
3 Abdirazak Mahboub, Aida Simon,
4 Beatriz Winters, Common Cause,
5 OneMinnesota.org, and Voices for
6 Racial Justice,

7 **Plaintiff-Intervenors,**

8 **vs.**

9 **Steve Simon, Secretary of State of**
10 **Minnesota,**

11 **Defendant.**

12 -----

13 On October 11, 2021, at 6:30 p.m., this matter
14 was duly before the Special Redistricting Panel: Judge
15 Louise Dovre Bjorkman, Judge Diane Bratvold, Judge Jay
16 Carlson, Judge Juanita Freeman, and Judge Jodi
17 Williamson, for hearing at the Woodbury City Hall, 8301
18 Valley Creek Road, Woodbury, Minnesota 55125.

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1 (The following proceedings were held:)

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3 THE CLERK: Please rise. This special
4 session of the Minnesota Special Redistricting Panel
5 will now come to order. Judge Bjorkman, Judge Bratvold,
6 Judge Carlson, Judge Freeman, and Judge Williamson; the
7 Honorable Louise Dovre Bjorkman presiding.

8 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Please be
9 seated.

10 Welcome. Good evening. Thank you for being
11 here. We are pleased to be here in Woodbury. We
12 recognize that you have taken time out of your busy
13 lives to attend this hearing.

14 The redistricting process occurs only once
15 every ten years and is important to all Minnesotans, so
16 we appreciate your participation.

17 My name is Louise Dovre Bjorkman. I'm a
18 judge on the Minnesota Court of Appeals and am the
19 presiding judge of this Special Redistricting Panel.

20 I will ask my colleagues, the other judges
21 on this panel, to introduce themselves.

22 JUDGE BRATVOLD: I'm Diane Bratvold, a
23 judge on the Minnesota Court of Appeals in St. Paul.

24 JUDGE CARLSON: Judge Jay Carlson from the
25 Seventh Judicial District.

1 JUDGE WILLIAMSON: Jodi Williamson, Third
2 Judicial District, chambered in Dodge County.

3 JUDGE FREEMAN: Judge Juanita Freeman,
4 Tenth Judicial District, chambered in Stillwater,
5 Washington County.

6 JUDGE BJORKMAN: The Chief Justice of the
7 Minnesota Supreme Court appointed this panel to adopt
8 congressional and legislative redistricting plans only
9 in the event that the Minnesota Legislature does not
10 enact redistricting plans by the statutory deadline of
11 February 15th, 2022.

12 We recognize that the legislature has been
13 delayed in its work because of delays in the release of
14 the final 2020 census data, and we find ourselves in the
15 unusual situation of conducting parallel redistricting
16 processes. We intend to give the legislature every
17 opportunity to complete redistricting, but we also must
18 move forward with our work so that we are prepared to
19 act, if necessary, by February 15th.

20 The redrawing of Minnesota's congressional
21 and legislative districts involves many considerations,
22 not the least of which is the effects of redistricting
23 on the people who have a stake in this process, and that
24 is all the people in this state.

25 Public hearings like this one are central to

1 the redistricting process. Our legislature, like
2 legislatures across the country, has conducted hearings
3 to receive information from the public, and prior
4 redistricting panels such as this one have done the
5 same. These hearings enable members of the public to
6 directly voice their opinions and concerns and to share
7 local perspectives that will enhance our understanding
8 of communities across the state. This participation is
9 truly democracy in action.

10 We are particularly grateful for this
11 participation during this challenging time. We have
12 taken various precautions to create safe opportunities
13 for broad and diverse public engagement. For those of
14 you attending public hearings in person such as tonight,
15 masks are required at all times, except when you are
16 making an oral presentation. I believe we have extra
17 masks at the back of the room. So if you don't have one
18 on, please grab a mask and place it over your nose and
19 mouth at this time.

20 This hearing and all other in-person
21 hearings are being streamed live via Zoom so that
22 interested members of the public can watch remotely.
23 The panel will receive and give full consideration to
24 written statements from the public. Written statements
25 must be submitted by October 29th of this year. For

1 details on how to submit written statements, please see
2 the panel's web page.

3 We welcome the comments of those who have
4 registered to speak at this hearing. We will call
5 speakers one at a time in the order in which they appear
6 on the list of confirmed speakers. In the event these
7 speakers complete their presentation before 8:30, we may
8 allow others to speak.

9 Our marshal will display a clock -- you can
10 can see it right there -- to assist us in staying within
11 the five-minute time limit for each speaker.

12 My fellow judges and I will be listening
13 carefully to each speaker. We may ask questions to
14 clarify or better understand a speaker's comments, but
15 we are mostly here to listen.

16 When speakers describe communities, we
17 encourage them to use the maps on display -- there is a
18 laser pointer also at the podium that you can use -- and
19 we encourage speakers to refer to geographic markers,
20 such as political subdivisions or rivers or landmarks or
21 streets, so that we can understand where those
22 communities are relative to the district lines.

23 Our court reporter will take down each
24 speaker's comments and a transcript will be available on
25 our website at a later time.

1 Please be mindful that this is a court
2 proceeding. And with many thanks to the city of
3 Woodbury, this lovely city council chambers is our
4 courtroom for the evening.

5 If you have not done so already, please turn
6 off your cell phones. Cell phones and private recording
7 devices must be turned off during the entire hearing.
8 If you need to leave during the hearing, please try to
9 do so in between speakers.

10 Please be respectful of the speakers and the
11 listeners by not talking, adding commentary, or
12 applauding during or after a presentation. And please
13 respect and protect each other by wearing your mask over
14 your mouth and nose throughout the session.

15 Again, on behalf of the panel, thank you so
16 much for your interest in this important matter.

17 And we will begin then the comments tonight
18 with those of Andrew Ervin.

19 ANDREW ERVIN: Your Honors, thank you very
20 much for this opportunity to provide testimony this
21 evening.

22 My name is Andrew Ervin, and I'm a long-time
23 resident of the city of White Bear Lake here in the east
24 metro. And I wanted to talk especially about the
25 redistricting of the state house and senate districts --

1 and probably really the senate districts especially --
2 in terms of communities of interest.

3 And in suburban communities, the school
4 district is many times the most powerful community of
5 interest. Sometimes it's a matter of the community of
6 debate because there can be tremendous differences of
7 opinions about curriculum, funding, and other issues.
8 And, in fact, mask wearing is a big one in the school
9 district I live in.

10 But also, at all times the community of
11 interest of debate focuses around the local economy,
12 including such issues as home values and strength of
13 community, the future of our community, the importance
14 of educating our young members and as well as issues, of
15 course, of taxation.

16 And I'd like to use the example of District
17 624, where I live, the White Bear Lake Area School
18 District. And it covers parts of three counties, ten
19 cities, which makes things a little complicated. But
20 really there's one cohesive educational perhaps
21 community but one cohesive debate. And a wonderful
22 thing that happens, even though it isn't always
23 respectful, is that school district issues bring many
24 people to hearings, to submit comments, to want to talk
25 with principals, to want to talk with school board

1 members. And this is just a very healthy thing most of
2 the time.

3 And I wanted to point out that in District
4 624, we have three parts of three different senate
5 districts. And I've recently been reviewing the maps of
6 several local, large school districts, and two is fairly
7 typical. And having three senate districts really
8 dilutes the opportunities for commonality for debate.
9 And each of those three senate districts each has
10 another large school district within their senate
11 district, so we have the same issue for adjoining school
12 districts as well.

13 So I would really hope that we would see, as
14 is done actually in a lot of other districts, no more
15 than two senate districts for each large school
16 district.

17 A competing interest is the age and housing
18 development. Just very briefly I'll touch upon this,
19 that within our district we have a much older, fully
20 built-up city in White Bear Lake. We have Hugo, that's
21 actively growing and is much younger and there's
22 tension, of course, over many issues there.

23 But there is a third issue that -- and I
24 wanted to say too, despite -- you know, we could have
25 White Bear Lake combined with part of Maplewood, but

1 really I think the school district is the strongest bond
2 that should be given very high consideration.

3 I also wanted to point out that in some
4 communities an environmental impact or something similar
5 is incredibly important. And in the White Bear Lake
6 area, we have the issue of the Water Gremlin plant and
7 the poisoning of water. Just very serious issue that's
8 going to be around for many years. It wasn't known ten
9 years ago.

10 Gem Lake, a portion of White Bear Township,
11 and a portion of White Bear Lake are within that mile
12 and a half circle of the Water Gremlin plant. But Gem
13 Lake is currently in a different senate district, which
14 was fine ten years ago, than the White Bear Township and
15 White Bear Lake small areas. And that I think it would
16 be incredibly important, if possible, for all three to
17 be in the same senate district and really the same house
18 district.

19 Thank you very much.

20 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments
21 are submitted.

22 Next speaker on our list is Sean Brown.

23 SEAN BROWN: Good evening. And thank you
24 for this opportunity. I really appreciate it. This is
25 my first time doing this. I've been involved a long

1 time. But this is the first time I'm going to ask to do
2 that. So thank you. It's kind of an honor.

3 A lot of what I feel is important is just to
4 keep the districts available and representative of
5 everyone in all communities. Whether you're a working
6 class person or upper middle class, everybody should be
7 included.

8 I also think that we need to be careful in
9 what we do as we've seen in other parts of this country
10 how they're trying to take away the rights of certain
11 individuals to either express their opinions or vote or
12 whatever it is they may do.

13 I've got so much to say but just -- I'm not
14 usually a public speaker. I'm a carpenter by trade, and
15 public speaking is not my strong suit.

16 But I also think that we need to come
17 together in this and bring people together and keep
18 people together of different opinions so we can all work
19 together to make this an inclusive and equal opportunity
20 for everybody.

21 When I grew up, my parents instilled in me,
22 you know: No matter what or how you're treated, you
23 need to treat everybody with the same respect as you
24 would wish to be treated. And I think that's very
25 important in this process also.

1 And I thank you for the opportunity. And
2 good evening.

3 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments
4 are submitted.

5 We will next hear from Jennifer Willette.

6 JENNIFER WILLETTE: Good evening, Your
7 Honors, and thank you for the opportunity to address you
8 tonight on this topic.

9 My name is Jennifer Willette. I am a
10 Woodbury resident. I've lived in Woodbury for 22 years;
11 on the East Side most of my life. Tonight I'm here,
12 though, more for my professional life than my personal
13 life.

14 I am a State employee. I do want to state
15 I'm not here on behalf of my agency or anything. This
16 is my personal opinions. But I have been in county
17 service for a little over 19 years. And throughout
18 those years, there's been a common theme for all of
19 those years; and that is, the effort that government has
20 made to try to address the racial and ethnic disparities
21 that we have in the state of Minnesota. In some areas,
22 we have some of the worst disparities in the country.

23 Every agency I've worked for tries to find
24 ways to solve these problems. I don't expect
25 redistricting is going to solve them. It's not the

1 silver bullet. I don't think there is a silver bullet.
2 But we see these disparities across education and health
3 care and housing and across all of state government.
4 We, as government employees, are not doing a good job of
5 treating our customers equitably, and we need to solve
6 that problem.

7 And what I'm asking tonight is that in the
8 process of redistricting, we make that a priority, of
9 keeping those communities of interest together where
10 they have a common shared experience with their
11 relationship to government and government services. In
12 particular, racial and ethnic groups, the Black
13 community, especially today of all days, the indigenous
14 community and other communities of color.

15 An example of this would be American Indian
16 reservations, that we keep reservations together within
17 districts so that they can join their voices and be part
18 of how we solve this problem in Minnesota, because I
19 think having those voices as part of the solution is the
20 only way we solve the problem. I don't think partisan
21 politics is going to solve it. It hasn't so far and
22 it's not going to going into the future.

23 To that end, I think redistricting is a way
24 of ensuring that when elections come, the best candidate
25 is going to win based on their policies and how they

1 serve those communities, not based on partisan politics
2 and certainly not at the expense of those communities
3 that have been historically underserved.

4 Thank you.

5 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments
6 are submitted.

7 We will next hear from James Johnson.

8 JAMES JOHNSON: Good evening, honorable
9 members of the redistricting committee. Thank you for
10 the opportunity to testify before you.

11 My name is Jim Johnson. I'm a 30-year
12 resident of Eagan, Minnesota. I'm here to testify that
13 it would help our community if it were paired with
14 Bloomington in the same congressional district.

15 In my years as an Eagan resident, I've been
16 to Bloomington countless times for shopping, visiting
17 friends. I've always noted the many similarities of
18 Eagan, Burnsville, and Bloomington and find it would
19 make so much sense that it would be together in a newly
20 drawn Second Congressional District.

21 All three -- Eagan, Burnsville, and
22 Bloomington -- are similarly suburban. They're all
23 vibrant, growing communities, and all home to
24 increasingly diversifying populations. It really is one
25 community connected by multiple bridges and roads. I-35

1 connects the hearts of Burnsville and Bloomington; Cedar
2 Avenue goes from Apple Valley and near the new outlet
3 mall in Eagan, to Bloomington beside the Mall of
4 America, which itself connects the surrounding
5 communities.

6 Eagan, Burnsville, and Bloomington are
7 really a single community for many Twin Cities commuters
8 with many of the same day-to-day concerns. All of these
9 communities south of Minneapolis are very similar
10 economically with very similar median incomes and
11 education levels. They are similar cities with a lot of
12 shared commutes, jobs, shops, and restaurants. They
13 belong, I believe, in a single suburban district, and I
14 hope this panel will draw Bloomington into a new Second
15 Congressional District.

16 These growing suburban cities need fair
17 representation that making the Second Congressional
18 District more reflective of the core of the community
19 will provide.

20 Thank you for the opportunity of sharing my
21 observations.

22 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments
23 are submitted.

24 We will next hear from Justin Recla.

25 JUSTIN RECLA: Honorable members of the

1 redistricting committee, thank you for the opportunity
2 to testify before your committee.

3 My name is Justin Recla. I've lived in
4 St. Paul Park, within Washington County, for the past
5 ten years. I'm here to testify that it would make much
6 more sense for Woodbury and all of south Washington
7 County to be in the second district along with our towns
8 rather than the neighboring districts of the fourth and
9 sixth district.

10 Cottage Grove currently forms the northern
11 border of the second district and the southern part of
12 Washington County. St. Paul Park is a small city of
13 only 5,500 people just to the east of Cottage Grove is
14 now split between the second and fourth districts.
15 Ideally, a small city like ours would not be split as it
16 diminishes the voice of St. Paul Park residents in
17 whatever district they are placed in.

18 Woodbury lies directly to the north of
19 Cottage Grove but it's also in district four. The
20 northern part of Dakota County, however, would naturally
21 connect the southern part of Washington as Woodbury is
22 directly to the east and would form a compact northern
23 border for a potential congressional district.

24 Washington County is currently split between
25 three congressional districts -- the second, fourth, and

1 sixth -- and reducing that to two would further enhance
2 the voice of the county residents. With a population of
3 only 267,000 -- a little more than a third of an ideal
4 district -- Washington County does not deserve to be
5 split into three different districts.

6 There's also plenty of economic and cultural
7 ties between the communities in south Washington County.
8 Residents of St. Paul Park frequently travel to Woodbury
9 to shop at stores, like Woodbury Lakes, Tamarack
10 Village, and to get essentials that might not be
11 available in St. Paul Park.

12 St. Paul Park is also part of south
13 Washington school district. Kids in Newport go to
14 school a few miles away at East Ridge High School in
15 Woodbury and kids from Woodbury go to school in Altman
16 Middle School in Cottage Grove.

17 South Washington schools is a highly
18 connected community. It's odd that the southern part of
19 the county is united and a electoral district like the
20 school board, watershed board, telecom board, and at the
21 local level but divided at the federal level.

22 I think federal lines should recognize what
23 locals already know, that Washington County should be
24 fully in one congressional district -- or south
25 Washington County district should be fully in one

1 congressional district.

2 Thanks for listening to my testimony. Thank
3 you.

4 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments
5 are submitted.

6 Our next speaker is Georgianna Yantos. Do
7 we have Georgianna Yantos? (No response.) Okay. We
8 will call that name later in the session.

9 How about Kelli Carlson?

10 KELLI CARLSON: Good evening. And thank
11 you, Your Honors, for giving me this opportunity.

12 My name is Kelli Carlson, and I'm a resident
13 of Woodbury, Minnesota.

14 Today I'm going to focus on south Washington
15 County and why I think it should be considered a
16 community of interest united in the Second Congressional
17 District.

18 Currently, south Washington County is drawn
19 between the three different congressional districts, and
20 I hope that my testimony today will help this panel see
21 south Washington County as a community of interest that
22 should not be split whenever possible.

23 South Washington County presents a variety
24 of communities of interest, most obviously -- the most
25 obvious way to tell in this case is because of how the

1 community has organized itself.

2 The south Washington school district is one
3 of the largest school districts in the state and was
4 intentionally created as a uniting force for our county.
5 As the second largest employer in the county, the school
6 district is an economic and educational force in the
7 county that should not be split.

8 Additionally, the cities of Woodbury and
9 Cottage Grove have collaborated closely in recent years.
10 A prime example is the HERO Training Center, a
11 soon-to-be-open center built as a collaborative project
12 between the two cities. A result of years of
13 collaboration, the two cities, including joint city
14 council meetings, the HERO Center will be a regional hub
15 for training law enforcement officers, firefighters, and
16 EMS professionals. Without the collaboration between
17 the communities in south Washington County, the project
18 likely would've never come to fruition. In fact, the
19 south Washington County Telecommunications Commission
20 and south Washington County Watershed District
21 contributed to funding to the project as well. This
22 project and the groups that worked together to build it
23 prove that south Washington County is a united community
24 that should not be separated.

25 The close relationship of cities in south

1 Washington County is not a new one. Cottage Grove and
2 Woodbury considered incorporating as one city in the
3 1960s due to the economic and cultural similarities
4 between the two towns.

5 We've also faced challenges together. Most
6 recently, communities in south Washington County have
7 faced PFAS contamination in our water supplies. The
8 issue does not recognize district boundaries with
9 Woodbury and Cottage Grove, both working to solve the
10 challenges related to the PFAS underground plumbing
11 incident impacting their communities.

12 South Washington County is also an area that
13 is suburban and gives way into farmland to the east,
14 which as an area makes the most sense to be paired with
15 another similar community. Specifically, we believe
16 that south Washington County and Dakota County should be
17 on the Second Congressional District.

18 Dakota County is another area populated
19 primarily by suburbs that gives way to farmland. I also
20 hope that south Washington County is not paired with the
21 St. Paul-based districts as the distance and the culture
22 between St. Paul and its outer suburbs do not constitute
23 a community of interest, in my mind.

24 I hope I've made a clear case as to why
25 south Washington County represents a community of

1 interest. And in the future, I hope this panel will
2 avoid splitting south Washington County unnecessarily.

3 Thank you.

4 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments
5 are submitted.

6 The next speaker is Colin Beere.

7 COLIN BEERE: Thank you for the opportunity
8 to testify before the committee tonight.

9 My name is Colin Beere. I have lived in
10 Woodbury, within Washington County, for the past seven
11 years.

12 I'm here to testify that it would make much
13 more sense for Woodbury to be in the second district
14 rather than the fourth and any other Washington County
15 district. Washington County is currently split between
16 three different districts, which is unnecessary: both
17 the fourth and the sixth districts include part of the
18 county, in addition to the second, which includes the
19 southern part of the county.

20 The current second district boundaries now
21 go up to Woodbury border but not include -- the second
22 district includes all of Dakota to the west and the
23 southern part of Washington in the east. Moving
24 Woodbury into the second would also make for a more
25 compact second district as Dakota County already extends

1 further north than in -- further north than the
2 Washington County part in the second district. If
3 Woodbury were in the north edge of the second district,
4 I-94 would form a natural boundary for the second
5 district.

6 More importantly, Woodbury is just more
7 similar to the second. A large portion of Woodbury
8 already shares public education with the second
9 district; in turn, families are spending time in the
10 community together, sharing common values.

11 Also, the second district is largely a
12 suburban district compared to the fourth, which includes
13 the City of St. Paul, Ramsey County, and much more
14 urban.

15 Importantly, the lack of transit also unites
16 south Washington County and the communities in the
17 south. South Washington County has been working for
18 many years to improve transit to its communities,
19 resulting in the planned Gold Line, a bus rapid transit
20 line that would connect Woodbury to downtown St. Paul.
21 Unfortunately, Cottage Grove and Hastings currently
22 suffer from lack of transit options that Woodbury is on
23 the verge of addressing.

24 Having all of these communities brought into
25 one congressional district would allow their

1 representative to advocate for additional transit
2 funding.

3 In short, I hope that when this panel draws
4 our congressional maps this year, they will include
5 Woodbury into the second district.

6 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments
7 are submitted.

8 We will next hear from Michael Fitzgerald.
9 (No response.) Is there a Michael Fitzgerald here? (No
10 response.)

11 I think we will go on then to Joel Holstad.

12 JOEL HOLSTAD: Yes.

13 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Hopefully, I'm pronouncing
14 that correctly.

15 JOEL HOLSTAD: As well as anybody. Thank
16 you for taking your time to hear community comment. My
17 name is Joel Holstad.

18 First. I'm very much a partisan. I think my
19 first political campaign was 1972 polling bumper
20 stickers for Hubert Humphrey. And it is at the request
21 of my political party that I was invited to apply for
22 this opportunity to comment, yet I'm not speaking on
23 behalf of the party.

24 I'm concerned about all attempts to engineer
25 results, specific results with specific as to this

1 committee. My ask is similar to Mr. Ervin's initial
2 response, which is just broadly to recognize communities
3 of interest. I'm not attempting to define which
4 communities of interest are more important than others;
5 just recognizing communities of interest are important.

6 One of the communities of interest that
7 concerns me is, as similar comments may have made,
8 dividing communities into -- or house districts and
9 senate districts at the legislative level into various
10 congressional districts.

11 I'm in Forest Lake currently. I grew up in
12 the White Bear area. And yet our senate district is
13 part in the fourth district, part in the sixth, though
14 we have very little common interest. And it is my
15 belief that those persons that are in the smaller
16 represented district get actually less attention.

17 It is bothersome to me that all parties --
18 I'll just say all parties are attempting to manipulate
19 the process towards what they perceive to be a political
20 advantage. I think that my political party has done
21 fairly well without having to use redistricting as the
22 basis to achieve majorities. And I think that we should
23 be, if we are truly interested in building communities,
24 a broad community with some cohesion. We need to be
25 persuasive and use persuasion and not process GR goals.

1 That being said, the bias that I do have is
2 that I think you have too much data available to
3 redistrict with. I wish that you could redistrict
4 simply by looking at numbers -- numbers, county lines,
5 use lines. The ability to identify too much about
6 people I think tempts too much of an opportunity to
7 manipulate the process.

8 That all being said, I do hope that we could
9 keep rural areas compact with rural areas, suburban
10 areas compact with suburban areas, urban areas with
11 urban areas so as not to dilute the voice of any of
12 those diverse communities who definitely have diverse
13 interests.

14 And with that, I'll just say thank you for
15 your efforts, and a thank you to all the other citizens
16 who are taking the time to make comments tonight.

17 Thank you.

18 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments
19 are submitted.

20 Our next speaker is Connie Sierras.

21 CONNIE SIERRAS: Is it okay if I leave my
22 mask on?

23 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Absolutely.

24 CONNIE SIERRAS: Thank you. I'm sorry
25 about the hat; it's actually to help my ears.

1 So thank you for letting me speak. My name
2 is Connie Sierras. I've lived at various times in my
3 life all over St. Paul, from the East Side to the West
4 Side, from North St. Paul, Maplewood, to Woodbury, and
5 now currently I'm living in Inver Grove Heights,
6 Minnesota. I'm retired now after working nearly 38
7 years at 3M.

8 My first thing I want to say is thank you
9 for allowing me to express my gratitude here to be able
10 to offer my input on redistricting.

11 Personally, I would prefer even more citizen
12 input. I would think, like, a panel of some type that
13 would help the legislature to divide the districts up
14 would be ideal, in my opinion, and/or judges. But given
15 that that may not be possible, this is the next best
16 option I think that we have if we want to try to keep
17 our districts fair.

18 Our voices matter. It's what our democratic
19 republic was founded on: the voices of the people being
20 heard and listened to. So I appreciate your willingness
21 to take on this challenge of redistricting, if
22 necessary, and to listen to us citizens.

23 I've seen some images of crazy gerrymandered
24 districts across the country. Minnesota has been
25 relying on judges like you for at least 50 years now to

1 create fair districts. And while we don't have as many
2 of the insanely drawn maps as some other states do, we
3 still can and should do better.

4 I feel Minnesota has a history of its
5 citizens being quite civic-minded as evidenced by how
6 often we are at the top or very near the top of voter
7 turnout in national elections. I think we deserve to be
8 proud of that and we ought to cherish and preserve it.

9 And that's why I'm here today, to ask that
10 as you create the districts, you remember to honor us
11 citizens by adhering to small "D" democratic voting
12 principles; namely, to allow voters to choose their
13 electeds rather than letting electeds choose their
14 voters.

15 Districts need to be comparable in
16 population so the principle that one-person one-vote is
17 upheld. Each representative should have a comparable
18 number of constituents on both the national and the
19 state level so that there isn't one representative for a
20 larger population than another. They should be equal as
21 best as possible.

22 And, finally, I think it's also important to
23 keep communities of people typically marginalized from
24 being split apart, as two others have already spoken.

25 As I've said earlier, I lived on the West

1 Side. In fact, I spent quite a bit of my childhood
2 there, as did my mother. When I was growing up, there
3 were many Hispanic and Middle Eastern families there. I
4 can well recall being in classes, including Spanish
5 class, with classmates who spoke only Spanish at home.
6 They almost always speak better English than I have or
7 ever will speak Spanish.

8 There are still many Hispanic and Middle
9 Eastern families on the West Side, West St. Paul, Inver
10 Grove Heights, and now there are many Asian and Muslim
11 families there too. It's important to me that we try to
12 keep these communities whole to ensure fair and
13 equitable representation for all.

14 It's no doubt to me that this is a thankless
15 job that you're taking on. But I'm asking you to keep
16 the principles of equal representation foremost in your
17 deliberations. As I said before, every vote matters.
18 So let's please not dilute anyone's vote.

19 Thank you for your time.

20 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments
21 are submitted.

22 We will next hear from Christopher Johnson.

23 CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON: Good evening, Your
24 Honors. I'm honored to be here. I haven't prepared
25 much of a statement, but I wanted to speak for my

1 community here in Washington County.

2 I'm a lifelong resident. I live currently
3 in Scandia, Minnesota, in northern Washington County.
4 My family has been here since statehood. We had a
5 family farm in Marine on St. Croix, and I've lived here
6 most of my life. I've lived throughout the county,
7 actually. I've attended church in Scandia, where I now
8 reside, although that's in Forest Lake School District.
9 And I attended Stillwater School District -- the
10 boundary kind of went through our family farm -- and I
11 went to Marine Elementary.

12 My main point here that I wanted to make was
13 someone else mentioned that currently this county is
14 divided into four different congressional districts.
15 And I've got to say that the sixth is the one that I'm
16 really most concerned about, the splitting of the
17 community.

18 Washington County, as you know, runs north
19 and south. I've heard people talk about wanting to
20 split off the lower Woodbury part. I've lived in
21 Woodbury a couple years over the years, and I kind of
22 agree with that. But being a resident of the northern
23 part of the county, I guess, looking historically, we
24 belong more with the communities to the north of us and
25 down to Stillwater. That's where, you know, growing up,

1 that's where we always hung out.

2 Scandia is known as the first Swedish
3 settlement in Minnesota. Well, Lindstrom and Chisago
4 and... I've lived there too. We have a lot more in
5 common with those folks.

6 I'm not a representative of the
7 Congressional District 6 for my political party, but I
8 could hardly make it to a meeting in St. Cloud. And it
9 goes all the way to the west side of the cities. Now,
10 most of the people, all the way, like, up to Hinckley,
11 that I know -- and I work in the cities too and
12 commute -- they come towards the cities, down the lower
13 St. Croix Valley, that natural corridor of the lower
14 St. Croix watershed that includes all of Chisago, parts
15 of Pine, and Washington County. This was the big woods
16 area. We all kind of gravitate to that. We all kind of
17 also are familiar with Wisconsin, our neighbors on the
18 other side.

19 We don't share those same life experiences
20 with the people on the other side of Minneapolis and
21 over in Sherburne and in St. Cloud and... You know, I
22 think this came in to being, like, around '82, where we
23 got the Sixth Congressional District.

24 And that's my primary concern, is look at
25 the historical maps back to the '30s and the 1900s and

1 where we were more of a north shore of the corridor.

2 Thank you.

3 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments
4 are submitted.

5 Next person on our list is Joe Ward.

6 JOE WARD: Good evening, Your Honors.

7 My name is Joe Ward. My family and I have
8 lived in Woodbury since 1974 and seen it grow from a
9 community of less than 7,500 to over 75,000 as of April
10 1, 2020. I'm a retired 3M person, retired owner of a
11 tech business startup. I volunteer for my church, the
12 community and the city, serving on the Business
13 Development Commission for the past several years. I'm
14 a former scout leader, a member of the League of Women
15 Voters, Woodbury Thrives.

16 I care about our community and the right of
17 every citizen to have a fair and equal access to voting.
18 I continue to be alarmed at the polarization of our
19 country. Of the country's 435 -- quoting from the
20 Washington Post -- the country's 435 congressional
21 districts, the respective presidential candidates won
22 just 50 of them by five or fewer percentage points.
23 There are really only three dozen truly competitive U.S.
24 House seats, and partisans have realized that in these
25 polarized times, the best way to flip a district is to

1 gerrymander it.

2 I totally oppose this gerrymandering
3 process, and I suspect many in this room do as well.
4 That's just one of the key factors that are threatening
5 our democracy, and restrictive election laws are
6 another.

7 Woodbury, just for example, has evolved into
8 its own unique identity as a city -- as a city with
9 dedicated parks and trails, first-class schools, and a
10 place where people care about a healthy quality of life.
11 Our diversity is growing as folks are attracted to this
12 city to work, live, and thrive.

13 We're hearing a lot about communities of
14 common interest. Woodbury is one. There are those who
15 would slice, dice, and apportion this out based on
16 political advantage. I urge Your Honors not to do this.
17 We need fair, competitive districts where people live,
18 work, and grow together. Woodbury has long been known
19 as a swing district. Let's keep it that way.

20 Those are my comments.

21 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments
22 are submitted.

23 Next person on our list is Beth Ann Meyer.
24 Do we have Beth Ann Meyer? (No response.) All right.

25 Then the next person is Jon Erik Kingstad.

1 JON ERIK KINGSTAD: Good evening to the
2 honorable panel. I thank you for the opportunity of
3 appearing and addressing you tonight. I've prepared
4 some written comments and I would like to have the
5 opportunity -- I noticed that there was a notice left
6 out on the chairs out here that I can submit written
7 comments that I've worked on today. My printer wouldn't
8 work so I didn't have this, so I'm going to basically
9 deliver what I can because I planned on being here sort
10 of extemporaneously do the best I can.

11 I understand that the purpose of this
12 meeting is primarily to get people's residence,
13 understand their feelings about their communities. And
14 we've heard some comments tonight from various people.
15 I think very helpful, welcome comments. I appreciate
16 the chance to have heard a number of them because it
17 provoked in me some thoughts about the kind of feelings
18 I have about community.

19 I've lived in Washington County now for 33
20 years -- most of the time since the time that I've lived
21 in Minnesota. I'm a retired lawyer. I live at 3684
22 Garden Court North in Oakdale. I've lived there for the
23 last seven years.

24 But the first almost 25 years I lived in
25 Afton, and I was part of what I considered to be the

1 St. Croix Valley community, which is consistent of
2 Stillwater. And I think, like some of the other people,
3 like the gentleman from Scandia mentioned, I think we
4 also felt a large community of interest with Afton to
5 Stillwater. And, frankly, I still do, even though I
6 live in Oakdale, just a few miles from here, north of
7 here.

8 But I think my main concern tonight and what
9 I'd truly like to address is some of the issues that
10 have been touched upon, which is the issue of partisan
11 gerrymandering, which is why this panel is even here in
12 the first place.

13 As I mentioned, I'm a retired lawyer. And I
14 spent a little time today, in the past several days
15 actually, reviewing some of the process by which we got
16 here tonight and why you were appointed.

17 For the last two or three years, part of my
18 life has been as an activist, you might say, a citizen
19 activist working -- I'm appearing on behalf of myself
20 tonight, but I've been working with a group of citizens,
21 some of whom's names I recognize as being some of the
22 plaintiffs in the lawsuits that began the process by
23 which this panel came about.

24 And what their lawsuits did not say was that
25 this matter came because of the legislative inaction and

1 delay of the last ten years bring us to this very point
2 that we were about ten years ago. And, frankly, I think
3 for the previous ten years several times. This is not a
4 new issue. And the problem of I think the partisan
5 gerrymandering problem has really only come to the fore
6 because I think we've seen some shocking examples -- I
7 think shocking -- in North Carolina, Wisconsin, some
8 other states, where the process has been so blatantly
9 manipulated and there's been a lot of information about
10 how this has come about.

11 I've managed to learn through my involvement
12 with some groups that have been working on trying to
13 correct this process about how exactly this happens.
14 And one of the things that I was noted about is that we
15 had -- two or three years ago, the legislature has had
16 plenty of opportunity, ample opportunity to address this
17 problem the last couple of years. And I place the blame
18 squarely with not so much individual legislators who
19 actually worked quite -- they were quite good leadership
20 in terms of bringing about attempts at legislative
21 redistricting reform, especially over the last two or
22 three years. I place the blame really with the party
23 leadership of both parties who I think had wanted to
24 kind of hold their cards close to the vest and retain as
25 much power as possible to bring us this, I think,

1 unfortunate thing where we have to basically have a
2 confrontation in kind of a very complex -- much more
3 complex process and not necessarily more transparent or
4 open.

5 Two or three years ago, the group I worked
6 with had arrived at a couple of pieces of legislation
7 that were introduced by bipartisan support in the
8 legislature and both houses. Neither of those proposals
9 ever were brought to the house floor, either house
10 floor, ever were submitted for any kind of vote. So I
11 guess that to me suggests something about there's some
12 blockings at the top to prevent that from happening.

13 But these proposals, I think, which we did
14 have bipartisan support, and I think, as I say, I think
15 some of the people who were behind some of the lawsuits
16 here were behind -- and I think I agree with them --
17 were behind, it was basically to, I think there was some
18 consensus about creating something called, like -- it
19 would basically be a citizen commission, an advisory
20 commission, to basically come up with the legislative
21 districts that would be submitted to the legislature
22 based upon certain principles that were defined in the
23 legislation that I had worked on.

24 I testified several times before two
25 different -- couple committees in the house and the

1 senate, and it seemed to be sort of welcomed. But as I
2 say, it never really got any further than that.

3 The principles, though, was to basically
4 force the legislature to put the -- to present the
5 legislature with committees (timer sounded) or with
6 redistricting -- Am I out of time?

7 JUDGE BJORKMAN: You are.

8 JON ERIK KINGSTAD: I'm sorry.

9 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Well, I'll give you a
10 moment to conclude your thought.

11 JON ERIK KINGSTAD: I just want to say, to
12 me the idea of having pre-drawn -- forcing the
13 legislature to come up with explanations of why they
14 come up with the districts that they come up rather than
15 having the public coming and comment upon them. There's
16 no way of getting behind the process, the secret
17 process, the confidential, closed process by which the
18 maps which would be submitted unless we have a district
19 commission that's created before.

20 I see an opportunity for that with the
21 proposal by the Supreme Court to have stipulation. I
22 hope this panel will strongly consider some kind of a
23 citizen commission for redistricting so that we have an
24 opportunity -- the citizens have an opportunity to put
25 forth maps and make the legislature explain why they

1 don't accept those kinds of maps.

2 And I'll submit my written comments before
3 October 29th.

4 Thank you very much for your attention
5 tonight.

6 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments
7 are submitted.

8 Our next speaker is JoAnn Ward.

9 JoANN WARD: Good evening, Your Honors, and
10 thank you for the opportunity. Thank you for your work.
11 You have a strenuous month ahead of you, I think, from
12 the calendar that I've seen. And I want to thank you
13 for that.

14 So I've been a resident of Woodbury since
15 the early '70s, when we had one stoplight and a much,
16 much smaller population, one main road through town and
17 through the residential, and then -- I mean, small
18 portion -- and then you got into gravel roads. So
19 there's been a lot of change over the last 40 years.

20 And over those years, I want to tell you a
21 little bit about myself and my perspective. I was a
22 successful real estate agent for many years, which gave
23 me information about the broader -- not only Woodbury
24 but the broader community. And I've been an active
25 volunteer, especially in the schools, working on

1 referendums, successful referendums, and serving on
2 district committees; leading scouts. I was chair of the
3 local Youth Service Bureau, the board, among some other
4 similar kinds of leadership positions.

5 Most recently, I'm a retired legislator of
6 the Minnesota state house. And that has given me a very
7 broad exposure to all of the people of the district in
8 ways that my previous roles did not.

9 So I'd like to tell you a little bit about
10 the district as it stands now and what our hopes might
11 be.

12 So we have a very diverse -- a comment was
13 made that it's a swing district. It has historically
14 been a swing district. And that diversity of political
15 perspective is one of our precious strengths because it
16 does allow people to have a voice and we don't crowd
17 some people out.

18 Many of the characteristics of Woodbury are
19 things that people have identified from all over
20 Washington County and Dakota County here tonight. We
21 are highly diverse ethnically and culturally. We have a
22 very strong Muslim community, a strong Hmong community,
23 and other ethnicities are very well represented.
24 Woodbury as a whole is about 28 percent non-White.

25 So as with the other communities that have

1 been mentioned tonight, broader than just Woodbury,
2 education is a key value. Most of these communities
3 have very strong churches, active communities and
4 churches, vibrant communities. We've got groundwater
5 issues. We've got other environmental issues, but the
6 groundwater with the PFAS is significant. And we are
7 concerned about not only the quality of water but the
8 quantity of good, clean water that we will have access
9 to in the future.

10 The quality of life is a key value for all
11 of these people, however they define it. And it can be
12 seen in Woodbury in the many philosophic -- sorry --
13 philanthropic community organizations that thrive here.
14 Very active, engaged community. Very proud of the parks
15 and the trails that we have. But especially the
16 community engagement.

17 So Woodbury itself can be seen as an anchor
18 for the east metro region. We have people that come for
19 the medical facilities -- a very, very active, large
20 medical community that is spread out all over the city;
21 and the recreational and shopping options bring people
22 from surrounding communities, as well as jobs.

23 Transit is an issue. Others have talked
24 about that. School district boundaries are a
25 significant thing, as you've heard from other people.

1 One of the things that hasn't been said is that Woodbury
2 School District boundaries... There are four school
3 districts in Woodbury -- sorry, three actually in
4 Woodbury; and in our senate district there are four.
5 That presents its own challenges.

6 I understand a little of the complexity
7 because of my background, a little of the complexity of
8 the task (timer sounded) -- Oh, my.

9 JUDGE BJORKMAN: You can conclude your
10 thought.

11 JoANN WARD: Thank you.

12 But I want to thank you for all of the
13 considerations that you will be making. The city, the
14 counties, the congressional districts and the school
15 districts, it's a very complex issue. And I want very
16 much to have citizen voice involved and hoping that
17 there will be a commission of citizen experts and
18 citizens that will be able to help draw a fair map for
19 all of the citizens of Minnesota.

20 Thank you.

21 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments
22 are submitted.

23 The next person on the list is Lucina
24 Gonzalez Miron. I may be mispronouncing Lucina Gonzalez
25 Miron. (No response.)

1 Then we will hear from Monica Bravo. Is
2 there a Monica Bravo present? (No response.)

3 Next person on the list is Julia Freeman.

4 JULIA FREEMAN: Hello. I want to thank you
5 for this opportunity to speak before the special
6 districting commission. Thank you so much.

7 My name is Julia Freeman. I live on the
8 East Side of St. Paul, about less than 10 minutes from
9 here, right behind Sun Ray Shopping Center.

10 I am a grandmother of ten. And because of
11 this, education is very, very important to me. And I
12 work really close with BIPOC -- that's Black,
13 Indigenous, People of Color -- parents and youth. I'm
14 basically in the community all the time, and that's why
15 I want to talk about that special interest group.

16 The education that BIPOC parents and
17 youth --

18 (Interruption in the proceedings.)

19 JULIA FREEMAN: These parents and youth
20 have been building power in their school districts and
21 neighborhoods for education equity solutions to be
22 realized. This includes voting for the right person on
23 school boards to represent them. This is very
24 important. Just in St. Paul we've had some amazing
25 school board members get elected that look like the

1 students, which is very important.

2 I'm urging the special redistricting
3 commission to do everything in your power not to draw
4 new district lines that will destroy the efforts and the
5 voting power of these communities to choose who
6 represents them.

7 The community is aware that new district
8 lines will determine our congressional representation on
9 the federal and state level. My community and all
10 communities of interest deserve to have the right to
11 vote from a point of community strength, to not only
12 live but to thrive.

13 Please be on the right side of history and
14 do not dilute the voting power.

15 I thank you so much for this opportunity to
16 speak. And I can take any questions anyone might have.

17 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments
18 are submitted.

19 JULIA FREEMAN: Thank you.

20 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Our next speaker is Darcy
21 McKenzie. Do I have a Darcy McKenzie? (No response.)

22 The next speaker on the registered list is
23 Julie Hanks.

24 JULIE HANKS: I also have notes on my
25 phone, if that's okay.

1 JUDGE BJORKMAN: That's fine.

2 JULIE HANKS: Okay. Thank you.

3 Thank you for the opportunity to testify
4 before the committee.

5 My name is Julie Hanks. I have lived in
6 Richfield, Minnesota, in the southern part of Hennepin
7 County, for the last 60 years. Where does the time go?

8 I'm here to testify that it will be a
9 natural fit for our community if Richfield were part of
10 the Second Congressional District rather than the third
11 or the fifth. Richfield is in the southern part of
12 Hennepin County, just north of Bloomington and to the
13 east of Ft. Snelling and the north part of Dakota
14 County. It is also directly south of Minneapolis, which
15 has always been part of the fifth district.
16 Geographically, it's very close to the northern parts of
17 Dakota County, and using it as a northern border for the
18 second would make a very compact district.

19 Richfield is a close-in suburb of the Twin
20 Cities and is full of suburban commuters to Minneapolis
21 and St. Paul, just like Dakota County across the river.
22 Median household income and education levels are both
23 very similar to Dakota County to the east and
24 Bloomington to the south and west. As Hennepin County
25 has had a population over the past decade, it is also

1 natural for the Hennepin County districts to the
2 north -- third and the fifth -- to shed some territory
3 to districts to the south.

4 Richfield is also very connected to the rest
5 of the second district to the south. I-35W goes through
6 Burnsville, directly north, through the heart of
7 Richfield. Route 77, which is Cedar Avenue, also
8 connects Dakota County and Eagan to the eastern edge of
9 Richfield. Furthermore, I-494 covers the southern edge
10 of Richfield and connects the city with the airport and
11 Dakota County to the east.

12 All the bridges and major roads integrate
13 Richfield with other parts of the southern Hennepin and
14 northern Dakota Counties and residents constantly go
15 back and forth to work and day-to-day activities.

16 It is a single community and would have a
17 larger voice if it were all in the same congressional
18 district.

19 Thank you for listening to my testimony
20 tonight, and I hope you'll consider drawing Richfield in
21 with the second district when you draw congressional
22 lines.

23 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments
24 are submitted.

25 JULIE HANKS: Thank you.

1 JUDGE BJORKMAN: I am going to call again
2 the names of preregistered speakers who were not present
3 earlier on, the first of whom is Georgianna Yantos. (No
4 response.)

5 We have Michael Fitzgerald. (No response.)

6 Beth Ann Meyer. (No response.)

7 Lucina Gonzalez Miron. (No response.)

8 And Darcy McKenzie. (No response.)

9 I guess this concludes, then, the comments
10 for people who have preregistered. But we do have time
11 remaining for comments by other members in attendance
12 who have not already given a presentation. So if you
13 wish to and have not already had an opportunity to make
14 a presentation, if you would please come forward. We
15 will continue to observe the five-minute time limit.

16 Please come forward and please state your
17 name.

18 PAM NEARY: Thank you for this opportunity.
19 I hadn't really planned on saying anything tonight. But
20 my name is Pam Neary. I'm from Afton. And like JoAnn,
21 I'm a former state legislator too.

22 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Can you please spell your
23 last name?

24 PAM NEARY: N-e-a-r-y.

25 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you.

1 PAM NEARY: It was about a hundred years
2 ago that I was a state legislator; however, I'm always
3 struck by how little changes.

4 I wanted to just make a quick comment to you
5 tonight. I've read through all of the papers that you
6 have posted on your website encouraging people to get
7 involved. And I read with interest some of the issues
8 and criteria that you were going to use in thinking
9 about redistricting.

10 And one of the ones that struck me most
11 was -- and I don't think that these are legislatively
12 prescribed or even prescribed by you, necessarily, but
13 there were several mentions of trying to keep districts
14 as intact as you could; in other words, minimizing the
15 amount of change that you would do in drawing new lines.
16 And one of the other criteria was also avoiding putting
17 current elected officials into the same district.

18 As a former elected official, I would urge
19 you to ignore both of those. I don't think that the
20 criteria to be used for redistricting ought to have to
21 do with protecting current incumbents; it ought to have
22 to do with people who are voting for the incumbents, in
23 keeping the communities intact that need to be kept
24 intact and having people feel part of a communal effort
25 within their districts and having access to the people

1 that they vote for. And I don't think that necessarily
2 protecting legislators who are in office does that, nor
3 do I think keeping boundaries to a minimal change
4 necessarily does that.

5 It's my perspective -- and it's probably not
6 correct -- that redistricting tends to start on the west
7 and move east. And when they get to our side, where a
8 lot of growth has happened in the last 20 years, they've
9 run out of space to expand districts east so they have
10 to start dividing them up in really creative ways. And
11 so you have things like Woodbury divided in half for
12 years and years and years into several different senate
13 districts or house districts right down the middle of
14 it.

15 When I was in the legislature, I had half of
16 Woodbury, had all the way from Hastings all the way up
17 to North St. Paul and half of Woodbury. It's because
18 they didn't know what to do with us once they got to the
19 east side.

20 And now that we have such a lot of growth
21 happening, I would hope you would start on our side and
22 try to find out and figure out what district lines make
23 the most sense in the east and then move from there.

24 I will just second the opinion that you
25 ought to try to keep cities whole and keep more rural

1 areas together. And that may mean -- I'm from Afton --
2 making one long district along the St. Croix River,
3 where there's an incredible amount of commonality
4 between all of those communities that view the river as
5 kind of their backyard. And although we go shopping in
6 Woodbury and we send our kids to maybe Woodbury or other
7 places, that's not where we look to our sense of
8 community. It's that river.

9 And so I would just urge you to, again, try
10 to start on the east side and work west this time and
11 ignore those other criteria.

12 Thank you so much.

13 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments
14 are submitted.

15 Is there anyone else who has not spoken who
16 would like to make a comment?

17 DORY SHONAGON: I have a question first.
18 I'm scheduled for Wednesday. So if I speak tonight,
19 will I be able to speak on Wednesday?

20 JUDGE BJORKMAN: And what is your name?

21 DORY SHONAGON: Dory Shonagon. I'm
22 scheduled for Wednesday in Shakopee.

23 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Well, I think most people
24 have an opportunity to speak at one hearing.

25 DORY SHONAGON: Okay. I'm not going to

1 then because I want to be able to have my full...

2 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Okay. All right. Thank
3 you. We look forward to seeing you then on Wednesday.

4 DORY SHONAGON: Okay. Thank you.

5 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Is there anyone else who
6 has not had a chance to speak who would like to do so
7 before we conclude this hearing?

8 Please state your name and spell your last
9 name.

10 BOB CARDINAL: Thank you, Judges.

11 My name is Bob Cardinal. I'm from
12 Maplewood. I was mayor of Maplewood a few years ago.
13 And the current district is the most gerrymandered
14 district in the state. Maplewood runs from St. Paul all
15 the way up to Mahtomedi and it's cut like a step all the
16 way up. So in your deliberations, I would second what
17 was just mentioned about --

18 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Can I just stop you? Do
19 you mean the city of Maplewood is or the district?

20 BOB CARDINAL: The district.

21 JUDGE BJORKMAN: And what district number
22 is that?

23 BOB CARDINAL: If you know what Maplewood
24 looks like, you probably --

25 JUDGE BJORKMAN: I do know what

1 Maplewood... I was wondering if you were saying the
2 city or the district.

3 BOB CARDINAL: The district.

4 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Okay.

5 BOB CARDINAL: The district is like a step
6 all the way up from Larpenteur and Rice Street all the
7 way up to Mahtomedi, to the tip of Mahtomedi.

8 So I'd just like to second the mention of
9 the try to keep the communities in one district and not
10 cut it up into several different districts. And for
11 your homework, if you look at that district, you'll know
12 what I mean.

13 Thank you.

14 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments
15 are submitted.

16 Is there anyone else who wishes to speak who
17 has not yet had an opportunity to do so? (No response.)

18 Don't know if there's anyone who didn't get
19 to complete their comments who wanted more time. We do
20 have a couple more minutes. But I also appreciate that
21 you have busy lives and other things that you want to
22 do. But we certainly want to give everyone the
23 opportunity to provide information to us. (No
24 response.)

25 Sounds like we have concluded then all the

1 comments.

2 And on behalf of the panel, I do want to
3 thank you all for coming, for participating, and
4 providing us information and ideas about your community.
5 Your contributions will aid us in this work that we do
6 in the redistricting process.

7 I think I can speak again for all of us. We
8 are heartened by your interest, by your civic
9 engagement, by your careful and thoughtful comments. We
10 really appreciate you taking your time to be here,
11 especially under the circumstances we find ourselves in
12 this year, to participate in this important work.

13 So with that, I would wish you all a good
14 evening. And we are adjourned.

15 THE CLERK: All rise.

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17 (At 7:41 p.m., the Special Redistricting
18 Panel of judges left the courtroom and this special
19 session of the court stood adjourned.)

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1 STATE OF MINNESOTA)
)
2 COUNTY OF DODGE)

3

4 CERTIFICATE

5

6 That I, Lane T. Knutson, Registered Professional
7 Reporter and Official Court Reporter in and for the
8 State of Minnesota, County of Dodge, Third Judicial
9 District; that I reported and transcribed the
10 proceedings herein; and that the transcript contained on
11 the foregoing pages is a true and correct transcription
12 of my shorthand notes as reported by me at the said time
13 and place herein noted.

14

15

16 /s/Lane T. Knutson
Lane T. Knutson, RPR
17 Official Court Reporter
Dodge County Courthouse
Mantorville, Minnesota 55955
18 (507) 624-7007

Dated: November 30, 2021.

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