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STATE OF MINNESOTA

SPECIAL REDISTRICTING PANEL

A21-0243  
A21-0546

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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 On October 21, 2021, at 6:30 p.m., this matter  
13 was duly before the Special Redistricting Panel: Judge  
14 Louise Dovre Bjorkman, Judge Diane Bratvold, Judge Jay  
15 Carlson, Judge Juanita Freeman, and Judge Jodi  
16 Williamson, for hearing at the Olmsted County Government  
17 Center, 151 4th Street SE, Rochester, Minnesota 55904.

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APPEARANCES and INDEX

<b>Mark Liebow</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Caitlin Nicholson (No Appearance)</b> .....	<b>--</b>
<b>Teresa O'Donnell-Ebner</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Christine DeVries</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>Julie Fryer</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>Angie Hanson</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>Janette Dean</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>Gale Julius</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<b>Ceri Everett</b> .....	<b>32</b>
<b>Mary Jones</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<b>Christopher Brandt</b> .....	<b>38</b>
<b>Dan Speckhard Pasque</b> .....	<b>41</b>
<b>Karin Swenson</b> .....	<b>43</b>
<b>Abdullahi Mohamed Adan</b> .....	<b>45</b>
<b>Marco Loera Alvarez</b> .....	<b>47</b>

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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 Good evening. Thank you for being here. We  
11 are pleased to be in Rochester this evening. A special  
12 welcome and thanks to those who are observing this  
13 evening's hearing by Zoom. We are glad this technology  
14 affords you the opportunity to view this hearing  
15 remotely.

16 We recognize that you have all taken time  
17 out of your busy lives to attend this hearing. The  
18 redistricting process occurs only once every ten years  
19 and is important to all Minnesotans, so we appreciate  
20 your participation.

21 My name is Louise Dovre Bjorkman. I'm a  
22 judge on the Minnesota Court of Appeals and the  
23 presiding judge of this Special Redistricting Panel.

24 I will now ask my colleagues, the other  
25 judges on the panel, to introduce themselves, starting

1 to my left.

2 JUDGE BRATVOLD: Good evening. My name is  
3 Diane Bratvold. I am a judge on the Minnesota Court of  
4 Appeals, sitting in St. Paul.

5 JUDGE FREEMAN: Good evening. Juanita  
6 Freeman in the Tenth Judicial District. I'm chambered  
7 in Stillwater, Washington County.

8 JUDGE CARLSON: Judge Jay Carlson, Seventh  
9 Judicial District, chambered in Becker County, which is  
10 Detroit Lakes, Minnesota.

11 JUDGE WILLIAMSON: Jodi Williamson,  
12 chambered in Dodge County, Third Judicial District.  
13 Used to be chambered here in Rochester for 13 years.

14 JUDGE BJORKMAN: The Chief Justice of the  
15 Minnesota Supreme Court appointed this panel to adopt  
16 congressional and legislative redistricting plans only  
17 in the event that the Minnesota Legislature does not do  
18 so by the statutory deadline of February 15th, 2022.

19 We recognize that the legislature has been  
20 delayed in starting the work of redistricting because of  
21 delays in the release of the final 2020 census data, so  
22 we find ourselves in the unusual situation of conducting  
23 parallel redistricting processes. We do intend to give  
24 the legislature every opportunity to complete  
25 redistricting, but we must also move forward with our

1 work so that we will be prepared to act, if necessary,  
2 by February 15th.

3           The redrawing of Minnesota's congressional  
4 and legislative districts involves many considerations,  
5 not the least of which is the effects of redistricting  
6 on the people who have a stake in the process, and that  
7 is all the people of this state.

8           Public hearings like this one are central to  
9 the redistricting process. Our legislature, like other  
10 legislatures across the country, has conducted hearings  
11 to receive information from the public, and prior  
12 redistricting panels have done the same. These hearings  
13 enable members of the public to directly voice their  
14 opinions and concerns and to share local perspectives  
15 that will enhance our understanding of communities  
16 across the state. This participation is truly democracy  
17 in action.

18           We are particularly grateful for this  
19 participation during this challenging time. We have  
20 taken various precautions to create safe opportunities  
21 for broad and diverse public engagement.

22           For those attending hearings in person,  
23 masks are required at all times, except when you come up  
24 to the table to make your presentation, at which time  
25 you may remove your mask if you would like to do so.

1           This hearing and all other in-person  
2 hearings are being streamed live via Zoom so that  
3 interested members of the public can watch remotely.  
4 And the panel will receive and give full consideration  
5 to written statements from the public. Written  
6 statements must be submitted by October 29th of this  
7 year. For details on how to submit written statements,  
8 please see the panel's web page.

9           We welcome the comments of those who have  
10 registered to speak at this hearing. We will call  
11 speakers one at a time, in the order in which they  
12 appear on the list of confirmed speakers. In the event  
13 these speakers complete their presentations before 8:30,  
14 we may allow others to speak.

15           Our marshal will display a clock, which I  
16 believe you can probably see where you're sitting, which  
17 will assist us in staying within the five-minute time  
18 limit for each speaker.

19           My fellow judges and I will be listening  
20 carefully to each speaker. We may ask questions to  
21 clarify or better understand a speaker's comments, but  
22 we are mostly here to listen to you.

23           When speakers describe particular  
24 communities, we encourage them to use the maps on  
25 display, which you will be able to see when you come

1 forward. And there is a laser pointer at the desk for  
2 your use. We encourage speakers to reference geographic  
3 markers, such as political subdivisions, landmarks, or  
4 streets, so that we can understand where those  
5 communities are relative to the district lines.

6 Our court reporter will take down each  
7 speaker's comments and a transcript will be available on  
8 our website at a later time.

9 Please be mindful that this is a court  
10 proceeding. And with many thanks, this is our courtroom  
11 here in the Rochester Olmsted County Government Center  
12 for this evening.

13 If you have not done so already, please turn  
14 off your cell phones. Cell phones and private recording  
15 devices must be turned off during the entire hearing.  
16 If you need to leave during the hearing, please try to  
17 do so in between speakers. Please be respectful of the  
18 speakers and the listeners by not talking, adding  
19 commentary, or applauding during or after a  
20 presentation. And please respect and protect each other  
21 by wearing your mask over your mouth and nose throughout  
22 the session.

23 Again, on behalf of the panel, thank you so  
24 much for your interest in this important work.

25 We begin with our first speaker, Mark



1 Liebow. Good evening and welcome.

2 MARK LIEBOW: Your Honors, thank you for  
3 giving me the opportunity to testify tonight.

4 My name is Mark Liebow and I'm a  
5 semi-retired internist. I live in Rochester, the  
6 largest city in the First Congressional District, and  
7 have for almost 28 years. I want to testify about  
8 drawing legislative districts in Olmsted County.

9 Thirty years ago, the last redistricting of  
10 the 1990s created a senate district that was almost  
11 exclusively in Rochester, at a time when the population  
12 of Rochester was a few thousand more than was needed for  
13 a senate district.

14 The senator and both representatives from  
15 that district were quite attentive to the needs of the  
16 city and its people over the next decade. However, in  
17 2001, the then mayor of Rochester asked that Rochester,  
18 which had grown by 15,000 people in the decade and so  
19 was the size of 1.2 senate districts, be split in half  
20 in hopes of having two senators responsive to the needs  
21 of the city. It wasn't inherently a bad idea, but in  
22 hindsight it backfired. More importantly, it split  
23 communities of interest. Let me say that again: It  
24 split communities of interest.

25 Most of the minority populations in

1 southeast Minnesota live in Rochester. And unlike some  
2 other cities, they are not concentrated in a  
3 neighborhood or two close-by neighborhoods. They go all  
4 around the city. Splitting Rochester in half diluted  
5 their abilities to elect representatives of their choice  
6 or to advocate effectively for their interests,  
7 especially the state senate.

8           As a comparison, Duluth, the other regional  
9 center city whose population is more than twice that --  
10 or more than that needed for a senate district, is  
11 predominantly in one senate district, with a small  
12 amount of the city flowing into an adjacent district.

13           Fortunately, remedying this change that  
14 happened 20 years ago has become easier. Rochester has  
15 continued to grow briskly, with 35,600 more people than  
16 20 years ago. It's just about 6,300 people short of  
17 having enough people for three house districts.

18           So any redistricting that doesn't just split  
19 the city in half again will help give Rochester a  
20 senator whose focus is on the city.

21           However, to best accommodate communities of  
22 color, which are largely in the northwest and southeast  
23 parts of the city; that is, the northwest and southeast  
24 parts of the city, the successor districts to House  
25 Districts 26A and 25B, the two house districts

1 predominantly in Rochester, should be combined into a  
2 senate district.

3           As background, the current Senate Districts  
4 25 and 26 between them cover Olmsted County, and Senate  
5 District 25 also has 14,875 people in Dodge County.  
6 Both these senate districts have more people than the  
7 ideal population for a district. All other districts in  
8 southeast Minnesota in comparison have too few. So it  
9 would be reasonable to have people at the east and west  
10 ends of District 25 and 26 go to other districts that  
11 need to add people.

12           However, there's one exception: Kasson,  
13 which is -- I'm out of practice using a laser pointer --  
14 but Kasson, which is right here, Kasson, Mantorville are  
15 both in Mantorville Township. Kasson especially is  
16 increasingly becoming a bedroom suburb of Rochester, so  
17 it makes sense to keep Kasson and nearby Mantorville,  
18 which, as I said, are both in Mantorville Township, in a  
19 district that includes Olmsted County. That house  
20 district, most likely the successor to 25A, could also  
21 be the district of most of the smaller cities and rural  
22 townships in Olmsted County, which forms another  
23 community of interest.

24           This would leave two house districts  
25 completely in Rochester, and you could have a fourth

1 made up of some of southern Rochester, Stewartville and  
2 adjacent townships. These districts would be contiguous  
3 and relatively compact.

4 Thank you again for letting me testify  
5 tonight.

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

8 Our next speaker is Caitlin Nicholson. Is  
9 there a Caitlin Nicholson? (No response.)

10 All right. Then we will move to Teresa  
11 O'Donnell-Ebner. Good evening and welcome.

12 TERESA O'DONNELL-EBNER: Thank you.

13 Your Honors, I'm Teresa O'Donnell-Ebner, and  
14 I'm a lifelong resident of southern Minnesota. I've  
15 lived in La Crescent for the last 37 years. I've been a  
16 paralegal for 40 years and recently retired from  
17 Gunderson Health System located just across the river in  
18 La Crosse, Wisconsin.

19 I currently serve on the La Crescent City  
20 Council, but I am here tonight solely as a Minnesota  
21 voter, not as a representative of the city of La  
22 Crescent.

23 I firmly believe that every citizen has an  
24 important role to play in making our government work at  
25 its best, so I am here to express my own personal views

1 on redistricting.

2           First and foremost, the redistricting  
3 process must be transparent and nonpartisan. I'm  
4 in Minnesota House 28B, with the nice, neat borders of  
5 Houston and Fillmore Counties. Census numbers indicate  
6 that we are about 2,500 residents under the new ideal  
7 average for a house district. I understand that  
8 boundaries for 28B will need to be adjusted, and I would  
9 like to point out that there are two neighborhoods in  
10 the city of La Crescent which are physically located in  
11 Winona County and are part of 28A.

12           If boundaries are to change, I believe that  
13 those La Crescent residents would benefit from being  
14 included in the same house district as the rest of the  
15 city of La Crescent.

16           The boundaries of Senate District 28 will  
17 also need adjusting, but I want to speak more about  
18 CD-1. As you know, CD-1 is wide and narrow. It goes  
19 from the Wisconsin border to the South Dakota border.  
20 It takes me four hours to travel from my end of the  
21 district to the other. This can be a hardship not only  
22 for our candidates and elected officials trying to meet  
23 with constituents, but also for those of us that live in  
24 the district. I realize that CD-7 and CD-8 also have  
25 large physical footprints. But keeping districts as

1 convenient and as compact as possible is an important  
2 consideration. I encourage you to look for areas of  
3 density that would enable CD-1 population to be  
4 increased without greatly increasing the footprint.

5 I have heard testifiers at other public  
6 hearings mention three primary communities of interest  
7 for CD-1: Agriculture, health care services, and small  
8 businesses, and I agree with all of those. But I have  
9 not heard mention of the community of interest for those  
10 of us who live in the driftless area of the bluffs and  
11 river valleys of southeastern Minnesota. We have a  
12 shared interest in the preservation and stewardship of  
13 this unique part of Minnesota.

14 I ask that consideration be given to drawing  
15 boundaries that would include more communities along the  
16 southeast Minnesota, along the Mississippi River, to  
17 better represent that unique community of interest.

18 I mention that I spent the last 37 years  
19 working in Wisconsin. After the 2010 census, the maps  
20 drawn in Wisconsin were a shocking example of the  
21 partisan gerrymandering that can occur. The new maps  
22 drawn did not enhance representative government. It was  
23 not done in a fair and impartial manner. They were  
24 drawn behind closed doors to favor one party.

25 As you know, when the matter went to court,

1 the map designers argued that they met the technical  
2 requirements and so their maps should stand. And,  
3 unfortunately, the Supreme Court refused to intervene  
4 even though the map designers acknowledged multiple  
5 revisions were made to create more and more partisan  
6 results. In my opinion, this is wrong and does not meet  
7 the spirit of redistricting.

8           Balanced representation is essential so that  
9 communities of interest are fairly represented and each  
10 person's vote has value.

11           Please do not let this happen in Minnesota.  
12 We are better than that.

13           In closing, I can tell you that while I  
14 loved my career as a paralegal in Wisconsin, I was  
15 always grateful to cross the big blue bridge at the end  
16 of the day and return to Minnesota. Our state prides  
17 itself in citizen engagement, with the highest voter  
18 participation in the nation. Our election system is  
19 well run by dedicated election officials, clerks, and  
20 volunteers, and there is much to be proud of.

21           But we cannot take that for granted. These  
22 maps have consequences, and we must ensure the integrity  
23 of Minnesota voting systems remain intact. I know you  
24 will take your nonpartisan role in this process  
25 seriously.

1                   And I thank you for your time this evening.

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

4                   Our next speaker is Christine DeVries.  
5 Welcome.

6                   CHRISTINE DeVRIES:     Good evening, Your  
7 Honors.

8                   My name is Christine DeVries.   I live in  
9 Preston, in Fillmore County.   And I will speak tonight  
10 on how I would like Fillmore County to be viewed during  
11 redistricting for our congressional district.   Since you  
12 are charged with making maps, my comments are informed  
13 by maps.   I hope to make three points about our  
14 underlying communities of interest.

15                   First, here is an important fact to know  
16 about Fillmore County and our identity:   Fillmore County  
17 falls solidly within Minnesota's southeast region of  
18 active karst, which the state describes as featuring  
19 rolling hills, caves, sinkholes, dramatic bluffs, and  
20 valleys.   Fillmore County has more caves, sinkholes, and  
21 disappearing streams than all other Minnesota counties  
22 combined, according to the University of Minnesota.

23                   We share our distinct geology with the  
24 counties of Houston, Olmsted, Winona, Goodhue, and  
25 Wabasha.   Significant parts of Dakota, Rice, Dodge, and



1 Mower are also known for their karst features.

2           Our geology brings opportunity for wonderful  
3 year-round recreation and tourism that comes with it.  
4 The state's karst geology areas also share environmental  
5 concerns because of our fragile caves and underground  
6 water. Our geology creates a community of interest.

7           My second point: Rochester and Olmsted  
8 County are employment centers for Fillmore and all  
9 surrounding counties. In pre-COVID days, four daily  
10 buses brought Fillmore County workers to Rochester, with  
11 Mayo Clinic the main employer. The spider web of  
12 privately funded bus lines shows a labor attraction  
13 area, including Mower, Dodge, Dakota, Goodhue, Wabasha,  
14 and Winona Counties.

15           Health care jobs in Rochester are critical  
16 to supporting households throughout southeast Minnesota.  
17 A \$5.6 billion Destination Medical Center, a 20-year  
18 project, will only strengthen Rochester's position as a  
19 health care hub and enhance the already large community  
20 of interest in southeast Minnesota.

21           My third and final point reflects how the  
22 state of Minnesota organizes itself into districts for  
23 administering and funding of dozens of state and federal  
24 programs that serve Minnesotans.

25           Fillmore County is part of a region defined

1 by state agencies that includes Houston, Fillmore,  
2 Mower, and Freeborn counties along the southern tier;  
3 Steele, Dodge, Olmsted, and Winona Counties in the next  
4 tier; and Rice, Goodhue, and Wabasha Counties in the  
5 northern tier.

6 This is true for the southeast service  
7 cooperative among schools, the Minnesota Social Services  
8 Association, Minnesota Department of Health, the State  
9 Economic Development Agency, the Minnesota Department of  
10 Transportation, USDA, and others.

11 This definition of southeast Minnesota also  
12 applies to a district of water and soil conservation  
13 which administers big projects by both government  
14 entities and private landowners that affect watershed,  
15 trout streams, farms, feed lots, and conservation,  
16 et cetera -- much of it distinct because of our shared  
17 karst geology.

18 With a couple of exceptions, the common  
19 definition of southeast Minnesota matches the third  
20 district trials court of the Minnesota Judicial Branch.

21 In Fillmore County, we do not experience  
22 south Minnesota, an area reaching from the Mississippi  
23 across the western prairies to South Dakota, such as we  
24 see in the map of our current congressional district.

25 For responses to issues and service to

1 constituents, southeast Minnesota should be kept  
2 together.

3 Thank you.

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

6 We will next hear from Julie Fryer. Good  
7 evening and welcome.

8 JULIE FRYER: Good evening.

9 Thank you, Your Honors, for taking the time  
10 tonight to hear our thoughts on this important issue.

11 My name is Julie Fryer. I am a small  
12 business owner and a 24-year resident of Chatfield. We  
13 sit on the northern edge of Fillmore County, with  
14 approximately one-third of our city sitting in Olmsted  
15 County. Highway 52 is our actual Main Street. We're  
16 the largest city in Fillmore County, and we're  
17 considered the gateway to bluff country.

18 Our community offers both outdoor activities  
19 and arts and entertainment, including three trout  
20 streams, which are also used by canoeists and kayakers;  
21 two hiking trails and an ATV trail. We have an  
22 internationally known music lending library and an arts  
23 and entertainment venue, Chatfield Center for the Arts,  
24 that draws patrons from all across the midwest.

25 The tourism industry in Fillmore County

1 generates up to \$22 million per year in gross sales, and  
2 that is projected to grow even more in the coming  
3 decade.

4 To leverage this important economic  
5 opportunity in tourism, we are proposing that the  
6 boundary of CD-1 be adjusted to include the counties to  
7 our east, Wabasha and Goodhue, and to return the eastern  
8 section of Rice County, which is now in CD-2.

9 As others have mentioned, we are all part of  
10 the driftless region. We share unique geographies. And  
11 together these counties form a vibrant tourism corridor.  
12 Every community in this region is actively working on  
13 tourism because we all recognize it is the way we can  
14 rebuild our main streets.

15 The one missing piece we have is common  
16 representation. Right now with these three counties  
17 separated from us, we are unable to collectively bargain  
18 for our shared goals. And, in fact, we often must  
19 compete with them on legislative budgets.

20 Prior to 2010, these counties were part of  
21 CD-1. By returning them, it would bring our district  
22 back to what is widely considered southeastern  
23 Minnesota, as many other testifiers have mentioned.

24 In their 2018 Southeast Minnesota Regional  
25 Economic Study, the Community Economic and Development

1 Association, commonly called CEDA, and the state of  
2 Minnesota included both Wabasha and Goodhue in their  
3 review, grouping them with us into the Southeast  
4 Minnesota League of Municipalities.

5           This study found that since 2009, employment  
6 and tourism-related jobs rose by over 15 percent,  
7 supporting more than 16,000 jobs in the region. This  
8 growth is driven by major attractions that have sprung  
9 up in our region, including Wabasha's National Eagle  
10 Center, Red Wing's Treasure Island Resort and Casino,  
11 our own Chatfield Center for the Arts, and Preston's  
12 National Trout Center.

13           These attractions are combined with hundreds  
14 of miles of bike trails, abundant fishing and hunting,  
15 an emerging craft beer, wine, and spirits industry, and  
16 a well-established B & B presence in the region.

17           But this growth does not mean our work is  
18 done. What we've learned through our nearly 10-year  
19 experience with Chatfield Center for the Arts is that  
20 big transformative projects like this cannot get done  
21 without legislative support. It has to be a group  
22 effort, and we need a voice at the table when decisions  
23 in transit and tourism are being made.

24           We want to be part of this growth, but we  
25 need partners who share the same goals. We do not feel

1 that the western counties in our district; specifically,  
2 Rock, Nobles, Martin, Jackson, Watonwan, and Cottonwood,  
3 are similar enough to us in tourism interest to make  
4 them part of our alignment.

5           Instead, we suggest keeping Brown County,  
6 which is also a river county, and adding Wabasha,  
7 Goodhue, and the remainder of Rice. This will connect  
8 us with our neighbors who share our geography and vision  
9 so we can work together with the same legislative  
10 advocates to build southeastern Minnesota into its own  
11 unique tourism brand.

12           As we've seen with these new population  
13 numbers, rural Minnesota is changing. And what we do  
14 right now is going to either make or break our small  
15 towns.

16           I'm respectfully asking you to consider  
17 adjusting our district boundaries in this way to give  
18 all of our communities a tool that we can use together  
19 to build our economic future.

20           Thank you.

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

23           We will next hear from Angie Hanson.

24 Welcome. Good evening.

25           ANGIE HANSON: Good evening, Judges. My

1 name is Angie Hanson. I live in Albert Lea, where I was  
2 born and raised.

3 First of all, I want to say that I feel  
4 privileged to live in Minnesota and honored to speak  
5 with you today.

6 When it comes to voting, the state of  
7 Minnesota is doing the right things to ensure that  
8 eligible voters are able to exercise their right to  
9 vote. Voters are allowed to vote early, vote by mail,  
10 and register on election day. The efforts have paid  
11 off. Year after year, voter turnout is among the  
12 highest in the nation.

13 I recently, last couple of election cycles,  
14 have been an election judge. In that role, I've been  
15 able to witness the election process firsthand. It is  
16 inspiring to see young people vouching for their friends  
17 and seeing unregistered voters without necessary  
18 documents coming back with their needed documents to  
19 register and vote. Voters from other wards mistakenly  
20 turn up at our polling location all the time because  
21 it's City Hall. We always do what we can to get them  
22 where they need to be.

23 In the role of an election judge, it doesn't  
24 matter who they are voting for, my guy or the other guy.  
25 What matters is that each voter is able to cast their

1 ballot. Regardless of politics, we strive to ensure  
2 that every voter has a fair chance to vote.

3 That's exactly how I see redistricting.  
4 What matters is that there's a fair process that strives  
5 to ensure that politics are kept out of map drawing, and  
6 that all of those voters in my ward and across Minnesota  
7 are shared equal representation, with no group left  
8 powerless.

9 Minnesota voters are trusting you to ensure  
10 that maps are not drawn in a way to give an advantage or  
11 disadvantage to a political party or candidate.

12 Minnesota voters are trusting you to ensure  
13 that districts stay within one percent of the ideal size  
14 so that we are all equally represented.

15 And Minnesota voters are trusting you to  
16 ensure that those in minority groups are fairly  
17 represented. And this includes American Indian  
18 reservations, to keep them whole so that their voter  
19 power is not so diluted that they have no voice at all.

20 On a more personal note, I live in House  
21 District 27A, which comprises almost the entirety of  
22 Freeborn County, with just, like, a tiny smidge that is  
23 left out. As lines are redrawn and our district  
24 expands, please keep in mind that Freeborn County is a  
25 community that has unique needs and would benefit from



1 being kept whole.

2 I believe that we are the only county in the  
3 state who does not have a full-service, inpatient  
4 hospital. The community has worked together to ensure  
5 that we have the health care that we need in our county.  
6 And so if we are kept whole and Freeborn County remains  
7 intact, citizens may continue to work together for our  
8 county's needs in the area of health care and our other  
9 needs as well.

10 I also live in Senate District 27, which  
11 comprises mostly of Freeborn and Mower County, with a  
12 little bit of extra pieces of counties put in there. I  
13 want to also bring to your attention that these two  
14 counties function as a community as well. We share  
15 medical services with Mower County. They have the  
16 inpatient hospital and Freeborn County does not right  
17 now.

18 And then also, a lot of our school districts  
19 share services. Albert Lea and Austin share some school  
20 district services, and also there's a smack consortium  
21 that spans across both counties.

22 So Freeborn and Mower County, it would be a  
23 benefit if we could be kept whole in Senate District 27  
24 because we share a lot of commonalities and we function  
25 as a community as well.

1           In conclusion, Minnesota voters are counting  
2 on you to draw fair lines that ensure equal  
3 representation and leave no group powerless.

4           Thank you so much for your time.

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

7           Our next speaker is Janette Dean. Good  
8 evening and welcome.

9           JANETTE DEAN: Thank you.

10           Good evening, Your Honors. I am Janette  
11 Dean from Caledonia, Minnesota, in Houston County, and  
12 am a graduate of La Crescent High School.

13           I currently work as an environmental policy  
14 and human rights advocate, using my dual degree in  
15 political science and sociology as an alumni of the  
16 University of Southern California and the University of  
17 Nevada-Reno.

18           Just last month, in Washington, D.C., on  
19 August 28th, I also helped rally and march with 50,000  
20 other people for U.S. voting rights, protections, and  
21 fair elections.

22           I am also joining you here today to ask that  
23 you do your utmost, whenever called upon, to help ensure  
24 that we have fair and inclusive electoral maps in  
25 Minnesota, including in my Congressional District 1, and

1 in our district's house and senate seats to prevent and  
2 correct any unfair political advantage and voter  
3 disenfranchisement through gerrymandering.

4 To achieve fair redistricting, I have  
5 learned and wish to emphasize that we must create maps  
6 that elect public officials that reflect the diversity  
7 of Minnesota and prevent districts from being drawn to  
8 divide or concentrate minority groups, including Black  
9 people, Indigenous people, People of Color, racial  
10 groups, ethnic groups, or members of a language minority  
11 group; and that, two, a community of interest may  
12 include an ethnic or language group or any group with  
13 shared experiences and concerns, including, but not  
14 limited to, geographic, governmental, regional, social,  
15 cultural, historic, socioeconomic, occupational, trade,  
16 or transportation interest.

17 To elaborate on that, while some may refer  
18 to Congressional District 1 and different Minnesota  
19 house and senate districts in terms of the agricultural  
20 sector, I would like to say that I and many who live in  
21 Houston County and Fillmore County, as well as in  
22 Winona, Rochester, Mankato, and so many other areas,  
23 think of our communities with much more richness than  
24 one sector.

25 We have a strong educational sector as well;

1 are also in a state-of-the-art medical region; support a  
2 wide array of many businesses that support our lives;  
3 and also enjoy so many types of fine and performing  
4 arts, culture, tourism, and recreation as well.

5           Furthermore, many more of us are working  
6 from home offices in many fields and also commute to  
7 cities with a diverse mix of industries and culture for  
8 work, play, and extended family get-togethers.

9           As a Houston County resident, I know I and  
10 others from nearby counties often go to Winona and  
11 Rochester for various life activities, as well as nearby  
12 La Crosse, Wisconsin. And many consider ourselves  
13 tri-state area residents with nearby Decorah, Iowa,  
14 residents.

15           Many of us also think of ourselves in terms  
16 of the beautiful driftless area which geologically  
17 overlaps four different states.

18           So while agriculture is an important part of  
19 our congressional district, it certainly is not the only  
20 one employment area, and I wouldn't want our different  
21 levels of districts to be so pigeonholed into only that  
22 perspective.

23           In addition, I and others are also working  
24 on trying to increase more sustainable practices, such  
25 as renewable energy, energy efficiency, and local

1 regenerative food web economies across urban, suburban,  
2 and rural environments that will lead to more green  
3 jobs, health, food security, and community building  
4 everywhere so that they are not overly concentrated in  
5 certain districts only.

6 I also believe that as more young people in  
7 Minnesota also seek to stay and flourish in the areas  
8 they grew up, particularly as more significant climate  
9 change impacts make the thought of being separated from  
10 close family less favorable than more reverse remote  
11 jobs and entrepreneurial activities, will also be  
12 expanded by them and others (timer sounded) across all  
13 parts of our state, as well as the country.

14 Thank you again, Your Honors.

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

17 Our next speaker is Gale Julius. Good  
18 evening. Welcome.

19 GALE JULIUS: Thank you. One moment here;  
20 I have to pull up my words. (Pause.) Oh, there we go.

21 Honorable members of the redistricting  
22 community, thank you very much for this opportunity.

23 My name is Gale Julius and I have lived in  
24 Rochester, within Olmsted County and southern Minnesota,  
25 for the past 30-plus years.

1                   I'm here to testify that it would help our  
2 community if both Goodhue and Wabasha are moved from the  
3 second district to the first for the next decade. The  
4 first district has historically been the greater  
5 Minnesota district that covers most of southern  
6 Minnesota, south of the Twin Cities metro area. After  
7 redistricting, the first district needs to add  
8 population, and adding Goodhue and Wabasha to the north  
9 makes sense.

10                   The first district historically covers the  
11 southern part of the state, but is also the most compact  
12 of the three greater Minnesota seats.

13                   Olmsted County, where I live, is the largest  
14 county in the district and contains the largest city:  
15 Rochester. Wabasha and Goodhue are directly to the  
16 north of Olmsted and would form a much more compact  
17 addition to the first -- sorry -- to the first compared  
18 to expanding into numerous rural counties to the west.

19                   The entire First CD would be among the most  
20 compact districts in the state with the addition of  
21 Goodhue and Wabasha.

22                   Aside from geographically, there are a lot  
23 of cultural and economic reasons to consider Wabasha,  
24 Goodhue, and Olmsted County as communities of interest,  
25 many of which you've already heard this evening and I

1 won't repeat.

2                   People in Goodhue and Wabasha Counties  
3 depend on Rochester to get goods and services that might  
4 be closer to home. Wabasha's County Community Resource  
5 Guide tells folks who want to find housing, find a  
6 lawyer, where to get food if they can't afford it, to go  
7 into Rochester.

8                   Everyone knows about the Mayo Clinic. And,  
9 of course, folks from Wabasha and Goodhue come into town  
10 to go there very often. But fewer people talk about the  
11 Rochester VA, where area veterans come to get  
12 specialized treatment and care. Rochester is a health  
13 care destination for people who live up in Goodhue and  
14 Wabasha as well.

15                   Our transportation network also speaks to  
16 how important these two counties to our north are. U.S.  
17 Highway 52 is a major corridor of commerce from Olmsted  
18 County into Goodhue. Wabasha County, though smaller, is  
19 still connected to Rochester via its own highway,  
20 Highway 63, which eventually becomes Broadway Avenue --  
21 a thoroughfare here in Rochester.

22                   By drawing Rochester into a different  
23 district from nearby communities who rely upon it, it  
24 weakens the power of these communities that depend on  
25 one another.

1           I hope that the court will draw Goodhue,  
2 Wabasha, and Olmsted Counties all in the same current  
3 congressional district this decade.

4           Thank you very much.

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

7           Our next speaker is Ceri Nicole Everett.  I  
8 hope I pronounced your first name -- No?  Sorry.

9           CERI NICOLE EVERETT:   That's okay.

10          JUDGE BJORKMAN:    Welcome.

11          CERI NICOLE EVERETT:   All right.  Thank you  
12 for the opportunity to testify before your committee  
13 tonight.

14          My name is Ceri Everett, and I'm a lifelong  
15 resident of Red Wing, Minnesota, in Goodhue County, just  
16 to the north of here, Rochester.

17          So tonight I'm here to testify that I  
18 believe the first district is a much better fit for  
19 Goodhue County than the current district of the second.

20          Growing up in Goodhue County, I always  
21 identified as a southeastern Minnesotan.  Even as an  
22 adult, when I tell people where I'm from, I lead with  
23 this.  We have so many ties to this corner of the state  
24 that have already been talked about tonight, that I  
25 really believe it is the choice that makes the most



1 sense.

2           When the lines are redrawn, it not only  
3 helps in the congressional district, but also my current  
4 senate district is split amongst two congressional  
5 districts right now. So Red Wing is a part of Senate  
6 District 21, and 21 actually goes from Red Wing all the  
7 way down, it skirts around the Rochester area, almost  
8 just north of Winona. (Indicating.) And so we actually  
9 have some of us belong to CD-2 and some of us are in  
10 CD-1. And this creates a lot of problems for us to  
11 organize and with representation.

12           Another thing that I wanted to mention  
13 tonight was that most of our health care facilities,  
14 they're not just -- you know, we don't just go to Mayo.  
15 All of our health care facilities in Goodhue County are  
16 actually aligned with Mayo Clinic. So not only do we go  
17 to Rochester, but there's an even larger link. So they  
18 are an employer, they are a health care provider. And,  
19 really, it's in our best interest, in my opinion, that  
20 our representation understands our community's needs.  
21 Splitting up Goodhue from the rest of southern Minnesota  
22 makes our voices less powerful.

23           Another thing that I wanted to talk about  
24 was that Dakota County borders us to the north.  
25 Currently, we're a part of the same congressional

1 district as Dakota County. While Goodhue County has  
2 47,000 people, Dakota County has just under half a  
3 million. That is a huge difference, and it also  
4 provides a stark contrast in our congressional district.

5 By joining the southern counties to our  
6 south here, we actually will be a better fit. One of  
7 the reasons is that Dakota County is consisting of  
8 suburban areas, suburban residents. Goodhue County is  
9 mostly exurban and rural. So, again, our needs are a  
10 much better fit for the First Congressional District.

11 For almost three decades, we were a part of  
12 this congressional district. And with recent changes,  
13 that didn't happen. And so I am going to ask that when  
14 the panel redraws the lines or potentially redraws these  
15 lines, that they consider adding Goodhue County back to  
16 the first.

17 Thank you.

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

20 Our next speaker is Mary Jones. Good  
21 evening and welcome.

22 MARY JONES: Thank you. Good evening,  
23 honorable court members.

24 My name is Mary Jones, and I am testifying  
25 on behalf of myself as an individual and not on behalf

1 of or as a representative of any organization.

2 I've lived in Olmsted County, just outside  
3 of southwestern Rochester city limits, for about 30  
4 years. I've grown up and gone to school and lived my  
5 whole life in CD-1. And so as a resident and citizen in  
6 Minnesota throughout my life, in CD-1 of Minnesota, I'm  
7 fortunate for so many opportunities that have largely  
8 been a good result of good representative governance at  
9 the federal, state, and local level.

10 Congressional District 1 in Minnesota needs  
11 to have an increased population as revealed by the 2020  
12 decennial census. To be the same population as other  
13 seven Minnesota congressional districts and the 2022  
14 redistricting in Minnesota, as we're all here for  
15 tonight, must be completed by February 15, 2022.

16 My first issue is that only since 2002, as  
17 other speakers have said, has the first district spanned  
18 the entire southern border of Minnesota. It's always  
19 otherwise only been in the southeastern portion of  
20 Minnesota, and it has not represented the counties of  
21 Goodhue and Wabasha Counties along the Mississippi  
22 River, except in the past, since 2002.

23 We who live in Olmsted County have more in  
24 common, as many of the other speakers have already said,  
25 with the residents of Goodhue and Wabasha Counties than

1 residents of the southwestern counties in the current  
2 CD-1.

3           We need a congressional representative that  
4 understands our shared regional governance needs --  
5 roads and bridges, health care choices and access, land  
6 topography, farming practices, public school education  
7 funding and access, shared regional job opportunities.

8           Sixteen southeast Minnesota counties  
9 together have about 95 percent of the residents needed  
10 to populate an ideal Minnesota congressional district  
11 for 2022 redistricting. Including part of or all of an  
12 adjacent county would complete a compact and contiguous  
13 district, a CD-1 district.

14           My second point is that Rochester's needs as  
15 a city, that we have one state senator for Rochester.  
16 Rochester, as previously said, is the third largest city  
17 in the state of Minnesota. Over 75 percent of the  
18 population growth in Olmsted County in the last decade  
19 was within the Rochester city limits. Currently,  
20 representation of the city of Rochester is divided  
21 between two state senators who, together, represent  
22 everyone within Olmsted County, as has been currently  
23 noted.

24           This leaves the residents of the city  
25 without the benefit of a single state senator dedicated

1 to their specific needs as a city. The farmers and  
2 small town residents outside of Rochester, in the  
3 townships that surround Rochester, have specific state  
4 government needs that may differ from our city  
5 residents. They deserve a state senator that is  
6 dedicated to their specific needs as well. What happens  
7 when different needs compete for the same funding is  
8 probably not the best outcome.

9           Prior people have already mentioned  
10 Rochester's needs as a city and that it should have its  
11 own state senator as a result. And that's because of  
12 the transportation, access to health, affordable food,  
13 health care, affordable housing, education and safety.

14           Rochester has a diverse population, and all  
15 government services need to be provided with the  
16 understanding, respect, and tolerance of our differences  
17 as well.

18           So my final points are that for  
19 congressional districts (timer sounded), Goodhue and  
20 Wabasha Counties, adjacent in southeast Minnesota, have  
21 more in common in government needs than the southwest  
22 counties currently in CD-1 and should be part of CD-1.  
23 And our state senators, Rochester needs and deserves a  
24 single state senator from within its city limits.

25           Thank you very much.

1                   JUDGE BJORKMAN:    Thank you.  Your comments  
2 are submitted.

3                   I am wondering if Caitlin Nicholson has  
4 joined us since I called her name?  No.  Okay.

5                   Then we have heard the comments of all of  
6 those people who had preregistered to speak.

7                   We do have some time remaining for comments  
8 by others in attendance.  So if you would like to make a  
9 presentation and have not had an opportunity to do so  
10 here or at another public hearing, I'd invite you to  
11 come forward and make a statement.

12                   Good evening.  Welcome.

13                   CHRISTOPHER BRANDT:    Thank you.

14                   JUDGE BJORKMAN:    Please state and spell  
15 your name before you begin your comments.

16                   CHRISTOPHER BRANDT:    Christopher Brandt.  
17 Last name B-r-a-n-d-t.  I can also provide a written  
18 record of my comments.

19                   JUDGE BJORKMAN:    Thank you.

20                   CHRISTOPHER BRANDT:    Your Honors, thank you  
21 for the opportunity to give input.

22                   My name is Christopher Brandt, a 42-year  
23 resident of Rochester, Minnesota, with 33 years working,  
24 work developing software at a major computer technology  
25 firm here.  I am now retired.

1           Southeastern Minnesota has been my home for  
2 over four decades, and I feel it has its own feel and  
3 culture from the rest of Minnesota. We are rural, with  
4 many small townships, towns, and some medium-size  
5 cities, including the third largest in Minnesota.

6           There are countless small and medium-size  
7 businesses in the first district, as well as some of the  
8 most advanced technology and medical enterprises in the  
9 state; for example, the Mayo Clinic and IBM, which have  
10 a very long history here.

11           All these enterprises have their home in the  
12 first district, meaning they are not subsidiaries of  
13 another entity elsewhere in Minnesota. The culture and  
14 prosperity of these enterprises is deeply intertwined  
15 with the first district, together with all the small  
16 businesses, the agriculture, and the small communities.

17           While we certainly don't want to ignore the  
18 rest of the state, we recognize this is our home and we  
19 share a common interest in the well-being of this unique  
20 region.

21           My representatives over time have been aware  
22 of this commonality. They understand the culture and  
23 the interests of the district and are able to represent  
24 them. I don't relish the idea of losing my current  
25 representative simply because the boundaries have

1 changed.

2 I think the current shape of the first  
3 district makes sense and should be maintained as much as  
4 possible. Our district is bordered on three sides by  
5 other states, which is a very logical boundary.

6 If change is needed, then adding back a  
7 county that the district had previously, such as Murray,  
8 Pipestone or Wabasha, would make sense. They've been in  
9 this district before. We are definitely part of  
10 outstate Minnesota and would like to keep it that way so  
11 that our interests continue to be representative.

12 As for the Minnesota senate boundaries, I  
13 know some would like to combine the two senate seats and  
14 have Rochester represented by essentially one senator.  
15 But this has two drawbacks: It probably would make that  
16 seat uncompetitive due to Rochester moving towards one  
17 party in recent years. We know uncompetitive seats are  
18 less moderate, and that good government and healthy  
19 debate are better served when districts are more evenly  
20 matched.

21 Secondly, it would also mean the third  
22 largest city in Minnesota would essentially be just  
23 represented by one senator. I think a city of  
24 Rochester's size and importance is more properly  
25 represented by two senators.



1 Thank you much for this opportunity.

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

4 Is there anyone else present who has not had  
5 an opportunity? Please come forward.

6 Welcome. Please state and spell your name.

7 DAN SPECKHARD PASQUE: Dan Speckhard  
8 Pasque. Pasque is P- as in Paul -a-s-q-u-e.

9 Good evening, Your Honors. As I said, my  
10 name is Dan Speckhard Pasque. Thank you so much for the  
11 chance to speak tonight.

12 I am a computer engineer who is a resident  
13 of Rochester. I live in the Northern Heights  
14 neighborhood in the northeast part of town. My wife and  
15 I moved here just over two years ago, and we're excited  
16 to say that we are expecting our first child in just  
17 four weeks. So I wanted to offer my perspective as a  
18 young family transplant to the city, specifically as it  
19 relates to the state senate district lines and the  
20 redistricting. And I'm glad to get to do so while I'm  
21 still well-rested.

22 But I would like to voice my support for  
23 maintaining the state senate district lines in the  
24 capacity that is similar to how it is now: with two  
25 senate districts centered on the city, with a majority

1 of the population of each district made up by equal  
2 parts of Rochester. And I say this for several reasons.

3 As has been mentioned many times before, we  
4 need adequate representation in state legislation  
5 because we are a big city. We're the third largest in  
6 the state and we just keep growing. As we continue to  
7 grow, the issues and concerns that will need to be  
8 addressed by our legislators will also grow.

9 We're also a really diverse community, and  
10 it's essential that having the many diverse voices here  
11 be heard and represented in state congress.

12 So for all of that, imagining having only  
13 one senator representing all of Rochester feels like  
14 underrepresentation.

15 Furthermore, I personally believe that  
16 having competitive heterogeneity in political thought  
17 within a district is essential to creating a healthy  
18 democracy where every person's vote truly counts.

19 By isolating Rochester to a single district,  
20 that would strongly homogenize the districts here  
21 politically, and I believe that that would create less  
22 accountability for representatives to all their  
23 constituents and it would dis-incentivize people from  
24 being engaged politically.

25 Finally, this approach would also allow the

1 court to make the fewest changes to district maps and  
2 would also respect the need to be able to keep Olmsted  
3 County relatively whole in that districting.

4 Thank you so much for your time.

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

7 Is there anyone else who wishes to speak?  
8 Welcome.

9 KARIN SWENSON: I always worry about chairs  
10 going back with my short legs.

11 Good evening. My name is Karin Swenson.  
12 K-a-r-i-n S-w-e-n...

13 JUDGE BJORKMAN: You may proceed.

14 KARIN SWENSON: Thank you for letting us  
15 make a statement. I appreciate it.

16 Again, I'd like to introduce myself. My  
17 name is Karin Swenson. I live in northwest Rochester  
18 and I run a small nonprofit preschool and child care  
19 center in southeast Rochester. And I've been in my role  
20 for about 30 years. I'm happy to be here as a voice and  
21 concern when it comes to redistricting.

22 Rochester must continue with two state  
23 senate districts that each cover large, equal sections  
24 of our city. Over the past 50 years, I've lived in  
25 Rochester, except for a short amount of time being in

1 college. And especially in those last ten years of my  
2 time here, our city has grown and shifted immensely.

3           Young families, communities of color, and  
4 immigrants are all communities that contribute to  
5 growth -- rapidly here in Rochester -- and contribute to  
6 the growth of our collective voice in our community. I  
7 see these changes in my work with families every single  
8 day as new people and families come to town as we grow.

9           By continuing with two senate districts,  
10 each covering separate majority Rochester territories,  
11 we ensure that our city and our rapidly growing  
12 communities of young people and people of color have the  
13 most representation at the capitol that they can have.

14           Two senators for Rochester means more  
15 accountability and more community voices from Rochester  
16 and to make sure that they are heard and reflected at  
17 the capitol. There is a greater chance with two  
18 Rochester senators that our large population and the  
19 wide diversity of voices here can most adequately be  
20 represented.

21           With roughly 120,000 people now here in  
22 Rochester, Rochester dominates the population of Olmsted  
23 County and exceeds the size of a single district and  
24 will continue to grow. If we were to continue with two  
25 Rochester-focused senate districts, Rochester could

1 represent well over half the population of each, and  
2 this Rochester focus of the two districts would continue  
3 to be the case upon subsequent redistricting as the city  
4 grows.

5 Two Rochester-focused senate districts best  
6 suit the growth trajectory we are on now, and there's no  
7 need to change course to diminish our voice at the  
8 capitol.

9 Thank you for your time and attention.

10 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments  
11 are submitted.

12 Is there anyone else who has not had a  
13 chance to speak? Please come forward. Welcome.

14 ABDULLAHI MOHAMED ADAN: Thank you.

15 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Please begin by stating  
16 and spelling your name.

17 ABDULLAHI MOHAMED ADAN: My name is  
18 Abdullahi Mohamed Adan. I'll provide that --

19 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Yes, please spell it all.  
20 Thank you.

21 ABDULLAHI MOHAMED ADAN: -- in writing.  
22 Okay. It's A-b-d-u-l-l-a-h-i, Mohamed, M-o-h-a-m-e-d,  
23 last name Adan, A-d-a-n.

24 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. You may  
25 proceed.

1                   ABDULLAHI MOHAMED ADAN:    Good evening,  
2 honorable judges.  I really appreciate the time you guys  
3 have given us and the chance to hear our comments.

4                   I am new to Rochester compared to the other  
5 people that came before me.  And among the many  
6 thousands that moved here to build a family, as a  
7 Somali-American, I find the city and this area to be  
8 very vibrant and welcoming.

9                   Originally being from Minneapolis, where I  
10 used to live, there are many senate districts in the  
11 city.  And because of this, there are wide multitude of  
12 Minneapolis voices represented at the capitol, and  
13 Rochester deserves the opportunity to have its voice  
14 represented in the capitol in numbers reflective of its  
15 population and size too.

16                   It's clear that our city far exceeds the  
17 target population; about 85,000 people for a new senate  
18 districts.  The size of its population calls for two  
19 districts equally focused on the city.  While a single  
20 core district entirely based within Rochester could be  
21 drawn, there would be unintended negative consequences  
22 for Rochester residents and the community of color that  
23 live in the city, who live in the peripheral district or  
24 districts that would result.

25                   For example, communities of color located

1 more closely to the periphery of town would be at risk  
2 of being separated from other Rochester communities of  
3 interest and lumped in within a large rural district  
4 representing the greater southeast Minnesota. This  
5 would dilute our community voice effectively. And  
6 cracking the communities of interest, that line across  
7 Rochester and providing them and the voices of 35,000  
8 Rochesterians that might live in the peripheral district  
9 with less representation at the state capitol.

10 I ask that you consider redistricting, you  
11 maintain the principle of two separate senate districts,  
12 each focused on Rochester, so the voices of our  
13 neighbors and the weight of our population can be best  
14 reflected in the representation in St. Paul.

15 Thank you for your time.

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

18 Is there anyone else who has not had an  
19 opportunity? Please come forward. Good evening.

20 MARCO LOERA ALVAREZ: Good evening.

21 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Please state and spell  
22 your name, please.

23 MARCO LOERA ALVAREZ: Yes. My name is  
24 Marco Loera Alvarez. M-a-r-c-o L-o-e-r-a  
25 A-l-v-a-r-e-z. And I'm sorry, Your Honor. Is it okay

1 if I turn on my phone to give my testimony?

2 JUDGE BJORKMAN: You may.

3 MARCO LOERA ALVAREZ: Thank you. Okay.

4 Hello, everyone. (Speaking in Spanish.) My

5 name is Marco Loera Alvarez. And I'm here with Conny

6 Vi- --

7 COURT REPORTER: Can you spell that last

8 name, please? Conny...

9 MARCO LOERA ALVAREZ: Yes. Conny,  
10 C-o-n-n-y.

11 COURT REPORTER: The last name?

12 MARCO LOERA ALVAREZ: Villar, V-i-l-l-a-r.

13 COURT REPORTER: Thank you.

14 MARCO LOERA ALVAREZ: Yep.

15 I am a Rochester resident of 17 years. I am  
16 here today to express the importance of redistricting  
17 and what it means to my community; that it shows that  
18 communities of color are fast-growing segment of  
19 Minnesota population. According to the Post Bulletin,  
20 southeastern Minnesota has grown more diverse. That's  
21 what the U.S. census data shows.

22 The Latino community here keeps growing, yet  
23 policies and resources don't reflect that. We must  
24 ensure that during this redistricting process, it is a  
25 fair and equitable one, one where there is no



1 gerrymandering or any type of manipulation of the  
2 boundary lines that will be redrawn.

3           The Latino community here in Rochester is  
4 more prevalent in the southeast area of town. The  
5 mobile homes on Marion Road have become a safe space and  
6 an only space for many Latinx families.

7           JUDGE BJORKMAN: Can you... What was the  
8 road?

9           MARCO LOERA ALVAREZ: Yep. Marion Road.

10          JUDGE BJORKMAN: Marion. Thank you.

11          MARCO LOERA ALVAREZ: Yes.

12                 And like I said, this is a safe space and  
13 only one of the few spaces openly for that Latinos feel  
14 safe in.

15                 Due to expensive rent, many families are  
16 forced to live in mobile homes that cost \$300-\$400 a  
17 month, plus whatever they're paying off their trailer.  
18 This has created a small community space for us, like  
19 community gardening, the Mexican stores, and gathering  
20 space. In this space, we have learned to take care of  
21 each other by setting up resources, like electricians,  
22 plumbers, construction workers, daycare, so that we  
23 don't have to travel so far because, unfortunately, the  
24 lack of access to driver's license for many Latino  
25 families is not there because of politicians that have

1 voted against their interest.

2 I attended Mayo High School, where the  
3 majority of Latino students attend; again, all located  
4 in the southeast area of town. These areas now carry  
5 power of the Latino community because more resources  
6 have been created to those specific areas of town  
7 because of the high immigrant community.

8 Like I said, we also have Conny here, who is  
9 a Center Director of the Elgin Tri-Valley Head Start.  
10 She has firsthand experience with what migrant  
11 communities go through on a daily basis. She helps  
12 expecting families to get on their feet by providing  
13 resources to them. Many times the families she serves  
14 don't even have the basic necessities for themselves or  
15 the child. Places like Tri-Valley are building support  
16 for their communities that serve many surrounding towns.

17 We need a fair system that doesn't break  
18 these communities apart. If lines are created that hurt  
19 POC communities, it will have a big impact on  
20 generations to come.

21 Again, my name is Marco, and I'm a resident  
22 of Rochester.

23 Thank you.

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



1 STATE OF MINNESOTA )  
 )  
2 COUNTY OF DODGE )

3

4 CERTIFICATE

5

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