

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE
WESTERN DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA—MONROE DIVISION**

PHILIP CALLAIS, LLOYD PRICE,)	
BRUCE ODELL, ELIZABETH ERSOFF,)	
ALBERT CAISSIE, DANIEL WEIR,)	
JOYCE LACOUR, CANDY CARROLL)	
PEAVY, TANYA WHITNEY, MIKE)	
JOHNSON, GROVER JOSEPH REES,)	
ROLFE MCCOLLISTER,)	
)	Case No. 3:24-cv-00122-DCJ-CES-RRS
Plaintiffs,)	
)	
v.)	District Judge David C. Joseph
)	Circuit Judge Carl E. Stewart
NANCY LANDRY, IN HER OFFICIAL)	District Judge Robert R. Summerhays
CAPACITY AS LOUISIANA)	
SECRETARY OF STATE,)	Magistrate Judge Kayla D. McClusky
)	
Defendant.)	

THE PARTIES’ DESIGNATIONS OF THE 2024 FIRST LEGISLATIVE SESSION

COME NOW Plaintiffs Philip Callais, Lloyd Price, Bruce Odell, Elizabeth Ersoff, Albert Caissie, Daniel Weir, Joyce LaCour, Candy Carroll Peavy, Tanya Whitney, Mike Johnson, Grover Joseph Rees, and Rolfe McCollister (collectively, “Plaintiffs”) by and through counsel and designate the following:

January 15, 2024 House Governmental Affairs Committee Hearing	
Start	End
Attorney General Murrill: 36:1	37:1
Attorney General Murrill, Rep. Marcelle: 43:22	45:14
Attorney General Murrill: 48:13	49:7
Rep. Farnum, Attorney General Murrill: 52:14	53:15
Rep. Carter: 57:11	57:14
Attorney General Murrill:	

61:20	62:12
Attorney General Murrill: 62:24	63:5
Attorney General Murrill: 67:17	67:24
Attorney General Murrill: 76:12	76:22

January 17, 2024 Senate Floor Session	
Start	End
Sen. Womack, Sen. Morris: 3:19	8:6
Sen. Morris, Sen. Womack: 8:21	9:8
Sen. Womack: 12:4	12:9
Sen. Carter: 15:14	17:5
Sen. Duplessis: 21:8	21:25
Sen. Pressly: 22:7	23:25

January 18, 2024 House Governmental Affairs Committee Hearing	
Start	End
Sen. Womack: 5:8	5:12
Sen. Womack: 6:25	8:5
Rep. Marcelle, Sen. Womack: 9:9	9:18
Rep. Boyd, Sen. Womack: 13:6	13:18
Rep. Beaulieu, Sen. Womack: 26:12	27:3
Rep. Beaulieu, Sen. Womack: 27:21	28:4

Rep. Lyons: 75:24	76:21
Rep. Newell: 89:8	89:21
Rep. Marcelle: 101:08	101:16
Sen. Womack: 121:19	122:1

January 19, 2024 House Floor Session	
Start	End
Rep. Beaulieu: 4:15	8:10
Rep. Amedee, Rep. Beaulieu: 9:3	9:8

January 19, 2024 Senate Floor Session	
Start	End
Sen. Morris, Sen. Womack: 5:14	7:4
Sen. Cathey: 8:7	8:18
Sen. Luneau: 10:5	10:9
Sen. Carter: 10:13	10:17

Dated this 7th day of April, 2024

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I do hereby certify that, on this 7th day of April, 2024, the foregoing was electronically filed with the Clerk of Court using the CM/ECF system, which gives notice of filing to all counsel of record.

/s/ Edward D. Greim

Edward D. Greim



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House Governmental Affairs Committee Hearing
-Audio Transcription

January 15, 2024

Phillip Callais, et al.

vs.

Nancy Landry

1 REPRESENTATIVE GADBERRY: That's the one that
 2 she looked at though, that she rejected?
 3 MS. LOWREY-DUFOUR: Well, I mean -- and -- and
 4 also there have been other plans --
 5 REPRESENTATIVE GADBERRY: Okay.
 6 MS. LOWREY-DUFOUR: -- that have been
 7 submitted by plaintiffs to the court.
 8 REPRESENTATIVE GADBERRY: And -- and would you
 9 say that Act 5 did not meet the redistricting criteria?
 10 MS. LOWREY-DUFOUR: Representative Gadberry --
 11 REPRESENTATIVE GADBERRY: I know. You're not
 12 (inaudible 0:43:45) --
 13 MS. LOWREY-DUFOUR: That is a -- that is a
 14 legal matter that is currently the subject of litigation
 15 in the Middle District, and again, much more
 16 appropriately addressed by our chief legal officer.
 17 REPRESENTATIVE BEAULLIEU: Yeah. We can let
 18 our attorney general handle that one.
 19 REPRESENTATIVE GADBERRY: Okay. Thank you.
 20 MS. LOWREY-DUFOUR: Thank you.
 21 REPRESENTATIVE BEAULLIEU: Thank you, Ms.
 22 Lowrey. Members, as -- as you all were just -- got a --
 23 got a teaser from Representative Gadberry, we have our
 24 attorney general here with us, Ms. -- Ms. Liz Murrill.
 25 She's going to join us and give us an update on the

1 litigation. And I see Ms. Murrill has a familiar face
 2 with her, so I'd like to welcome back to the House of
 3 Representatives former colleague Representative Larry
 4 Frieman. Welcome, welcome, Mr. Frieman.
 5 MR. FRIEMAN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you,
 6 members. It's -- I'm glad to be back. And sitting on
 7 this side of the table is a familiar place --
 8 REPRESENTATIVE BEAULLIEU: Yeah.
 9 MR. FRIEMAN: -- for myself as well. So thank
 10 you for having me.
 11 REPRESENTATIVE BEAULLIEU: If you wouldn't
 12 mind, everyone, and introduce yourself for the
 13 committee, and then it's all yours.
 14 MS. MURRILL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and
 15 members of the committee. It's great to be with you
 16 today as your new attorney general. I'm Liz Murrill. I
 17 also have with me Tom Jones who is the new director of
 18 the civil division and has been involved in the
 19 litigation. And now, chief deputy -- almost chief
 20 deputy, assuming you confirm him, is Larry Frieman. So
 21 that'll be before you soon, too.
 22 I -- I -- I want to tell you that
 23 redistricting is hard. I'm not going to tell you this
 24 is easy. I -- I think that you did a -- you did the
 25 best job you could before. We've been in litigation.

1 The last time redistricting, in the 1990s, it -- it was
 2 -- when the second majority/minority map was drawn, we
 3 ended up in litigation for a decade. So there is no
 4 guarantee that when you do this again, we won't still be
 5 in litigation. But we are in litigation now.
 6 The District Court judge has conducted a
 7 fact-finding mission - that's what will -- what always
 8 happens - and made fact findings regarding the map. She
 9 issued an injunction. That injunction is not currently
 10 in effect for reasons that I can explain to you, but I
 11 think the bottom line is it is not currently in effect
 12 because the deadlines for the election that it enjoined
 13 are -- are over.
 14 The courts, nevertheless, have told us to draw
 15 a new map, and they have indicated that we have a
 16 deadline to do that or Judge Dick will draw the map for
 17 us. So you have an opportunity now to go back and draw
 18 the map again. And -- and I think that it is not an
 19 easy task because the United States Supreme Court has
 20 not made it an easy task. They've given you some
 21 directives that seem to be -- to not give you a lot of
 22 clear lines for doing your job. I -- I apologize on
 23 their behalf for -- but, you know, we tried.
 24 I mean, I am defending that map, and so you
 25 won't hear me say that I believe that that map violated

1 the redistricting criteria. I'm defending that map, but
 2 I will defend your new map if you draw a new map. So,
 3 you know, it's an act of the legislature. My job is to
 4 defend the work of the legislature, and I will do that
 5 to the very best of my ability.
 6 I think that the difficulty is that in the
 7 Merrill v. Milligan case, which was the Alabama
 8 litigation that preceded ours, the Supreme Court issued
 9 an opinion. And it says that in a Section 2 disparate
 10 impact claim, which is different really from the work
 11 that you did -- you did your work. You did it in good
 12 faith. But they can -- they -- the plaintiffs will go
 13 to court, and they will make a disparate impact claim,
 14 and that's what gets litigated.
 15 That has nothing to do with whether your
 16 intent was nefarious or not. Everyone can have had the
 17 right intent and followed the rules as they believed
 18 they were given to them, and go to court. And the court
 19 can still say, "Under Section 2, there's a disparate
 20 impact. And because there's a disparate impact, you
 21 have to go back and do it again, or I will do it for
 22 you."
 23 And that is -- that is the short version of
 24 what Judge Dick has held and what has not been
 25 overturned by any court that we have brought it before,

Page 42

1 that core retention is the part that the court has given
 2 the least amount of attention to in this process now,
 3 that once you are trying to redraw the map, I think that
 4 core retention takes -- is -- becomes a less important
 5 factor under Merrill v. Milligan.
 6 REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS: Thank you.
 7 REPRESENTATIVE BEAULLIEU: Thank you,
 8 Representative Thomas. Representative Marcelle.
 9 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: Thank you. Let me
 10 start by congratulating you. I don't know if I should
 11 say congratulations or condolences. I'm not really
 12 sure. Congratulations.
 13 MS. MURRILL: Well, I asked for the job, so
 14 thank you.
 15 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: Okay. Let -- let me
 16 just go over a couple of things that you said, and --
 17 and so I can be clear in what you're -- what you're
 18 telling us today. Number one, you said you're going to
 19 defend the map, Act 5, that they presented because that
 20 is your job to do so, correct?
 21 MS. MURRILL: Yes.
 22 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: And so --
 23 MS. MURRILL: I am defending it now.
 24 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: Correct. Because
 25 that's -- that's what we hired you to do, to defend us,

Page 43

1 right? And if we pass another map, you'll defend that
 2 map as well?
 3 MS. MURRILL: That's correct.
 4 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: The other thing that
 5 I -- I -- I -- I -- I heard you say was this is a
 6 -- the judge has fact-finding matters. Can you kind of
 7 elaborate on what that means? Is that -- that's based
 8 upon the testimony that was presented by the plaintiffs;
 9 is that accurate? And -- and the -- and the defense,
 10 obviously, she took both -- both matters into
 11 consideration when she was doing her fact finding.
 12 MS. MURRILL: She did. That doesn't mean I
 13 agree with them.
 14 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: Okay. So --
 15 MS. MURRILL: And I -- and I think that it's
 16 also a product of -- this is part of what's frustrating,
 17 I think, for the legislature when it goes into
 18 litigation because people can -- like, experts, for
 19 example, that are hired by the plaintiffs, no matter who
 20 they are -- this could happen on the new map. Right?
 21 Those experts can come and testify in court, and the
 22 judge can control that testimony. In our case, it
 23 happened in a very, very short, short turnaround in a
 24 preliminary injunction hearing which is different from a
 25 trial on the merits. We've never had a trial on the

Page 44

1 merits.
 2 So, you know, the -- the -- the court -- the
 3 judge, whoever that judge may be, has an enormous amount
 4 of control over how much testimony is allowed and by
 5 whom, and -- and how much time we will have to do that.
 6 That was all very, very compressed when we litigated
 7 this right after the map was passed. We have not had
 8 any other fact finding because we haven't had a trial on
 9 the merits. I have raised an objection to that because
 10 I think that you are entitled to have a trial on the
 11 merits, but the courts have not accepted those arguments
 12 at this point.
 13 They have told us to go back and draw the map,
 14 and they have given us a deadline. So, you know, I am
 15 making the same arguments that I would make on the new
 16 map. But at the -- at the same time, you know, the --
 17 the courts haven't given us a lot of safe harbor to go
 18 litigate --
 19 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: Okay.
 20 MS. MURRILL: -- the rest of this case.
 21 They've said, "Go do this."
 22 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: So it's -- it -- it
 23 is a fact that we do have six congressional districts in
 24 Louisiana? That is --
 25 MS. MURRILL: It is.

Page 45

1 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: -- a fact, right?
 2 Is -- is it also a fact that a third of that -- the
 3 population is African American?
 4 MS. MURRILL: Approximately, based on the
 5 data. I would also point out that 50 percent are women.
 6 I mean, there are other -- there are other population,
 7 you know, and gender and differences -- like, that's why
 8 Section 2 has never been -- I mean, it is expressly
 9 stated in Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act that this
 10 is not an act of proportionate dividing. That is not
 11 permitted under Section 2. And so we can't just take
 12 that number and say that's -- that's how we do this,
 13 because it's not that simple and that's actually not
 14 permitted under the law.
 15 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: So -- so it's not
 16 permitted to say that we have six congressional
 17 districts, and of those six congressional districts, we
 18 -- we talk about community interests, I think was one of
 19 them. So do you believe that all five of the other
 20 districts has all the community interests impacted in
 21 those, and African American districts only should have
 22 one?
 23 MS. MURRILL: Representative Marcelle, the --
 24 the -- the -- the job of drawing the districts is yours.
 25 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: I get it.

Page 46

1 MS. MURRILL: It's not mine.
 2 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: Right.
 3 MS. MURRILL: And I -- I am defending what I
 4 believe to have been a -- a defensible map. And if you
 5 draw a new map, I will defend that map. Judge Dick has
 6 put us in a -- in a position -- and the Fifth Circuit,
 7 the panel that reviewed that decision, and the whole
 8 court, when I asked them to go en banc, by declining to
 9 go en banc, have put us in a position of where we are
 10 today, where we -- we need to draw a map. So I'm here
 11 to tell -- I'm not here to tell you don't draw a map. I
 12 mean, I think we do have to draw a map --
 13 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: And -- and --
 14 MS. MURRILL: -- and I will defend that map.
 15 REPRESENTATIVE WYBLE: And -- and my final
 16 question. I heard Representative Beaulieu talk about
 17 two-thirds of the legislature approving this map and --
 18 and -- and voting for it. Beaulieu. I'm sorry.
 19 (Simultaneous speaking.)
 20 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: Beaulieu?
 21 (Simultaneous speaking.)
 22 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: I just call you
 23 Beau, so I'm -- I'm trying to get your real name because
 24 --
 25 REPRESENTATIVE BEAULLIEU: We'll -- we'll --

Page 47

1 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: -- I been calling
 2 you Beau.
 3 REPRESENTATIVE BEAULLIEU: -- we'll work on
 4 you --
 5 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: Yes.
 6 REPRESENTATIVE BEAULLIEU: -- Representative
 7 Marcelle.
 8 (Laughter.)
 9 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: So Beaulieu -- I
 10 always call him Beau. But Beaulieu, I -- I -- I -- I
 11 heard him say that two-thirds of the legislature voted
 12 for this map. And he's absolutely accurate because the
 13 majority of the legislature would support this map
 14 because it benefits them. We talked about, you know,
 15 our districts and our interests. What I did not hear
 16 him say is -- because I sat at that table on the other
 17 side and presented a map, and none of the maps that we
 18 presented got out of this committee.
 19 So it's, you know, it's unfair to say, "Okay,
 20 we passed it with the majority of the people," because a
 21 majority of the people would support us not having an --
 22 an additional African American representation in another
 23 district. I get that. But it's not fair to say that
 24 those arguments weren't made to -- to support that. I
 25 was one of those that made the argument to support an

Page 48

1 additional congressional map. And I think what we're
 2 hearing from Judge Kelly Dick is --
 3 MS. MURRILL: Shelly Dick.
 4 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: -- Shelly Dick is
 5 that the map is not fair for the state of Louisiana.
 6 And -- and what I -- what I agree with her on is that if
 7 we cannot -- and we had an opportunity to draw this map
 8 ourselves and we did not do it as it supports Section 2,
 9 in my opinion. I know you gave yours, but this is my
 10 opinion. So then we will allow her to draw that map if
 11 we can't do that. We can't draw a map right now, right?
 12 Is that accurate?
 13 MS. MURRILL: So what will happen if you do
 14 not draw a map is that she has set a trial date. It's
 15 very, very quick, and we will still be operating under
 16 the old map. So we will move forward then with a trial
 17 on the -- under the old map. There'll be a trial on the
 18 merits, the same record I think that was presented, and
 19 Tom can affirm or -- or correct me if I'm wrong, but the
 20 -- the record from the preliminary injunction hearing
 21 will all go into the -- into the -- into the court
 22 record, and we will look at whether we want to have
 23 additional testimony. And that trial will move forward.
 24 I -- I don't expect Judge Dick to change her
 25 position. I think she will draw a map, and -- and so

Page 49

1 you are getting the first opportunity to do that. I
 2 mean, we could have -- in theory, we could have had a
 3 trial on the merits, and she could have said, "I don't
 4 --" you know, again, "I don't like the old map," and --
 5 or, "I don't like the map that you drew and I'm going to
 6 redraw your map." But as a matter of law, you get the
 7 first shot at doing that, so.
 8 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: No. We get the
 9 second shot at doing it. Thank you very much, though.
 10 REPRESENTATIVE BEAULLIEU: Thank you.
 11 Representative Marcelle. Representative Farnum.
 12 REPRESENTATIVE FARNUM: Thank you, Mr.
 13 Chairman. So a couple of things. So the -- the
 14 parallel that the argument has been based on is the --
 15 the case in Alabama; was that the one?
 16 MS. MURRILL: Yeah. The Alabama case was
 17 litigated just, you know, a few months ahead of ours,
 18 and so it went up to the Supreme Court before ours did.
 19 And so we've basically been held -- our case was held in
 20 abeyance pending the outcome of that case.
 21 REPRESENTATIVE FARNUM: So -- and that was a
 22 seven-member district, right?
 23 MS. MURRILL: I believe so.
 24 REPRESENTATIVE FARNUM: So -- so they were
 25 trying to reach a second district in a seven-member

Page 50

1 state. So would you say, just in your opinion, is it
 2 harder to -- to draw two of six than it is two of seven,
 3 just based on the compactness of the population of that
 4 state? Because wouldn't you say that every state has a
 5 different compactness, there's no two states that are
 6 identical, and maybe it's easier in one state, that
 7 maybe the compactness is -- is much more centrally
 8 located to reach that conclusion. Wouldn't -- would you
 9 agree with that?
 10 MS. MURRILL: I -- I would agree with you that
 11 every state is different and that -- that our population
 12 -- how our population is spread out is -- is different
 13 from every other state.
 14 REPRESENTATIVE FARNUM: Would -- would you --
 15 MS. MURRILL: So our population is -- our
 16 population, I think, is relatively close to theirs. I
 17 -- they'd probably have a little more population because
 18 they still have seven districts. You know, we -- this
 19 isn't going to be easy. I -- I didn't -- that's why I
 20 started out by saying, "I'm not here to tell you this is
 21 an easy job." You have a hard job. Our state is
 22 different. Every state is different from each other,
 23 and -- and you have to do this based on the facts in our
 24 state.
 25 We have argued in our case that our state is

Page 51

1 different from Alabama with regard to -- so that they --
 2 the fact findings aren't -- can't be the same. We're
 3 not the same. Our history isn't the same. Our history
 4 of redistricting and redistricting litigation is not the
 5 same. And we -- we brought those issues up, and here we
 6 are still, so.
 7 REPRESENTATIVE FARNUM: I -- I -- I know. I
 8 spent the better part of three years going over this. I
 9 was on the committee last time and sat through numerous,
 10 numerous meetings on -- on this across a period of the
 11 three years. Help -- help me understand how the -- the
 12 voting-age population factors in when the voting -- the
 13 Black voting-age population is lower than the total
 14 population in the state. How does that factor in?
 15 MS. MURRILL: You want to take that one?
 16 MR. JONES: Yeah. The -- the judge --
 17 MS. MURRILL: Introduce yourself just quickly
 18 again.
 19 REPRESENTATIVE BEAULLIEU: You're on. You're
 20 on.
 21 MR. JONES: The judge here in the Middle
 22 District has based her rulings on the Black --
 23 REPRESENTATIVE BEAULLIEU: If you don't mind,
 24 could you kind of speak into the mic a little bit? Or
 25 you can pull the mic to you, I believe, as well.

Page 52

1 MR. JONES: I'm sorry. My name is Tom Jones.
 2 I'm the director of the civil division in the attorney
 3 general's office.
 4 The judge has principally based her ruling on
 5 Black voting-age population. That's what she's used as
 6 the primary criteria. Then the experts take that Black
 7 voting-age population, and they're very clever people,
 8 and they do very clever things with those numbers. They
 9 can persuade you on one side that the Black voting-age
 10 population should be analyzed this way, and the other
 11 experts can convince you of just the opposite the next
 12 day. But Black voting-age population has been the
 13 primary criteria for this judge's rulings.
 14 REPRESENTATIVE FARNUM: Because you did say
 15 something earlier, that -- that race cannot be a
 16 determining factor of -- of why you draw maps.
 17 MS. MURRILL: It can't be the predominant
 18 factor.
 19 REPRESENTATIVE FARNUM: Isn't that the only
 20 reason we're here right now?
 21 MS. MURRILL: You know, we're here because of
 22 --
 23 REPRESENTATIVE FARNUM: But isn't that the
 24 predominant reason?
 25 MS. MURRILL: -- the court's telling us we

Page 53

1 have to be here. I mean, I -- I think that's part of
 2 it. You know, the -- I mean, I'm defending the map.
 3 I'm going to defend the new map. I -- I want you to
 4 know, I mean, if you draw a new map, I'm defending that
 5 map, so.
 6 REPRESENTATIVE FARNUM: I -- I agree.
 7 MS. MURRILL: I'm not going to say that, you
 8 know, I mean, I think -- I don't -- I have complaints
 9 about how this case was managed, I mean, not by our
 10 litigators, not -- you know, I just think that we need
 11 -- we should have a trial on the merits. I've always --
 12 I have argued that in court. I have signed off on those
 13 pleadings. I still believe that that's true. The
 14 courts have told us to do this by a certain date or it's
 15 going to be done for us.
 16 REPRESENTATIVE FARNUM: I -- I think the
 17 circular fashion of -- of the 14th, the 15th Amendment,
 18 and this Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act is a circle.
 19 So it -- it -- it sends you in this race to chase your
 20 tail to try and accomplish what you're trying to
 21 accomplish. And -- and each one contradicts the other
 22 one in the circle. So you end up in this never ending
 23 loop of -- of how do you accomplish what we're tasked to
 24 do here.
 25 We did look at a lot of maps and -- and, you

1 know, I -- I personally think that the one we passed was
 2 -- was a very legal, legitimate map. And -- and -- and
 3 we'll do the best we can with what we have. So,
 4 appreciate your time today. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
 5 REPRESENTATIVE BEAULLIEU: Thank you,
 6 Representative Farnum. Representative Carter.
 7 REPRESENTATIVE CARTER: Thank you, Mr.
 8 Chairman. I -- because this committee meeting is being
 9 viewed by people throughout the state, I think it's
 10 important that we be honest and -- and -- and -- and put
 11 the whole picture, why we here, how we got here. It
 12 seemed to be an impression that the old Judge Dick's
 13 begging us, trying to make us do something even though
 14 we've done the right thing.
 15 Is it not true that the judge's job, her task,
 16 is to look at the law, first the law, the -- the
 17 jurisprudence of reapportionment, and look at the -- the
 18 -- the -- the statute that's been passed,
 19 reapportionment and other criteria that Congress and --
 20 has given us, to see if we went about this the right
 21 way. She just didn't come up the side to say, "I'm
 22 going to make them have another Black district." That
 23 is not her job. And -- and -- and she did anything
 24 contrary to that, she certainly would have been reversed
 25 quite quickly.

1 But -- but -- but what she did, she looked at
 2 the law, and there was -- there was -- there was a
 3 request made by motion to -- to -- as to whether or not
 4 the plaintiff would succeed on this problem with
 5 disparity and what have you if they went to trial. And
 6 she pretty much said, after studying the law and
 7 studying the facts and what actually took place in this
 8 legislature, she decided it would probably succeed. So
 9 she asked the legislature to go back and try to do this
 10 over again the right way. And the legislature has that
 11 opportunity. We could get nothing done, okay?
 12 So now the judge -- it will stay -- the
 13 attorney general office -- she -- she expressed that she
 14 wanted another map and she -- a better map, she thought,
 15 that's more legal. And so she -- she asked the
 16 legislature to -- there was a state made by the attorney
 17 general's office, and that was granted by the Fifth
 18 Circuit.
 19 And because of the Alabama case -- and Alabama
 20 is different from -- first of all, Alabama has 26
 21 percent population of African Americans. Louisiana, 33
 22 percent. Alabama has a larger overall population than
 23 Louisiana as well. That's why they have seven
 24 congressman. But -- but you can't compare Alabama to
 25 Louisiana.

1 But the law is pretty much the -- it's the
 2 same. So based on that law, that judge says, "Well,
 3 y'all either going to do a map, or I'm going to do a
 4 map." So -- so he gave us another -- a third time to do
 5 the map. Now, if you look at the analysis of the -- of
 6 what we done the last time, there was about eight maps
 7 that were presented to this House and Government Affairs
 8 Committee, but there's only one map, the speaker map,
 9 House Bill 1, that was even considered, seriously
 10 considered.
 11 I mean, there was some people came to the --
 12 to the table and -- and talked about these other maps,
 13 but -- but -- but it was asked by the speaker then --
 14 the then speaker who was carrying the House Bill 1, "Did
 15 you look at Section 2 of the Voters Right Act? And did
 16 you try to comply this map with Section 2?" And the
 17 speaker said no.
 18 "Well, did you look at the disparity that this
 19 map represents? It's just common sense. If you got a
 20 third of the population that is African American and --
 21 and -- and 33 -- over 33 percent, did you look at those
 22 -- those figures? You don't have to be the primary
 23 criteria, but you got to first look at whether or not
 24 it's a -- it's appears to be a fair map and complying
 25 with the 14th Amendment, Section 2 and other -- other of

1 Supreme Court jurisprudence?" He said no.
 2 He said that he -- he -- he -- he -- this is
 3 his map that he's presenting, and he didn't -- let the
 4 lawyers worry about all this other stuff. This is his
 5 map. So the -- the -- the record -- the record of the
 6 -- and I tried to tell him this because I was asking
 7 questions to this -- to -- on House Bill 1, like
 8 everybody else, "Why this map have a problem?" And so
 9 -- so -- so the legislature knew the map had a problem,
 10 but they wouldn't listen to anybody else.
 11 So while I agree that the -- your
 12 representation that race is not the -- the sole factor,
 13 the -- the fact is you got to have six divided equally,
 14 okay? And -- and if it -- but -- but -- but Section 2
 15 says if you've got a group that is compact, that is
 16 compact and that vote certain voting patterns, that you
 17 should try to create a map that allow that group to
 18 represent a person of their choice. That's all it says.
 19 So I asked the speaker, "Did you look at Section 2 and
 20 try to come up with a map that does that?" He said,
 21 "No, I didn't."
 22 So it's the speaker's and -- and -- and the
 23 legislators' testimony in the record that caused them
 24 the problem they had when it went to the judge. Had
 25 they said, "We looked at Section 2, we tried to comply

1 with Section 2 but we couldn't because the Black
 2 population is so dispersed in the state. We could not
 3 get another district that was compact," they didn't say
 4 that, didn't even try. So that's why the state is in
 5 the position it's in, not because somebody is out there
 6 -- some federal judge is out there trying to make
 7 Louisiana have another -- another minority district now.
 8 However, I do agree that we need to have this
 9 opportunity, and it's wonderful to have this opportunity
 10 to try to create a map that will comply. Now -- now --
 11 and I think that I applaud the governor because I think
 12 the governor wants to do the right thing. The new
 13 governor wants to do the right thing. He wants to have
 14 a map to -- so we can do our own map and not a federal
 15 judge. And I support that. And so -- but I don't want
 16 to give the impression that federal judge is just a bad,
 17 bad monster, is trying to make us do something we
 18 shouldn't do. She has to comply with the law.
 19 Now, the Supreme Court has reviewed what the
 20 -- the -- the -- the attorney general's office presented
 21 there on confection of the state, and it's really --
 22 they -- they denied that. It's the United States
 23 Supreme Court saying you got to go back and do this map,
 24 not just Judge Dick, okay? So -- so we need to accept
 25 the fact that the map we had, based on the record, based

1 on the testimony presented here in the legislature,
 2 based on the debate in the legislature, based on the
 3 law, that it was not in compliance.
 4 Now, you can differ. People can differ
 5 because they -- they don't like what the law says,
 6 maybe, or they want to twist the law. But the fact of
 7 the matter is it's not a sustainable map. This map is
 8 not sustainable that we have now. And so we have a
 9 chance to do that and not offend too many political
 10 notions at the same time.
 11 And so I just -- I just want to make that --
 12 put that in the record that -- that this is a effort on
 13 the part of people of different political interests to
 14 try to resolve the issue that had been defined by -- by
 15 Supreme Court decision and by federal statute, and --
 16 and try to come up with a district that is acceptable.
 17 That's what we're trying to do, you know. And
 18 it doesn't mean that you're a bad person or you -- or
 19 you got a problem because you supported that last map.
 20 It's just that the record did not support -- we didn't
 21 get enough input from other people that had concerns
 22 about it. We didn't allow people to have -- have -- put
 23 their input in. Had we putting three or four maps on
 24 the floor and explain why we putting on the floor, that
 25 might have been different. Have we tried to do what the

1 -- what the Supreme Courts over the years have told us
 2 to do?
 3 I happened to be on the legislature in '84 to
 4 '92 when we wrote a lot of the reapportion maps. Okay.
 5 So this problem been around a long time. So we -- and
 6 -- and so we had -- oftentimes, federal judges had to
 7 put us on the right track, say, "Okay. Y'all doing
 8 good. Y'all working in the right direction, but y'all
 9 got to go back and do this over again." And that's what
 10 she did.
 11 REPRESENTATIVE BEAULLIEU: Thank you, Judge
 12 Carter. Vice-chairman Lyons.
 13 VICE-CHAIRMAN LYONS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
 14 Is it Ms. Murrill?
 15 MS. MURRILL: Murrill.
 16 VICE-CHAIRMAN LYONS: Murrill. I'm sorry,
 17 sorry. I -- I -- I have a question for you, but before
 18 I get into my question, I just wanted to note that as we
 19 talk about the Voting Rights Act and -- and the premise
 20 of a lot of things that we've done, today is actually
 21 the holiday of Martin Luther King Day, today, which his
 22 actual birthday is tomorrow. This is -- the observance
 23 of it is today. So a lot of us question, you know, as
 24 the federal holiday (inaudible 1:14:43) was -- was
 25 empty, what have you, is why we're here today.

1 So I just want to just remind everyone that
 2 one of the things that Martin Luther King did say was
 3 there's never a wrong time to do the right thing. So
 4 we're here today and we would not have any other, I
 5 guess, issue -- he wouldn't. Now we're doing something
 6 that we'll be doing to correct where we at and -- and so
 7 forth. But my question to you, ma'am, is you alluded to
 8 earlier that you want to have a -- preference to have a
 9 trial on the merits, that you were requesting -- asking
 10 for.
 11 So as a body here, as we're going to be going
 12 through this process, can you outline to us in any form
 13 necessary that -- to get it across, what were some of
 14 those merits? Because I'm assuming when you say the
 15 trial on the merits, you mean that the merits of -- of
 16 the decision that you may have had difference with, you
 17 had other merits that you wanted to talk about or maybe
 18 defend in the -- in the fact-finding portion that was
 19 not revealed.
 20 MS. MURRILL: So, Representative Lyons, when
 21 we went into this litigation right after the legislature
 22 completed the map drawing process, we went into a very,
 23 very compressed hearing on a motion for a preliminary
 24 injunction. That is a different standard. It was very
 25 compressed. We did not have the -- the length of time

1 that we would ordinarily have for a full trial.
 2 I believe that -- I mean, this is -- you can
 3 blame it on the litigator in me, which is fine, but I
 4 believe that it -- that -- that the state and -- and I
 5 believe this under the new map that you pass, that we
 6 should be entitled to have a trial on the merits --
 7 merits before we are forced to go in and change an act
 8 of the legislature. That is just a fundamental premise
 9 that I have about acts of the legislature and us being
 10 required by the courts to redo them. That -- that -- as
 11 a practical matter, we did not have a lot of time, but I
 12 have lost -- we lost on that issue.

13 I mean, we -- we did. Not just me, but the
 14 entire litigation team, including the lawyers who
 15 represented the legislature or the -- the -- the speaker
 16 and the -- the president of the Senate at the time and
 17 the secretary of state. We asked to have a trial on the
 18 merits set before you were required to go into session,
 19 and we offered to do it quickly. So just to be clear,
 20 we were not trying to delay. We offered to do it in
 21 November. There was another trial set. I mean, we
 22 tried to do this quickly so that we could have a
 23 complete record upon which whatever the decision was.

24 And we did not believe that Judge Dick would
 25 change her decision, but we still believe that the case

1 should be before the courts on a complete record. It is
 2 not, because we weren't -- we never had a trial on the
 3 merits. The courts have told you to go back and draw a
 4 map. And they said, "We can have a trial on the merits,
 5 but we can do that after you draw a map."

6 So as a -- I mean, just fundamentally as a
 7 lawyer who represents the -- you and defends the laws
 8 that you pass, your laws -- if you have a law that you
 9 pass, that you feel very strongly about, and the entire
 10 legislature has voted for it even though some people may
 11 disagree with it, then I will defend your law. And I --
 12 I think that -- that you are entitled and the
 13 legislature is entitled to that defense. So that's the
 14 point that I was making. I -- I don't think any of
 15 these cases should be tried and decided at the
 16 preliminary injunction stage. I think we are entitled
 17 to a trial on the merits.

18 And -- but at this point, the courts have told
 19 you -- the federal courts have told me and they have
 20 told you that we don't get that right now. You -- you
 21 get to have this session right now, or Judge Dick is
 22 going to draw the map for you. So, you know, I'm not
 23 here to say, "Don't draw the map." I'm here to tell
 24 you, "Draw the map."

25 VICE-CHAIRMAN LYONS: Okay. Thank -- thank

1 you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

2 REPRESENTATIVE BEAULLIEU: Thank you,
 3 Representative Lyons. Representative Gadberry.

4 REPRESENTATIVE GADBERRY: Thank you, Mr.
 5 Chair. Ms. Murrill, if we draw a new map and Judge Dick
 6 decides she don't like that one, do we start all over
 7 again, or will she immediately draw a map? I don't
 8 think she's capable of drawing a map, number one. I
 9 just don't think she could do it. But --

10 MS. MURRILL: She -- I mean, no federal judge
 11 does this without a demographer helping. I mean,
 12 they're -- she'll appoint -- she will ask for experts.
 13 She will ask for the maps to be submitted to her with
 14 expert testimony, and then she will -- typically, she's
 15 probably going to decide which map to take, but she can
 16 tweak those lines. She can decide how to draw the map,
 17 how she wants to draw this map based on the input of the
 18 experts from both sides. She could appoint her own
 19 expert and have that expert assist her in the
 20 map-drawing exercise.

21 And remember, you've been through this before.

22 A large part of this exercise is done through computer
 23 generated maps. So, you know, you put the numbers in,
 24 you start changing -- you change the inputs, it spits
 25 out a new map. She's going to have to go through that

1 same process that you did, and then -- and then we
 2 continue. So I -- I mean, I can't tell you that the
 3 plaintiffs will accept the map that you draw. She has
 4 established a timeline for the plaintiffs to amend their
 5 petition and challenge that map, and then we will -- we
 6 will go through the process again to determine whether
 7 or not that map is acceptable.

8 REPRESENTATIVE GADBERRY: And for four years
 9 on this committee previously, I spent hours upon hours
 10 looking at this map, all the maps. And I looked at the
 11 plaintiff's map, so to speak, that they presented before
 12 this group, and I didn't feel like any of those met the
 13 criteria. The -- the -- the overriding factor, I guess,
 14 was they had gerrymander lines, which is against the
 15 Voting Rights Act. So I'm hearing that you said that
 16 the map -- that the current map that's been rejected, I
 17 guess, by the judge, has it been to the US Supreme
 18 Court? Because that's the next step.

19 MS. MURRILL: It has not. It -- the -- the --
 20 the US Supreme Court can decide whether to take a case
 21 or not take a case.

22 REPRESENTATIVE GADBERRY: Right.

23 MS. MURRILL: They have not taken our case.
 24 They took our -- they -- they stayed our case last
 25 summer while the Alabama case went forward and was

1 litigated. They said, "You just wait." They thought we
2 had made a good case for a stay and so they paused our
3 case while they decided that one. But they did
4 something and these -- this is kind of a term of art,
5 but I mean, they granted cert in advance of judgment.
6 That means they actually took our case, and then after
7 they decided the Merrill case, the Alabama case, they
8 just vacated their own grant and sent it back to us.

9 So in a way, they took our case, and then they
10 vacated their own decision to take our case and they
11 sent it back down to the Fifth Circuit and to judge
12 Dick. And so it's -- it's back in the hands of the
13 District Court judge who is supervised by the Fifth
14 Circuit Court of Appeals. And so there has been some
15 litigation between August and, really, through the
16 summer since the Merrill case came out all the way
17 through the time that the opinion was issued in
18 November, I think, from the Fifth Circuit where a panel
19 of the Fifth Circuit said, "You need to go draw a map by
20 February 15th."

21 So they actually suggested we should have done
22 this before -- before we legally, really -- or -- or --
23 or I think it was practically possible to even get it
24 done. But, you know, here you are. I think the
25 governor heeded that call that -- that -- that demand.

1 I mean, we've had it reviewed by a number of judges.
2 They have had nothing to say about our arguments. It's
3 been radio silence. And so the only decision that
4 remains in front of us right now is Judge Dick's.

5 And -- and so Judge Dick has set a timeline
6 for us to have a trial. They did say we get to have a
7 trial, but we don't get to have that trial until after
8 you go through this exercise. And, you know, she will
9 do it for you.

10 REPRESENTATIVE GADBERRY: And once we have
11 that trial, we have the opportunity, if she still
12 rejects the map, to appeal that?

13 MS. MURRILL: If she -- if she rejects the new
14 map?

15 REPRESENTATIVE GADBERRY: Or the existing one
16 again.

17 MS. MURRILL: Well, I mean, if she -- if you
18 don't draw a map, then we will be back in front of her
19 for the trial on the merits in very short order and that
20 -- that case will continue. If you do draw a map, then
21 the plaintiffs will have to decide whether they wish to
22 challenge that map, whether they accept that map. And
23 if they accept that map, then -- then the whole case
24 should be over.

25 REPRESENTATIVE BEAULLIEU: Yeah.

1 MS. MURRILL: If they do not accept that map
2 for whatever reason, then if they don't like it, I mean,
3 they may -- it may be a perfectly acceptable map for
4 some people. It may be a second majority/minority map
5 that -- that some people like or that some people don't.
6 So there's no guarantee that someone won't, that they
7 -- that the plaintiffs will like the map. But if they
8 -- they can -- so they could continue to challenge it,
9 and now they will have to go and amend their pleadings
10 and we, basically, will start over because it is a new
11 act of the legislature.

12 REPRESENTATIVE BEAULLIEU: It's going to
13 replace the existing map --

14 MS. MURRILL: It will replace the existing
15 map.

16 REPRESENTATIVE BEAULLIEU: -- Representative
17 Gadberry.

18 REPRESENTATIVE GADBERRY: Well, I mean, along
19 what Representative Farnum -- Farnum was saying earlier,
20 you chase your tail on this thing.

21 MS. MURRILL: Well, that's why I said it's not
22 easy.

23 REPRESENTATIVE GADBERRY: You comply with one
24 part, and you check another part and it doesn't meet the
25 criteria. So you go back and rework your population or

1 your districts, and that doesn't meet. So you're --
2 you're constantly going in a circle.

3 MS. MURRILL: Look, I believe that the United
4 States Supreme Court should give you better
5 instructions. I -- I do. I think that -- that -- that
6 is the argument that we made last summer. And, you
7 know, if -- if you pass a map and somebody else
8 challenges that map, it -- I will make that argument
9 again. I mean, I think that they -- the courts have
10 made this a difficult task for you and -- and so you are
11 doing the best that you can now within the constraints
12 of the rulings of the federal court.

13 So, you know, it's -- it's not an easy task
14 that you have and I believe that the jurisprudence has
15 made it confusing and that the Supreme Court would be
16 well -- I mean, you know, in my opinion, that the
17 Supreme Court ought to make its own jurisprudence
18 clearer to those of you who have the job of drawing the
19 maps. I think that's fair.

20 The constitution makes it clear that it is
21 your job to draw the maps. I believe that it is not
22 correct in terms of the balance of power between the
23 state and federal government, between the constitution,
24 you know, purview of how this should be happening, for
25 the courts to create precedent that makes it impossible

Page 74

1 also said that we had maps, and he pointed out the fact
 2 that the -- we as -- and I want -- I think it was Rep.
 3 Marcelle that said it. We did not have an opportunity
 4 to vote on all maps because all maps were not allowed to
 5 come out of this committee.
 6 There were options upon options to draw a
 7 second minority/majority congressional district, and
 8 they went all across the state to give minorities an
 9 opportunity to vote for their candidate of choice. They
 10 were not allowed to come out of this committee. We sat
 11 for a month, six hours, at least, a day, listening to
 12 the arguments of -- and the -- the makeup of each map
 13 and discussing voting -- voting-age population vs.
 14 population. So I understand why we still having those
 15 questions because we talked about it ad nauseam.
 16 But when you choose not to do right, that is
 17 when the process becomes difficult and it -- it seems as
 18 though we can't make a headway. But I want to put it on
 19 the record that I didn't vote for none of them maps that
 20 came out. I didn't vote for any of the maps that Judge
 21 Dick had in front of her because they were not maps that
 22 were fair and they were not maps that were taking
 23 consideration of all of the citizens of this great state
 24 that I call home no matter how unfair or how unjust it
 25 is to me.

Page 75

1 We still need to look and make sure that
 2 Louisiana is a state that it used to be, considering all
 3 of her citizens. And thank you for your time, Mr.
 4 Chair. I don't have a question for anybody.
 5 REPRESENTATIVE BEAULLIEU: Yeah. Let's try
 6 and -- and look -- let's try and keep this to questions
 7 for the attorney general. We -- we going to have a time
 8 to -- to talk about maps and -- and all that, but if --
 9 like to try and stick to any kind of questions out of
 10 respect for the attorney general's time. Representative
 11 Schamerhorn.
 12 REPRESENTATIVE SCHAMERHORN: Thank you, Mr.
 13 Chairman. Good morning.
 14 MS. MURRILL: Good morning.
 15 REPRESENTATIVE SCHAMERHORN: Welcome aboard.
 16 MS. MURRILL: Thank you.
 17 REPRESENTATIVE SCHAMERHORN: My question is if
 18 we do not present a different map, Judge Dick has
 19 threatened to draw her map. Is it not our --
 20 MS. MURRILL: Promised, not threatened.
 21 REPRESENTATIVE SCHAMERHORN: Well, okay. Is
 22 it not our responsibility as legislators by the -- and
 23 protected by the constitution, that our map should be
 24 the one that is approved? Now if she draws her own map,
 25 when she does, do we still have to approve -- would we

Page 76

1 have to approve her map --
 2 MS. MURRILL: No.
 3 REPRESENTATIVE SCHAMERHORN: -- or would it
 4 automatically go in force above what the constitution
 5 says is our duties as representatives?
 6 MS. MURRILL: So let me kind of -- let me
 7 untangle that a little bit. If you draw a map now, that
 8 map will become an act of the legislature and it will
 9 supersede the prior act of the legislature. The old map
 10 goes away.
 11 REPRESENTATIVE SCHAMERHORN: Okay.
 12 MS. MURRILL: If -- if you do not draw a map,
 13 then the -- the map that you drew before will remain --
 14 will be the map, and the plaintiffs will continue to
 15 litigate that. We will have a trial on the merits. The
 16 -- the record from the preliminary injunction will be,
 17 probably, supplemented with some additional testimony.
 18 She will issue a new ruling and she will issue a
 19 permanent injunction against the map. And then that
 20 will be litigated, which is my duty. And so I will
 21 continue to carry forth my duty to defend against the
 22 injunction. That's the process.
 23 If she draws the map herself, then someone
 24 could intervene and challenge that map. You know, there
 25 are a number of different potential outcomes if she

Page 77

1 draws the map. If she draws the map, you know, we could
 2 accept that map. You don't get it back. You don't get
 3 a second -- you don't get another opportunity to approve
 4 her work. The only question is can her work survive the
 5 scrutiny of the Fifth Circuit who grades her papers, and
 6 potentially, the United States Supreme Court who grades
 7 their papers.
 8 And, you know, I think what makes your job a
 9 little more complicated is that the prior -- not the --
 10 the exact prior map, but the map before that had been
 11 pre-cleared, there had been litigation in the past over
 12 a majority/minority map that was declared
 13 unconstitutional. So, you know, that's why I have never
 14 taken the position that our history is -- or at least
 15 our recent history is the same in redistricting as
 16 Alabama.
 17 And I believe that the courts need to make it
 18 more clear what your job is so that you can do it
 19 properly the first time and we can all avoid the
 20 litigation side of this and -- and continue to move
 21 forward with -- with an act that -- that, as I believe
 22 all your acts are, presumed to be constitutional. That
 23 is, you know, that's how I'll approach the next -- the
 24 next act that you issue. So I'm not picking and
 25 choosing. I mean, I think unless it's very clearly

1 minority district. Thank you.
 2 REPRESENTATIVE BEAULLIEU: Thank you, Ms.
 3 Labry. The -- the board is clear. Members, this is
 4 going to conclude our educational meeting this morning.
 5 I appreciate you all being here this morning and -- and
 6 your attentiveness and your questions. We're going to
 7 have a busy week. I ask you all to stay close to your
 8 computers. As bills are uploaded, read them, become
 9 familiar with them. If you have amendments, please get
 10 them to staff as soon as possible.

11 Remember, you also -- if anybody in any --
 12 from the outside is submitting information or submitting
 13 maps, to include shapefiles as well so we can have the
 14 -- the equivalency -- block equivalency files so that we
 15 can -- we can have that data and -- and get it to staff
 16 as -- as soon as possible. But, members, look forward
 17 to it. It'll be a fun week. Thank you.

18 MS. BAKER: Move to adjourn?

19 REPRESENTATIVE BEAULLIEU: Yeah.

20 Representative Thomas has moved to adjourn.

21 (Meeting adjourned.)
 22
 23
 24
 25

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January 17, 2024

In Re: Louisiana House Floor/Committee Video

Page 2

1 MS. MIZELL: Official Journal of the Senate of
 2 the state of Louisiana, Second day's proceedings,
 3 Tuesday, January 16th, 2024.
 4 MALE SPEAKER: Senator Hodges moves to
 5 dispense the reading of the journal without objection.
 6 MS. MIZELL: Petitions, memorials, and
 7 communications, I am in receipt of a letter from the
 8 president appointing the parliamentarians, Senator
 9 Gregory Miller. Messages from the house, the house is
 10 finally passed and asked for concurrence in the
 11 following house bills and joint resolutions. House Bill
 12 16. House Bill 8, respectfully submit headed. Michelle
 13 Fontenot, Clerk of the House. Introduction of House
 14 bills. Senator Talbot now moves for suspension of the
 15 rules for the purpose of reading the house bills the
 16 first and second time and referring them to Committee.
 17 House Bill 8 by Representative Mike Johnson is
 18 an act to Entitled 13 relative to the Supreme Court to
 19 provide relative to redistricting Supreme Court Justice
 20 districts. It is referred to senate and governmental
 21 affairs. House Bill 16 by Representative McFarland is
 22 an act to appropriate funds and to make certain
 23 reductions from certain sources to be allocated to the
 24 designated agencies and purposes in specific amounts for
 25 making of supplemental appropriations. Refer to

Page 3

1 finance.
 2 MALE SPEAKER: Oh, Senator O'Connor for an
 3 introduction.
 4 MALE SPEAKER 2: (inaudible 0:04:15).
 5 MALE SPEAKER: Oh, okay.
 6 MALE SPEAKER 2: It's okay.
 7 MALE SPEAKER: Never mind. It's -- that zip
 8 sound? Senate bills on third reading and final passage.
 9 MS. MIZELL: First bill? Senator Womack now
 10 moves for a suspension of the rules for the purpose of
 11 calling out of order, Senate Bill 8 by Senator Womack.
 12 It's an act to amend Title 18 relative to congressional
 13 districts to provide for the redistricting of
 14 Louisiana's congressional
 15 FEMALE SPEAKER: To provide with respect to
 16 positions and offices other than congressional, which
 17 are based on congressional districts.
 18 MALE SPEAKER: Senator Womack, on your bill.
 19 SENATOR WOMACK: Thank you, Mr. President.
 20 Colleagues, I bring Senate Bill Number 8 before you this
 21 evening. As you know, Louisiana congressional districts
 22 must be drawn, given the Federal Voting Rights Act
 23 litigation that is still ongoing in the US District
 24 Court for the Middle District of Louisiana. This map in
 25 the bill that I'm introducing, which is the product of a

Page 4

1 long, detailed process, achieves several goals.
 2 First, as you know and you're aware of,
 3 Congresswoman Julia Letlow is my representative in
 4 Washington, DC. The boundaries in the bill I'm
 5 proposing ensure that Congresswoman Letlow remains both
 6 unpaired with any other incumbents, and in a
 7 congressional district that should continue to elect a
 8 Republican to Congress for the remainder of this decade.
 9 I have great pride in the work of Congresswoman Letlow
 10 and -- that she's accomplished, and this map will ensure
 11 that Louisianans will continue to benefit from her
 12 presence in the halls of the Congress for as long as she
 13 decides to continue to serve this great state.
 14 Second. Louisiana has six congressional
 15 districts. The map that's proposed bill ensures that
 16 four are safe Republican seats. Louisiana Republican
 17 presence in the United States' countours has contributed
 18 tremendously to the national discourse, and I'm very
 19 proud that both Speaker of the US House of
 20 Representatives, Mike Johnson, and US House Majority
 21 Leader Steve Scalise are both from our great state.
 22 This map ensures that two of them will have solidly
 23 Republican districts at home, so they can focus on the
 24 national leadership that we need in Washington, DC. The
 25 map that's proposed in this bill ensures conservative

Page 5

1 principle is retained by the majority of those in
 2 Louisiana and will continue to extend past our
 3 boundaries to the nation's capital.
 4 Third. The corridor that you see on the map
 5 that -- that you have on your -- your table, if you'll
 6 notice the map runs up Red River, which is barge
 7 traffic, commerce. It also has I-49, which is a --
 8 which is -- goes from Lafayette to Shreveport, which is
 9 also a corridor for our state that is very important to
 10 our commerce. We have a college. We have education
 11 along that corridor. We have a presence with ag with
 12 our row crop, as well as our cattle industry all up
 13 along Red River in those parishes.
 14 A lot of people from that area, the
 15 Natchitoches Parish, as well as Alexandria, use
 16 Alexandria for -- for -- for their healthcare, their
 17 hospitals, and so forth in that area. So finally, the
 18 amounts in the proposed bill responds appropriate to the
 19 ongoing Federal Voting Rights Act in the Middle District
 20 of Louisiana. For those who are unaware, the
 21 congressional amounts that we enacted in 2022 of March
 22 have been the subject of litigation, roughly since the
 23 day -- the 2022 Congressional Redistricting Bill went
 24 into effect. Even before we enacted it.
 25 After a substantial amount of prolonged

1 litigation, the Federal District Court has adhered to
2 its view that the federal law requires that the state
3 have two congressional districts with a majority of
4 Black voters. Our secretary of state, attorney general,
5 and our prior legislative leadership appealed that, but
6 have yet to succeed. And we are now here because of the
7 federal court order, that we have to have first
8 opportunity to act. The district court order that we
9 must have two majority voting-age population districts,
10 combined with the political impurities I just described,
11 have largely -- largely driven the boundaries of
12 District Two and District Six on your map, both of which
13 are over 50 percent voting -- Black voting age
14 population.

15 Given the state's current demographics, there
16 is not enough high Black population in the southeast
17 portion of Louisiana to create two majority Black
18 districts, and to also comply with the US Constitution
19 one person, one vote requirement. That is the reason
20 why District Two is drawn around Orleans Parish, while
21 District Six includes the Black population of East Baton
22 Rouge Parish and travels up the I-49 quarter to include
23 Black population in Shreveport. While this is a
24 different map than the Plaintiffs' litigation have
25 proposed, this is the only map I reviewed that

1 accomplishes the political goals I believe that are
2 important for my district, for Louisiana, and for the
3 country.

4 While I did not draw these boundaries myself,
5 I carefully considered the number of different map
6 options. I firmly submit that the congressional voting
7 boundaries represented in this bill best achieve the
8 goals of protecting Congresswoman Letlow's seat,
9 maintaining a strong district for Speaker Johnson, as
10 well as Majority Leader Steve Scalise, ensuring four
11 Republican districts, and adhering to the command of the
12 Federal Court in the Middle District of Louisiana. And
13 I ask for favorable passage.

14 MALE SPEAKER: We have -- we have one question
15 by Senator Morris for --

16 SENATOR MORRIS: Senator Womack, among the
17 factors that you considered was the community of
18 interest of the district. Something that was considered
19 in coming up with this version of the map that we have
20 before us.

21 SENATOR WOMACK: Senator Morris, this map was
22 strictly drawn from the political aspect of our
23 congressman in -- in office is how it was drawn.

24 SENATOR MORRIS: Did -- you didn't consider
25 the community of interest of people having something in

1 common with one another within the district?

2 SENATOR WOMACK: No, I didn't because it was
3 -- it was -- we had to draw two districts, and that's
4 the only way we could get two districts. One of the
5 ways we could get two districts, and still protect our
6 political interest.

7 SENATOR MORRIS: Well, one of the things you
8 said earlier was that -- that we had in common the
9 agriculture. You mentioned that. That's a community of
10 interest. So you did consider agriculture as being
11 something that everybody had in common with this
12 district, or?

13 SENATOR WOMACK: My comment was -- was the
14 fact that it was along that corridor. Ag was along that
15 corridor some -- some -- not so much in that community
16 interest. Just maintaining -- bringing out the fact
17 that I-49 does go through there, and it does encompass
18 your -- your timberland, your ag, your hospitals. Just
19 trying to bring to light some of the positives going up
20 that corridor.

21 SENATOR MORRIS: So would you -- would you say
22 that the heart of this district is Northeast Louisiana
23 and North Central Louisiana?

24 SENATOR WOMACK: I wouldn't say the heart of
25 the district is that way, but the way the district -- to

1 pick up the -- the -- and honor the courts, it had to be
2 drawn like it had to be drawn to pick that up.

3 SENATOR MORRIS: So the -- is there a heart of
4 the district?

5 SENATOR WOMACK: If it is, it'll be a small
6 majority of the heart. I don't think it's a -- it's a
7 -- it -- it has a heart of the district, but it had to
8 start somewhere.

9 SENATOR MORRIS: Do you know what the most
10 populated parish is of Congressional District Five at
11 the current moment?

12 SENATOR WOMACK: I do not. I hadn't looked at
13 that to -- to prove that myself. I (inaudible 0:08:54)
14 -- could be Ouachita Parish.

15 SENATOR MORRIS: Right. So Ouachita Parish,
16 which is the most populated parish in Congressional
17 District Five, which you seek to protect for
18 Congresswoman Letlow. Your map cuts Ouachita Parish
19 into various pieces, does it not? And puts a lot of
20 that in Congressman Johnson's District Four, correct?

21 SENATOR WOMACK: That's true. The way the map
22 is drawn. That's in my bill. That is the way it's
23 drawn.

24 SENATOR MORRIS: And like you, your -- I -- I
25 think you indicated that Congresswoman Letlow is your

Page 10

1 congressperson, and -- and it's important to you for her
 2 to remain to be your Congresswoman; is that correct?
 3 SENATOR WOMACK: Very important.
 4 SENATOR MORRIS: Well, under your map, I would
 5 be Congressman Johnson's -- in his district, and so
 6 would Senator Cathey, and so would Representative
 7 Echols; is that correct?
 8 SENATOR WOMACK: That would be correct. I
 9 don't -- I know -- I've been to your house, but I hadn't
 10 been in any of the others, but I think you're correct.
 11 SENATOR MORRIS: So that would be important to
 12 me; did you know? But -- but this district as it's
 13 drawn now, would move Lincoln Parish and Louisiana Tech
 14 into Congressman Johnson's district; would it not?
 15 SENATOR WOMACK: That's a possibility.
 16 SENATOR MORRIS: Well, your map does -- map
 17 does put Lincoln Parish -- all of Lincoln Parish into
 18 Congressman Johnson's district; does it not?
 19 SENATOR WOMACK: It does do that, yes.
 20 SENATOR MORRIS: So -- but the district does
 21 reach down into Baton Rouge; does it not?
 22 SENATOR WOMACK: It does.
 23 SENATOR MORRIS: And the district includes
 24 Tiger Stadium in the district and also Joe Aillet
 25 Stadium at -- in Louisiana Tech in Ruston.

Page 11

1 SENATOR WOMACK: In the minority district, in
 2 district -- in District Two -- or District Six.
 3 SENATOR MORRIS: Isn't it true that Tiger
 4 Stadium in your -- on your map is located in
 5 Congresswoman Letlow's district?
 6 SENATOR WOMACK: Yes.
 7 SENATOR MORRIS: And so is Joe Aillet Stadium
 8 at Louisiana Tech.
 9 SENATOR WOMACK: Not -- not in -- not in that
 10 district. She don't go into -- under my map, she
 11 doesn't go into Ruston.
 12 SENATOR MORRIS: Under your map, all of
 13 Lincoln Parish is in Congresswoman -- that's Lincoln on
 14 the map right there. That's where Ruston is.
 15 SENATOR WOMACK: Right.
 16 SENATOR MORRIS: And so that is Congresswoman
 17 -- that would be -- it's currently Congresswoman
 18 Letlow's, but now it's going to be Congressman
 19 Johnson's.
 20 SENATOR WOMACK: Right.
 21 SENATOR MORRIS: Okay. Right.
 22 SENATOR WOMACK: Yeah.
 23 SENATOR MORRIS: So they will be in different
 24 districts. Tiger Stadium will be in Congresswoman -- I
 25 mean, yeah, Congresswoman Letlow's district, but

Page 12

1 Louisiana Tech will be in Congressman Johnson, even
 2 though Louisiana Tech is only 30 mile -- 30, 40 miles
 3 away from Congresswoman Letlow's home.
 4 SENATOR WOMACK: I -- I agree with that --
 5 with that totally, where we had to draw two minority
 6 districts. That's -- that's the way the numbers worked
 7 out. You've worked with -- with -- with redistricting
 8 before, and that's -- that's -- you have to -- you have
 9 to work everybody around the best you can. This is --
 10 SENATOR MORRIS: Well, as of yesterday before
 11 Committee, the map -- my home and Senator Cathey's home,
 12 but you amended it to put even more in Congressman
 13 Johnson's district; did you not?
 14 SENATOR WOMACK: Senator Morris, my
 15 understanding that -- that -- that my amendment put you
 16 all in Congresswoman Letlow's district.
 17 SENATOR MORRIS: In Congressman Johnson's
 18 district under the -- under your amendment because it
 19 added more Ouachita Parish into District Four; did it
 20 not?
 21 SENATOR WOMACK: My understanding that when we
 22 moved that, that it added y'all. I could be wrong on
 23 that, but it added y'all.
 24 SENATOR MORRIS: The -- the amendment as I
 25 understand it and looked at it in Committee before

Page 13

1 yesterday, the bill as filed -- but now, under the
 2 current version of the bill, I am in Congressman
 3 Johnson's district.
 4 SENATOR WOMACK: Okay.
 5 SENATOR MORRIS: Don't you think we should
 6 have moved -- included Louisiana Tech and Ouachita
 7 Parish in the Northeast Louisiana Congressional
 8 District?
 9 SENATOR WOMACK: Senator Morris, it's -- it's
 10 a lot of could have, and -- and -- and I regret that
 11 it's not, but we also have to look at the other members
 12 of Congress, and what we can live with concerning that.
 13 SENATOR MORRIS: If your bill gets out of --
 14 off the floor today and goes over to the House, would
 15 you be amenable to amendments that would allow this
 16 district, as long as all the other requisites are -- are
 17 there for -- to comply with the judge's order, and to
 18 comply with, you know, the -- the community of interest
 19 and all the other redistricting principles that we have
 20 to abide by?
 21 SENATOR WOMACK: Senator Morris, I have no
 22 problem in that, as long as it -- it -- it -- it -- it
 23 meets the requirements of the bill.
 24 SENATOR MORRIS: Thank you, Senator. I
 25 appreciate your efforts, and I'm hopeful that we can --

Page 14

1 as if -- assuming the bill does move, that we can
 2 perhaps find a resolution that can make everybody, if
 3 not absolutely happy, a little happier. Thank you.
 4 SENATOR WOMACK: Thank you, Senator Morris.
 5 MALE SPEAKER: Senator Stine for the floor.
 6 (Pause.)
 7 SENATOR STINE: Thank you, Mr. President.
 8 Members of this esteemed chamber, today we stand at a
 9 crossroads, burdened with a decision that weighs heavily
 10 on each of us. The congressional map before us, a
 11 construct far from our ideal, now demands our reluctant
 12 endorsement. It pains me, as it does many of you, to
 13 navigate these troubled waters not of our own making,
 14 but of a heavy-handed, Obama-appointed federal judge,
 15 who has regrettably left us little room to maneuver.
 16 This map, imperfect as it is, stands as a bulwark
 17 protecting not just lines on a map, but the very pillars
 18 of our representation in Congress.
 19 It safeguards the positions of pivotal
 20 figures, the United States Speaker of the House, the
 21 majority leader, and notably, the sole female member of
 22 our congressional delegation. Her role is not merely
 23 symbolic. She is a lynchpin in the appropriations,
 24 education, and workforce committees which are vital to
 25 the prosperity and well-being of our state. We are the

Page 15

1 guardians of Louisiana's voice on the national stage.
 2 Our decision today, while constrained, is crucial.
 3 It's about more than lines on a map. It's
 4 about ensuring our state's continued influence in the
 5 halls of power where decisions are made that affect
 6 every citizen we represent. So with a heavy heart, but
 7 a clear understanding of the stakes, unfortunately, we
 8 must pass this map before us instead of giving the pen
 9 to a heavy-handed, Obama-appointed federal judge who
 10 seeks to enforce her will on the legislature. Into an
 11 untenable situation, rather than acting as a co-equal
 12 branch of government as laid out in our constitution.
 13 MALE SPEAKER: Senator Carter for the floor.
 14 SENATOR CARTER: Thank you, Mr. President,
 15 members. This proposed map by Senator Womack -- well,
 16 let me start with the current district, District Two.
 17 The current African American voting age population in
 18 District Two is currently 58 percent. This map proposed
 19 by Senator Womack reduces it to barely 51 percent, and,
 20 Committee, the bill's author testified that no sort of
 21 performance analysis had been conducted to determine
 22 whether or not District Two continues to consistently
 23 perform as an African American district. There are
 24 serious concerns about this map. There are serious
 25 concerns about this proposal.

Page 16

1 Despite those concerns, I stand in support of
 2 this legislation. It still needs work, it must be
 3 amended, but I stand in support of it today, and I speak
 4 only for today. I would like to read to you all a
 5 statement from Congressman Carter, who currently
 6 represents the Second Congressional District. Many of
 7 us served with him either when we were in the House, or
 8 those of us who served with him in the Senate. Here's a
 9 statement.
 10 "My dear friends and colleagues, as I said on
 11 the steps of the capital, I will work with anyone who
 12 wants to create two majority-minority districts. I am
 13 not married to any one map. I have worked tirelessly to
 14 help create two majority-minority districts that
 15 perform. That's how I know that there may be better
 16 ways to create -- to craft both of these districts.
 17 There are multiple maps that haven't been reviewed at
 18 all. However, the Womack map creates two
 19 majority-minority districts, and therefore I am
 20 supportive of it. And I urge my former colleagues and
 21 friends to vote for it while trying to make both
 22 districts stronger with appropriate amendment."
 23 "We do not want to jeopardize this rare
 24 opportunity to give African American voters the equal
 25 representation they rightly deserve." And that's the

Page 17

1 statement from Congressman Troy Carter. I expressed my
 2 concerns. They're serious concerns. It is my
 3 expectation and my hope that this bill continue to be
 4 worked on, that amendments continue to happen, but today
 5 I stand in support. Thank you.
 6 MALE SPEAKER: Senator Jackson for the floor.
 7 (Pause.)
 8 SENATOR JACKSON: He tried to cut off my mic.
 9 (Pause.)
 10 MALE SPEAKER: Members, you have to talk
 11 directly into the mic, unlike in previous times, where
 12 you could kind of talk around the mic. You have to
 13 literally talk directly into the mic for it to work.
 14 We're going to adjust that for the next --
 15 SENATOR JACKSON: Hello. Okay. Good.
 16 (inaudible 0:23:11) was going to have a fit if I wasn't
 17 able to speak. I stand in support of this map. I first
 18 want to thank Senator Womack, who had the fortitude,
 19 regardless of how we got here, but to stand up and do
 20 what the last body couldn't do, and that's to come
 21 together. But I do stand to say this because I said it
 22 in Committee. I reluctantly came to the floor to
 23 support this map because my constituents and a lot of
 24 our constituents in North Louisiana right now are still
 25 experiencing an ice state. That's what I call it

Page 18

1 because we didn't get snow.
 2 And so a lot of them don't even know that
 3 we're down here right now passing maps. And so this is
 4 the first time in a long time I'm probably going to vote
 5 for something that I haven't vetted through my
 6 constituency because tonight, myself, Representative
 7 Fisher and Representative Morrell will have a Zoom
 8 community meeting to catch them up on what they have
 9 lost while they were at home, because my legislative
 10 assistant was finally able to get to the office and at
 11 least send something out to our constituency.
 12 However, at some point, what they did tell me
 13 over and over again for the last year, year and a half
 14 that we've been going through this process, that they
 15 were supportive of fair and equitable maps, and that
 16 they knew a fair and equitable -- equitable map would be
 17 something that created fair representation for all
 18 people in the State of Louisiana. I will end with this.
 19 I don't think we're in a -- in the hands of a
 20 heavy-handed judge, but we're in the hands of
 21 consequences that the last legislature created in our
 22 failure to act. And I say that with a heart of hope
 23 that we act today on what is right, on what is just, and
 24 what is fair.
 25 I don't believe, and I said this before, any

Page 19

1 of my colleagues in this chamber would have it to be
 2 that a certain group of people in the State of Louisiana
 3 would not be properly represented. I am an American who
 4 stands every time the flag is presented. I proudly say
 5 one nation under God. And I hope today that in this
 6 senate we will stand as one Louisiana under God, because
 7 God is for what's just and what's equitable and what
 8 helps all people.
 9 There is nothing that says that a second
 10 African American serving in Congress in Louisiana will
 11 not help the masses. Well, if we think that, then we
 12 think that we're less or better than a person based on
 13 race. If anyone in this chamber could articulate a
 14 reason why they believe that any African American that
 15 sits before you today wouldn't go to Congress with the
 16 same zeal and vigor and heart for the people, then maybe
 17 we can say that there's not an African American in this
 18 state that's going to stand in Congress and represent
 19 us.
 20 But I literally do not believe that there's a
 21 colleague in here that looks across this chamber at any
 22 member of the Black caucus and does not believe that we
 23 wouldn't go to Congress and represent Louisiana. And so
 24 I stand in support, with reluctance of having to talk to
 25 my constituents after this vote, but with carrying the

Page 20

1 spirit of fairness that they asked me to carry in the
 2 last redistricting session. And I want to thank Senator
 3 Womack because the mark of a true leader is a leader
 4 that not only does what he wants to do, but what's
 5 necessary to bring resolve and wholeness to a body that
 6 has to work together on a number of issues. Thank you.
 7 MALE SPEAKER: Thank you, Senator Jackson.
 8 Senator Duplessis for the floor.
 9 SENATOR DUPLESSIS: Thank you, Mr. President.
 10 Thank you, Chairman Womack. I just want to make a few
 11 brief comments based on some comments that have been
 12 made earlier today. I was not necessarily planning to
 13 speak, but I think it's important that I just share a
 14 thought or two. It was said that this is much more than
 15 just lines on a map, and I agree. It is much more than
 16 just lines on a map. We've heard a lot from Chairman
 17 Womack and my colleague, Senator Stine about the
 18 importance of protecting certain elected officials, but
 19 it's about more than lines on a map. It's about the
 20 people of this state. It's about one-third of this
 21 state going underrepresented for too long.
 22 It's about a federal law called the Voting
 23 Rights Act that has not been interpreted just by one
 24 judge in the Middle District of Louisiana who was
 25 appointed by former president Barack Obama, but also a

Page 21

1 US Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals that's made up of
 2 judges that were appointed by predominantly Republican
 3 presidents, and a United States Supreme Court that has
 4 already made rulings. That has been made up of justices
 5 that were appointed by a majority of Republican
 6 presidents, primarily former president Trump. This is
 7 not about one judge that was appointed by former
 8 president Barack Obama. This is about the people of
 9 this state, and one-third of that state, 33 percent, to
 10 be exact, being underrepresented.
 11 So I think it's important that we keep the
 12 focus on why we're here today. None of us want to be
 13 here today. We've been at this for well over two years,
 14 and all of us have a level of reluctance with the maps
 15 that are before us. Just like Senator Carter, I'm not
 16 thrilled about what's happening to send it to
 17 Congressional District Two, and the way that it's
 18 lowering the numbers.
 19 Senator Price and I, we coauthored a bill that
 20 we felt performed better, but we too are going to
 21 support this map because not only have we been ordered
 22 to do it by, yes, a judge who was appointed by President
 23 Obama, but if we felt like the -- the -- the -- the
 24 appellate judges would overrule her, then we'd be right
 25 back in court. We're at the end of the road, and I too

1 will support this -- this map. Not because I think it's
 2 perfect, not because I think it's the best thing that we
 3 could do, but because it's time to give people of this
 4 state fair representation. Thank you.
 5 MALE SPEAKER: Thank you, Senator Duplessis.
 6 Senator Pressly for the floor.
 7 SENATOR PRESSLY: Thank you, Mr. President,
 8 and members. Senators, I rise today in opposition of
 9 this bill, and I rise in opposition because I represent
 10 a community that's unique and wonderful in many ways,
 11 very diverse, and clearly a passionate part of my life
 12 in Northwest Louisiana. I believe that Shreveport and
 13 Bossier City and the surrounding parishes of De Soto and
 14 Red River and Webster are unique from the rest of our
 15 state, and I believe that commonalities of -- of
 16 interest are important.
 17 I agree with -- with Senator Jackson. I would
 18 have no issue whatsoever of having any member of this
 19 body, and many others from throughout our state of any
 20 background, of any creed, of any race represent our
 21 great, wonderful, diverse state in Washington, DC. But
 22 I cannot support a map that puts Caddo Parish and
 23 portions of my district, which is over 220 miles from
 24 here, in a district that will be represented by someone
 25 in East Baton Rouge that may or may not have ever even

1 been to Northwest Louisiana, and certainly doesn't
 2 understand the rich culture, rich, important uniqueness
 3 of our area of the state.
 4 When we look at -- at Louisiana, we often talk
 5 about north and south, and that division is true. It's
 6 real. I think all of us acknowledge that. The I-10
 7 corridor has unique needs. When you look at -- at the
 8 challenges that you face with storms, often you think of
 9 hurricanes. In North Louisiana, we think of tornados
 10 and ice storms. When you look at the -- the important
 11 region of our states and the -- the diverse industries
 12 that we have in Northwest Louisiana, Barksdale is
 13 vitally important. Certainly, having Barksdale and Fort
 14 Johnson now, previously Fort Polk, together in one
 15 district is the one positive thing that I see in this
 16 map, and I think that is something that we must keep in
 17 mind as we continue through this process.
 18 But I am concerned with the important part of
 19 -- of this state, Northwest Louisiana, not having the
 20 same member of Congress. With having a -- two members
 21 of Congress, that has the potential to split our
 22 community even further along a -- a -- a -- a -- a --
 23 line that's based purely on race, and I'm concerned
 24 about that. Therefore, I'm voting no, and I urge you to
 25 do the same.

1 MALE SPEAKER: Thank you, Senator Pressly.
 2 The board is clear. Senator Womack, to close on your
 3 bill.
 4 SENATOR WOMACK: Colleagues, appreciate the
 5 questions and the comments, and I just ask that we move
 6 this bill favorable.
 7 MALE SPEAKER: Senator Womack has moved
 8 favorable passage of Senate Bill 8. When the machines
 9 are open, all those in favor, aye. Those opposed, vote
 10 nay. Open the machines. Madam Secretary, open the
 11 machines. Go to a machine, members. Senator -- Senator
 12 Miguez. There we go. Secretary, close the machines.
 13 27 ayes, 11 nays. The -- the -- the bill is passed.
 14 Senator Womack moves of reconsideration. The -- the
 15 vote by which the bill was passed. I lay the motion on
 16 the table without objection. So ordered.
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Page 2

1 Representative Larvadain. Vice Chair Lyons.
 2 VICE CHAIRMAN LYONS: Present.
 3 MS. BAKER: Present. Representative Marcelle.
 4 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: Here.
 5 MS. BAKER: Present. Representative Newell.
 6 REPRESENTATIVE NEWELL: Here.
 7 MS. BAKER: Present. Representative
 8 Schamerhorn.
 9 REPRESENTATIVE SCHAMERHORN: Here.
 10 MS. BAKER: Present. Representative Thomas.
 11 REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS: Here.
 12 MS. BAKER: Present. Representative Wright.
 13 Representative Wyble.
 14 REPRESENTATIVE WYBLE: Here.
 15 MS. BAKER: Present. We have 12 members in a
 16 quorum.
 17 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Thank you, Ms. Baker.
 18 Members, we have one item on the agenda today. It's
 19 Senate Bill 8 by Senator Womack. Senator Womack is --
 20 is delayed this morning, so what we're going to do --
 21 until I hear back from Senator Womack, we're going to
 22 stand at ease until then. So we just ask you all to
 23 kind of stay nearby.
 24 We'll give you all some time to -- to be able
 25 to get back, but until we hear back from Senator Womack,

Page 3

1 we're going to go ahead and stand at ease. And so just
 2 viewer -- members that are listening online or watching
 3 online, just kind of be aware. We are hoping to come
 4 back in at some time later this morning. Thank you all.
 5 (Pause.)
 6 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Good afternoon, members,
 7 viewing audience. Thank you for your patience. We are
 8 ready to resume our House and Governmental Affairs
 9 Committee. Today is Thursday, January 18th, 2024. Ms.
 10 Baker, can you give me an updated roll call, please?
 11 MS. BAKER: Chairman Beaulieu.
 12 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Here.
 13 MS. BAKER: Present. Representative Billings.
 14 REPRESENTATIVE BILLINGS: Here.
 15 MS. BAKER: Present. Representative Boyd.
 16 REPRESENTATIVE BOYD: Present.
 17 MS. BAKER: Present. Representative Carlson.
 18 REPRESENTATIVE CARLSON: Present.
 19 MS. BAKER: Present. Representative Carter.
 20 Representative Carver.
 21 REPRESENTATIVE CARVER: Here.
 22 MS. BAKER: Present. Representative Farnum.
 23 REPRESENTATIVE FARNUM: Here.
 24 MS. BAKER: Present. Representative Gadberry.
 25 REPRESENTATIVE GADBERRY: Here.

Page 4

1 MS. BAKER: Present. Representative Johnson.
 2 Representative Larvadain.
 3 REPRESENTATIVE LARVADAIN: Here.
 4 MS. BAKER: Present. Vice Chair Lyons.
 5 VICE CHAIRMAN LYONS: Present.
 6 MS. BAKER: Present. Representative Marcelle.
 7 Representative Newell.
 8 REPRESENTATIVE NEWELL: Here.
 9 MS. BAKER: Present. Representative
 10 Schamerhorn.
 11 REPRESENTATIVE SCHAMERHORN: Here.
 12 MS. BAKER: Present. Representative Thomas.
 13 REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS: Here.
 14 MS. BAKER: Present. Representative Wright.
 15 Representative Wyble.
 16 REPRESENTATIVE WYBLE: Here.
 17 MS. BAKER: Present. We have 13 in a quorum.
 18 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Thank you, Ms. Baker.
 19 Members, we have one item on our agenda today. That's
 20 Senate Bill 8 by Senator Womack. Ms. Lowery, would you
 21 please read-in the bill?
 22 MS. LOWERY: Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.
 23 Members, Senator Womack brings Senate Bill Number 8 to
 24 provide relative to the redistricting of Louisiana's
 25 Congressional District, to provide with respect to

Page 5

1 positions and offices other than congressional based
 2 upon congressional districts, and to provide related
 3 matters.
 4 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Senior Womack, on your
 5 bill.
 6 SENATOR WOMACK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
 7 Committee members, good evening. Thank you for letting
 8 me come in today and present this bill. As you know,
 9 Louisiana Congressional Districts must be redrawn, given
 10 the Federal Voting Rights Act litigation that is still
 11 ongoing in the US District Court for the Middle District
 12 of Louisiana. The map and the bill that I'm
 13 introducing, which is the product of a long, detailed
 14 process, achieves several goals.
 15 First, as you all are aware, Congresswoman
 16 Julia Letlow is my representative in Washington, DC.
 17 The boundaries in this bill I'm proposing, ensure that
 18 Congresswoman Letlow remains both unpaired with any
 19 other incumbents, and in the congressional district that
 20 should continue to elect a Republican to Congress for
 21 the remainder of this decade.
 22 I have great pride in the work that
 23 Congresswoman Letlow has accomplished, and this map will
 24 ensure that Louisianans will continue to benefit from
 25 her presence in the halls of Congress for as long as she

Page 6

1 decides and continues to serve our great state. As you
 2 know, Congresswoman Letlow sits on appropriations. She
 3 sits on ag, which is a big part of my district.
 4 Second, the Louisiana 6th Congressional
 5 District. The map and the proposed bill ensures that
 6 four are safe Republican seats. Louisiana's Republican
 7 present in the United States Congress has contributed
 8 tremendously to the national discourse, and I'm very
 9 proud that both Speaker of the US House of
 10 Representatives, Mike Johnson, and US House Majority
 11 Leader Steve Scalise are both from our great state.
 12 This map ensures that the two of them will
 13 have solidly Republican districts at home, so they can
 14 focus on the national leadership that we need in
 15 Washington, DC. The map proposed in this bill ensures
 16 that the Conservative principles retained by the
 17 majority of those in Louisiana will continue to extend
 18 past our boundaries to our nation's capital.
 19 Third, the map that I've presented is -- goes
 20 along the Red River. It's the I-49 corridor. We have
 21 commerce through there. We have a college through
 22 there. We have a lot of ag cattlemen as well as farm
 23 row crop, and a lot of people up through that corridor
 24 comes back to Alexandria using that corridor for their
 25 healthcare. Finally, these maps in the proposed bill

Page 7

1 respond appropriate to the ongoing Federal Voting Rights
 2 Act case in the Middle District of Louisiana.
 3 For those who are unaware, the congressional
 4 maps that we enacted in March 2022 have been the subject
 5 of litigation, roughly since the day the 2022
 6 Congressional Redistricting Bill went into effect and
 7 even before we enacted it. After a substantial amount
 8 of prolonged litigation, the Federal District Court has
 9 adhered to its view that the federal law requires that
 10 the state have two congressional districts with a
 11 majority of Black voters.
 12 Our secretary of state, attorney general, and
 13 our prior legislative leadership appealed, but have yet
 14 to succeed, and we are now here because of the Federal
 15 Court's order that we have a first opportunity to act.
 16 The District Court's order that we must have two
 17 majority Black voting age population districts, combined
 18 with the political imperative I just described, have
 19 largely driven the boundaries for District 2 and
 20 District 6, both of which are over 50 percent Black
 21 voting age population.
 22 Given the state's current demographics, there
 23 is not enough high -- high enough Black population in
 24 the southeast portion of this -- Louisiana to create two
 25 majority Black districts, and to also comply with the US

Page 8

1 Constitution one person, one vote requirement. That is
 2 the reason why District 2 is drawn around the Orleans
 3 Parish and why District 6 includes the Black population
 4 of East Baton Rouge Parish and travels up I-49 corridor
 5 to include Black population in Shreveport.
 6 While this is a different map than the
 7 plaintiffs' litigation have proposed, this is the only
 8 map I reviewed that accomplishes the political goals I
 9 believe are important for my district, for Louisiana,
 10 and for the country.
 11 While I did not draw these boundaries myself,
 12 I carefully considered a number of different map
 13 options, and I firmly submit the congressional voting
 14 boundaries represented in this bill best achieve the
 15 goals for protecting Congressman Letlow's seat,
 16 maintaining strong districts for Speaker Johnson and
 17 Majority Leader Scalise, ensuring four Republican
 18 districts, and adhering to the command of the Federal
 19 Court in the Middle District of Louisiana. I'd be happy
 20 to answer any questions.
 21 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Thank you, Senator
 22 Womack. Representative Marcelle for a question.
 23 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: Thank you, Senator
 24 Womack, for presenting this bill. Were -- did you have
 25 the opportunity to view the map that I filed?

Page 9

1 SENATOR WOMACK: I -- I reviewed several maps,
 2 Representative Marcelle.
 3 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: HB5.
 4 SENATOR WOMACK: HB5. I didn't -- I didn't
 5 look at the HB5 --
 6 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: Did not.
 7 SENATOR WOMACK: -- per se. I looked at
 8 several maps. One of them could have been that.
 9 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: Okay. Because I
 10 heard you say that you thought that your map was the
 11 best possible route. A pathway to get to what we needed
 12 to, first of all, make sure that we get out of the
 13 litigation, apply with Section 2, and go about the
 14 deviations and the compactness and all of those
 15 different things that we needed to do in order to create
 16 a second Black seat -- congressional seat. Is that what
 17 I heard you say?
 18 SENATOR WOMACK: Yes, ma'am.
 19 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: Okay. Well, I -- I
 20 certainly want to thank you, and I know -- I spoke to
 21 you yesterday about putting an amendment on your bill to
 22 make sure that we could reduce the parish splits and
 23 that we had some conversations, and it's a short period
 24 of time. Certainly, I don't know when the amendments
 25 are going to be offered up, but I certainly want to go

Page 10

1 down those same lines of -- since I could not get my map
 2 through, which I thought was the best path, that I -- I
 3 would support this map, with some cleanup done to it.
 4 So I -- I just want to make sure that I go on
 5 the record of saying that I spoke to you. The things
 6 that my amendment would do would certainly be to add Red
 7 River Parish to Congressional District 6, and preserving
 8 the things in Red River community as well. So I want to
 9 go on the record of saying that I -- I believe that we
 10 have had several maps that would have gotten us there,
 11 but I think because of political reasons, we are here
 12 where we are today.
 13 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Representative Marcelle,
 14 just if I can chime in for a second, so I can let the
 15 viewing members know that online there are two different
 16 amendments that -- that will likely be proposed today,
 17 and both of those are available online for the -- for
 18 the viewing public. If we could hold off on those
 19 amendments for -- we have a -- a handful of questions on
 20 the board, Representative Marcelle, and then we'll come
 21 back. Is that okay with you?
 22 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: Yes. I just --
 23 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Okay. Good.
 24 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: I just wanted to --
 25 to make mention to that why -- why I was asking him some

Page 11

1 of the questions. So when you did this map, you -- you
 2 considered the population deviation.
 3 SENATOR WOMACK: Well, we had -- had to -- to
 4 create the two districts, we had to think about the
 5 population.
 6 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: And the parish
 7 splits as well?
 8 SENATOR WOMACK: The parish splits as well.
 9 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: So you felt like
 10 this was the best pathway after you viewed those areas
 11 that we certainly had to do to enact this map.
 12 SENATOR WOMACK: Representative Marcelle, I --
 13 I -- I want to be -- and -- and I -- I was hoping that
 14 it -- that covered that in my opening statement, but it
 15 -- it -- my map is politically drawn to protect our
 16 members of Congress as it stands, as well as create the
 17 two districts, minority district, Black districts.
 18 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: So in your opinion,
 19 your map does two things. It satisfies the Court, and
 20 it also protects the politics, or our congressional
 21 members. Is that -- is that --
 22 SENATOR WOMACK: Yes, ma'am.
 23 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: -- accurate to say?
 24 SENATOR WOMACK: Yes, ma'am.
 25 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: Okay. Thank you

Page 12

1 very much and thank you for your work.
 2 SENATOR WOMACK: Thank you.
 3 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Thank you, Representative
 4 Marcelle. Representative Boyd.
 5 REPRESENTATIVE BOYD: Good afternoon, Senator.
 6 How are you?
 7 SENATOR WOMACK: Fine, thank you.
 8 REPRESENTATIVE BOYD: So I agree with Rep
 9 Marcelle. This is not, in my opinion, the best map that
 10 I've seen, but I do understand what it took to get here,
 11 and my congressman seems to also be in support of the
 12 map. Therefore, I do plan on supporting the map,
 13 hopefully with some amendments. Are you open to an
 14 amendment on this?
 15 SENATOR WOMACK: Yes, ma'am, once -- once I
 16 see some amendments.
 17 REPRESENTATIVE BOYD: Okay.
 18 SENATOR WOMACK: You know, we'll look at
 19 amendments.
 20 REPRESENTATIVE BOYD: And then she mentioned
 21 the parish splits. How many parish splits are they; do
 22 you know?
 23 SENATOR WOMACK: I think we're 16 at the -- at
 24 the present time.
 25 REPRESENTATIVE BOYD: And do you know the

Page 13

1 BVAPs for 2 and 6?
 2 SENATOR WOMACK: I'm sorry?
 3 REPRESENTATIVE BOYD: The BVAPs for 2 and 6,
 4 do you know what they are right now?
 5 SENATOR WOMACK: No, I don't.
 6 REPRESENTATIVE BOYD: Okay. Did you have any
 7 communication with anybody from -- with community
 8 influences on this? Have you met with other groups?
 9 Who did you meet with to come up with this map?
 10 SENATOR WOMACK: I've had several meetings
 11 over the period of time with several groups.
 12 REPRESENTATIVE BOYD: With community of
 13 interest as well?
 14 SENATOR WOMACK: It -- it was hard to -- to
 15 create communities of interest with this map and -- and
 16 -- and still achieve some of the goals that we were
 17 trying to achieve from the congressional, political
 18 standpoint.
 19 REPRESENTATIVE BOYD: Okay. Again, based on
 20 the map and my conversation with our congressman, if we
 21 can get some things cleared up and straightened up on
 22 it, I would be in support of the bill as well.
 23 SENATOR WOMACK: Okay. Thank you.
 24 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Thank you, Representative
 25 Boyd. Representative Newell.

1 there was another map. There's a lot cleaner map
 2 because the map that I see goes from Shreveport to Baton
 3 Rouge, which you're just zigzagging. And you picked up
 4 Alexandria, you picked up Natchitoches, you picked up
 5 DeSoto, but it's more of a political map. The map that
 6 the Democrats pursued, it was a map that we agreed on
 7 two majority-minority districts, and this is more of a
 8 political map.

9 SENATOR WOMACK: Yeah, I know.

10 REPRESENTATIVE LARVADAIN: Okay. Thank you.

11 SENATOR WOMACK: Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Senator Womack, why are
 13 we here today? What -- what brought us all to this
 14 special session as it -- as it relates to, you know,
 15 what we're discussing here today?

16 SENATOR WOMACK: The middle courts of the
 17 district courts brought us here from the Middle
 18 District, and said, "Draw a map, or I'll draw a map."

19 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Okay.

20 SENATOR WOMACK: So that's what we've done.

21 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: And -- and were you --
 22 does -- does this map achieve that middle court's
 23 orders?

24 SENATOR WOMACK: It does.

25 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Okay. When you were

1 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Okay. That's what --
 2 that's what I was thinking. That's what I've learned
 3 through the process, and I just wanted to make sure that
 4 your map achieved that. Yeah.

5 SENATOR WOMACK: Yes, sir, Mr. Chairman.

6 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: All right. Senator, the
 7 board's cleared. We're going to go ahead, if you don't
 8 mind, and -- and take up the amendments right now. Bear
 9 with me for two seconds. Senator Marcelle, and -- and
 10 -- excuse me. Sorry about that promotion,
 11 Representative Marcelle.

12 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: That's okay.

13 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: And -- and Representative
 14 Farnum both have amendments.

15 FEMALE SPEAKER 2: Here. This card's in
 16 Marcelle's name.

17 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Okay. Hold that -- hold
 18 that for me. Bear with me. So the first amendment is
 19 how -- is Amendment 68. That is Amendment 60. Give me
 20 a second while it's loading. What amendment is 68?

21 MS. LOWERY: That is the one offered by
 22 Representative Farnum.

23 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Representative Farnum,
 24 we're going to take up your amendment first.
 25 Representative Farnum, on your amendment.

1 drawing the maps, you also took into consideration
 2 incumbency, correct?

3 SENATOR WOMACK: Right.

4 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Okay. To protect not
 5 just our state, but our national interest as well.

6 SENATOR WOMACK: Our national.

7 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Is that correct?

8 SENATOR WOMACK: Right.

9 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: This is -- this is bigger
 10 than just us.

11 SENATOR WOMACK: It's bigger than just us, and
 12 Louisiana has never been sitting in the poor position
 13 that they are today.

14 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: What -- what position
 15 does Congressman Mike Johnson have in the United States
 16 House of Representatives?

17 SENATOR WOMACK: He's a speaker of the house.

18 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Okay. And what about
 19 Congressman Steve Scalise?

20 SENATOR WOMACK: Majority leader of the house.

21 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Okay. So if we've been
 22 able to accomplish what the judge has ordered through
 23 your map, and also been able to protect the political
 24 interest, that is kosher, correct?

25 SENATOR WOMACK: That's exactly.

1 REPRESENTATIVE FARNUM: Thank you, Mr.
 2 Speaker. So I offer -- does -- do we need to read it
 3 in?

4 MS. LOWERY: Certainly.

5 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Ms. Lowery, please
 6 read-in the amendment.

7 MS. LOWERY: Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.
 8 Representative Farnum is offering up HCSBA-36268. And
 9 on page 1, it's going to delete lines 13 through 17, and
 10 delete pages 2 through 6, and we'll be inserting a new
 11 district configuration for the congressional districts
 12 for the State of Louisiana. This amendment is available
 13 online and is available in your packets, members, and
 14 contains maps and statistics relevant to the plan.

15 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Thank you, Ms. Lowery.
 16 Representative Farnum, on your amendment.

17 REPRESENTATIVE FARNUM: Thank you, Mr.
 18 Chairman. So in the -- in the beginning of this
 19 process, me and my colleagues from Southwest Louisiana
 20 set out to accomplish making Calcasieu whole. In the
 21 history of -- of our -- our great parish, we've always
 22 had one congressman that represented us. And -- and --
 23 and with the current map as presented from Senator
 24 Womack, it -- it split Calcasieu Parish basically in
 25 half in population. And -- and with the community of

Page 74

1 or COI landmark. So thinking of school districts or
 2 hospitals, airports, everything else when you're looking
 3 at that metric, all I can speak to -- I can't speak to
 4 this amendment. I just saw it. But in terms of
 5 landmark place splits, the map that we had proposed had
 6 the exact same amount as the enacted map.
 7 So that was another metric that, in our
 8 process, we were able to hold ourselves accountable to,
 9 to making sure our map was as good as or, in most of the
 10 instances, better than the enacted map.
 11 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: So, Representative Wyble,
 12 what we can do -- I know you're a big school board guy.
 13 Why don't we get you with them afterwards, and y'all can
 14 talk in some details on that?
 15 MS. WENGER: We've got slide decks on this.
 16 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Right. No. They have --
 17 they have -- they have tons of information.
 18 MS. WENGER: I'd be happy to provide it for us
 19 anytime.
 20 REPRESENTATIVE WYBLE: Thank -- thank you so
 21 much.
 22 MS. WENGER: Thank you.
 23 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Thank you, Representative
 24 Wyble. Members, that clears the board. Representative
 25 Farnum has a motion on the table to adopt Amendment Set

Page 75

1 68. And objection -- what's that?
 2 VICE CHAIRMAN LYONS: (inaudible 1:22:44).
 3 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Oh, oh. One second,
 4 Members. Vice Chairman Lyons.
 5 VICE CHAIRMAN LYONS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
 6 And I was going to address this -- this to
 7 Representative Farnum on -- on your amendment. And
 8 after the table was just -- was clear with that
 9 information, now, I -- I just want to say that the past
 10 two years, I've been through every roadshow throughout
 11 this state.
 12 I was in Calcasieu, and I heard the testimony
 13 there. And I -- I sympathize in it with the individual
 14 residents there as they talked about being whole as
 15 other communities of interest throughout the state.
 16 That was the most impacting testimony that we received
 17 throughout this process. And it went on for not only
 18 from our community to your community, everywhere else.
 19 And the question remains always - and we don't
 20 have an answer for - is: can we draw the perfect map? I
 21 don't think we ever can draw the perfect map. I don't
 22 think that there's ever going to be a situation where
 23 everybody's going to be happy or even whole.
 24 But I'm looking at the mission that we have
 25 here. And the mission that we have here is that we have

Page 76

1 to create two majority-Black districts. And performance
 2 of those maps that we saw earlier, some that didn't make
 3 it through, some that were here, including yours,
 4 Senator Womack, some of them perform. Some perform
 5 better than others.
 6 But we have to look at the -- the -- the
 7 center of this piece, and that is to create those
 8 districts that perform. And some of that's going to be
 9 for debate and some that's going to be for the -- the
 10 clearing pieces to happen as we go forward.
 11 But I just want to put on the record, you
 12 know, that I know the senators worked hard on this
 13 piece. And that goal is what was in mind, to create
 14 these two majority-Black districts and to do it with as
 15 much of the criteria as possible to be done to -- to
 16 make sure that it -- it -- it is conforming.
 17 And -- and with that being said, I wanted to
 18 get that clear of what that message is and what we're
 19 doing here, which you remember before we -- we go with
 20 this piece. And I wanted to say that, Mr. Chairman, as
 21 we go forward in this opportunity. Thank you.
 22 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Thank you, Vice Chairman
 23 Lyons. Members, back on the motion, we have a -- a
 24 motion by Representative Foreman to adopt -- Farnum to
 25 adopt Amendment Set 68. Is there any objections to the

Page 77

1 adoption of that amendment set? Hearing no -- no
 2 objection, Amendment Set 68 is -- is hereby adopted.
 3 On to the next amendment. We have Amendment
 4 Set 70, I believe, Representative Marcelle.
 5 Representative Marcelle, on -- on your amendment.
 6 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: That's amendment
 7 (inaudible 1:25:52).
 8 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Or Ms. Lowery, would you
 9 mind reading that in?
 10 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: I just missed my
 11 objection -- amendment.
 12 MS. LOWERY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
 13 Representative Marcelle brings Amendment Set HCASB-8362,
 14 number 70. This is available, Members, in front of you,
 15 and also for members of the public, it's available
 16 online.
 17 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Representative Marcelle,
 18 on your amendment.
 19 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: Thank you.
 20 Amendment Number 3 adds River -- the Red River Parish to
 21 Congressional District 6, better preserving the Red
 22 River community of interest and the community of
 23 interest formed by Red River, Natchitoches, and DeSoto
 24 Parishes. It also makes Ouachita Parish whole in
 25 Congressional District 5.

1 decision.
2 Well, her actual order says that the
3 plaintiffs, when they went into Court for a preliminary
4 injunction, never tried on the merits, just a summary
5 proceeding, said that they had carried their burden of
6 showing that the current map violates Section 2 of the
7 Voting Rights Act and that the plaintiffs had a
8 substantial likelihood of making their claim successful,
9 which is that we'll have a second minority district in
10 Louisiana.

11 But there was no trial on the merits. But the
12 judge essentially said, if we have a trial on the
13 merits, I'm going to rule in favor of the plaintiffs,
14 and I'm going to create a second majority-minority
15 district in Louisiana. That's exactly what this bill is
16 doing right now.

17 And if our current map goes -- if you do
18 nothing and our current map goes back before Judge Dick,
19 she's going to probably end up doing the same thing.
20 But at least we have a chance to fight for the current
21 map in our state. And no matter how she rules, we have
22 the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal, and we have the US
23 Supreme Court.

24 And, again, everything is at stake, and it
25 seems like we're simply giving it all away right now.

1 We believe that this is worth fighting for. We believe
2 that that balance of power is worth fighting for.

3 And I would remind the members of this panel
4 that I know, some of whom we helped get elected, along
5 with Governor Landry whom we worked very hard for and
6 who we respect and think he's going to be a great
7 governor, that the citizens of Louisiana worked very
8 tirelessly to get you elected to come here, not to cave
9 in to political pressure, which is it appears to
10 hundreds and hundreds of citizens across the state that
11 that's what you're doing. You're caving in to political
12 pressure, and you're giving in without a fight.

13 Speaker Mike Johnson has weighed in on this.
14 We heard some testimony earlier that Congressman Johnson
15 apparently was okay with this proposed legislation.
16 That's not our legislation. That's not our
17 understanding at all. In fact, Congressman Johnson
18 specifically said that our current map from 2022 needs a
19 full trial on the merits, with appellate review all the
20 way to the Supreme Court, if necessary, because the
21 issue is so profoundly important to the future of this
22 republic. I will -- I want to reiterate before I close,
23 as I said, people all over the state are watching this
24 right now, many of whom voted for you to come here, some
25 of you who were just elected very recently.

1 And if six months or a year from now, the
2 United States Congress is controlled by Democrats, it
3 started in this house, it started and ended in this
4 capital, and that's what will have made it possible.
5 And the citizens of Louisiana, I can tell you, will have
6 a very, very good memory if that occurs. I would
7 respectfully submit that your responsibility is to
8 represent the interests of the substantial majority of
9 Louisiana citizens and not to cave to political
10 pressure. And we're asking you to defeat this
11 legislation. Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Thank you, Mr. Alexander.
13 And look just to -- to -- and -- and you got a couple
14 of questions. But just from -- from my standpoint, I
15 sat on the committee when we drew the other maps that we
16 all believe were fair, and we believe is representative
17 of the state of Louisiana. The Fifth Circuit sent it
18 back to the federal judge and basically held us hostage
19 that if -- if we don't do it, she's going to do it. And
20 so none of us like the position we're in.

21 But -- you know, and -- and a little bit to
22 your point, we were elected to serve, and we feel that
23 -- that we would prefer to have the lines drawn in this
24 committee than have some Obama-appointed judge drawing
25 the lines for us. And so we don't like it. It's

1 painful to do. And so I feel your sentiment, and -- and
2 I don't -- I'm not disagreeing with most of what you
3 said. I mean, it's -- it's -- it's -- it's what goes on
4 in a lot of our minds. So I -- I appreciate your
5 comments. Thank you. And you do have -- you do have a
6 question. Representative Newell.

7 REPRESENTATIVE NEWELL: Thank you very much,
8 Mr. Chairman. I'm troubled by your statements because
9 this is not a process by which one party is losing
10 power, caving into another party. This is a process by
11 which the other 30 percent of the people in this state
12 are trying to get the representation that their
13 population and numbers deserve in Congress. This isn't
14 a caving in or power grab or giving away of power or
15 losing of power of the Republican Party.

16 It's an opportunity for this body to represent
17 all of the people that they supposed to represent in
18 their district, listening to them and giving them the
19 opportunity to vote for someone of their choice, whether
20 that person of their choice is a Black Republican or
21 White Democrat. It's an opportunity for Black people,
22 as some of my colleagues would prefer to be said, but a
23 minority-majority district to have the opportunity to
24 vote for their candidate of choice. And I'm troubled by
25 the way you said your statement. You're very

Page 98

1 was 40, 50 years ago.
 2 And so the reason why this is so difficult is
 3 because we are moving in the right direction. We don't
 4 have concentrated populations of -- of certain
 5 minorities or populations of White folks in certain
 6 areas. It is spread out throughout the state. Compared
 7 to Alabama, Alabama has 17 counties that are
 8 minority-majority, and they're all contiguous.
 9 Louisiana has seven parishes that are minority-majority
 10 and only three are contiguous. That's why this process
 11 is so difficult, but here we are without any other
 12 options to move forward.
 13 And so I -- I hear what you're saying. I
 14 respectfully disagree with the characterization that
 15 it's bending to political pressure.
 16 MR. ALEXANDER: Yeah.
 17 REPRESENTATIVE CARLSON: I -- I -- you know
 18 me, and you know that I wouldn't do that. But I don't
 19 see any other path forward. This is the best of two bad
 20 options, and I'm going to always do my job --
 21 MR. ALEXANDER: Yeah.
 22 REPRESENTATIVE CARLSON: -- that's before me.
 23 MR. ALEXANDER: And I understand that.
 24 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Thank you.
 25 MR. ALEXANDER: Is there -- is -- is there --

Page 99

1 do you think there's anything that would be -- an option
 2 would be to allow our attorney general to argue the
 3 constitutionality of our current map in Federal Court,
 4 Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal, and Supreme Court?
 5 REPRESENTATIVE CARLSON: Already been done
 6 twice in the Fifth Circuit and asked of the Supreme
 7 Court, and they've refused to do that. And here we lie
 8 today.
 9 MR. ALEXANDER: Yeah.
 10 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: There's never even been a
 11 trial on the merits, Representative Carlson, on this map
 12 --
 13 REPRESENTATIVE CARLSON: That's not our
 14 decision.
 15 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: -- even in district
 16 court.
 17 REPRESENTATIVE CARLSON: That -- that is the
 18 judge's decision, unfortunately.
 19 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: And if you don't do
 20 anything, they'll have one.
 21 REPRESENTATIVE CARLSON: And if we don't do
 22 anything, we'll have a worse map. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
 23 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Thank you.
 24 MR. ALEXANDER: Thank you, sir. I appreciate
 25 the interchange.

Page 100

1 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Representative Marcelle.
 2 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: Thank you. Mr.
 3 Alexander, I guess it's disheartening for me to sit here
 4 in 2024 and hear that we certainly need to keep the
 5 power. And if you all do what's right in Louisiana,
 6 we're going to lose our thin majority. If we would have
 7 done what was right long time ago, you probably wouldn't
 8 be in a majority. If Alabama passes what they need to
 9 pass and we pass what we need to pass, then, perhaps, we
 10 will have a fair and balanced Congress.
 11 MR. ALEXANDER: And you'll be in the majority.
 12 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: Well -- and -- and
 13 what's the problem with that, sir?
 14 MR. ALEXANDER: Well, there's millions of
 15 Americans who have a problem with that.
 16 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: And guess what, it's
 17 millions of people who have not had an opportunity to
 18 have a seat at the table. We have a problem with voter
 19 suppression. We have a problem with people thinking
 20 that we can't make decisions. And let me say this: on
 21 the other side of the aisle -- on the other side of the
 22 chamber in the Senate, I have colleagues that have some
 23 of the same beliefs that some of you have, right? And
 24 they believe in pro-life. They are African Americans.
 25 I believe in pro-choice. So to say that everybody's

Page 101

1 ideology because they are Black is one way, is certainly
 2 crazy, number one.
 3 And number two, I really agree with you with
 4 something, and that is, send it back to the courts and
 5 let Judge Shelly Dick draw the maps. We could then
 6 remove --
 7 MR. ALEXANDER: But you -- you agree with me.
 8 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: I -- I do agree with
 9 that because then we could remove all of these different
 10 people and these moving parts that everybody -- these
 11 political interests because we do deserve two Black
 12 congressional seats because where I went to school - it
 13 was a Black school, though, Capitol High School - when
 14 you divide six into a third, a third into sixth, you get
 15 two. And so we deserve two seats, and that's what we
 16 deserve. We didn't -- we're not begging for something
 17 that we don't deserve. That's what we deserve.
 18 And -- and God forbid, maybe somebody will get
 19 elected that feels like you, have the same ideologies as
 20 you, but perhaps they won't. People need an opportunity
 21 to have their voices heard.
 22 MR. ALEXANDER: I respect that.
 23 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: And when I send
 24 somebody to Congress that feels like you that represents
 25 my district, then you do not represent what I believe.

1 REPRESENTATIVE CARLSON: Absolutely. And
2 thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm done.

3 MR. HURD: It's absolutely the same. What
4 they held was in the '90s, the federal agency that was
5 telling you, "You had to do it," was the DOJ under
6 Section 5, which itself was later held unconstitutional.
7 The answer is they were wrong. They were
8 unconstitutionally demanding racial districting beyond
9 what the federal courts now recognize as the permissible
10 range of remedy. We may be -- we don't -- I -- I --
11 look, I'll give Judge Dick an opportunity. It's not
12 that she's hailed Section 2 applies.

13 The question is whether or not Section 2 has a
14 constitutional remedy, i.e., I believe that my
15 districting plan that I've handed in and I did it for an
16 -- an example is as close as you can get to a
17 non-rationally gerrymandered district and get to two
18 majority-minority districts, and it does. The
19 plaintiff's remedy, Senate Bill 4 and 5, they're both
20 racial gerrymanders and will not stand up to the Fifth
21 Circuit. There are abilities to draw a compact
22 contiguous majority-minority district, second one, in
23 Louisiana. What you're going to do, you're going to
24 enact this.

25 If I was Judge Dick, I'd look at it and go,

1 "I'm sorry. I've got -- already got the judge that
2 wrote the opinion on the Fifth Circuit that says what
3 y'all are about to do is a constitutional gerrymander.
4 Therefore, I can disregard it." Disregard it. It is
5 null and void. And she's going to draw the plan if you
6 want to remedy an actual remedy. That's why it's
7 exactly the same. You read the opinion, and you'll see
8 they said, "The federal power does not override or force
9 you to violate the Constitution." Stand up for the
10 Constitution.

11 Stand up if you want a compact district. Draw
12 the one that makes sense with our traditional
13 districting principles because you can do it. The --
14 the -- the -- the -- the answer is, this is an
15 unconstitutional alternative.

16 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Okay. Thank you, Mr.
17 Hurd. You -- you -- I think you've been very, very
18 clear on it. The board is clear. We have no more
19 witnesses. Senator Womack, we're going to go ahead and
20 -- and call you back up to -- to close.

21 MR. HURD: Your Honor, if -- I mean, Your
22 Honor. I apologize. I'd like to -- I've got a copy of
23 that opinion that outlines all the reasons that what
24 you've got is a racial gerrymander. I had an outline of
25 what it -- of -- of the -- each criteria that the judge

1 applies on why this is a -- a -- a ineffective remedy,
2 and I hope -- I hope your good judgment finds another
3 solution.

4 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Thank you.
5 Representative Phelps, you failed to call, but you
6 didn't say you wanted to speak. Are you trying to speak
7 now?

8 REPRESENTATIVE PHELPS: Yes, (inaudible
9 2:19:39).

10 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: I know you're not on the
11 committee, but you want -- all right. Come on. Let's
12 -- all right. All right. So let's fill this out that
13 says she does want to speak. She's providing
14 information only, not a green card or a red card. So
15 Representative Phelps?

16 REPRESENTATIVE PHELPS: Thank you for the
17 opportunity to speak. I -- I just wanted to mention to
18 maybe some of our new colleagues here when we talk about
19 why we're here. This started from an increase of the
20 population from our census. So I -- and I think that's
21 not -- we haven't heard a lot of that with the audience
22 on the outside. It just was not a mandate to draw a
23 map. So this does go with the 2020, the Census results
24 that resulted in a population increase of African
25 Americans across the state.

1 Secondly, I hope that there is some passion
2 here about if there were a different population, a White
3 population, and there was so much pushback about
4 creating a district so that everyone would be
5 represented, how that may feel. Just a thought.
6 Thirdly, when I heard Judge Dick's name reference to
7 Obama's judge, I don't know if I've ever heard someone
8 say Trump's judge or Carter's judge or Reagan's judge or
9 whomever. I don't know if we're going to start
10 referencing judges that way, but I hope that we do not
11 do that in this body.

12 I think we should give all of our elected
13 officials a little bit more respect in that, regardless
14 of what president they were appointed to or from. Thank
15 you for your time.

16 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Thank you, Representative
17 Phelps. The board is clear. Senator Womack, would you
18 come up and close on your bill?

19 SENATOR WOMACK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
20 Members of the committee, we all know why we're here.
21 We were ordered to -- to draw a new Black district, and
22 that's what I've done. At the same time, I tried to
23 protect Speaker Johnson, Minority Leader Scalise, and my
24 representative, Congresswoman Letlow. I'm agreeable to
25 the amendment, and we complied with everything the judge

1 has asked. And I just ask for favorable passage.

2 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Thank you, Senator --

3 Senator Womack. Representative Farnum has made a motion

4 that we adopt Senate Bill 8 as amended. Is there any

5 objection? Representative Marcell objects. Ms. Baker

6 -- listen, do we have anybody in an anteroom needs to

7 come in real quick? We have everyone here? Looks like

8 everyone's here. Okay. Ms. Baker, would you please

9 call the role? So let me clarify the vote. A vote of

10 yes moves Senator Womack's bill as amended by

11 Representative Farnum forward. A vote of no leaves it

12 here in the committee. Ms. Baker?

13 MS. BAKER: Thank you. Mr. Chairman.

14 Chairman Beaulieu?

15 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Yes.

16 MS. BAKER: Yes. Representative Billings?

17 REPRESENTATIVE BILLINGS: Yes.

18 MS. BAKER: Yes. Representative Boyd?

19 REPRESENTATIVE BOYD: Yes.

20 MS. BAKER: Yes. Representative Carlson?

21 REPRESENTATIVE CARLSON: Yes.

22 MS. BAKER: Yes. Representative Carter?

23 Representative Carver?

24 REPRESENTATIVE CARVER: Yes.

25 MS. BAKER: Yes. Representative Farnum?

1 matters before this committee. Representative Thomas

2 had made a motion that we adjourn. Look, and -- as we

3 adjourn, thank you everyone for your patience. Thank

4 you everyone for your time. It's been a -- a great

5 debate and -- and we appreciate you. Meeting adjourned.

6 Thank you all.

7 (Meeting adjourned.)

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1 REPRESENTATIVE FARNUM: Yes.

2 MS. BAKER: Yes. Representative Gadberry?

3 Yes. Representative Johnson? Representative Larvadain?

4 Yes. Representative Lyons?

5 VICE CHAIRMAN LYONS: Yes.

6 MS. BAKER: Yes. Representative Marcelle?

7 Representative Newell?

8 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: Not as amended. No,

9 as amended.

10 MS. BAKER: No for Representative Marcelle.

11 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: No.

12 MS. BAKER: Representative Newell?

13 REPRESENTATIVE NEWELL: Yes.

14 MS. BAKER: Yes. Representative Schamerhorn?

15 REPRESENTATIVE SCHAMERHORN: Yes.

16 MS. BAKER: Yes. Representative Thomas?

17 REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS: Yes.

18 MS. BAKER: Yes. Representative Wright?

19 REPRESENTATIVE WRIGHT: Yes.

20 MS. BAKER: Yes. Representative Wybel?

21 REPRESENTATIVE WYBEL: Yes.

22 MS. BAKER: Yes. There are 14 yeas and 1 nay.

23 CHAIRMAN BEAULLIEU: Members -- members have a

24 vote of 14 yeas, 1 nay. Senate Bill 8 is hereby adopted

25 as amended. Reported as amended. There are no other

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1 Members, I'm bringing you this congressional
2 redistricting map that Senator Womack presented. You've
3 -- you've heard it debated a couple of times. You heard
4 it in -- in committee as well. Yesterday, we added an
5 amendment in committee to Senator Womack's bill. And so
6 my first order of business, even before I make my
7 opening remarks, is going to get this bill in a proper
8 posture. I'd like to offer up an amendment to delete
9 the amendments that we added in committee yesterday. So
10 if you'll check your monitors, it's going to -- or Madam
11 Clerk, would you mind reading in the amendment?

12 THE CLERK: Mr. Speaker and members,
13 Representative Beaulieu, as he's just discussed, is
14 offering up a one-page set of amendments. That set is
15 online. It's set number 83.

16 REPRESENTATIVE BEAULLIEU: So, members, after
17 hearing from a lot of you, it's my thought that this
18 instrument was in its best posture when it came over
19 here from the Senate. And so I am offering an amendment
20 to put it back in that posture, and I'd ask for your
21 support.

22 MR. SPEAKER: I see no questions on the
23 amendment. Representative Marcelle for the floor on the
24 amendment.

25 REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE: Thank you, Mr.

1 REPRESENTATIVE BEAULLIEU: Members, I just ask
2 you to support the removal of the amendment that we
3 added in -- in House and Governmental. Thank you.

4 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Beaulieu has
5 offered up an amendment which Representative Farnum
6 objects. All those in favor, vote yea. All those
7 opposed, vote nay. The clerk will open the machine.

8 THE CLERK: (inaudible 0:04:34).

9 MR. SPEAKER: Wright, yea.

10 THE CLERK: Emerson, yea.

11 MR. SPEAKER: Emerson, yea. Are you through
12 voting, members? The clerk will close the machine. We
13 have 84 yeas and 16 nays, and amendment passes.
14 Representative Beaulieu on the bill.

15 REPRESENTATIVE BEAULLIEU: Okay, Mr. Speaker,
16 Thank you, members, for supporting me on that amendment.
17 You'll bear with me for a second. So, members, I -- I
18 appreciate you giving me the opportunity to be with you
19 here today. Two years ago, I sat on the committee that
20 -- that passed the original congressional map after
21 redistricting, and we spent a lot of time going around
22 the state listening to folks from all over our state.
23 And this House, by two -- over two-thirds vote,
24 supported a map that we thought was fair, that we
25 thought was representative of the state of Louisiana.

1 Speaker and Chairman. And thank you, members. On
2 yesterday, we had a pretty, I would say, heated debate
3 in H&G about these amendments, and so I rise in support
4 of removing those amendments. And I had a lot of
5 questions after I got home about why didn't I object to
6 the amendments, but I'd stepped out of the room and so
7 that's the reason for me not objecting to the
8 amendments. I did object to the bill because the
9 amendments had been added.

10 I know this is the process. I think that the
11 bill was in its best posture when it came over with
12 Representative -- I mean, with Senator Womack, Senate
13 Bill 8. However, I tried to put that bill in a better
14 posture. That matter failed. I know the process. I
15 appreciate the process. And I appreciate the chairman
16 taking that amendment off that I think does us no good
17 to get to a better place where we can get the second
18 congressional district. And I'd ask that you all would
19 support the chairman in removing the amendment that was
20 placed on there on yesterday. Thank you.

21 MR. SPEAKER: Is there any objections to the
22 adoption of the amendment? Representative Farnum,
23 objection. Would you like to speak on your objection?
24 Representative Beaulieu, would you like to close on
25 your amendment?

1 As Senator Stine said earlier in this week,
2 "It's with a heavy heart that I present to you this
3 other map," but we have to. It's that clear. A federal
4 judge has ordered us to draw an additional minority seat
5 in the state of Louisiana. We have the -- the federal
6 Voting Rights Act litigation is still going on in the US
7 District Court in the Middle District of Louisiana. The
8 map in this bill that I'm presenting is one of a product
9 of long, detailed process with several goals.

10 First, and as a lot of you are aware,
11 Congresswoman Julia Letlow represents north Louisiana in
12 our nation's capital and serves on both the
13 appropriations and agricultural committees. The
14 boundaries in the bill that I'm presenting ensure that
15 Congresswoman Letlow remains both unimpaired with any
16 other incumbents, and in a congressional district that
17 should continue to elect a Republican Congress for the
18 remainder of this decade.

19 I have great pride in the work Congresswoman
20 Letlow has accomplished, and this map will ensure that
21 Louisianians will continue to benefit from her presence
22 in the halls of Congress for as long as she decides to
23 continue serving our great state of Louisiana.

24 Second, of Louisiana's six congressional
25 districts, the map and the proposed bill ensures that

1 four are safe from -- or safe Republican seats.
 2 Louisiana's Republican presence in the United States
 3 Congress has contributed tremendously to the national
 4 discourse, and I'm very proud, and it's remarkable, that
 5 both the speaker of the United States House of
 6 Representatives, Mike Johnson, and the US House majority
 7 leader, Steve Scalise, are both from our great state.
 8 This map ensures that the two men -- the two
 9 of them will have solidly Republican districts at home
 10 so they can focus on the national leadership that we
 11 need in Washington, DC. The map proposed in this bill
 12 ensures that the conservative principles retained by the
 13 majority of those in Louisiana will continue to extend
 14 past our boundaries to our nation's capital.
 15 Finally, the maps in the proposed bill respond
 16 appropriately to the ongoing federal litigation, the
 17 ongoing federal Voting Rights Act case in the Middle
 18 District of Louisiana. For those who are unaware of the
 19 background, the congressional maps that we enacted, that
 20 I mentioned a second ago, in March of -- in March of
 21 2022, have been the subject of litigation roughly since
 22 the day the 2022 congressional redistricting bill went
 23 into effect, and even before we enacted it. So the suit
 24 was filed before we actually enacted the bill.
 25 After a substantial amount of prolonged

1 -- the reason why District 2 is growing around Orleans
 2 Parish, while District 6 includes the Black population
 3 of east Baton Rouge Parish and travels up the I-49
 4 corridor and the Red River to include Black population
 5 in Shreveport.
 6 While this is a different map than the
 7 plaintiffs in the litigation have proposed, this is the
 8 only map I reviewed that accomplishes the political
 9 goals I believe are important for my district, for
 10 Louisiana, and for our country.
 11 While I did not draw these boundaries myself,
 12 and I'm bringing the bill to the floor for the --
 13 Senator Womack carried through the Senate and through
 14 committee yesterday in this House, I firmly submit that
 15 the congressional voting boundaries represented in this
 16 bill best achieve the goals of protecting Congresswoman
 17 Letlow's seat, maintaining strong districts for Speaker
 18 Johnson and Majority Leader Scalise, ensuring four
 19 Republican districts, and adhering to the command of the
 20 federal court in the Middle District of Louisiana.
 21 I submit to you this map, and I'll be happy to
 22 take any questions.
 23 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Taylor on a
 24 question.
 25 THE CLERK: She waives.

1 litigation, two trips to the Fifth Circuit asking it to
 2 reverse it, and a trip to the US Supreme Court, the
 3 federal District Court has adhered to its view that the
 4 federal law requires that the state have two
 5 congressional districts with a majority of Black voters.
 6 It's that simple. Our secretary of state, our attorney
 7 general, and our prior legislative leadership appealed
 8 but have yet to succeed. We are now here because the
 9 federal courts order that we have a first opportunity to
 10 act.
 11 If we don't act, it is very clear that the
 12 federal court will impose the plaintiff's proposed map
 13 on our state, and we don't want that. The District
 14 Court's order that we must have two majority-Black
 15 voting-age population districts, combined with the
 16 political imperatives I just described, have largely
 17 driven the boundaries for District 2 and District 6,
 18 both of which are over 50 percent Black voting-age
 19 population, or BVAP as you've heard discussed a lot in
 20 committees and may hear with folks discussing today.
 21 Given the state's current demographics,
 22 there's not a high enough Black -- Black population in
 23 the southeast portion of Louisiana to create two
 24 majority-Black districts and to also comply with the US
 25 Constitution's one vote, one person requirement. That a

1 MR. SPEAKER: She waives. Representative
 2 Amedee on a question.
 3 REPRESENTATIVE AMEDEE: Thank you, Mr.
 4 Speaker. Rep. Beaulieu, thanks for carrying the bill
 5 over here. Is this bill intended to create another
 6 Black district?
 7 REPRESENTATIVE BEAULLIEU: Yes, ma'am, and to
 8 comply with the judge's order.
 9 REPRESENTATIVE AMEDEE: Thank you.
 10 MR. SPEAKER: Seeing no further questions,
 11 Representative Bayham for the floor.
 12 (Pause.)
 13 REPRESENTATIVE BAYHAM: When I ran for the
 14 legislature, I had one goal, and that is to give my
 15 community a voice. I've studied some of the plans that
 16 were submitted by my colleagues here. Representative
 17 Wilford Carter had a plan, I believe, that kept St.
 18 Bernard Parish intact, and I appreciate that,
 19 Representative Carter. I am here to stand up for my
 20 community. St. Bernard has never been split into two
 21 congressional districts. We've already been split into
 22 two Senate districts. And to be brutally honest,
 23 looking at the way these precincts are -- and I know
 24 every precinct. I've campaigned in every precinct in
 25 St. Bernard.

Page 10

1 We have two precincts, for example, that are
 2 in the 2nd Congressional District. One, Precinct 24,
 3 gave President Trump 75 percent of the vote. Precinct
 4 25 gave President Trump 69 percent of the vote. Those
 5 are in the 2nd District. In the 1st District is
 6 Precinct 44, which gave President Biden 83 percent of
 7 the vote. Precinct 45 gave President Biden 85 percent
 8 of the vote. It seems like these precincts were just
 9 thrown together like a mechanical claw machine, just
 10 grabbing people and dropping them off.
 11 Now, I participated in the hearings on the
 12 congressional reapportionment where they toured the
 13 state, and I appreciated the leadership of the House and
 14 the Senate, the committees in doing this. I took
 15 advantage of it. I testified. We are being told that
 16 we have to redraw all of this in a period of less than
 17 eight days. That is not how you make sausage. That's
 18 how you make a mess. I cannot in good conscience vote
 19 for this bill that divides my community, and I will
 20 stand by that for my community. Thank you.
 21 MR. SPEAKER: There's no questions.
 22 REPRESENTATIVE BAYHAM: Thank you.
 23 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Beaulieu to
 24 close on the bill.
 25 REPRESENTATIVE BEAULLIEU: As a colleague

Page 11

1 mentioned earlier - sorry, Representative Cox, if I have
 2 to poach you - "Everybody likes to eat sausage, but
 3 nobody likes to see how it's made." And it's -- it has
 4 been painful, and it has been painful for all of us.
 5 But it's simple. We're under a federal judge's mandate,
 6 and this bill is our best attempt to comply with her
 7 decision. So, members, I ask you to support me in
 8 voting for this map. Thank you.
 9 MR. SPEAKER: Representative Beaulieu moves
 10 for final passage of the bill. Those in favor, vote
 11 yea. Those opposed, vote nay. The clerk will open the
 12 machine. Vote your machine, members. Members, are you
 13 through voting? The clerk will close the machine. We
 14 have 86 yeas, 16 nays, and the bill is finally passed.
 15 Representative Beaulieu moves to adopt the title, and
 16 moves to reconsider the vote for which the bill finally
 17 passed and lay that motion on the table without
 18 objection.
 19 MR. SPEAKER: Open the machine for co-authors.
 20 (Pause.)
 21 MR. SPEAKER: The clerk will close the
 22 machine. We have ten co-authors.
 23 MALE SPEAKER: Representative Bagley for a
 24 motion to move to correct his vote.
 25 REPRESENTATIVE BAGLEY: I want to correct on

Page 12

1 -- on Senate Bill Number 8. I want to correct from
 2 absent to nay.
 3 MALE SPEAKER: Without objection.
 4 REPRESENTATIVE BAGLEY: Thank you, Mr. --
 5 MALE SPEAKER: Representative Taylor moves for
 6 a motion to correct her vote.
 7 REPRESENTATIVE TAYLOR: Good afternoon. I
 8 would also like to vote from absent to yea on the
 9 amendment.
 10 MALE SPEAKER: Without objection.
 11 Representative Jackson moves to correct his vote.
 12 REPRESENTATIVE JACKSON: Yes. I want to
 13 change my vote from nay to yea.
 14 MALE SPEAKER: Without objection.
 15 REPRESENTATIVE JACKSON: Thank you.
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1 in the exact posture that it left the Senate. The House
 2 is removed. HGA Committee amendment I move to concur
 3 with on Senate Bill Number 8.
 4 (Pause.)
 5 MALE SPEAKER: Gotcha. Members, the summaries
 6 are being passed out right now, so we're just going to
 7 slow down a little bit. I want to give everybody the
 8 chance to see what we're voting on.
 9 (Pause.)
 10 MALE SPEAKER: Senator Womack, would you mind
 11 going over the -- I know we've all seen the amendment
 12 once. We -- we know what the bill looks like, but if
 13 you could just go over some high points on it while
 14 they're passing this out. Members, if you have a --
 15 members, if you want to speak, hit your Floor button if
 16 anybody would like to come to the Floor to discuss the
 17 bill. I know some members -- make sure that you do
 18 that.
 19 (Pause.)
 20 SENATOR WOMACK: Okay. They're passing out
 21 the amendments. The -- the way they did lay up the
 22 House -- I mean, lay up the Senate, it was one district
 23 change on that amendment. That took in part of
 24 Avoyelles Parish. That was the only change, to my
 25 knowledge, that was in the -- that was in the new map.

Page 3

1 MALE SPEAKER: Okay. Senate Morris for -- for
 2 -- Senator Morris for a question on the bill, and you
 3 also have your Floor button, so which -- you want to
 4 question. Let's do question first, please, and then we
 5 can do the Floor. Thank you.
 6 SENATOR MORRIS: Senator Womack, you said the
 7 only change was -- was taking some of Avoyelles Parish
 8 and putting it in Miss Letlow's district, correct?
 9 SENATOR WOMACK: Correct.
 10 SENATOR MORRIS: However, it actually took my
 11 personal home out of Miss Letlow's district, as well as
 12 Senator Cathey's home precinct, as well as State Rep
 13 Echols' home precinct, and put that in Representative
 14 Johnson's district, did it not?
 15 SENATOR WOMACK: It did.
 16 SENATOR MORRIS: So the only thing being done
 17 was not just Avoyelles Parish, correct?
 18 SENATOR WOMACK: I stand to be corrected.
 19 You're correct.
 20 SENATOR MORRIS: Why did we do that for
 21 Avoyelles Parish?
 22 SENATOR WOMACK: That was -- that was brought
 23 before the -- the -- I'll have to look back. I -- I was
 24 -- I was thinking that was a -- a -- a Senate Committee
 25 amendment on that, and that's the way it came out of

Page 4

1 Committee.
 2 SENATOR MORRIS: Yes, sir. I think you
 3 altered the amendment.
 4 SENATOR WOMACK: Senator Morris, I'll have to
 5 -- I'll have to look back and -- and put that together
 6 for you. Any other questions?
 7 SENATOR MORRIS: So you don't know why we put
 8 Avoyelles in Miss Letlow's district?
 9 SENATOR WOMACK: As I stated earlier, we were
 10 -- we were trying to put what we could to -- to give
 11 senator -- Representative Letlow as much North Louisiana
 12 as we could. So that was what we -- that was what we
 13 done on -- on that amendment.
 14 SENATOR MORRIS: By -- by trading Avoyelles
 15 for Monroe, we gave her more North Louisiana.
 16 SENATOR WOMACK: As I understand it, in that
 17 bill, I didn't think that -- that your home or Senator
 18 Cathey or Echols was in the original bill to start with.
 19 My recollection.
 20 SENATOR MORRIS: It wasn't in Miss Letlow's
 21 district.
 22 SENATOR WOMACK: Right.
 23 SENATOR MORRIS: Would you be shocked if that
 24 was not the case, and that we were all in Miss Letlow's
 25 district?

Page 5

1 SENATOR WOMACK: Probably so. But that -- at
 2 the -- at the time I put that amendment on, I don't
 3 remember the original map having that -- y'all's address
 4 in her district.
 5 SENATOR MORRIS: But you did know that the
 6 amendment took some more of Ouachita Parish out of
 7 Letlow's, and put it into Johnson's district; you did
 8 know that, right?
 9 SENATOR WOMACK: I knew it had to come from
 10 somewhere.
 11 SENATOR MORRIS: Yes, sir. Thank you.
 12 MALE SPEAKER: Senator Morris, you have the
 13 Floor now for the -- for Senate (inaudible 0:08:19).
 14 SENATOR MORRIS: Thank you, Mr. President. We
 15 came here to redistrict because there's a chance. It's
 16 not absolute, but there's a chance that the judge will
 17 rule that our districts that we -- that we completed in
 18 the last couple of years will not be declared
 19 unconstitutional. That case never went to a final
 20 judgment. It hasn't even gone to a full trial on the
 21 merits, but yet here we are. So what do we do? We're
 22 supposed to redistrict with a lot of principles in mind.
 23 Among those include compactness and contiguity.
 24 This bill does neither. It's neither
 25 contiguous nor compact. We're all supposed to do it and

1 consider political subdivisions and communities of
2 interest. So now, by everyone's account, I live in
3 Northeast Louisiana, and now I'm in the same district as
4 Lake Charles. Louisiana Tech, Grambling, and University
5 of Louisiana, Monroe are now in different congressional
6 districts. They're all only 30 miles apart.

7 Senator Womack said in Committee that what he
8 wanted to do was protect Julia Letlow. She's the only
9 woman in our congressional delegation in this state,
10 she's the only member of appropriations, and she's on
11 the Agriculture Committee. So protecting her district
12 because she has seniority, and because she's a bright,
13 articulate, and effective Congresswoman, that's a very
14 noble and worthwhile goal. And I applaud him for having
15 stated that that is one of the objectives of this bill,
16 but this bill doesn't do that.

17 This bill puts more votes south of the
18 Mississippi line in the Florida parishes than it does in
19 the northeast corner of the state. Now, I'm not
20 horribly disappointed to be in Congressman Johnson's
21 district because I admire him immensely. It's nothing
22 against him. He -- I served with him in the House, and
23 we are friends, and I'm a supporter, and he knows that.
24 It has nothing to do with him. But we didn't do the
25 things that I believe that we should have done. Well,

1 what did we do?

2 It looks like to me we primarily considered
3 race, and we considered the personal interest of a
4 handful of members. There was no reason. The bill, as
5 originally filed, we did not like. It cut my home
6 parish in half. I understand it's got to go through
7 somebody's district, right? A lot of you have your
8 districts, your home parishes cut through, but you
9 didn't have to zigzag it around just so somebody can get
10 a personal stake, who might want to run for Congress, or
11 just wants their parish there because of their personal
12 interest.

13 I'm not going to be around to run for Congress
14 or anything of the sort in two years, eight years, or
15 ten years. This is about districts and regions that
16 will represent the people of our area, and the lack of
17 compactness is going to effectively disenfranchise. I
18 believe, to a certain degree, the people that I
19 represent. And for these reasons, I urge you to vote
20 against this bill. Thank you, Mr. President.

21 MALE SPEAKER: Thank you, Senator Morris.
22 Senator Cathey to the Floor on the bill.

23 (Pause.)

24 SENATOR CATHEY: Thank you, Mr. President.
25 Members, I -- I don't know that I can say any better

1 than what Senator Morris just said, and I wholeheartedly
2 agree with everything that he said. You know, I love
3 the Senate, and I love being a member of this body, and
4 I'm excited about the things that we're going to do in
5 this term. I think we're going to do some great things.
6 Unfortunately, today is not one of those days.

7 What we're doing to Northeast Louisiana with
8 this map is a travesty and a disservice to the only
9 woman that we have serving in our congressional
10 delegation. The only member that we have that sits on
11 the House Appropriations Committee, which controls
12 federal dollars to this state. When we say that this
13 map protects Northeast Louisiana and Congresswoman
14 Letlow, I'll have you know, 50 percent of the votes in
15 Congresswoman Letlow's district now reside within 30
16 miles of this building. Let that sink in. 30 miles of
17 this building. Look, I can see the writing on the wall,
18 and I know where this is going to go.

19 And so, look, I'm -- I'm -- I've been around
20 long enough to -- to count, and -- and I know that --
21 that we can't get to 20, but -- but I just couldn't let
22 this go without standing up for my people and my
23 district and my congresswoman. And so I guess there is
24 one other thing that -- that I do want to say just to
25 put it into perspective. Again, kind of like Senator

1 Morris said, my home, my personal home, which is 35
2 miles from the Arkansas line, and 65 miles from the
3 Mississippi line will now be in the same congressional
4 district as Fort Polk and McNeese State University and
5 Lake Charles. That's a disservice and a travesty. So
6 with that, I close.

7 MALE SPEAKER: Thank you, Senator Cathey.
8 Senator Luneau for the Floor.

9 (Pause.)

10 SENATOR LUNEAU: Thank you, Mr. President.
11 Members, we -- we did redistricting last year, I'm sure
12 most of you remember that, and it was an utter failure.
13 And there were a lot of us that talked about some of the
14 things that we could have done different to make it
15 different, but it didn't work out that way, so here we
16 are again. And I remember when we redistricted our own
17 district, our Senate districts, Rapides Parish, my home
18 parish, now has six different senators. Six. And I
19 fought that, but I lost on that -- on that -- on that
20 quest. I -- I just couldn't -- couldn't get everybody
21 together.

22 And they said, "You know, it's going to be
23 great if you have six centers. Then you've got six
24 people coming together." That -- that didn't happen.
25 That's not true. We didn't come together, and it hurt

Page 10

1 Rapides Parish. And now this map, yet again, has
 2 Rapides Parish divided in half. I guess that's better
 3 than six, but I guess we would have to have every
 4 congressperson from the -- from the state to have six.
 5 It's important that we do these maps, and we do them
 6 correctly, where we establish another minority majority
 7 district. And for that reason, I'm going to support and
 8 I'm going to vote for this map, but like my colleagues
 9 before me, I have to admit we should do better.

10 MALE SPEAKER: Thank you, Senator Luneau,
 11 Senator Carter for the floor.

12 SENATOR CARTER: Thank you, Mr. President.
 13 Members, we have an historic opportunity before us
 14 today, and it's an exciting day for the great State of
 15 Louisiana. If we concur and accept Senate Bill 8, we
 16 get to create two performing African American districts
 17 right here in the State of Louisiana. That is historic.
 18 That is to be celebrated. I really want to say thank
 19 you to everyone in this room. I can't thank you all
 20 enough. I appreciate the sincere effort. I appreciate
 21 the -- the -- the working late into the evenings that --
 22 I want to thank the staff of the SGA committee and the
 23 tireless hours that they have. This is -- this is
 24 historic.
 25 I know that it's hard to do anything that's

Page 11

1 perfect, and I know redistricting is the hardest thing
 2 that we do of all. This is my second redistricting
 3 session, and they're very tough, but we came together in
 4 a effort to comply with a federal judge's order that
 5 Louisiana provide equal representation to the African
 6 Americans in the State of Louisiana, and we have an
 7 opportunity to do that. Let's celebrate. Let's be
 8 happy. Let's be glad this state has an opportunity to
 9 provide equal representation in our congressional
 10 leadership right here in the State of Louisiana. Thank
 11 you all so much.

12 And I also want to thank -- I'll be remiss if
 13 I didn't thank the -- the president, all the members of
 14 SGA committee, the -- the governor who called this
 15 session. We began with the governor addressing us on
 16 Dr. King's Day, and here we are celebrating at the end
 17 of that week. And it just didn't start at the beginning
 18 of this week with Dr. King's Day. It started way back
 19 when Dr. King was alive, in a push for a voters' rights
 20 act. There's so many hurdles along the way and so many
 21 battles. There's so many -- so many -- so much effort.
 22 So much energy.

23 And when we were in Committee, we heard from
 24 many people. From the LDF people to the plaintiffs to
 25 all the -- the community people that came to testify

Page 12

1 because they did it last year. And some of them said,
 2 "We are tired. We're tired of keep doing this." But
 3 let me tell my friends and my colleagues, to everyone,
 4 we shall not tire. We shall continue to fight for
 5 what's right. It is -- this is how we make progress.
 6 It is not easy, it is challenging, but this is how we
 7 make progress, and we make progress. We celebrate it.
 8 We acknowledge it. So thank you to my colleagues.
 9 Thank you to all of us who engaged in this process.
 10 Thank you, Mr. President.

11 MALE SPEAKER: Thank you, Senator Carter.
 12 Senator Womack to close.

13 SENATOR WOMACK: Members, we all -- we all
 14 know what we went through and worked through and
 15 tirelessly. Late nights. Many hours. Many hours spent
 16 in the drafting room, of trying to help Senator Morris
 17 and Senator Cathey in trying to alleviate some of the
 18 problems they had. We worked on that. However,
 19 congressional, it wasn't working for everybody. So
 20 we're here where we're at, and here your bill's before
 21 you. I ask that you concur with Senate Bill 8. Thank
 22 you.

23 MALE SPEAKER: Thank you, Senator Womack.
 24 Senator Womack moves to concur in Senate amendments
 25 proposed to House -- to Senate Bill 8. When the

Page 13

1 machines are open, all those in favor to concur in the
 2 Senate amendments will vote aye. All opposed will vote
 3 nay. Madam Secretary may open the machines.

4 SENATOR HENRY: Go to machine, members. Go to
 5 machines. Go to machines, members. Close machine,
 6 please.

7 27 yeas, 11 nays, and the motion carries.
 8 Senator Talbot for a motion.

9 SENATOR TALBOT: Thank you, Mr. President. I
 10 make a motion that we adjourn sine die.

11 SENATOR HENRY: Without objection. Members,
 12 if you could have your seat just for a second. Sit down
 13 just.

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