
Commission Meeting

of

NEW JERSEY LEGISLATIVE APPORTIONMENT COMMISSION

*“The Commission will take oral testimony from members of the public
on the establishment of State legislative districts in New Jersey”*

LOCATION: Meeting via Zoom

DATE: January 8, 2022
12:00 p.m.

MEMBERS OF COMMISSION PRESENT:

LeRoy J. Jones, Jr., Democratic Delegation Chair
Al Barlas, Republican Delegation Chair
Senator Stephen M. Sweeney
Senator Thomas H. Kean, Jr.
Assemblyman Jon M. Bramnick
Honorable Philip S. Carchman
Cosmo A. Cirillo, Ph.D.
Linda DuBois
Michael B. Lavery, Esq.
Gary Taffet
Diane T. Testa, Esq.



ALSO PRESENT:

Raysa Martinez Kruger
Office of Legislative Services
Commission Secretary

Jessica Oestreicher
Office of Legislative Services
Commission Aide

Andrew Gimigliano, Esq.
Special Counsel to
Eleventh Member

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Meeting Transcribed by
The Office of Legislative Services, Public Information Office,
Hearing Unit, State House Annex, PO 068, Trenton, New Jersey

DEMOCRATIC MEMBERS

LeRoy J. Jones, Jr.
Chairman

Cosmo A. Cirillo
Stephen M. Sweeney
Gary Taffet
Diane T. Testa



REPUBLICAN MEMBERS

Al Barlas
Chairman

Jon M. Bramnick
Linda DuBois
Thomas H. Kean, Jr.
Michael B. Lavery

NEW JERSEY LEGISLATIVE
APPORTIONMENT COMMISSION
STATE HOUSE ANNEX • P.O. BOX 068 • TRENTON, NJ 08625-0068

APPOINTED
ELEVENTH MEMBER
Philip S. Carchman

***REVISED
COMMISSION NOTICE**

TO: MEMBERS OF THE APPORTIONMENT COMMISSION

FROM: AL BARLAS, CHAIRMAN
LEROY J. JONES, JR., CHAIRMAN

SUBJECT: **COMMISSION MEETING - JANUARY 8, 2022**

The public may address comments and questions to Raysa Martinez Kruger, Commission Secretary or make scheduling inquiries to Sophie Love, Secretary, at (609)847-3890. Written and electronic comments, questions and testimony submitted to the Commission by the public, as well as recordings and transcripts, if any, of oral testimony, are government records and will be available to the public upon request.

The Apportionment Commission will meet *remotely via Zoom on Saturday, January 8, 2022 at 12:00 PM.

The Commission will take oral testimony from members of the public on the establishment of State legislative districts in New Jersey. As required by the New Jersey Constitution, the Apportionment Commission is charged with redrawing the lines of the State's 40 legislative districts, from which the 40 Senators and 80 Members of the General Assembly are elected.

Members of the public may view the live proceedings via the New Jersey Legislature home page at <https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/> or via the Commission's home page at <https://www.apportionmentcommission.org/default.asp>.

Those wishing to testify must register online in advance of the meeting at <https://www.apportionmentcommission.org/schedule.asp>. Registration is also available at <https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/>. Select January 8 on the calendar and click on Apportionment Commission for the registration link. Registrations must be received by Friday, January 7, 2022 at 3:00 PM. Upon successful registration, you will view a printable receipt on screen. At a later date, you will receive an email with instructions for testifying.

(OVER)

To ensure that all who wish to testify can do so, the Chair will limit public testimony to 5 minutes per person. Extra time will be allotted for those needing the assistance of a translator.

If you require language interpretation services to testify, please contact the Office of Legislative Services at (609) 847-3890 to discuss and arrange for interpretation services in advance of the meeting.

You may also submit written testimony instead of, or in addition to, oral testimony by email to OLSaideAPPC@njleg.org by Friday, January 7, 2022 at 3:00 PM. Written testimony will be included in the Commission's record and distributed to all Commission members.

Issued 12/29/21
*Revised 1/5/22

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AL BARLAS (Republican Delegation Chair): Good afternoon, everybody.

Welcome to our sixth public hearing of the Legislative Apportionment Commission.

Madam Secretary, would you like to call the roll?

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER (Commission Secretary):
Commissioner Testa.

MS. TESTA: Here.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Commissioner Taffet.

MR. TAFFET: Here.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Commissioner Sweeney.

SENATOR SWEENEY: Here.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Commissioner Lavery.

MR. LAVERY: Here.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Commissioner Kean.

SENATOR KEAN: Here.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Commissioner DuBois:

MS. DUBOIS: Here.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Commissioner Cirillo.

DR. CIRILLO: Present.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Commissioner Bramnick.

ASSEMBLYMAN BRAMNICK: Here.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Co-Chair Jones.

LeROY J. JONES, Jr. (Democratic Delegation Chair):
Present.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Co-Chair Barlas.

MR. BARLAS: Here.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: And 11th Member Carchman.

JUSTICE PHILIP S. CARCHMAN (Eleventh Member):
Present.

MR. BARLAS: So welcome, everybody.

Before we get into the public comment portion of our hearing--
First, our 11th Member, Judge Carchman, has some remarks he'd like to read
into the record.

So Judge, the floor is yours.

JUSTICE CARCHMAN: Thank you, and thank you to the
Chairs, and members of the Commission; and, most important, the public,
all of whom are participating in this very important process.

The Commission has requested that I outline and describe the
standards that will inform my vote on the final legislative map.

But before addressing the standards individually, I want to share
some general observation about the apportionment process, and the array of
applicable standards.

Apportionment is a complex undertaking, which requires
harmonizing competing factors. At its core, apportionment is about the
public interest -- drafting a map that fairly represents the people of the State
of New Jersey. My view is that the Commission cannot look only to the past
to draw a new map, but also must look at the present to how New Jersey has
changed over the past decade; and towards the future, to how the new map
will represent the population of our ever-changing State.

We must recognize the demographic changes that have shaped
New Jersey over the past 10 years. Although there are many, I highlight two.

First, New Jersey's population shift from south to north; and second, the increase in New Jersey's minority population.

The present minority population of New Jersey collectively now approximates 48 percent. Both changes must impact this apportionment cycle.

One other change bears mentioning. Recent legislation requires that incarcerated individuals shall be deemed residents of their home districts, not the districts of their place of incarceration.

With regards to apportionment standards, the Constitution of the United States mandates that New Jersey's 40 districts must be of near-equal size in population. Our State Constitution requires that the districts be compact, contiguous, and preserve municipal boundaries. And the map must comply with Section 2 of the Federal Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The remaining standards -- recognition of communities of interest, competitiveness, continuity of representation, and partisan fairness -- while not constitutionally mandated, have been recognized as integral to the drafting and evaluation of a viable map. Critically, however, the remaining standards allow for some discretion in their application.

I view each of these standards as necessary to my role; but I recognize that the standards may be weighed and valued in their application differently by different people.

While some may view the standards as separate and discreet, I see them as integrated so that no one standard can dominate to the exclusion of the others.

Tensions exist between some of the standards, but no absolutists view of one standard can negate the application of the other standards.

I view my charge, as the 11th member of this Commission, to apply the standards without reference to partisanship to ensure that our next legislative map best reflects the people of New Jersey of 2022, and for the next decade.

It is with these thoughts in mind that I address each standard individually, starting with the constitutional requirement.

Equal population: As I noted earlier, the United States Constitution requires that each of the proposed districts be of equal population to ensure that each vote carries the same weight. “One person, one vote” is the critical tenet of the apportionment process.

According to the latest Census, the population of New Jersey is 9,283,016, and this does not include the 5,978 people indicated as residing at an unknown location in New Jersey. And therefore, each of the required 40 legislative districts should have a population of approximately 232,075 people. Recognizing that it is virtually impossible for each district to be identical in population, the law permits a deviation of up to 5 percent -- that is, 2.5 percent above and 2.5 percent below the required district size. Districts should be drawn to achieve that result. Now, I recognize that there is some Federal case law that has been tolerant of a greater deviation, but absent extraordinary circumstances, we should adhere to the 5 percent deviation.

Municipal boundaries: With the exception of Newark and Jersey City, whose populations exceed that of a single legislative district, municipalities cannot be split among districts.

Contiguity: The New Jersey Constitution requires that the districts be contiguous; they must be connected. Although this may present

some challenges where municipalities are separated by waterways or major highways, I do not see this as an impediment to appropriate district configuration. All legislative districts, therefore, should be contiguous.

Compactness: The State Constitution also requires legislative districts to be as compact as possible. This standard presents a greater challenge than contiguity because the requirement to preserve municipal boundaries will result in some irregular-shaped districts. This standard should be adhered to as long as it does not adversely impinge on the other apportionment standards.

Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965: Of particular importance to New Jersey and its growing minority population, Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 prohibits voting practices that result in citizens being denied equal access to the political process on account of race, color, or membership in a language minority group. Section 2 also prohibits adopting or maintaining voting practices for the purpose of disadvantaging citizens on account of race, color, or membership in a language minority group.

To fulfill New Jersey's obligation under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, New Jersey's next legislative map should include *opportunity-to-elect* legislative districts that provide racial or language minorities a reasonable opportunity to participate in the political process and elect representatives of their choice, either alone or in concert with other voters. Except as otherwise noted, race should be considered only as necessary to comply with Section 2 and should be narrowly tailored to satisfy these mandates.

Communities of interest: The map should recognize communities of interest, which are neighborhoods, communities, or groups of people who share common values, goals, and concerns, such as cultural,

ethnic, linguistic, economic, or religious interests; or shared infrastructure concerns, shared environmental concerns, or shared industry. Communities of interest, however, should not be based on political considerations, such as partisan affiliation or loyalty to a particular incumbent.

The increasing diversity of New Jersey's population makes identification and analysis of communities of interest critical to drafting a legislative map. Based on New Jersey's geographic and demographic diversity, the State's communities of interest are many. Although the preservation of communities of interest cannot displace mandatory apportionment principles, to the extent possible districts should be created to preserve communities of interest. Packing or cracking any particular portion of the population should not be done under the guise of creating communities of interest.

Competitiveness: Competitiveness should be applied to ensure that those participating in the political process have a real opportunity to choose a legislator who reflects the will of the voter. But this standard has limitations. Competitiveness in all districts is unrealistic; and other standards -- such as equal population, preservation of municipal boundaries, compliance with Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, and recognizing communities of interest -- militate against viewing competitiveness as the dominate standard.

The map should strive for competitive districts; but competition should not be used to diminish other standards, and competitiveness should not be applied solely for partisan advantage.

Continuity of representation: There is a substantial benefit to the citizenry of New Jersey to maintain a modicum of stability in the core of legislative districts.

Interaction with legislators and knowing one's legislative district has value and should not be discounted. District disruptions every 10 years do little to further citizen involvement and confidence in the political process. Unless necessary to meet other standards, cores of existing districts should be maintained.

As with competitiveness, however, continuity of representation should yield if it impairs the application of other standards, and it should be applied without partisan aims. Districts should not be drawn simply for the sake of protecting incumbents.

Finally, creating districts where incumbents must compete against each other, unless necessary to meet other standards, should be minimized.

Partisan fairness: No district or map should be drawn solely to favor or disfavor a political party or the election of any person. The parties should be treated fairly and consistent with the other standards.

The new map should reflect the demographic changes that have taken place in the past 10 years -- the increase in total population, the increase in minority population, and the shift of population from the southern part of New Jersey to the north. Like competitiveness, partisan fairness should not be applied for partisan advantage. The demographic shifts in population may benefit a particular party, and that cannot result from a failure to weigh and consider the other standards.

Fairness requires a map that does not inherently favor one party over the other for the next decade. Fairness also requires a map that includes districts that may shift with changing political tides.

The objective of the apportionment process is to provide a map that is fair to the residents of the State of New Jersey. While political parties may benefit from apportionment, that benefit can only be a byproduct of a process that serves, first and foremost, the entire population of New Jersey. Ensuring that result is the charge of the Commission and, most assuredly, my role as the 11th member.

Thank you very much.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you, Judge Carchman; we really appreciate your remarks, and you providing this to us in advance of the meeting.

So we'll now shift to the public portion of the hearing.

Madame Secretary, first person.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Mr. Chairman, would you like to go using the spreadsheet, which is alphabetical, or do you want to go in the order of registration?

MR. BARLAS: Let's go alphabetical.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Okay.

The first speaker present would be Ms. Rachel Davis, followed by Mr. Talib Morgan.

RACHEL DAWN DAVIS: Hi, good morning.

Thank you, Commission and staff, for this opportunity to share testimony.

My name is Rachel Dawn Davis, and I'm the Public Policy and Justice Organizer for Waterspirit. Waterspirit is a nonpartisan, nonprofit ministry of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace, and we work to center equality and justice around water-related policies at every level of government on

Earth. We focus on the interconnectedness of all life, and the issues in which we work are intertwined. Democracy, like water, is fluid.

We are glad to partake as part of the Fair Districts New Jersey Coalition. New districts should be drawn that reflect the fact that New Jersey's population growth has been overwhelmingly concentrated among New Jersey's communities of color.

These communities are only growing, and the Apportionment Commission must ensure these communities are receiving equitable representation that reflects and respects this growth in the next legislative map. Accessibility is essential to ensuring all New Jersey voices are heard.

It is vital that the New Jersey Apportionment Commission release draft maps and allow public comment on their proposals.

We specifically want to highlight the opportunity to keep together, and not split up, indigenous communities; for example, Lenape and Ramapo, who are still here, whose land we all occupy.

Almost half of New Jersey residents are people of color, but less than a quarter of this Commission is. As I pointed out in November, the majority of this Commission is made up of white men, despite being around a quarter of New Jersey residents.

Regardless of this malapportionment -- which has been going on for so long -- we still believe this Commission can make decisions that reflect the needs and perspectives of all New Jersey residents, to ensure that people who are not well represented on this Commission are not only encouraged, but empowered, to participate in the process.

Currently, the Commission is falling short with respect to the transparent changes, which future generations of New Jerseyans so deserve.

There's still time for transparency and change.

Thank you for the opportunity, and we wish everyone peace and health in 2022.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you, Ms. Davis, for your very insightful comments.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Mr. Chairman, the next speaker is Mr. Talib Morgan, followed by Mr. Thomas Pender, Jr.

TALIB MORGAN: Hello.

My name is Talib Morgan; I live in Scotch Plains, and this is my sixth year as a resident, homeowner, and passionate advocate for the representation of difference in our town.

And so I would like to ask for your consideration during the redistricting process.

Scotch Plains is an interesting town for our area of New Jersey. It is the home of an important first -- the first African American golf course in the country, Shady Rest Club, founded in 1921. And that happened because, even in 1921, African Americans were an important part of the fabric of our community.

This community has also long been an important home to the Italian community from Montazzoli, Italy, who moved here during the early 20th century.

You know, on Facebook recently, there was a post about -- on one of our community pages, where people were pointing out the report from -- of stats from United Van Lines, suggesting that New Jersey experienced a net-negative population change of people moving to or from the state;

meaning, about 20,000 people left the state, according to UVL. There was an enthusiastic discussion around that stat in Scotch Plains -- as there is about lots of things around here; people are very passionate -- but the blame was laid at the feet of everyone from the Governor, for generally being sucky -- according to them -- to counties for their high tax rates, to overall cost of living. But we know the truth; and that is that New Jersey is a great place to live, and, in fact, we saw a population increase, according to the Census, often led by increasing numbers of Black and brown people who choose to call New Jersey *home*.

And what's happening in the State is happening in Scotch Plains, and in its sister community of Fanwood. And we've seen not just African Americans and Italians, but also an increasing number of Latinos, and South Asians, and East Asians, and many others moving into our community, making it more diverse, just as it's doing for the state.

And so it's my request that the Commission give due consideration to the ways our community is changing, both in the composition of the Commission and in the drawing of the legislative map, such that equitable representation is a focus and concern of the process; and that the map is reflective of an effort to value and appreciate the wonderful amalgam of difference our State has become.

Thank you.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you, Mr. Morgan.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Mr. Chairman, the next speaker would be Mr. Thomas Pender, Jr., followed by Ms. Joan Peters.

T H O M A S P E N D E R, Jr.: Thank you.

Good morning, members of the NJ Apportionment Commission; Chairman Jones, and Chairman Barlas.

My name is Thomas Pender, Jr., and I'm a freshman at the New Jersey Institute of Technology, a STEM university located in Newark, New Jersey; and a member of the Trenton Branch Youth Council for the NAACP.

At NJIT I major in mechanical engineering, looking to minor in mathematics in the upcoming year. I am an aspiring (indiscernible) of our future, and a member of the recently reactivated NAACP Trenton Youth Council.

A lifelong New Jersey resident and registered New Jersey voter, I've lived in Piscataway for most of my life, but now reside in Hamilton, New Jersey.

Growing up in Piscataway opened my eyes to what the true meaning of *diversity* meant. Although not everyone is the same, with different backgrounds and different struggles, we can all find ourselves the will and a head held high.

The NAACP Trenton Youth Council is part of over 550 Youth and College Chapters all over the country. I'm a member of a group which comprises the next generation of Civil Rights leaders who are trying to make a difference and making waves now. In the NAACP, there are young people like myself, who are under the age of 25, who are leading change through Junior Youth Councils, Youth Councils, high school chapters, and college chapters, who are actively involved in the fight for Civil Rights and social justice. Part of our national vision is to advance the economic, educational, social, and political status of African Americans, and other racial and ethnic minorities, and their harmonious cooperation with other peoples.

Just a few weeks ago, on December 4, we began our convention here at The College of New Jersey, TCNJ, where we convened to discuss issues that are important to us. Redistricting and reapportionment were discussed as topics that are important to us.

It is because of the above that I'm here to testify today about reapportionment.

History and the present teach us that the most intense assault on the voting rights of Black people, and other people of color, are waged (indiscernible) at this moment -- when people of color are on the verge of using new or existing political power.

We urge the Commission that, rather than embrace their repressive tactics of the past, we look to the future and draw a map that will lead to a more inclusive democracy in our State.

By all indications, New Jersey will only get more diverse in the future. Our next legislative map must also recognize that communities of color are likely to be an even larger percentage of New Jersey's population in the future, and be drawn in a way so that, as communities of color grow, so will their political opportunities for greater representation.

Additionally, the Commission should commit to making proposed maps publicly available prior to certification, and hold hearings providing the public the opportunity to weigh in before a final vote on certification is held.

A deserved "thank you" goes to the NJ Institute of Social Justice, who assisted the New Jersey Conference NAACP Youth Committee in preparing my testimony, and those of the NAACP students who have previously testified before you and the Redistricting Commission.

Thank you for your time.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you, Mr. Pender, for your very thoughtful and deliberate comments.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Mr. Chairman, the next speaker is Ms. Joan Peters, followed by Mr. Keshawn Porter.

J O A N P E T E R S: Good afternoon, and thank you for allowing us to testify.

My name is Joan Peters, and I live in Clark; but I'm civically engaged in the Scotch Plains-Fanwood community, with grandchildren in the Scotch Plains School District -- and I'm very anxious about that.

I'm also a Board Member of Social Justice Matters, based here in Scotch Plains. And so I am testifying, asking for fairness for every voter.

Scotch Plains-Fanwood is predominantly white, with a growing population of people of color, as you've heard from Talib. We are bordered by Plainfield, a predominantly Black community with rich history; and Westfield, which is similar in makeup to SP-F; and Clark, which is almost all white.

Our District represents, for me, what districts should be -- where all votes (*sic*) can be heard and represented fairly. As the percentage of people of color rises -- as it has in the last Census, and will likely continue in the future -- we need maps across the state to be drawn in a way so that as communities of color grow, so do their political opportunities for greater representation.

I am here to ask for fair representation for all New Jerseyans of any color or political party. I want New Jersey to stand out for promoting

democracy. Let us lead the way so that voters can choose their leaders, rather than the leaders choosing their voters.

I recognize that the majority of the members of the Commission are white men, but I am asking you to make decisions that reflect the needs and perspectives of all New Jersey residents, by drawing maps in a fair way to ensure that people of color, and other groups not well represented on this Commission -- like the LGBT community and women -- are empowered to participate in this process.

I want to say that, after hearing Judge Carchman's comments, I am very encouraged. So I hope you will do the fair thing.

Thank you for your time.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you, Ms. Peters, for your comments.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Mr. Chairman, the next speaker is Mr. Keshawn Porter; followed by Ms. Saneitta Wicks.

KESHAWN PORTER: Good morning, Chairmen Jones and Barlas, and other members of the Apportionment Commission.

My name is Keshawn Porter; I live in East Orange, which is in the Greater Newark area.

I am here to testify about important features of my community.

I'm currently a junior attending Rowan University, majoring in law and justice with a minor in psychology. After my tenure at Rowan, I aspire to be a parole officer for the State of New Jersey.

As a student, I am active on campus, with membership in Alpha Phi Sigma Criminal Justice Honor Society, and a Resident Assistant. But

today, I'm here in my capacity as Assistant Secretary of the Rowan University Chapter of the NAACP.

My community is largely made up of African American families, families who just continue building. Many of these African Americans are enrolled in the public school system. Many of the families who live in East Orange are unable to afford to send their children to private schools due to economic barriers, so they enroll their children into free public schools.

My community is bordered by Newark to the east, Orange to the west, and Highway 280 to the north. East Orange is near Branch Brook Park, and is in close proximity to Eagle Rock Reservation.

My community includes East Orange Campus High School, East Orange STEM Academy, Sojourner Truth Middle School, and Main Street in Orange, New Jersey. My community is split between the 10th and the 11th Congressional Districts, and is in the 34th Legislative District.

Some of the issues that are most important to us are gun violence and access to healthy foods in East Orange.

In the media, we see gun violence happening on a daily basis. Every day, we hear about shots-fired incidents, and there are no arrests being made -- only open investigations.

We would like the County officials and government officials to collaborate to effectively decrease gun violence, and provide resources directly into the community to combat gun violence.

In terms of access to healthy foods, we only have one Whole Foods in our area, which is expensive and creates a financial barrier. If the elected officials would advocate for the decrease in the amount of fast food restaurants in East Orange, and more healthy, but affordable food places in

East Orange, we can decrease the rates of obesity, high blood pressure, and all these other chronic health diseases that are in East Orange.

My community is a lot like Newark, another urban community in the area that has gun violence and limited access to healthy food places. We see places like Millburn and West Orange, Verona, and other communities that do not face similar problems.

To sum this all up, the greater East Orange area is a tight-knit community with deep roots in the area, and we hope to be well represented in the new district maps.

To quote the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, “Achieving equal representation and being able to cast equal and effective votes depends, in part, on redistricting or reapportionment maps that are drawn fairly to reflect and respect our communities.”

Therefore, I ask that you take my testimony, and that of my peers, into consideration when drawing the map.

I thank the Commission for listening to me today, and ask that you consider keeping my community together when drawing new maps, to the extent it is possible, without in any way diluting minority voting power, or otherwise violating the law or fair redistricting principles.

Again, thank you, and it was a pleasure speaking with you all today.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you, Mr. Porter, for your very, very insightful comments. And I know I speak for Co-Chair Jones when I say it’s nice to have somebody from Essex County testifying.

And I think he feels a little more special because he’s from East Orange. (laughter)

Thank you.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Mr. Chairman, the next speaker is Ms. Sanietta Wicks, followed by Ms. Amy Winkler.

SANIETTA WICKS: Good morning, Chairman Jones and Chairman Barlas, and other members of the Reapportionment Commission.

My name is Sanietta Wicks, and I'm a senior at The College of New Jersey, where my major is criminology, and a sociology minor.

My career goal is to become a lawyer; and on-campus, I am active in participating in campus life. I'm active within my sorority, the Black Student Union, and I'm also a peer educator for the Anti-Violence Initiatives.

And today, I'm here in my capacity as a member of TCNJ's NAACP Chapter.

I live and go to church in Newark, New Jersey; I'm a member of the Pentecostal Church of God here; and I testify about the importance of the future of my community.

My community is largely made up of Black and Hispanic families; some of whom attend my church are a vital part of my larger community.

The common languages spoken within my community are English, Spanish, and Portuguese; and my community is located in the Essex County area, bordered on the south by East Orange -- South and East Orange, Irvington, and Bloomfield. And Newark is roughly bounded by Raymond Boulevard, Mulberry Hill, and Washington; and is divided into four political parts, or Wards: East, West, and South, and North Ward, and Central Ward.

I currently live--

(testimony interrupted)

Sorry; I apologize.

(Indiscernible); I currently live in Newark, New Jersey, like I said before; and my community is a part of the 28th Congressional District.

Some important issues to address in my City are education and healthcare. (Indiscernible) the total of 36 schools, and our public schools are poorly funded; not to mention the hike in diabetes -- are the two most important conditions. Furthermore, Newark, New Jersey, has a history that is deeply rooted in cultures.

With that being said, I hope to be represented well in the new district maps.

So I thank the Commission for listening to me today, and I ask that you consider keeping the community together, and then drawing new maps to the extent that it's possible, without any diluting of minority voting powers and otherwise violating the law of fair redistricting principles.

And before I go, I want to say to those listening to this hearing, that your testimony is important. The New Jersey State Conference of the NAACP Youth and College Council will encourage you -- that you can testify. And to quote Leah Aden, Deputy Director of Litigation at the LDF, "The lines we draw give Black communities access to allow us to elect representatives that can work to serve our policy interests in justice, jobs, high quality education, and healthy communities."

It is my hope that my testimony here today has encouraged others, especially young people, to testify.

Again, thank you for your time, and thank you.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you, Ms. Wicks.

And I think I can safely say, on behalf of my fellow Commissioners, that we totally agree with you. The more people who do participate in this process, the more people who do come in and give us their testimony -- it is greatly, greatly appreciated and needed, quite frankly. And look, the more young people who want to participate in this process -- that's great. I mean, we would love to see that more than anybody else.

So thank you again for taking the time, Ms. Wicks.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Mr. Chairman, the next speaker is Ms. Amy Winkler.

AMY WINKLER: Thank you.

Good afternoon. My name is Amy Winkler; I live in Fanwood Borough in Union County, part of the 22nd District, where I have resided for more than 20 years.

I'm here to testify about some features of my community, and to request that districts be drawn to give voice to the growing populations of people of color in New Jersey.

Fanwood is roughly a square mile in size, and surrounded on three sides by Scotch Plains Township. The two municipalities share a school district and, in many ways, we see ourselves as one large community. Lots of the people in our community grew up here, and chose to buy homes and raise their own families here; other people moved to our community because of the schools.

Locally, we typically refer to the community as *SP-F*, for *Scotch Plains-Fanwood*. While still predominantly white, like much of New Jersey we've seen growth in the population of people of color in our community.

We have a rich diversity of populations here, and we take pride in that diversity. We have two historically Black neighborhoods, as well as a historically strong Italian community here.

In recent years, we've seen growth in our Latin, East Asian, and particularly South Asian populations. We're home to Shady Rest, the first Black country club in the United States, which was established in 1921, and was listed in the *Negro Motorist Green Book*. We're also home to the late Malcolm E. Nettingham, one of the original five Tuskegee Airmen, who lived most of his life here and for whom one of our middle schools was recently renamed.

Our community is, in some ways, a lot like Westfield, the municipality immediately east of us. We are similar in socio-economic ways, and many of the people from SP-F shop, attend religious services, and socialize with friends in Westfield. Both communities are known for their schools.

To our west is the City of Plainfield. While our racial and socio-economic makeup is different from Plainfield, increasingly businesses and friendships draw people across the border in both directions.

Now that the State's population is nearly 50 percent people of color, and growing, it's critically important that New Jersey's districts be drawn so that people of color have the opportunity to pick their chosen representatives for at least half the seats.

To sum this up, it's important that we keep Scotch Plains and Fanwood together in the same District, since we really do see ourselves as one community. I ask that the Commission consider a map that is reflective of

the population shifts we've seen in the last decade, and gives voice to the growing populations in New Jersey.

I also ask that the Commission make their proposed maps available to the public, and hold hearings providing the public the opportunity to weigh in before a final vote on certification is held.

I want to thank the Commission for holding at least 10 public hearings on this, and for allowing me to share my testimony today.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you, Ms. Winkler, for taking the time to come and testify before us today.

Madam Secretary.

Mr. Chairman, there are no other speakers present.

MR. BARLAS: Anybody else join in who wishes to testify? (no response)

Chairman Jones, anything?

MR. JONES: No, Mr. Chairman.

I think, you know, that sums it up.

You know, I'm just hoping that over these next several meetings that we have more input from the public. I commend all those who participated and shared their thoughts and comments; especially Judge Carchman, with a very, very thorough overview of your expectations in terms of the standards that we should be guided by and focused on.

So, Mr. Chairman, that's all I have on behalf of our delegation.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you, Co-Chair Jones.

Judge Carchman, anything further?

JUSTICE CARCHMAN: No, thank you.

MR. BARLAS: All right.

So with that, I'd like to make a motion to adjourn.

ASSEMBLYMAN BRAMNICK: Second.

MR. BARLAS: Second; all in favor say "aye." (affirmative responses)

MR. BARLAS: All opposed? (no response)

Great; thank you, and Happy New Year.

We'll see you at the next meeting, which will be virtually on Wednesday, January 6 (*sic*), at 6 p.m.

MR. JONES: January 26.

MR. BARLAS: January 26, 26; we're not going back in time.
(laughter)

See you.

MR. JONES: Bye now.

ALL: Bye-bye.

(MEETING CONCLUDED)