
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: John F. Scarpa Academic Center
Stockton University Atlantic City
Atlantic City, New Jersey

DATE: November 16, 2021
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
Dr. Cosmo A. Cirillo
Michael B. Lavery, Esq.
Gary Taffet
Diane T. Testa, Esq.



ALSO PRESENT:

Raysa Martinez Kruger
Office of Legislative Services
Commission Secretary

Jessica Oestreicher
Roshard Williams
Office of Legislative Services
Commission Aides

Meeting Recorded and 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

COMMISSION NOTICE

TO: MEMBERS OF THE APPORTIONMENT COMMISSION

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

SUBJECT: COMMISSION MEETING – NOVEMBER 16, 2021

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 or email: OLSAideAPPC@njleg.org. 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 on Tuesday, November 16, 2021 at 12:00 PM at Stockton University, Atlantic City Campus, John F. Scarpa Academic Center, Fannie Lou Hamer Event Room, 3711 Atlantic Avenue, Atlantic City, New Jersey, 08401.

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 may 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 November 16 on the calendar and click on Apportionment Commission for the registration link. Advance registrations must be received by Monday, November 15, 2021 at 3:00 PM. Upon successful registration, you will view a printable receipt on screen.

(OVER)

Registration will also be available on site. 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. If providing written testimony in addition to oral testimony at the meeting, please bring 15 copies for distribution to Commission members. Written testimony will be included in the Commission's record and distributed to all Commission members.

This meeting will observe the COVID-19 protocols in place at our host location. **Visitor Pledge:** All visitors and guests at Stockton University are asked to complete the visitor or attendee health pledge. The pledge can be completed in advance of your arrival by clicking on this link <https://go.stockton.edu/public/visitor/form> or by stopping at the kiosk upon your arrival. The kiosk is located at the information or security counter in the main lobby of the Scarpa Academic Center. **Mask Guidance:** All individuals, regardless of vaccination status, are asked to wear a mask in indoor public and common areas unless granted a medical accommodation.

Public parking is available in the Stockton University Parking Garage at 101 S. Lincoln Place, Atlantic City. Please note that there is a fee for parking in the garage. There is also metered street parking. A printable campus map is available at: <https://stockton.edu/maps/documents/ac-campus-map.pdf>.

Issued 11/9/21

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For changes in schedule due to snow or other emergencies, see website <http://www.njleg.state.nj.us> or call 800-792-8630 (toll-free in NJ) or 609-847-3905.

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AL BARLAS (Republican Chair): Good afternoon, everybody.
Welcome to the second public hearing of the New Jersey
Legislative Apportionment Commission.

Today is Tuesday, November 16.

We'll begin with the roll call, Madam Secretary.

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 Cirillo.

DR. CIRILLO: Present.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Commissioner Bramnick.

ASSEMBLYMAN BRAMNICK: Present.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Chair Jones.

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

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Chair Barlas.

MR. BARLAS: Present.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Eleventh member, Commissioner
Carchman.

JUSTICE CARCHMAN: Here.

MR. BARLAS: We're good? Great.

Thank you, everyone.

We're going to begin the public testimony portion. We know we have some folks who signed up today, who showed up, which is great.

But we will start in the order of those who signed up online to testify.

So the first person that I'll ask to come up to testify is Mr. Christopher Binetti.

Mr. Binetti, are you here?

CHRISTOPHER BINETTI, Ph.D.: How many minutes do I have? About two, or--

MR. BARLAS: We're doing about two to three minutes.

DR. BINETTI: Okay.

MR. BARLAS: You're all right.

DR. BINETTI: My name is Dr. Christopher Binetti. I am a Ph.D. in political science; I'm a political scientist and an aspiring academic.

And I'm also the President of the Italian American Movement, which is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to Italian American civil rights.

I have testified before, and I hope to testify a number of times again. But as you know, I, and many members of my community, believe that we are often ignored when it comes to reapportionment issues. There are good reasons for that, some of which I described in both my written testimony and my oral testimony last time.

I want to move a little bit away from the theme before, since I'm doing something different.

Anyway, what's really important is, it is very hard to get good data for Italian Americans, even if you wanted to consider us a community of interest for the purposes of reapportionment. I obviously think that you should. But because the 2020 census -- even though it did include a blank for Italian Americans -- has not, as far as I know, included the ancestry data yet -- and I could be wrong about that -- as opposed to the race and ethnicity data. If you were to try to include us as a community of interest, you'd probably have to use the 2019 American Community Survey data, which I believe is more specific than just the New Jersey data. And I think you would be able to do that and do a district-by-district analysis. Obviously, I would be happy to help with that, and there are other members of the Italian American community who would be able to help with that.

But it is a little trickier because the 2020 ancestry data, even though it is -- should be included, hasn't been given out to people. And this is a serious problem because the assumption is that only race and ethnicity will count for communities of interest. And then what we would colloquially call *ethnicity*, which is considered ancestry -- like being Italian, or Polish, or Jewish, or something of that -- would never be taken into account. And so this creates a problem, because even if you want to make the change to include these ancestries in communities of interest, it makes it more difficult. But I think there's a way around it through the 2019 data.

The last point I want to make is, I understand it is a little unnerving to people to hear of Italian Americans calling themselves a *community of interest* or arguing for minority rights. But I think the important part is, it's not in opposition to any other group and it's not in any way a zero-sum game. I argued last time that perhaps it's not even about how many

Italians are in the Legislature -- although I think that's important -- but how many Italians are in the districts. How many Italian voters are there? I, for one, have a wonderful representative, but he isn't familiar with our issues, and there aren't as many members -- Italian -- in the district, and so it does make it a little bit hard to push him, even though I think he's very much acting in good faith.

And so I do think that that's important. Ultimately, it's the substance of representation more than the descriptive representation that matters -- the substance of the laws. But at the end of the day, descriptive representation matters, too.

But I would make the ultimate argument that even including us in some kind of community of interest analysis I don't think disenfranchises or harms any of the traditional minorities, and I think we can work together to create something equitable for everybody.

Thank you so much.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you, Dr. Binetti. We appreciate your comments.

The next person up to testify is Carmelo Cintron Vivas. (no response)

Carmelo? (no response)

No? All right, we'll come back.

The next person scheduled to testify is Ms. Elaine Rose.

Ms. Rose, are you here?

E L A I N E R O S E, Ph.D.: My name is Elaine Rose, last name spelled the same as the flower.

Just as we're giving our academic credentials, I have a Ph.D. in sociology, though that's not the field I work in.

I'm a resident of Galloway Township, and my issue is that I feel I don't have a representative in Trenton. Galloway Township and Port Republic are cut off from Atlantic County in the current districts. And I know the *names* of my legislative representatives; I don't know their office numbers, I don't know where they are. I don't hear anything from them; except a couple of weeks before the election, the Republicans put up a couple signs on our streets, and the Democrats didn't even bother doing that.

I just feel I don't have anybody in Trenton who I can go to. They're sitting somewhere in Toms River; God knows where. I don't have an office number; they never reach out to us in Galloway.

And I am asking that you please put Galloway and Port Republic back in the District with Atlantic County, where our interests lie, and where we live, and where we know the people and they know us.

MR. BARLAS: Okay.

DR. ROSE: Thank you.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you very much, Ms. Rose.

The next person is Susen Shapiro.

S U S E N S H A P I R O: I am a resident of Galloway Township, and both Galloway and Port Republic are the only towns in Atlantic County that are included in Legislative District 9, the bulk of which is in Ocean County. Geographically there's no reason for this, except that the area is like a nodule attached to Ocean County.

With population increases in Ocean County in the last 10 years, there is no population-related reason either.

The concerns of Atlantic County are not necessarily the same as those of Ocean County. The presence of casinos in Atlantic City provide an example of issues that affect only Atlantic County.

A newspaper article in the *Press of Atlantic City* discussed the inclusion of 15 Atlantic County municipal courts into one central court. It's doubtful that the Assemblypersons and Senator of Ocean County would find this of interest, and that's understandable.

The problem is that Galloway and Port Republic have no representation in the State Legislature. LD9's political activities and campaigning take place in Ocean County only. We do not know who, if anyone, is running against the current incumbents since campaigning is geared toward Ocean County voters only. This is true of both parties.

I'm asking for your consideration in removing Galloway Township and Port Republic from LD9 and putting us in a district that is more compatible geographically.

The article in the *Press* announcing this hearing states that the goal of redistricting is to ensure that all State residents have equal representation in the U.S. House of Representatives. I assume this would also apply to the State Legislative districts.

We have no representation. Let this redistricting be the end of our situation of taxation without representation.

Thank you.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you, Ms. Shapiro.

Next up we have scheduled to testify Mr. Joshua Hunte.

JOSHUA R. HUNTE: Good afternoon, Commissioners of the New Jersey Apportionment Commission.

My name is Joshua Hunte, and I am a junior at Stockton University studying psychology and biology, with a neuroscience minor; with residence on the Galloway campus. My goal is to attend Rowan Osteopathic School of Medicine to become a pediatric psychiatrist.

On campus I serve as the Chairperson of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee of the Stockton Student Senate, and a member of the Stockton State NAACP. Aside from these, I'm a founding father of Phi Mu Delta fraternity, Mu Psi Provisional Chapter. A goal of the fraternity -- the national goal -- will be to provide a positive fraternity experience for today's college man, regardless of ethnicity. The chapter will also encourage high personal standards, morally, mentally, and spiritually; and help its members live the ideals of our fathers: democracy, brotherhood, and service.

At the moment, I'm a patient care associate at the AtlantiCare Mainland Campus, where our goal is to create a trusting, engaging, and sacred personal connection with the patients we come in contact with.

Though I currently live on the Galloway campus, I'm originally from Lindenwold, New Jersey, and I've lived there for 20 years. Growing up there, I lived on the border of Lindenwold and Gibbsboro, and went to Trinity Preparatory School in Laurel Springs. Confidently, I can say I explored all of Lindenwold, which ranges from the PATCO station to Clementon Park, and extends to Berlin.

Speaking more about my time and experience, within a mile from my house is an apartment complex with diverse residents. While in that area, I saw many different people from all backgrounds. While the area is predominantly white, I saw many Black and Hispanic people outside walking

their kids, going to the park, or visiting Deterding's supermarket right across the street.

While growing up in that area, many of my friends were first-generation citizens coming from households where their parents didn't speak English fluently. Yet, they worked hard to become part of the community and made a life for themselves and their families. I thank God that my parents worked hard for my sister and me so we did not have to experience poverty. However, for 14.2 percent of our community, that was not the case.

When most people hear *Lindenwold Borough*, they also get a foul taste in their mouth if they are only familiar with what is displayed in the news or what is on social media. They only retain information about the crime rate, which is said to be a significant percentage above the national crime average. However, to me, Lindenwold is the place I call home.

The majority of people don't see the diversity and culture that is never-ending and always exciting. With that, I'm thrilled to say that I am from Lindenwold. A heartfelt thank you to my parents for choosing the town that I know and love, and that is so special and dear to me.

What I ask today is that everyone here sees what I feel and understands why I feel the way I feel. Because it is imperative that the concerns of my community do not get drowned out by the representation that does not have my best interest. Therefore, I implore this Commission to make sure that my community's voice is not overpowered by the white majority representation. Please, whatever decision is made, make sure that my community receives the attention that it deserves. We deserve to have our voice heard.

Thank you for your attention and time.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you, Joshua.

The next person up to testify is Jesse Connor.

JESSE CONNOR: Yes.

MR. BARLAS: Ms. Connor.

And also, for the public's information -- on our website, *apportionmentcommission.org*, the feature to submit maps has been placed on there; it is live and functioning now. So if anyone wishes to submit a full map, partial map, district map, county -- whatever you'd like to see -- the option is there for anyone to submit maps that both sides, and the 11th member, will all be -- will all receive copies of that as well.

So Ms. Connor.

MS. CONNOR: First, I want to thank the Commission for allowing me to speak about the importance of redistricting and elevating the voices of our communities.

My name is Jesse Connor. I'm a longtime resident of Port Republic, and I'm here today on behalf of the Atlantic County Chapter of the League of Women Voters. The League of Women Voters is an organization that, for over 100 years, has fought to protect and strengthen our democracy, and ensure full participation and access in the process.

The redistricting work that this Commission has been charged with is a central part of our democracy. The hope for my testimony today is to play a small role in ensuring that maps drawn in the 2021 redistricting cycle fairly represent my community and other communities throughout South Jersey.

We have seen how improper redistricting has distorted and undermined crucial values of our representative democracy. All maps drawn

should be drawn in the interest of the people and communities they serve and not, as is often the case, to protect the power of a few. The unfair redistricting of communities has stolen their power and guarantees the suppression of their voices.

In our democracy, it is important that all voices be heard; and allowing people like me to testify is the best way to ensure a fair and just process. We cannot allow another redistricting process to go by without fighting for fair representation.

As an active member and Chair of the Atlantic County Chapter of the League of Women Voters, I strongly support a redistricting process that requires substantially equal populations, geographic contiguity, and effective representation of racial and linguistic minorities. A process that promotes nonpartisan fairness, the preservation of communities of interest, and the boundaries of municipalities and counties is also critical to the creation of fair districts.

I have a personal interest in redistricting as well. As I mentioned, I've been a resident of Port Republic for the last 32 years. The population of my roughly seven-and-a-half square mile town is 1,121. It is situated in the northeast corner of Atlantic County, bordered on the north by the Mullica River and on the east by the waters of Great Bay. Historically, Port Republic residents voted with neighboring Galloway Township residents, and other citizens of Atlantic County, in Legislative District 2. More recently, however, Port Republic and Galloway Township have been redistricted into the 9th District in Ocean County.

I believe that redistricting the citizens of Port Republic into District 9 has done us a disservice. The Mullica River geographically isolates

us from Ocean County. Like other residents of Port Republic and Galloway, I shop, I attend church, I dine at restaurants, I attend culture and community events in Atlantic County. I rarely travel to the north covered by District 9. I am unaware, uninformed, and to be perfectly honest, not very interested in the issues that are important to voters of the 9th Legislative District.

In contrast to that, I am aware, informed, and interested in the issues that are of importance to Port Republic, Galloway Township, and the neighboring Atlantic County community.

So now, speaking for myself as one of the many redistricted citizens and voters, I urge the Commission, when creating maps -- new maps, in 2021 -- to protect communities of interest, and respect county boundaries, and to keep Atlantic County together by redistricting Port Republic and Galloway Township back into Legislative District 2.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you, Ms. Connor.

Next up we'll have Yash Shah.

YASH SHAH: Thank you, Judge Carchman, Chairman Jones, Chairman Barlas, and all the members of the Legislative Apportionment Commission for allowing me to speak today.

My name is Yash Shah, and I am the Executive Director of the South Asian Registration Initiative. I appreciate your willingness to hear from the members of the public.

Transparency and inclusion are an important part of the reapportionment process, and that is why I'm here to speak to you today. Like other communities that have addressed this Commission, I would like you to consider the impact your decisions will have on my community, not

just in Monmouth County where I currently live and work, but all across the state.

The Asian population in New Jersey has increased significantly since the last census. The Asian population increased 44 percent over the last decade, with more than 1 million people residing here of Asian American and Pacific Islander heritage. This was most evident in this month's election results.

Asians have historically been underrepresented, but we will now have six legislators across five districts representing us in Trenton beginning this January.

You must do everything you can to protect our communities of interest and solidify our legislative representation for the next decade when creating the new map. Our State Constitution requires that you do not divide municipal lines, except in Jersey City and Newark. With that principle in mind, I believe it is impossible to create a majority Asian district that stays within acceptable population guidelines. And yet, in the next legislative session, there will be six representatives of Asian descent from five different districts. So how should you go about ensuring there are more opportunities for Asian representation, even if it may not be possible to create majority Asian districts?

I ask that you solve this problem by creating many different districts that reflect the broad diversity of New Jersey with significant Asian populations. For example, the 33rd District, home to Assemblyman Raj Mukherji, is only 17.5 percent Asian; but it is over 60 percent non-white. In that case, creating a diverse district with a significant Asian minority sustains Asian representation.

As you look at Jersey City, I ask that you keep the Asian communities there in a single district. State Senator Vin Gopal lives in Monmouth County, and the residents in the 11th Legislative District have benefited greatly from his voice and advocacy in Trenton. His path in 2017 was helped by the diverse communities of color in the 11th District, and removing communities like Asbury Park and Neptune Township would jeopardize our only representation in the State Senate.

Assemblyman Sterley Stanley lives in East Brunswick; and keeping towns like East Brunswick and Edison together in the same legislative district allows for the Indian community to be represented in Trenton. Again, the district is not majority Asian, but it has created an opportunity for Asian representation, with approximately 36 percent of its population being Asian.

Although some may want to combine the Oak Tree Road corridor together by merging Edison and Woodbridge, this would have the practical implication of taking Edison, which is more than 48 percent Asian, out of a district that currently sustains one of only six Asian representatives in the New Jersey Legislature.

We just elected the first-ever Muslim woman to the New Jersey General Assembly, who currently lives in Montgomery Township. Her victory was due, in large part, to the Asian community living in Princeton and South Brunswick. Removing these communities would severely hinder the historic progress we just made.

Bergen County just elected two Asian women in the 37th Legislative District. This District follows the same path as others that have created opportunities for Asian representation -- majority non-white with a large Asian minority -- that allows the Asian communities to build coalitions

to increase representation. I ask that you maintain a district with similar population in Bergen County.

In conclusion, my attempts to create a majority Asian district have been unsuccessful if we are to follow other constitutional and legal criteria, such as respecting municipal boundaries and creating districts of equal population. Since you cannot create a majority Asian district, I ask that you do the next best thing, which is to create many districts that reflect the broad diversity of our state that has sizable Asian populations. The best way we have found electoral success in New Jersey is to have districts that are majority non-white in which the Asian population is a plurality or a significant minority.

I also ask that you consider the recent success of Asian candidates for the Legislature in mind when creating new districts. Cutting significant portions of districts away from our current Asian legislators in the name of creating an opportunity for Asian representation does not make sense.

And so I ask you to keep together communities that have a proven track record of electing Asian representatives to the Legislature.

Again, I thank you for your time and consideration.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you, Mr. Shah.

Next up we have Helen Kioukis. I hope I said that right.

Way to go -- I got a thumbs up.

HELEN KIOUKIS: Good afternoon, members of the Commission.

Thank you for holding this hearing and allowing me to present testimony.

My name is Helen Kioukis -- you did get that right -- and I'm a resident of Atlantic City. I'm not speaking today on behalf of any

organization, but as a lifelong voting member of the 2nd Legislative District who disagreed with the way Atlantic County was divided in the last redistricting cycle.

This area has two major anchor institutions that have grown significantly over the last decade: AtlantiCare Regional Medical Center and Stockton University. Both are currently constructing new facilities in Atlantic City, and they have also expanded within the Galloway Township area over the years. AtlantiCare's mainland campus is in Galloway; and for anyone else like me who sees physicians in the network, most of our doctors' offices are also in Galloway.

Similarly, the students who reside in Stockton's new Atlantic City dorms right across the street -- they shuttle between here and Stockton's main Galloway campus. However, Atlantic City and Galloway are not in the same legislative district. For the next map, I believe these municipalities should be reunited. Keeping Atlantic City and Galloway divided between the 2nd and 9th Districts splits communities of common interests and diminishes the voting and advocacy power of Stockton students.

Along with my testimony, I have submitted a draft of a proposed District 2 map that keeps Atlantic City and Galloway together, along with 12 other contiguous municipalities of Atlantic County. This new district would have a population of 232,422, just 197 people above the target population for each new district.

In closing, I urge the Commission to create the new district map guided by input from community members and civil rights advocacy organizations, rather than partisan data. I understand that redistricting is a very complex and political process, but I believe any final map should

accurately reflect the diversity of New Jersey, provide communities of color the opportunity to elect candidates of their choice, and keep together communities with shared interests -- whether those interests are cultural, social, or economic.

Thank you, again, for this opportunity.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you very much.

Next up we have Danielle Combs.

DANIELLE V. COMBS: Good afternoon.

Thank you, Chairman; and good afternoon, members of the New Jersey Apportionment Commission.

My name is Danielle Combs. I'm a recent Stockton University graduate who majored in political science. While at Stockton, I was initiated into the Pi Chi Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. And I also was the President of the newly reactivated chapter of the Stockton University NAACP.

I'm an aspiring lawyer, and I'm currently the Administrative Director for the New Jersey State Conference of the NAACP.

I'm here today as part of a continuum of hundreds of students and young adults under 25 years old who are members of the NAACP Youth and College units. Yesterday, members of the Rowan University's NAACP testified at the New Jersey redistricting hearing; and today, myself and other members of the Stockton NAACP are here to testify.

Notably, for members of this Commission, is that I am a lifelong resident of New Jersey; a graduate of Camden County Technical Schools, the Gloucester Township campus; and a current resident of Cherry Hill, New Jersey. I have always called New Jersey home.

The NAACP has six Game Changers, and one of them is voting rights and political representation. The purpose of this Game Changer is to make sure that NAACP members protect and enhance voting rights and fair representation. NAACP members are tasked with working to ensure that every American has free, open, equal, and protected access to the vote, and fair representation at all levels of the political process. It is the hope that by protecting democracy, enhancing equality, and increasing democratic participation and civic engagement, African Americans and other persons of color will be proportionally elected to political office.

Because of this Game Changer, it is the plan of the New Jersey State Conference NAACP Youth Works Committee to have Youth and College members provide testimony at reapportionment and redistricting public meetings.

New Jersey's communities of color are growing, and the Commission must ensure that these communities are receiving equitable representation that reflects and represents the growth in the next legislative map.

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. In 2010, the legislative map that was drawn overrepresented white people, significantly diminishing the voices of people of color. The Commission must not let that happen again.

Now that we are over 48 percent people of color, it is vital that New Jersey's districts be drawn in a way so that people of color have a chance to pick their chosen representative for at least half of the seats.

The 2020 Census demonstrated that New Jersey is becoming more diverse. Latino, Hispanic, and Asian populations heavily drove New Jersey's growth in 2010. Latino and Hispanic populations grew by 447,000, or 29 percent; while Asian and Asian American populations grew by 223,000, or 31 percent. Then the Black and African American population also increased, by growing at about 29,000, a 3 percent increase from 2010.

Meanwhile, the population declined.

Today, I'm asking for three things to ensure that New Jersey's voices are heard.

One, in addition to written testimony, the Commission should explicitly and clearly allow the submission of maps from the public on its website. Two, the Commission should clarify on its website which translation services are provided, and provide simultaneous translation by default instead of placing the burden on the potential hearing participants or attendees to request translation services. And three, 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 New Jersey Institute of Social Justice who assisted the New Jersey State Conference NAACP Youth Works Committee in preparing my testimony today, and those of the NAACP students who you have heard, and will continue to hear today.

Thank you for your time.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you very much, Ms. Combs.

Next up to testify is Malikah Stafford.

MALIKAH STAFFORD: Good afternoon, Commissioners of the New Jersey Apportionment Commission.

My name is Malika Stafford. I'm a graduate of Egg Harbor Township High School and currently a senior at Stockton University, majoring in communication studies and minoring in Africana studies.

I'm currently the Vice President and Educational Chief of the Unified Black Student Society at Stockton University; and a member of the Stockton NAACP, where Zabrina Clement is President.

My career goal is to be a change agent in the television field by becoming a writer and producer who uses her talent to showcase the diaspora of African American life in a way where our culture can be uplifted.

I'm here today at the request of the New Jersey State Conference NAACP Youth Works Committee and the Stockton State University NAACP.

Now, currently, I'm a residential student living on the Atlantic City campus. While I grew up in a neighboring town, Egg Harbor Township, I was born right here -- Venice Park to be exact -- an area of the City that was a part of the historical Northside, a redlined, predominantly Black neighborhood.

Growing up I was heavily immersed in Atlantic City's noteworthy church culture. It was not uncommon for me to be in Atlantic City at least two to three times a week for my family's church, the Westminster Christian Worship Center; as well as visiting the other churches within the community on occasion.

Here in Atlantic City, this diverse community has a dominant Black and brown presence, many of whom are either essential workers for the

City government or are essential workers in the City's notable consumeristic market of casinos, shops, restaurants, and more. My mother's side of the family, the Witherspoons, all either have worked for the City or are still working for the City in some form or capacity.

I want everyone to know that Atlantic City is much more than this consumeristic market. There is a thriving, diverse community, full of rich history that is valuable. With Stockton's unveiling of the Atlantic City campus, there's now a diverse college student population within the City, which only adds to the diverse cultural population here in Atlantic City, which I will, at times, affectionately refer to as *AC* henceforth in this testimony.

Atlantic City is bordered by the Absecon Inlet on the north side of the City, and extends all the way to Jackson Avenue, the border separating Atlantic City from Ventnor. It resides within the 2nd Congressional District and in the 2nd Legislative District of New Jersey. Within these 48 blocks you can see the casinos' towering presence at any place in the City.

But AC is much more than these casinos and the outlet shops that lie at the center of the City. The heart of AC lies within the diverse communities like Chelsea Heights, right by Tropicana; and The Village, blocks away from the walk; and Venice Park, right by the Absecon Inlet. These distinctive communities of the City demonstrate the City's rich and diverse history. I remember going to the Gardner's Basin for various blues concerts with my dad, who would drag me down there growing up; or going to Take Your Child to Work Day with my mom at the Atlantic City Municipal Court, right off of Atlantic and Iowa Avenues; or hearing of the

glory days of my family's church, formerly located on the corner of Vermont and Madison Avenues.

This is the Atlantic City that I know, a City that I've come to love.

With that being said, I would like to tell you a story. So one day my sister and I were driving through Atlantic City. We wanted to find a different restaurant to go to, and we thought about staying offshore and going to a restaurant; but we decided to roam the City on that day. Coming off the White Horse Pike, we drove straight through Atlantic City. Cracked sidewalks, dilapidated buildings, the absence of traffic cameras, interwoven with brown skin faces walking to wherever; some with children in tow, others dressed in uniforms as if they were headed to work.

We kept driving and driving, and saw the same things, street after street, with a moment of slight pristine-ness when we hit the Center City outlets. But after a couple blocks, we saw the same thing still -- still no traffic cameras; uneven, crammed roads; boarded up houses; and broken street signs.

Then as we crossed the border of Jackson Avenue from AC to Ventnor, I noticed a distinct change. I saw a Wawa; I couldn't believe it. Right across the street, a movie theater. As we kept driving, the roads became more even, they were smoother. We kept driving. We saw plenty of restaurants with outside seating, white people walking their dogs, some jogging, others riding their bikes. And as we crossed into Margate, the houses turned into mansions almost. I saw Teslas, Mercedes-Benzes, BMWs lining the wide streets that were accented with manicured lawns and pretty fences with gates.

Out of all these things, I noticed the traffic cameras the most -- how they awaited you at every stoplight, accompanied by speed barometers, as if to tell those who were outsiders that you were being watched; monitored, even.

My sister and I were greeted with curious stares as we rode through, as if we were blemishes riding through these designated white streets. But my gaze kept returning to the traffic cameras; how frequently they appeared. It was as if that was the signal to me that this community was worth being seen, that this community was worthy of being protected, that this community mattered.

My sister and I ended up turning around to find somewhere else to eat, because we felt that uncomfortable. We felt seen, but not in a good way.

As we made our way out of Margate into Ventnor, and crossing Jackson Avenue back into Atlantic City, the traffic cameras left. I felt some relief to be in a place where I felt I belonged, but, at the same time, I knew that not seeing these cameras meant that this diverse community of Atlantic City that I love so much would metaphorically and literally not be seen, it would not be validated, it would not be protected, it would not matter.

AC is no different than any other bustling city in America. My work as an intern for *Stories of Atlantic City* -- an organization committed to restoring the narrative and image of Atlantic City through restorative narrative journalism -- illuminated this to me. There's culture, entertainment, and, most of all, a rich diverse community here -- something that often goes unnoticed.

What makes AC so different from Margate and Ventnor? White people; white people with money and resources. And this should not make their voices matter any more than the predominantly Black and brown voices that fill the communities in Atlantic City.

That brings me to my last point. It's important to have people who look like the people within my community representing my community. If they don't look like me, it is imperative that people who are representing me make it their central focus of taking these marginalized communities out of the margins and placing them within the view of recognition, validation, and importance.

Therefore, I implore this Apportionment Commission to make the right choice, whatever choice that may be, in making sure that the Black and brown voices of the Atlantic City community are not diluted and lost in the midst of the overpowering white majority in this District.

In these unprecedented times of change, those who are always counted last are now being counted first. It's up to us to follow the upward curve of change. It is important that the New Jersey Apportionment Commissioners, when drawing the new legislative map, ensure that there will be adequate representation that allows my community's voices to be heard, and for the stories of our communities to finally be seen. This will make way for change that will strengthen our community.

It is important that you take my testimony, and those like mine, into consideration when you are preparing to draw the new legislative map.

Again, thank you for hearing my testimony today.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you, Ms. Stafford.

Next, we'll ask Professor Brigid Callahan Harrison to come up.

Professor.

BRIGID CALLAHAN HARRISON, Ph.D.: Mr. Chairman and members of the Commission, I'm testifying as a resident of the Borough of Longport in Atlantic County, New Jersey. Welcome to my home County. And in 2020 -- obviously, you're in the 2nd Legislative District -- in 2020, I was an unsuccessful primary candidate for the 2nd Congressional District seat.

I'm also a Professor of Political Science and Law at Montclair State University, where I serve as the Department Chair. And my research interests over the past 25 years have centered on elections, apportionment, and the redistricting process; as well as New Jersey politics.

I'm also a proud Stockton alumni, and I'm grateful to have the opportunity to speak before you this afternoon.

Much of the testimony during the course of your hearings has been from constituents who want to remain in specific legislative districts; or, here today, from residents of Galloway or Port Republic who want to be put into the 2nd District. However, I want to call your attention to the important role that legislative redistricting plays in ensuring the principle of one person, one vote -- as outlined in *Baker v. Carr*, *Wesberry v. Sanders*, and then *Reynolds v. Sims* -- are consistent with the interpretation of the Voting Rights Act and Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment.

Particularly in today's political climate, it is imperative that you ensure that all of New Jersey's diverse voices are heard and that the principle of one person, one vote is truly implemented.

In *Wesberry*, Associate Justice Hugo Black held that Article I of the Constitution required, “as nearly as practicable, one man’s vote...is to be worth as much as another’s.”

In the 2021 New Jersey State legislative elections, 32 of the 40 State Senate seats of both political parties were won by incumbents receiving more than 10 percent plurality over their opponent. In several districts, the margin was in excess of 30 percent. I know that many of you would like to argue that these incumbents are doing their jobs so well that constituents are incredibly satisfied with incumbents’ job performance and so returned them to office with these large margins. But we all know that, of all the advantages that incumbents have -- name recognition, larger campaign war chests, and so on -- the drawing of district boundaries to overwhelmingly favor one party or another is the greatest advantage. And today, using GIS mapmaking technology, those partisan gerrymandered districts can be drawn in much more sophisticated and certain manners than in decades past.

There are numerous problems associated with the creation of such a large number of safe seats. Districts that are so partisan gerrymandered feed into a national political culture in which partisan extremism is valued over moderation; in which interparty factionalism replaces competition; and bipartisanship is rare, ridiculed, and penalized.

But for your purposes, importantly, the net impact of partisan gerrymandering is a violation of the principle of one person, one vote. In *Davis v. Bandemer*, the Supreme Court has ruled that partisan gerrymandering claims are justiciable under the Equal Protection Clause, and this was confirmed and expanded in subsequent rulings.

When partisan voters are packed into legislative districts, the net effect is that the impact of their votes are diluted, presenting a structure that is potentially in violation of Article I of the Constitution. When minority voters are packed into legislative districts, the net effect is that the impact of their votes and their influence as a community is diluted, presenting a structure that is potentially in violation of the Equal Protection Clause.

That's why I'm urging you, Judge Carchman, to urge the members of this Commission to commit to create maps using a standard of partisan fairness.

In creating these maps, Commission members should use one of the accepted metrics to gauge partisan fairness. Using a mean median difference score -- which compares the average district's vote share to the median district's vote share to find partisan asymmetry across the legislative district plan -- is a simple, but elegant, solution. If the mean district vote share is significantly higher than the median district's vote share, the plan likely cracks and packs voters of one party. The goal is to get the difference to as close to zero as possible.

But more appropriate for New Jersey is the use of an efficiency gap measure, and I urge the members of this Commission to use that measure. This compares what are called *wasted votes* -- the votes of the losing party and the votes for the winning party in excess of 50 percent + 1 -- to test for unequal outcomes. The EG then takes the number of wasted votes and divides by the total number of votes to see how efficiently votes were spread across the district map. An EG score of over 8 percent is considered evidence of a gerrymander. In New Jersey currently, 75 percent of our districts score over 8 percent.

Whatever methodology you decide to use, I urge you to use a measure of partisan fairness. I would urge you to ensure that the votes cast by New Jerseyans are not wasted, to ensure some standard of partisan fairness; but, most importantly, to ensure the diversity of voices of the voters of the State of New Jersey are heard.

Thank you for your time today.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you, Professor .

Our last scheduled speaker is Mr. Christian Estevez.

Good afternoon.

CHRISTIAN ESTEVEZ: Good afternoon.

Good afternoon, Judge Carchman, Chairpersons Barlas and Jones, and all the members of this Commission.

My name is Christian Estevez, and I'm the President of the Latino Action Network. And I thank you for allowing me the opportunity to address you this morning and taking the time to listen to all the residents of our state as you consider the lines of the next legislative map -- that will have a major impact on the representation New Jersey Latinos will have in our state's capital.

It is with that in mind that I address you today. The lines you draw as a Commission will help determine whether the members we elect to New Jersey's General Assembly and State Senate are truly reflective of the great diversity of this State.

Following the 2020 census count, Latinos comprised 20.9 percent of New Jersey's total population. However, Latinos continue to lag behind in representation -- Latino representation in the State Legislature and

in top political appointments. Latinos only make up 7 percent of the State Senate, and only 8 percent of the General Assembly.

Lack of representation has huge consequences for underserved communities. As a growing segment of the State's population, Latinos continue to have little voice in decisions made in Trenton. Latinos are left out of many important conversations and have little power to influence decisions that are made, due to lack of representation. As a result, Latinos tend to suffer from a disproportionate amount of negative impacts in areas of housing, health, education, and employment.

Latinos continue to lack access to affordable housing; our children remain trapped in segregated school districts; and we continue to lack access to basic civil rights, such as language and translation in courts and in healthcare.

The current pandemic has laid bare the inequities our community has faced for decades. For example, while Latinos make up 20.9 percent of the State's population, Latino men represented 43 percent of the coronavirus deaths in people under 50. Latino children were also over-represented among students who lack computers and Internet access when schools shut down due to the pandemic.

However, there is now an opportunity for New Jersey to put forward a fair and accurate redistricting effort that reflects the power of the Latino vote. This is especially important for a new generation of Latino voters, with Latino youth comprising 21.8 percent of New Jersey's school-aged children.

The redistricting process provides an opportunity to create a fairer New Jersey, one in which Latinos have appropriate representation at

the State and Federal levels. We aim to advocate for appropriate State legislative districts, where Latinos have more opportunities to elect candidates of our choice. These districts must respect our communities of interest and ensure that our communities are neither packed nor cracked, so that our influence is not diluted.

We cannot afford to have too many Latinos packed into too few districts so that our community lacks influence in all others. Conversely, we cannot afford to have our community *cracked*, or underrepresented, in *all* districts so that we don't have influence in *any* district.

You, as Commissioners, have an opportunity to consider the size and distribution of New Jersey's Latino population, and right size the number of Latinos in each district so as to maximize our community's opportunity to elect candidates of our choice.

There are opportunities to create greater Latino representation, both in the northern and southern portions of the state. In the last 10 years, our communities have continued to grow across the state, and that needs to be represented in the new map.

The Latino Action Network is working with a coalition of organizations that represent New Jersey's communities of color to draw a map that will present the best opportunities for representation for our communities, while also meeting the other requirements that this Commission must consider. We will be sharing these maps with you in the coming weeks.

We hope that this Commission will make more opportunities available for our diverse communities to share our stories with you, by expanding the number of in-person hearings in different parts of the state,

especially in the northern part as well. These stories are important so that the Commission takes more than just numbers with you when you make your decisions on this map. In order to make these in-person hearings more accessible to working people of color, we ask that you schedule more meetings in the evenings.

We look forward to exchanging ideas with all the members of this Commission on how we can arrive at a map that truly represents the diversity of our great state.

Thank you.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you, Mr. Estevez.

That concludes the public portion of our hearing.

There is just one housekeeping item.

We do have a virtual Apportionment Commission public hearing scheduled for next Tuesday, November 23, at 6 p.m. If you wish to participate, sign up on our website at *apportionmentcommission.org*.

With that, I believe I'd like a motion to adjourn.

Co-Chair Jones.

MR. JONES: So moved.

MR. BARLAS: Second?

ASSEMBLYMAN BRAMNICK: Second.

MR. BARLAS: Second; all in favor? (affirmative responses)

Any opposed? (no response)

The "ayes" have it.

Thank you very much, everyone.

(MEETING CONCLUDED)