
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: Brower Student Center
The College of New Jersey
Ewing, New Jersey

DATE: December 10, 2021
10:00 a.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

Roshard Williams
Office of Legislative Services
Commission Aide

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 – DECEMBER 10, 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 Friday, December 10, 2021 at 10:00 AM at The College of New Jersey, 2000 Pennington Road, Ewing, New Jersey 08628. The hearing will take place in Room 100 of the Brower Student Center.

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.

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 December 10 on the calendar and click on Apportionment Commission for the registration link. Advance registrations must be received by Thursday, December 9, 2021 at 3:00 PM. Upon successful registration, you will view a printable receipt on screen.

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.

(OVER)

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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. The College of New Jersey requires all persons on campus, regardless of vaccination status, to wear masks indoors.

Public parking is available in Parking lots 4, 5, 6, and 7. A campus map is available at: <https://tcnj.edu/about/campus-info/campus-map/>.

Issued 12/3/21

For reasonable accommodation of a disability call the telephone number above, or for persons with hearing loss dial 711 for NJ Relay. The provision of assistive listening devices requires 24 hours' notice. CART or sign language interpretation requires 5 days' notice.

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

I'm LeRoy Jones, the Co-Chair of the New Jersey Apportionment Commission; and I'm calling this meeting to order.

First, if we could start off by saluting the flag; and then I will defer to our hosts here at the wonderful College of New Jersey.

So if we can all stand.

Senate President, would you lead us in the flag salute?

SENATOR SWEENEY: Thank you, Chairman.

(all recite Pledge of Allegiance)

MR. JONES: Madam Secretary, would you call the roll?

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER (Commission Secretary): Yes, Mr. Chairman.

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.

AL BARLAS (Republican Delegation Chair): He's on his way; he's in the parking lot.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Okay, thank you.

Commissioner Dubois.

MS. DUBOIS: Here.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Commissioner Cirillo.

DR. CIRILLO: Present.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Commissioner Bramnick.

ASSEMBLYMAN BRAMNICK: Present.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Co-Chair Jones.

MR. JONES: Present.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Co-Chair Barlas.

MR. BARLAS: Here.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Eleventh member Carchman.

JUSTICE CARCHMAN: Here.

MR. JONES: Madam Secretary, we have a quorum.

And before we get started with the testimony, I'm going to ask our host, Provost Jeffrey Osborn, to come forward and address the Commission.

J E F F R E Y M. O S B O R N, Ph.D.: (off mike) Good morning.

As the Chair has indicated, I'm Jeff Osborn. I'm the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs here at The College of New Jersey.

On behalf of President Kathryn Foster and our entire campus community, I would like to welcome Chair Al Barlas, Chair LeRoy Jones, Jr., and the New Jersey Legislative Apportionment Commission to The College of New Jersey.

We are thrilled to host this important public hearing as part of the legislative redistricting process, and to play a role in ensuring equal democratic representation across our State.

TCNJ's continued commitment to the democratic process was most recently recognized last month by the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, in which more than 840 higher education institutions participated. Among all four-year public colleges and universities in the nation, TCNJ received the Best in Class campus award for highest voting rate. ALL IN also recognized TCNJ for the highest voter registration, highest voter turnout, and most improved voter turnout among four-year institutions, as part of the New Jersey Ballot Bowl and the Campus Voting Challenge.

TCNJ believes in the transformative power of education to develop critical thinkers, responsible citizens, and lifelong learners and leaders. We are proud of how our institution has earned consistent national recognition for the commitment to educational excellence in the way that TCNJ serves our State. In particular, TCNJ has achieved the seventh-highest four-year graduation rate of all public universities and colleges in the country. And here in the Northeast, TCNJ has been consistently rated as the number one public school in the "Best Regional Universities, North Category" by *U.S. News and World Report*, since 1991.

This is my 16th year at TCNJ, and I'm as excited to walk onto the campus each and every day, as I was the day I first arrived. It's an honor and privilege to educate New Jersey's next generation of nurses, teachers, entrepreneurs, artists, writers, scientists, engineers, innovators, and leaders.

I hope you have a productive meeting today, and you are able to spend some time on our beautiful campus today. We appreciate your service to the State, and wish you the best for the upcoming holiday season.

Thank you for being here.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Provost; thank you so much.

Co-Chair Barlas, any comments for the Provost?

MR. BARLAS: We really appreciate you guys helping us. I know logistically I think everyone on your team, with our folks at the Office of Legislative Services, were great; this has been a seamless set-up. So we look forward to spending the day here.

Thank you.

MR. JONES: Thank you; thank you, Chair.

Judge Carchman.

JUSTICE CARCHMAN: I just echo the comments of the Chairs, and thank The College of New Jersey for hosting today.

This is a wonderful opportunity for us to be here; and for members of the public and, hopefully, some students as well to see a form of democracy in action.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Judge.

Any members, Commissioners? (no response)

Seeing none, we all appreciate being here, Provost. This is a lovely campus, with certainly a lot that it contributes to the State of New Jersey and this country. And certainly, we are pleased to know that the student body is one of those student bodies that flourishes and contributes to our State and our nation. And we thank you for hosting us in this deliberative legislative process.

Thank you so much.

Madam Secretary, you can call the first witness.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Mr. Chairman, the first witness present is Mr. Christopher Binetti.

MR. JONES: Mr. Binetti.

C H R I S T O P H E R B I N E T T I, Ph.D.: Hi, my name is Dr. Christopher Binetti. I am the President of the Italian American Movement, which is an Italian-American civil rights 501(c)(3).

You've probably noticed that I've come to every meeting, I think, that the public has been entitled to. And obviously, we have the schedule for the rest of them, and I want to go to all 10.

So I don't want to repeat too much of what I've said before, since everyone has a good memory.

I want to make two quick points. Number one, I think it's very important to think of New Jersey -- which is pretty much the most, or one of the most diverse states in the country, not just racially and ethnically, but religiously and in a lot of other ways. I mean, each county is unique and wonderful. And I think we make a mistake of viewing it as a monolith at times. I mean, you have, obviously, the Philly metro area, the New York metro area, and sometimes that creates conflicts.

But as someone who's a political scientist by training, and also a little bit of a historian, I really feel that our 21 counties are an underutilized resource. And I say that, also, as an Italian-American, knowing that some counties really represent us, I think, in some ways better, and I think some counties don't. And I really would like, in the long run, for counties to have more power; partly because there are 21 of them, as opposed to 565 municipalities, and that can be a nightmare logistically. And I think the 21 counties are run very well. I'm from Middlesex County; that's run very well. And I really wish that our Board of County Commissioners -- I'm still getting used that term -- the Board of County Commissioners probably should have some more power over education and some stuff.

And in order to prepare for us to sort of change that lens, where there's more county autonomy or even sovereignty, where counties might have control over their own -- some of their own functions, I think maybe we should try to draw the districts, as much as possible, with counties in mind.

Obviously, my County has to have multiple districts; you can't just have one district for all of Middlesex County. But what we could do is, we could try to keep each district within the County; that's one thing you could do. And for other counties -- some counties you could put an entire county into one district. I think when we were all down in Atlantic County, you heard a lot of people talking about, "Why don't you put all of Atlantic County into a district?"

So I do think that drawing the districts does affect how people think. I think it affects how people identify, and I think by concentrating on trying to keep counties together, I think it prepares us, maybe, to give counties more rights, more power -- whatever term you want to use -- which I think is the best way to go forward.

That's my first point.

My second point is, we've talked a lot about ethnicity and race in these proceedings, as we should; as we absolutely should. Obviously, I do it all the time, as an Italian American activist. But I also think it's important not to forget the great religious diversity of our state. I don't know how you do that with redistricting, exactly. But about 40 percent of the State is Catholic. And as an Italian American Catholic, I have to tell you that I do not think Catholics are properly represented by the State Legislature. I don't know how you do that. I don't think it's easy to draw districts that way, but

I do think that there are ways to at least try to think about how to better represent people.

Obviously, a lot of the growth in our state has been the Latino community, and the Latino community is in no way a monolith. But there are quite a few Catholics who are coming in from that direction. Obviously, a lot of Italians are Catholic, and there are a variety of other communities. And I think it is important to try to reflect the values of about two-fifths of the population into our laws, and I don't think we really have.

I do have, sort of, a third subpoint that kind of deals with some of the themes.

Neither party in our State has a committee that deals with Italian-American or Catholic issues; neither party does. It's not that one does, and one doesn't. Both parties are increasingly recognizing the diversity of the State, and both parties have committees for Hispanics and Latinos; I think both have African American or Black committees. And both parties are increasingly recognizing diversity, as they should. But there isn't an Italian-American or Catholic caucus or committee in either party. And I have, for a couple years, tried on the Democratic side to get one. Being more a Democrat than Republican, I haven't really tried the other side.

But that would change a lot for us. And I do think, at the end of the day, this is the only opportunity, every 10 years, an ordinary person like me gets to talk to powerful people like you. And I would suggest that maybe we find ways to have more like this. For example, I'm a political scientist, and I have never been invited to testify before a State committee. I mean, State legislative committees are the heart and soul of the legislative process; they really are, and they're very important. And I wish that there was more

of this (indicates). This is the greatest thing I've ever seen in my life. I love the public back-and-forth between you, the people in power, and me and us. And I think that this kind of openness and transparency has, in many ways, reinvigorated my faith in State politics in a way that-- I'm still very leery of Federal politics.

So I would just encourage anything you can do to make that more so. And obviously, you'll see more of me, and I'll make more (indiscernible) in the future.

Thank you so much.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Binetti.

I appreciate your testimony again, and look forward to seeing you the next time.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Mr. Chairman, the next speaker is Ian Holmes. (no response)

MR. JONES: Not here?

Madam Secretary, we can move on to the next witness.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Mr. Chairman, the next speaker I have present is Anna Rivera.

MR. JONES: Ms. Rivera, good morning.

A N N A "C U Q U I" R I V E R A: (off mike) Good morning.

MR. JONES: Thanks for joining us this morning.

MS. RIVERA: Thank you for having me. I was not going to be able to go through all my writings; I'll just have to read it, if that's okay.

MR. JONES: It happens to a lot of us, Ms. Rivera. (laughter)

MS. RIVERA: Good morning, all.

Happy holidays, Commission members, and all present here.

My name is Anna Cuqui Rivera, and I am here with some of my neighbors and my friends from the Latino Action Network.

And I will say to us and to TCNJ that I'm also extremely proud to say that I have some of our student Latino youth organizers and amplifiers here, as well, who are going to speak to you today. And this can be a scary place for young and old sometimes, right? So I'm just very proud to be able to say that to us.

I am a lifetime resident of New Brunswick, located in District 17. District 17 is a very diverse community, and Latinos make up 26.8 percent of its population.

I have been a community advocate for well over 30 years here in this District, and with most of my work being focused in Central Jersey. And now, very much so statewide as well.

The District has a strong foundation in community resources as it is. These services include the Puerto Rican Action Board -- also where I have been, and am still employed, for close to 35 years. District 17 has immigration programs, housing programs, many food banks, and youth-focused services. Services like these are crucial and are invaluable to Latino growth.

We have various world-class health services, like Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, St. Peter's, mental health programs, the Cancer Institute of New Jersey, and federally qualified health centers included in our District. This District also has quality schools: Rutgers University; Middlesex College, with three campuses; and numerous bilingual and bicultural preschools.

Our District has adequate transportation services, central transit thruways like Route 18 and Route 1, and the New Jersey Turnpike. Our public transportation services include suburban bus lines that go back and forth between New York and Trenton, and local; New Jersey Transit buses and trains as well; free Rutgers and county college buses for students. All of these services and more are major to supporting everyone in this District and, most especially, its most vulnerable.

I believe these services have been successful because of community collaborations, and these resources need to evolve proportionately as these communities' needs also evolve.

Drawing fair legislative districts ensures that our communities thrive and are heard by those who have power to push, or keep them from progress. I thank you, and all of us, for this work. I know we are all working very hard to make the next legislative map its best possible for everyone, as we will live with it for the next 10 years.

With 26.1 percent of New Jersey's population being Latino, but only holding 7 percent of its legislative seats, a fair map is key to bringing justice in representation.

Thank you.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much, Ms. Rivera. We really appreciate your testimony, and look forward to any further dialogue you might have with the Commission.

And to you, happy holidays.

Thank you.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Mr. Chairman, the next speaker is Brady Rivera.

MR. JONES: Good morning.

BRADY RIVERA: Good morning; how are you?

MR. JONES: Good, how are you?

MR. RIVERA: I'm good, thanks.

I actually have a few copies here that I would like to submit to the Commission as well.

MR. JONES: Sure, you can give those to the Secretary.

MR. RIVERA: Well, good morning.

My name is Brady Rivera, no relation to the previous or next speakers. (laughter)

So my name is Brady Rivera; I am a lifelong resident of Mercer County. I originally hailed from the City of Trenton, and I currently live in Hamilton Township.

I'm here with a group of my neighbors and my friends from the Latino Action Network and Our Revolution Trenton Mercer.

As a native resident between these two municipalities, and as a member of the Hispanic community, I have seen firsthand the demographics change throughout the years, up to present day. Being born in Trenton, my family and I were part of the increase of Hispanics in the area; my family being of Guatemalan descent, many other residents also being of Central America.

And since moving to Hamilton back in 2006, we also made up the increase of the Hispanic population in Hamilton. Hispanics have largely

been moving into Trenton and moving on to create their own families in neighboring towns such as Hamilton, Ewing, and Hightstown.

And as a public health worker in Hamilton, I have firsthand witnessed the increase of Hispanics in Hamilton as well. Since working with the Hamilton Division of Health, I have been helping with the COVID-19 vaccination effort and translating services for Spanish-speaking residents, having met many individuals and families along the way. And I have noticed that Hispanics have had an increased presence in the municipalities, many of whom moved there from Trenton, and others who have decided to resettle here in Mercer County from New York City, Jersey City, Union City, and other northern cities in North Jersey. This increase, I believe, must be reflected in our representation in the New Jersey Legislature.

As per the 2020 Census, the Hispanic population has grown larger, making up a considerable plurality of the population. In my 14th Legislative District, Hispanics make up about 15.43 percent of the District, doubling from 7.8 percent from the last Census.

In the neighboring 15th Legislative District, they make up almost a quarter of the population, at 23.71 percent, increasing from a comparable 18.1 percent of the population.

Yet despite making up a great portion of these districts, along with the Black and Asian populations, we hardly constitute any of the legislative seats in either district. Looking at the numbers statewide, Hispanics constitute almost 22 percent of the state, but only about 8 percent of the Legislature.

This disparity is not special to only the Hispanic Community; the Black and Asian communities are also disproportionately represented.

The Commission must keep the residents of New Jersey in mind when redrawing our district lines, and give our residents the political power and representation that we have the right to. Hispanics, Black, and Asian representation is vital to the healthy democracy that New Jersey has maintained, and vital to the engagement of the political process.

And I just want to echo what the Doctor said when he was first up. I am also very grateful that you guys are having this conversation with us. I believe that it does reinvigorate the democratic process. I know I was very excited to speak here today, to all of you, and making my voice heard; and hoping that we can have our interests in mind so that we may also be represented up here on this table.

Thank you.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much, Mr. Rivera, for your community service, and your very well-thought-out testimony. And we appreciate the written side of it, and we will make sure that we continue to refer back as we make our hard decisions on maps.

So thank you so much, and happy holidays to you.

MR. RIVERA: Thank you; you too.

MR. JONES: Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Mr. Chairman, the next speaker is Victor Rivera.

MR. JONES: Mr. Rivera. We have the family Rivera here.
(laughter)

VICTOR MIGUEL RIVERA: I also have a few copies for the Commission.

MR. JONES: Okay; if you would give those to the Secretary.

MR. RIVERA: Well, good morning again. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for introducing me and having me. It's good to be back in front of you, and even better to voice my concerns in person.

My name is Victor Miguel Rivera. I'm 19 years old, from Hamilton Township; and I'm a community organizer for the Latino Action Network, and Co-Chair of Communications for Our Revolution Trenton Mercer.

In concordance with that, I also work for the Mercer County Board of Social Services. So throughout the pandemic, I have been providing bilingual services to individuals and the constituents in my community.

So I'm here today advocating for Latino representation of legislative maps; and, more specifically, in District 14, the second fastest-growing Hispanic district in the state, with a 98 percent increase in the proportion of Latinos.

Latinos continue to be disproportionately affected by New Jersey's lack of affordable housing, trapped in segregated schools, skyrocketing drug prices, and the lack of access to everyday basic civil rights.

Fair representation matters in New Jersey, because too often our decisions, like the redistricting effort before us, are left and made without a single Latino representative vote. Why do you think only 40 percent of the population turned out to vote in the gubernatorial and national elections? When we consistently show individuals that their vote does not matter, they fail to cast their ballot and, ultimately, lose access to critical funding, social programs, and most importantly, the right to be heard and represented in a democracy.

Despite us representing 21.6 percent of the population, Latino representation lags in top political appointments in New Jersey. And before everyone here today, again I present my testimony to a Commission composed of zero Latinos, in a state where I'm represented by a Legislature composed of only 8 percent Latinos.

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

Despite the clear unbalance of economic prosperity and political representation between Latinos and whites in my hometown, the redistricting process provides the opportunity to build a more equitable, inclusive, and fairer New Jersey -- one in which Latinos have appropriate representation at the State and Federal levels. To be clear, I'm advocating for appropriate legislative districts; 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.

The 2020 Census confirmed what we have known for years: the future of New Jersey is Latino. And it's time that we received fair representation. And I reiterate because Latinos are wide awake in the fight for fair representation in the Garden State.

Thank you for having me.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Rivera.

And let me just say that your testimony is certainly spot on, and we do appreciate the voice of the younger generation being so intimately

involved in this process. You know, all of our (indiscernible) well enough; I know I speak for the entire Commission.

So we thank you for that, and we thank you for your community service.

MR. RIVERA: Thank you.

MR. JONES: And we also wish you and your family happy holidays.

So thank you.

MR. RIVERA: I appreciate that. Thank you, and happy holidays.

MR. JONES: Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Mr. Chairman, just a clarification.

Mr. Ian Holmes is here, but indicated “no need to testify.”

And Ms. Glorianne Robbi is here; indicated “no need to testify.”

The next speaker is Daniel Stinger.

MR. JONES: Good morning.

DANIEL STINGER: Good morning; and thank you, members of the Commission, for giving me the opportunity to speak today.

My name is Dan Stinger, and I come before you, very humbly, as the defeated Democratic nominee for the State Senate in New Jersey’s 30th Legislative District for 2021. This District -- for people here who might not know -- encompasses the Shore towns from Bradley Beach down to Brielle. It also includes towns in Monmouth, Wall, Howell, Farmingdale, and includes also Lakewood and Point Pleasant Borough in Ocean County.

So I felt compelled to give a public comment today because I care very deeply about our District and our State. Because I feel as though some

of my experiences in the last year might be helpful in your considerations for reapportioning our District and the surrounding districts.

This last election cycle was my first time running for any political office -- first wanting to run for the General Assembly. I was inspired by the riots on January 6. And I was later talked into running for the Senate seat in LD30 instead -- by a municipal chairperson, who will remain nameless -- only then to discover that the primary reason was because they thought it would be humorous and entertaining for someone named *Stinger* to run against the longtime incumbent, Robert *Singer*. (laughter)

You see, my District, the District and community I've spent my entire life in -- we are one of the many "safe districts" across our State. A District where the incumbent gets to decide when to retire, and the opposing side becomes complacent and just puts up sacrificial lambs.

LD30, among others, has been so gerrymandered that even if a candidate were to win 13 of the 14 towns within the District, whoever secures Lakewood would still walk away the victor. Lakewood is one of two towns in LD30 that are not in Monmouth County with the other 12, but in Ocean County. Senator Singer, who has been in the seat since 1993, served on Lakewood's Township Committee from 1980 to 2010 simultaneously, and also served as the Town's Mayor simultaneously.

The way LD30 is drawn has allowed this man, from a single town in Ocean County, to make decisions for 12 towns in Monmouth that are completely different from Lakewood.

My point is that this is not representative at all, especially because the population of Lakewood has risen by 46 percent between 2010 and 2020, from 92,843 to 135,158. LD30, according to the U.S. Census, as

of 2020, has 269,949 people. Therefore, 50 percent of LD30 is made up by just one of the District's 14 municipalities, most of which being Shore communities with completely different issues.

Now, I agree with the first speaker in saying that these districts should be drawn with counties in mind the best they can. If anyone here is from Monmouth or Ocean counties, you know that they are just completely different, and one should not be speaking for the other.

But back for a moment to it being funny to put Stinger versus Singer. I want to ask everybody in this room, just for a moment, to sit on the thought that one of the candidates chosen for the New Jersey State Legislature was effectively -- should have done so in this manner because it was funny. How is this democratic? It's not. As long as gerrymandering continues to occur, we will continue to be unable to hold any of our legislators to account. When incumbents cannot be voted out, there is no accountability. When there is no accountability, our democracy suffers; and if it continues, I fear we will lose our democracy all together.

So I came here today to just be a voice for the over 21,000 people who voted for me -- to reinforce to the Commission what you already know. That, obviously, you have a very important job to do, and I don't want to insult anyone by telling you that; you know this already. You've been doing this for a much longer time than me. But everybody is watching. That's all.

So thank you very much. Happy holidays to you.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Stinger. We really appreciate that thoughtful testimony, and certainly the levity that you bring with it. It enlightened all of us, I'm sure.

And we also take this time to wish you and your family happy holidays.

Thank you so much.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Mr. Chairman, the next speaker is Joe Marchica.

MR. JONES: Good morning, Mr. Marchica.

J O E M A R C H I C A: Good morning.

I dropped off copies of the testimony outside at the front desk. So should I go grab them and give them to the Secretary?

MR. JONES: No, we'll get those later.

UNIDENTIFIED MEMBER OF COMMISSION: We have it.

MR. JONES: We have it.

MR. MARCHICA: Okay, thank you.

All right; as was said, my name is Joe Marchica. I'm a Hamilton resident, and I co-chair Our Revolution Trenton Mercer. We're a grassroots group within a national network pushing for progressive policy, candidates, and change at all levels of government. And I'm also here in solidarity with our allies, the Latino Action Network and the Fair Districts Project.

I'm here to ask you to help fix New Jersey's broken democracy. Our representatives are all but pre-selected by our primary election ballot format and by gerrymandered districts. The latter minimizes the number of competitive districts, setting the expectation that our legislative elections will be noncompetitive.

Now, demographic changes over the last 10 years made for some surprises back on November 2. Even so, only four districts saw the incumbent

party lose a seat: 2, 3, 8, and 16. Add in three others that were closer than expected -- 11, 21, and 38 -- and we're looking at seven, right? But that's a decade since the last districts were drawn. We're looking at seven competitive elections out of 40 districts a decade after the districts were gerrymandered. That's not a healthy democracy. With so few competitive elections, people feel like their vote doesn't matter, so they don't vote.

To engage New Jerseyans in government and elections we must show them that their vote matters; not just tell them how important it is. Otherwise, our words ring hollow. An example, LD16 was widely expected to be competitive this year, and both parties aggressively tried to turn out voters. Turnout in the LD16 race was up 23 percent this year compared to 2017. Now, let's compare that to the Governor's race statewide, where turnout was increased only by 19 percent. That 4 percent increase seems like a small number, but applied statewide that's 90,000 more people voting.

Let's compare that, now, to the largest upset in the State, in LD3, where we saw about a 20 percent increase in turnout. If instead LD3 had matched LD16's 23 percent turnout increase, that's 1,500 more voters. Had the outgoing Senate President's District been perceived as more competitive, and had his campaign emphasized turnout the way that LD16's campaign did, perhaps he would have stood a better chance to hold his seat.

Furthermore, our Governor won more votes in LD3 this year than he did in 2017. But LD3 -- the incumbent Senator lost votes, compared to 2017. So the narrative that is kind of pointing at the Governor and progressives to account for these losses doesn't really seem accurate. What seems accurate, looking at the data, is that lackluster Democratic voter

turnout is to blame, due to a perceived noncompetitive District, and perhaps a lack of voter engagement.

I would urge folks in these types of elections to emphasize engaging with voters to improve our democracy, and speak to issues that clearly support blue-collar, working-class people. And if you do that, you'll see more success.

Back on topic. We must stop virtually drawing every district to be noncompetitive. This cuts voters out of our democracy, especially when combined with New Jersey's unique, intentionally undemocratic primary ballot. This means stagnation, and this protects the systemic racism entrenched in our State government and history.

New Jersey county party leadership is disproportionately old, white, and male. So when party committee chairs pick candidates, they tend to pick people who look like them, and grant these candidates preferential ballot treatment on the county line. This rigs the primary election in their favor; to the point that no State rep, who is an incumbent, has lost a primary election on the line in 12 years.

When districts are drawn to be noncompetitive after this, these disproportionately white and male candidates then win the general election. So not only do people's votes end up not mattering in either the primary or the general, our Legislature, as a result, doesn't represent the diversity of our State. Is it any wonder that New Jerseyans are disengaged, when we're repeatedly shown that our votes don't matter?

Some demographics on our Legislature, compared to the latest census: We have about 30 percent of New Jersey legislators who are women; obviously, that's a lot less than half, ballpark. We're 27th nationally in

women's representation in the Legislature. That's behind Montana, Wisconsin, and Ohio.

Half the Legislature is over 59 years old, and a whopping 92 percent are over 40. Millennials are grossly underrepresented. People between 25 and 40 years old -- like me, I'm 30 -- deserve far more representation than 9 representatives out of 120.

Seventy-three percent of the Legislature is white, versus about 55 percent of New Jersey residents. So that's a 25 percent overrepresentation, right? Where does that come from? Well, we were looking at about 2.5 percent of the Legislature that is Asian American, versus 10 percent of New Jersey residents. So that's 7.5 percent right there. And 7.5 percent of the legislature is Hispanic or Latino, versus about 22 percent in the New Jersey population, because that makes up a lot of residents.

This lack of diversity directly results from our unhealthy democracy. This is what lets mostly white, male county party chairs predetermine election outcomes to favor people who look like I will in about 30 years, at the expense of everyone else, especially people of color.

New Jersey's legacy is rife with systemic racism, and maybe it's long past time to take decisive action to fix this.

So in closing, I urge you to do two things. Number one, draw competitive, fair districts where the voters are able to decide who their representatives are. This is necessary for a healthy democracy; it is foundational. And if we don't want more things to happen like what happened January 6, we have to demonstrate that our democracy is healthy and the people's voices are being heard everywhere in the U.S.

Second, we have to draw districts that enhance, rather than diminish, the voices of people of color, of women, and young people. Given our State's history of systemic racism, communities of color, in particular, must have their voices heard.

All right, that's all I've got. Thank you for your time. I really appreciate this, and have a great holiday.

MR. JONES: Well, thank you, Mr. Marchica. That was very passionate and very thought-provoking testimony. And certainly we will take that under very, very serious consideration.

MR. MARCHICA: I appreciate that.

MR. JONES: And happy holidays.

MR. MARCHICA: And you as well.

The testimony should have some of those numbers--

MR. JONES: Oh, we have it; thank you.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Mr. Chairman, the next speaker is Orlando Orvalles.

MR. JONES: Good morning, and welcome.

ORLANDO ORVALLES: Good morning, everyone; good morning, Commissioners.

Good morning. My name is Orlando Orvalles, and I'm the Northeast Director of Civil Engagement for the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials; NALEO Educational Fund. Our organization is the nation's leading nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that facilitates full Latino participation in the American political process, from citizenship to public service.

We are advocating across the nation for redistricting processes which result in maps that provide Latinos and other underrepresented groups with a fair opportunity to elect leaders who are responsive and accountable to their communities.

We thank you all for all your work and commitment to a participatory redistricting process as you gather public input.

I am here today to provide recommendations on how the Commission can assure the public has meaningful opportunities to provide public input on the Commission's maps, and the criteria the Commission should comply with when developing these maps.

We first urge the Commission to conduct an accessible, inclusive, and transparent redistricting process. We respectfully request that the Commission continue to host regional hearings, including public discussions, on draft maps. Our community deserves a first shot to provide feedback while engaging with the redistricting process.

We also urge the Commission to consider language accessibility in any additional public input it receives. Language inaccessibility is just one of the many historical barriers to civic participation in the Latino community. For the Commission to have the best possible information about communities of interest and related issues, it is imperative that residents be able to understand and participate in the Commission's activities, even if they have limited English proficiency. For this reason, providing interpretation and translation support for Latinos and other language minorities in the state is crucial. The Commission simply cannot obtain the full range of perspective it needs for meaningful engagement without providing translation and interpretation services. Given the large number of Spanish (indiscernible)

and Latinos in the state, we recommend that, moving forward, you provide Spanish language translation and interpretation for the Commission's website and at future public meetings.

You should also ensure that members of the public can provide written testimony in Spanish, and that such testimony is translated for the Commission to understand. Meaningful engagement with the public requires a two-way flow of information.

Furthermore, it is critical that the maps that result from your redistricting process comply with the provisions set forth in the United States Constitution and Federal Voting Rights Act. To meet these requirements, we urge the Commission to incorporate the growth of the Latino community over the last decade. According to Census 2020 data, Latinos now comprise 21.6 percent of New Jersey's population, up from 17.7 percent in 2010. The Latino population growth outpaced the overall increase in New Jersey's population between 2010 and 2020 -- while New Jersey's population grew by 5.7 percent, the Latino population grew by 28.8 percent.

It is crucial that the maps produced by the Commission reflect the growth of the Latino community, thus ensuring that Latinos receive fair representation by having the opportunity to elect candidates of their choice, through the new district lines.

Finally, we recommend for the Commission to draw lines that respect Latino communities of interest. These lines must keep communities together that share similar needs and concerns.

We hope that these recommendations will be useful and seriously considered during the remaining phases of the Commission's efforts.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and your attention to our comments. We look forward to continuing our work together to ensure a fair and transparent redistricting process for New Jersey.

Thank you.

MR. JONES: Mr. Orvalles, thank you so much. The testimony that we have, you certainly have been focused on. And as we continue, you'll see it implemented on our website as well.

So we thank you so much for that very insightful testimony.

MR. ORVALLES: Thank you. Happy holidays, everyone.

MR. JONES: We wish you happy holidays as well.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Mr. Chairman, the next speaker is Jacob Darby.

MR. JONES: Good morning.

J A C O B D A R B Y: Good morning, members of the New Jersey Apportionment Commission, Chairman Jones, Chairman Barlas.

My name is Jacob Darby, and I am a sophomore at Benedict College, an HBCU located in Columbia, South Carolina. At Benedict, I am a proud member of the Benedict Tiger's football team, while majoring in studio art with a minor in mass communications.

I'm an aspiring NFL football player and graphic designer, and a member of the recently reactivated NAACP Trenton Council.

A lifelong New Jersey resident and a registered New Jersey voter, I lived in Union for most of my life, but currently reside in Trenton, New Jersey. Growing up in Union opened my mind to the real world. I learned that nothing lasts forever, and you cannot take anything for granted.

When I moved to Trenton, I started to find my true self -- becoming a very prominent student athlete in my community.

The NAACP Trenton Council is part of over 550 youth and college chapters all over the country.

I'm a member of a group comprised of the next generation of civil rights leaders who are trying to make a difference --- no, making waves now. In the NAACP, the young people, like myself, who are under the age of 25 are making change through junior youth councils, youth councils, high school chapters, and college chapters, where we're 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 in their harmonious cooperation with other peoples.

My testimony today is day seven of the New Jersey State Conference NAACP Youth and College Commission. Just days ago, on December 4, we began our convention here at The College of New Jersey 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 this that I am here to testify today about reapportionment.

History and the present teach us that the most intense assaults on the voting rights of Black people and other people of color are waged at precisely 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 the oppressive tactics of the past, they 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 draw a map so that as communities of color grow, so do their political opportunities for greater representation.

My request today of you are *one*. Currently, four out of the five meetings that were scheduled were on weekdays during work hours, including today; times when it is extremely difficult for most people to participate. Most people are working and/or attending school. For example, my little brother -- he was also supposed to be here, but he's at school. My niece was also supposed to be here; she also had school. So it was kind of hard for anybody to come through. Most people are working and/or attending school. Because my final exams have concluded, I was able to be here today with my NAACP peers. Here at TCNJ people are still taking classes, working, and preparing final papers and exams.

The Commission should schedule additional meetings on nights and weekends when people may more easily participate.

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

Thank you for your time, and a copy of this testimony will be provided to the Commission.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much.

And we really appreciate your testimony. I'm impressed with your engagement in the NAACP, the oldest Civil Rights organization in this

country. It speaks volumes when you see young people, like yourself, engaging at a young point in your life like this, because it bodes well for the future.

So we thank you for that, and thank you for your testimony.

And what team do you like? (laughter)

MR. DARBY: I'm a Broncos fan. (laughter) They're doing all right, so--

MR. JONES: You have to leave now. (laughter)

Happy holidays.

MR. DARBY: Happy holidays.

MR. JONES: Thank you; thank you so much.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Mr. Chairman, the next speaker is Siddharth Satish.

MR. JONES: Good morning.

SIDDHARTH SATISH: Good morning.

MR. JONES: How are you?

MR. SATISH: Good; how are you doing?

MR. JONES: Good.

MR. SATISH: Good morning, members of the NJ Apportionment Commission, Chairman Jones, Chairman Barlas.

My name is Siddharth Satish, and I'm a 17-year-old senior at West Windsor-Plainsboro High School North in West Windsor, New Jersey; an aspiring lawyer, and currently the Co-Founder and President of the NAACP West Windsor Youth Council.

As a lifelong New Jersey resident and member of the West Windsor community, I'm here to talk to you about the reapportionment as it relates to my own community.

My community is largely made up of people of color, including Asian Americans, like myself; African Americans; and those of Hispanic descent. And it's in the Raritan Valley area, in Legislative District 15 and the 12th Congressional District, bordered by Plainsboro and Monmouth and Middlesex counties.

In my community you have wonderful parks, like Mercer County Park, while also celebrating the diversity through ethnic-specific shopping marts like Woo-Ri Mart. And our strength is found within its diversity and inclusion.

Being a member of the 25 charter members, the NAACP chapter here has allowed me to further unite people within my community. Nevertheless, as a community of majority of people of color, I've experienced the lack of inclusivity of colored history in our school curriculum, where the history of our ancestors, and those of our allied communities, are neither explored nor discussed. We hope to see this change.

My community is a lot like our neighboring Township of Plainsboro, but unlike areas down south. The West Windsor area is tight-knit, with deep roots in the area, and we hope to be well represented in the new maps.

As the name of our Youth Council suggests -- *West Windsor-Plainsboro*; and the names of our two high schools -- *West Windsor-Plainsboro North and South* -- West Windsor and Plainsboro are one community of interest. Both high schools are in a comprehensive, high-achieving regional

public school district in New Jersey, serving students in Pre-K through 12th grade from West Windsor Township down in Mercer County, and Plainsboro Township within Middlesex County. There are 10 schools within our school district that residents of both townships can attend.

However, despite this fact, the current New Jersey map has West Windsor, but within two State legislative districts -- West Windsor being in Legislative District 15, and Legislative District 14 for Plainsboro.

I thank the Commission for listening to me today; and as I leave, I want to impart a couple of different things.

First, that you consider keeping my West Windsor together, but adding Plainsboro, without in any way diluting minority voter power or otherwise violating our fair redistricting principles, and maintain racial equity.

And lastly, as my colleague just mentioned, a lot of the meetings that were scheduled for us to discuss the importance of reapportionment were on weekdays during working hours when people like myself -- who are just as passionate about this issue, but still can't vote, but will have a say in this democracy in just a few months -- don't have the opportunity to participate. And we hope to see that change in the future.

And as my colleague previously mentioned as well, a deserved thank you goes to the New Jersey Institute of Social Justice who helped us prepare our testimony today, and the NJ State Conference NAACP Youth Works Committee.

My testimony, and that of my peer from our Trenton Youth Council, is part of our NJ NAACP Youth and College Convention. Our job is to help educate youth about redistricting and reapportionment, and today

we continued that job by having a watch party at this testimonial with our State Conference.

At the end of the day, I thank you all for listening to my testimony. A copy of this testimony will be provided to the Commission.

Thank you once again.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much.

Your voice -- to the chorus of young people who did not testify today -- is quite heartfelt and warming to all of us; to know the engagement from that segment of our community who are participating in such a big way now.

So we're thankful for that, and your testimony was dead on. So thank you.

MR. SATISH: Thank you so much.

MR. JONES: Happy holidays to you.

MR. SATISH: You too.

MR. JONES: Madam Secretary.

Mr. Chairman, the next speaker is Carmelo Cintron Vivas.

MR. JONES: Good morning.

C A R M E L O C I N T R O N V I V A S: Good morning.

MR. JONES: How are you today?

MR. VIVAS: I'm all good; how are you all doing today?

MR. JONES: We are good.

MR. VIVAS: All right.

So my name is Carmelo Cintron Vivas. I'm here with the Latino Action Network.

I live in the 17th District of the New Jersey Legislature. Having come here from Puerto Rico in 2014, I'm proud to be part of the 28.8 percent growth of our community in the last decade.

I want to start by quoting the late, great Frantz Fanon, whose 60th anniversary of his work, *The Wretched of the Earth*, and his passing we just celebrated at Rutgers University.

He wrote, "Each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission, fulfill it, or betray it."

Notice that it says *each generation*, meaning that we each -- young and old, boomer, millennial, Gen Z, before and after -- have a duty to understand our role, our power, and use it, whether to fulfill or betray our mission.

And I just want to say, real quick, that Latinos of New Jersey are here; or, more importantly, we've seen that the young Latinos of New Jersey have shown up here today. And I wanted to recognize that, along with that quote.

I want to advocate for fair legislative districts in New Jersey. The fact that New Jersey counts 21.6 percent of its population being Latino, but only 7 percent of the Legislature is so, is a problem. This imbalance creates districts like District 17, where the Latino population outpaces the State with 26.8 percent of the population, yet doesn't have representatives who come from or know their community too well.

The whole competitive ratings of our districts create city and county party organizations that become all too powerful and controlling. We all know this is a real problem in New Jersey and around the state -- around the whole state; and it's not good for our democracy. Drawing fair districts

that take our Latino community into account is paramount to the whole state achieving representative justice. We can no longer ignore the lack of diversity and, more specifically, the lack of Latinos in the Legislature.

There is a wave of Latinos coming. And everybody here looks like a surfer today, so I'm going to go with this reference, and I'm going to go at it real hard.

UNIDENTIFIED MEMBER OF COMMISSION: Go ahead.
(laughter)

MR. VIVAS: With 21.8 percent of school-age children in the state being Latino, the wave is here now. Are we riding the wave, or are we wiping out? Whatever you decide, the water will still reach the shore. And before you can paddle back out, more waves will come. Why fight the current when we can all rejoice in it?

Thank you.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much, and we really appreciate that -- those references were quite appropriate given how things are trending here in New Jersey.

So we thank you for that, and thank you for your testimony as well. And we wish you happy holidays.

MR. VIVAS: Thank you, and happy holidays to all of you, too.

MR. JONES: Thank you.

Madam Secretary.

Mr. Chairman, the next speaker is Valeria Posso.

V A L E R I A P O S S O: Good morning, everyone.

MR. JONES: Good morning.

MS. POSSO: How are you today?

MR. JONES: Good; how are you?

MS. POSSO: I'm well.

Today is my first time testifying, so please bear with me.

Good morning, everyone. My name is Valeria Posso; I have been a resident of Trenton for the last 20 years, in District 15.

I'm here with a group of my neighbors and friends from the Latino Action Network Foundation and Our Revolution Mercer Trenton.

I would like the Commission to hear a little bit about my community, and what it means to me and our way of life. My community is disengaged and not connected to these issues. Trenton's population has increased, as Latinos comprise a majority at this very moment. We are a hardworking, dedicated, and eager community. I have been working in my community for the last 13 years, which is half of the time that I have been alive, to ensure that we fight for issues that are overlooked. This means that, for over a decade, my community has not had the appropriate support.

Our community needs better resources, so we are striving for a better, progressive, and helpful legislative and congressional map. And it is time for that change.

We ask for better representation. I speak for my community that does not feel connected to the current maps and voting process.

This is, however, an opportunity for New Jersey to put forward a fair and accurate redistricting effort that can respect the power of Latinos and communities of people of color to vote. This is especially important for the new generation of Latinx voters, as the Latinx youth comprise 21.8 percent of schools in New Jersey.

The redistricting process provides an opportunity to create a fairer New Jersey, one in which minorities and Latinos have appropriate representation at State and Federal levels. There are opportunities to create better representation for minorities as they continue to grow within New Jersey, and especially in my District, 15.

New Jersey will continue to become diverse, which means that it is time to improve the maps.

Thank you so much for this opportunity for being here, and I appreciate you listening to what I have to say for a more transparent process.

Thank you so much.

MR. JONES: Thank you.

And first time testifying?

MS. POSSO: Yes, it is.

MR. JONES: You knocked it out of the park.

MS. POSSO: Oh, thank you so much.

MR. JONES: All right.

MS. POSSO: Have a great day.

MR. JONES: Happy holidays.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Mr. Chairman, the next few speakers registered; I do not know if they have arrived: Sam Beson, Nicholas LaBelle, Todd Lund, Jr.

MR. JONES: How are you?

T O D D L U N D, Jr.: I'm swell.

MR. JONES: Good; thanks for joining us.

MR. LUND: You're very welcome.

Good morning, Commissioners. Thank you for this opportunity.

My name is Todd Lund, Jr., and I am a lifelong resident of Ocean County, and a graduate of Stockton University with a degree in economics.

I am here to advocate, not on behalf of an organization, but on an idea -- the idea that the State Constitution has meaning; that its principles, as currently construed, are not necessarily in conflict with the recent historical objectives of this Commission. We're filling the Federal one-man, one-vote principle; being generally compact, contiguous, maintaining continuity of representation -- AKA the ability to vote for your incumbent; maintaining or increasing the number of competitive districts; and following the Federal Voting Rights Act.

Even if the Supreme Court refuses to enforce the State Constitution's demands, I think it's incumbent on the Commissioners to generally commit to reducing the current number of county splits.

Counties, by their nature, are communities of interest. They are a distinct political body. They have elected boards, park systems, and community colleges. They tend to have similar landscape, resources, shared histories. Our political parties are chiefly organized at the county level. Counties in New Jersey are not relics of a bygone era; they are an active and integral part of our lives. And on that basis alone, they ought to be considered in the crafting of our legislative districts.

Our own Constitution calls for *a*) no county or municipality to be divided among the Assembly districts, unless it contains more than 1/40th the total number of inhabitants of the state; or *b*) no county or municipality shall be divided among the number of Assembly districts larger than 1 plus a

whole number, obtained by dividing the number of inhabitants in the county or municipality by 1/40th of the total number of inhabitants of the state.

Every Commission has adopted a map where there are over-splits of counties. This is inevitable, due to the Federal courts' constraints of generally requiring deviations in no more than 5 percent above or 5 percent below the ideal population. But the number of over-splits has grown almost every decade. In 1973, there were 15; in 1981, there were also 15; in 1991, 22; in 2001, 23; in 2011, 30.

I have passed to you data and material related to proposed maps that I believe fit far more within the criteria of our State Constitution as compared to formerly adopted maps. I've attempted to balance the competing interests of when best to apply the definition of *practical* when it comes to dividing the counties. Of course, I would not be disappointed if one of my maps was selected; but I would only expect that you use it as a basis for what will ultimately be adopted.

A technique that is alluded to in our State Constitution, I have coined as *county grouping*, should be used to help keep the number of county splits to a minimum. It involves combining counties into groups -- each apportioned districts -- that fall within deviation limits. This technique should give you the liberty to design the districts within those county groups, but prevent you from crossing into the other groups, as to more likely reduce the total number of splits.

So I implore all of you to consider the real value our counties have in crafting legislative districts -- to make it a priority.

Feel free to reach out to me for more detailed information on specific maps, or how to employ the county grouping technique. I have spent

over a year working with reapportionment data, and that should be a decent resource for you to rely on, if you so wish.

Thank you again for this opportunity. I apologize for the small print of the slides. It has been sent to you in your drop box for you guys to view full-size.

You're very welcome.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much for your testimony. It was well put together, well thought out, and analytically appropriate. We really thank you for your contribution to this process.

And we also wish you happy holidays as well.

MR. LUND: Happy holidays, Commissioners. Thank you.

MR. JONES: Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Mr. Chairman, there were two more speakers on the list -- we do not know if they are present -- Yarden Mach and Chloe Popowich. (no response)

MR. JONES: Seeing none -- nobody's moving, so we kind of assume that they are not with us today, and we're going to move on.

Madam Secretary, is there anything else on the witness agenda?

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Mr. Chairman, we do not have any other witnesses. If there is anyone in the audience who wishes to testify-- (no response)

MR. JONES: Seeing none, we're going to move to closure.

But before we do that, I will just mention a few things.

Just giving everybody a sense of what the next several dates of hearings will be: Saturday, January 8, at 12 p.m. This will be in-person. We

will be at Essex County's Donald Payne School of Technology; that's in Newark, New Jersey.

On Wednesday, January 26, at 6 p.m., we will be virtual.

On Wednesday, February 2, at 12 p.m., we will be virtual.

Saturday, February 5, will be at 10 a.m., and that will be virtual.

And Wednesday, February 9, at 6 p.m., will be in-person; and that location is to be determined.

One thing that I -- a couple of things that I do want to mention, with respect to the schedule, and I will just say this for the record. Four out of the remaining meetings are on nights and weekends; and overall, 6 out of the 10 meetings have been scheduled to be held at nights or on the weekends. So we are attempting to comply to the convenience of working schedules; and we certainly appreciate you guys highlighting those points, because that contributed to the schedule that I just laid out.

So before we conclude and I ask for a motion to adjourn, Chairman Barlas?

MR. BARLAS: Co-Chair Jones, I think you summed it all up.

You're right; we have heard everyone with regards to convenience in attending these meetings. And we're making every effort that we possibly can to update everybody with that.

Other than that, I agree with your sentiments. I thank everybody for being here, and you nailed it.

MR. JONES: Thank you.

Judge Carchman?

JUSTICE CARCHMAN: I'll just echo what the Chairs have said, and thank you all for participating today. It's been very enlightening and helpful in our deliberative process.

MR. JONES: Thank you.

Commissioners? (no response)

Seeing none, let me just thank each and every one of you for the testimony today. You have certainly been impactful and very helpful to this process. The diversity that was presented today certainly represented what we all strive for here in New Jersey, and I thank you for that.

And lastly, to everybody who is in the audience -- we wish you a Merry Christmas, Feliz Navidad, a Happy Hanukah, a Happy Kwanza, and a general happy holidays to everybody.

Do I have a motion to adjourn?

MR. BARLAS: Motion.

MR. JONES: Motion by Chairman Barlas.

DR. CIRILLO: Second.

MR. JONES: Seconded by Commissioner Cirillo.

All those in favor? (affirmative responses)

All those opposed? (no response)

The ayes have it; we're adjourned.

(MEETING CONCLUDED)