
Commission Meeting

of

NEW JERSEY LEGISLATIVE APPORTIONMENT COMMISSION

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

LOCATION: Meeting via Zoom

DATE: February 11, 2022
10:00 a.m.

MEMBERS OF COMMISSION PRESENT:

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



ALSO PRESENT:

Raysa Martinez Kruger
Office of Legislative Services
Commission Secretary

Jessica Oestreicher
Office of Legislative Services
Commission Aide

This transcript was prepared using an outside recording not designed for transcription purposes. Therefore, portions of this transcript may not be completely accurate as portions were inaudible and/or indiscernible.

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
Laura Matos
Gary Taffet
Diane T. Testa



REPUBLICAN MEMBERS

Al Barlas
Chairman

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

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

APPOINTED
ELEVENTH MEMBER
Philip S. Carchman

***REVISED
COMMISSION NOTICE**

TO: MEMBERS OF THE APPORTIONMENT COMMISSION

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

SUBJECT: COMMISSION MEETING - FEBRUARY 9, 2022 /
*OVERFLOW SESSION - FEBRUARY 11, 2022

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

The Apportionment Commission will meet remotely via Zoom on Wednesday, February 9, 2022 at *4:00 PM, with an overflow session on Friday, February 11, 2022 at 10:00 AM.

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>.

To ensure that all who wish to testify can do so, the Chair will limit public testimony to 3 minutes per person. Extra time will be allotted for those needing the assistance of a translator.

(OVER)

Apportionment Commission

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February 9, 2022

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. Written testimony will be included in the Commission's record and distributed to all Commission members.

Issued 2/4/22

*Revised 2/9/22 Changed time to 4:00 PM and added overflow session on Friday, February 11, 2022 at 10:00 AM

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LeROY J. JONES, Jr. (Democratic Delegation Chair): Good morning, everyone, and welcome to part two of the meeting that was split in half from February 9.

On behalf of myself, Co-Chair Barlas, all the Commissioners, and certainly our 11th member, Judge Carchman, we welcome you today and look forward to very, very robust and substantive testimony on what we deem as important to New Jersey over this next 10 years.

So I'm going to start by just asking Madam Secretary -- if you could call the roll.

Please call the roll.

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

MS. TESTA: Present.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Commissioner Taffet.

MR. TAFFET: Present.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Commissioner Lavery.

MR. LAVERY: Present.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Commissioner Kean.

SENATOR KEAN: Present.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Commissioner DuBois.

MS. DuBOIS: Present.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Commissioner Cirillo.

DR. CIRILLO: Present.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Commissioner Bramnick.

ASSEMBLYMAN BRAMNICK: Present.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Commissioner Barlas, Co-Chair.

AL BARLAS (Republican Delegation Chair): Here.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Co-Chair Jones.

MR. JONES: Present.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: And 11th Member Carchman.

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

MR. JONES: We have a quorum.

So Madam Secretary, I'm just going to begin by just indicating to all the speakers and witnesses who have joined us this morning that we have an outpouring of participation from the public, which bodes well for this process and makes it extremely healthy. However, out of respect to the 60 or so who have signed up today, we are going to try to enforce -- or enforce the three-minute rule so that it can be respectful to all the speakers who are here today, and give them the opportunity to share in this oh-so important process.

I'm going to just indicate to all of you how important this is; and please be very, very attentive to the time clock which will be presented on the viewing gallery. This is extremely healthy for our democracy and much appreciated by myself and all the Commissioners who are engaged in this oh-so important endeavor.

So with that -- and let me just indicate that Commissioner Matos is going to be joining us shortly. She's about to finish up another very important meeting that she's involved with.

So with that -- Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The first speaker will be Senator Nellie Pou, followed by Assemblyman Reginald Atkins.

S E N A T O R N E L L I E P O U: Good morning; good morning, everyone.

I don't know if you can see me; I can't see myself, but I'm going to try to speak very, very quickly.

Good morning, Judge Carchman, Chairman Jones, Chairman Barlas, and all of the Commission members.

My name is Nellie Pou, Senator of the 35th Legislative District. And I want to thank you all for providing me the opportunity to discuss this very important topic with all of you today.

And as you all know, in a representative democracy, the government and its leadership must commit itself to democratic openness to ensure that it reflects the many populations it serves. Democracy fails when it does not accurately reflect the citizenry; and representation is a basic fairness principle. Equal inclusion of the underrepresented populations must be woven into all public policy processes, and must ensure that the best interest of our citizens remains the bedrock of our functioning democracy.

During the legislative redistricting process this year, there were significant discussions about communities of color and the need for better representation of the growing minority communities throughout New Jersey. However, it took late into the redistricting process this year for the second-largest ethnic group in the state, Latinos, to even receive consideration for a seat on the Commission.

Speaking for a collective, and as a member of the leadership of the Legislature, we must move forward beyond words and symbolic gestures to ensure that our processes demonstrate basic fairness principles.

Following the 2020 Census, data shows that one out of every five residents are Latino in New Jersey. However, Latinos continue to lag behind in representation in the many areas of State government, its appointments, and even the State legislature. Latinos are the most underrepresented race or ethnicity in the Legislature, especially in the Senate. Latinos occupy only 3 out of 40 Senate seats, and in the General Assembly, 8 out of the 80 State Assembly seats.

New Jersey is scheduled to become a majority-minority State by 2030, due to the growth of the Latino population within the state. This presents an unprecedented opportunity for New Jersey to put forward a fair and accurate redistricting effort that reflects the power of the Latino vote.

When drawn 10 years ago, the legislative map only had one district in which Latinos made up the majority of the population. Today that same map has two districts with Latino majorities, which are Districts 32 and 35. On a personal note, this very expansion afforded me the opportunity to represent my constituency in the Senate.

The Commission has already heard testimony and has seen examples provided by advocates that demonstrates that it is possible to draw a map that contains four Latino majority districts. The growth of the Latino population, especially in Passaic, Bergen, Essex, Union, and Middlesex counties creates a unique opportunity to draw such districts. It would be a major setback for New Jersey's Latino community if this Commission

regressed by approving a map containing anything fewer than two majority Latino districts.

Cumberland County is a great example of an area that has seen the greatest Latino growth, when compared to any other county in New Jersey. This growth is being driven by increases in places such as Millville, Bridgeton, and Vineland. It is critical that these three communities be kept together in the same district to safeguard representation of these areas and their communities' needs.

I'm almost done.

While we have made progress in New Jersey, we must create structures that ensure appropriate representation. These structures guide the placement of qualified Latinos in elected and appointed positions in all branches of government -- the Judiciary, Executive, and the Legislature.

Thank you so very much. I want to thank you all for the opportunity to allow me to speak with you today on the importance of ensuring fair representation in the drawing of the State legislative map.

As a Chair of the Latino Legislative Caucus, I want to implore this Commission to commit to creating maps that accurately depict the needs of our communities. Without this, a representative democracy, and its ability to govern effectively, cannot succeed. I stand steadfast as an ally to these efforts, and it is my hope that this Commission will do everything it can to achieve this goal.

Thank you so very much to all of you. I'm sorry I was speaking so fast, but I wanted to bring all my points to you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and to all the members of the Commission.

MR. JONES: Well done, Senator; well done.

Thank you.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Assemblyman Reginald Adkins.

ASSEMBLYMAN PASTOR REGINALD W. ATKINS:
Thank you so very much for the opportunity to speak to you. To our Chairmen, thank you very much, as well as to our Judge and to all the Commission.

I do represent LD 20, which consists of Elizabeth, Roselle, Union, and Hillside.

I would just like to say, I understand this process is not an easy one, and I do appreciate the time and the effort that went into this whole process.

I can tell you today that I am voicing my support for both of these proposed maps, with the intent of Roselle's continued place in the 20th Legislative District. I can tell you, based on the infrastructure, also based on me being a local Pastor, that we literally feed somewhere in the neighborhood of about 500 to about 750 people on a weekly basis, and we have a greater percentage of those individuals who are coming from Elizabeth Township, as well as Roselle, as well as Union. So we're based very, very well.

Roselle's close relationship with the cities of Elizabeth and Union has made our community much stronger. We feel that the District has struck a proper balance of representation; and also if we were to be put into another District, it would put a newly-elected Assemblyman, such as myself, in direct conflict with others. Also, Roselle is a Black and Latino community. We're

based and we're served by continued relationships with Union, Vauxhall, as well as Elizabeth.

I would just like to say to the Commission, and to all those who are listening, thank you for protecting Roselle's place at the core of the 20th Legislative District in both of these proposed maps. Roselle, like Union and Elizabeth Township, are a blend of urban/downtown/suburban areas. The demographics are similar to the African American-Latino population of each Union and Elizabeth. Our economy in Roselle is strongly tied to the economy in Elizabeth in our access to the downtown area. I'm sure that others who are going to be coming after me, who come from Roselle, will echo the same sentiments.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to share my thoughts, as well as concerns, about LD 20.

Thank you very much.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much, Reverend. We appreciate that. And you know, you were pretty much close on the clock there. So kudos to you, my friend. Thanks for those remarks.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Bishop Fred Rubin, followed by Imam Saffet Catovic.

BISHOP FRED RUBIN: Yes, good morning.

And I offer my thanks and gratitude for this privilege to provide testimony to the Commission.

My name is Bishop Fred Rubin; I serve as the Senior Pastor at the Community Refuge Church in Manalapan. And I preside over 20-plus churches throughout the State of New Jersey.

I'm also a member of Faith in New Jersey, which has members within every county in New Jersey.

Community input is vital, and I applaud you releasing the proposed maps, allowing for response. However, there are certain things that we would like to bring to your attention. I acknowledge that you have undertaken a huge task, seeking to draw districts that are fair, especially at a time when certain politicians across this nation are actively trying to take the sacred right to vote away from some of God's children. You have been charged with rejecting partisan politics and honoring the uniqueness of each community of interest when you approve our next legislative map.

Our State has had all of its population growth from the global majority over the past 10 years, making us a state that is essentially 50 percent global majority. As such, the fair thing to do is to draw 20 Legislative Districts that provide places for these majority of individuals, and certainly people of color and Latinos. People who are not monolithic in their politics -- as are similar for all folks -- but their communities have shared concerns. If they are separated, certain legislations will continue to ignore the concern because their voice has been diluted. Simply put, it would be unjust for New Jersey's communities of color to be cut up and continue to be underrepresented in the Legislature, especially given the demographic changes of the last 10 years.

Our country has a horrible legacy of excluding the voices of people of color, and at every turn, even now, the practice continues across this country.

My denomination has fought for voting rights over and over again. We have fought to ensure that members of our primarily Black

domination, in particular, are able to truly participate in this democracy. Yet, even though the New Jersey total population is around 50 percent, there's only one majority Black district that's been (indiscernible).

We encourage you to please look at the maps so there is equal distribution throughout our state.

Thank you so much.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much, Bishop. And I know it's difficult to try to get all that in under three minutes, particularly a person of the cloth; and prior to you, a Reverend and a politician. (laughter) So we thank you so much for being so succinct.

BISHOP RUBIN: Thank you so much.

MR. JONES: Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Imam Saffet Catovic, followed by Reverend Heyward Wiggins.

IMAM SAFFET CATOVIC: Good morning.

Salam alaikum, salaam aleichem. Pax vobiscum, pax vobiscum; Om Shanti.

These are some of the myriad of ways peoples of faith across our Garden State greet one another with peace; a peace that results from fairness, equity, and just inclusion in all aspects of our lives, including our political life, as fully participating citizens in our democracy.

Allow me to express my deep appreciation to the Commission and to the Chair for the opportunity to provide testimony for fair districts that ensure that the voices of every New Jerseyan continue to matter in our great democracy.

My name is Saffet Catovic; I am Jersey born and raised, and a longtime resident of Montgomery Township. I serve as the Iman and Muslim Chaplain at Drew University in Madison, and am a longtime member of the Islamic Society of Central Jersey, Central Jersey's oldest and largest mosque.

I also serve on the Board of Faith in New Jersey, a multi-faith organization which is part of the national Faith In Action Network. And we have mobilized thousands of people across the state to participate in our democracy.

We are working-class people, essential workers, immigrants, clergy folk, justice-impacted citizens, youth, elders, and people of faith who are fighting for our collective liberation and to build the beloved community.

Community input -- and I appreciate the opportunity to be part of that input today -- is vital, and I applaud your efforts for releasing the proposed maps so we may respond.

Time was short, in terms of the opportunity to review and respond; but the opportunity is all the more appreciated.

Being in a community, and communities of shared interest, the neighborhoods where we live, pray, play, go to school, and work, are the heart of our democracy, and they should not be targeted for separation and division. I believe that the Fair Districts Unity Map provides the opportunity for all voices to truly be heard. I echo and support fully the sentiments of those of my sisters and brothers, fellow New Jerseyans who have already spoken and who may speak afterwards before this Commission on this important matter, when they call for three majority Black districts as indicated in the submitted Unity Map.

Our Latina sisters and brothers represent 22 percent of our statewide population and a vital part of those whom we minister to. They must be able to truly have their voices heard and votes be counted, and impactful regarding their lives, the lives of their families, and the future.

The Asian population has grown 30 percent in the last 10 years, many of whom are Muslim New Jerseyans. To recognize and honor this demographic change and reality, the Commission should draw Asian plurality and influence districts, where possible, without dividing their communities of interest.

We are blessed to be truly an ethnically diverse and religiously pluralistic society here in the Garden State, including hosting one of the largest concentrations of Arab Americans in the nation, whose voices must continue to be heard and the redistricting keep their communities together.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Commission for the opportunity to be with you and share with you today.

God bless, God speed.

MR. JONES: Thank you, brother Catovic. And *Wa alaykumu s-salam*; and we appreciate very much those very pointed comments and observations.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Reverend Heyward Wiggins; followed by John Kelly, Mayor of Caldwell.

R E V E R E N D H E Y W A R D D. W I G G I N S III: Good morning, everyone.

My name is, again, Reverend Hayward D. Wiggins. I am the President of Faith in New Jersey, part of the Faith in Action network. I've

been also the Pastor of Camden Bible Tabernacle Church the last 26 years in the City of Camden.

And I want to start by thanking the Commission for hosting this public hearing, and agreeing to attend such public hearings for the releasing of the maps for the final meeting. We applaud you for that.

I'm a member of the Camden City-Camden County community. And I was raised in Camden, and went to local high schools. And as I said earlier, I've been pastoring there for the last 26 years. And it's important to me that representation takes place in our counties, in our communities. And communities that are central to me are Camden-Pennsauken communities; I also am a resident of Chesilhurst, Atco, and the Berlin-Waterford areas as well.

But I would like us to focus in on the Camden, Pennsauken, and Merchantville community that has kind of been cut up by the Turnpike map, which splits Pennsauken and Merchantville from Camden. In Camden, which provides a lot of the go-to places for areas such as Pennsauken and Merchantville: the local court system, stores, and what have you, are in Camden, and yet they are split up. My congregation is made up of residents of Pennsauken, Merchantville, and Camden. And it's important that we stay together, not only physically and demographically, but also spiritually as well.

And so I think that's very important for us to make sure that we have 20 legislative districts that reflect that demographic in the areas in which I serve and worship for the last 26 years.

I have always adopted a principle and a practice that equality is better for the hope. So however the districts are divided up, it should be

based upon the equality of the people who are there in those particular districts so that it works out for everybody.

Now, I'm probably going to be the shortest clergy speaker that you have today, because I'm just about done. (laughter) But equality is the best policy. My faith perspective is that, if we can draw districts that show equality, to me that's the best policy that we can have.

Now, bless you and God keep you, and help you make the right decisions in this legislative map-drawing.

Thank you so much. God bless.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Reverend Wiggins. We really appreciate those comments, and certainly that focus on the policy of equality.

Thank you.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Mayor John Kelly, followed by Rachael Davis.

MAYOR JOHN KELLY: Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the Borough of Caldwell.

I'll keep this short, but to the point.

I'm in the fourth year of my first term, and I want to thank our representatives, Governor Codey, John McKeon, and Mila Jasey, for all that they do for the governing body and the residents of Caldwell.

The Borough has a very strong relationship with these representatives. All are part of the Caldwell community. In fact, Governor Codey has a daily presence -- I repeat, a daily presence in our downtown, and hears from residents of the Borough of Caldwell and Essex Fells, which is our

neighboring community. This extremely close relationship with Governor Codey extends to John McKeon and Mila Jasey.

Caldwell has been well represented in the current District, and it is a good, successful fit for the community.

In each of the proposed maps there are big changes to this representation that may present challenges for Caldwell. In the Turnpike map scenario, Caldwell was put into District 40, a District that is made to include four counties: Bergen, Passaic, Essex, and Morris; that Republican incumbents live in Passaic County and Bergen -- both Assemblyman.

In the Parkway maps scenario, Caldwell is put into District 34, along with Orange and East Orange. This will mean that almost half the population will be those towns, which have less in common with Caldwell, other than the other parts of west Essex County.

As Mayor of Caldwell, I implore you to not pick these actions, which will diminish our representation.

Thank you again for the opportunity to voice Caldwell's opposition to these proposed maps.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Mayor. I appreciate those comments.
Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Rachel Davis, followed by Rachael Brookes.

RACHEL DAWN DAVIS: Thank you.

Good morning, everyone. Thank you Commissioners, Judge, staff, and attendees -- everyone, all -- for this opportunity to share testimony.

My name is Rachel Dawn Davis, and I'm the Public Policy and Justice Organizer for Waterspirit. Waterspirit is a nonpartisan, nonprofit,

spiritual ecology center and ministry of the sisters of Saint Joseph of Peace. And we work to center equality and justice around water-related policies at every level of government on Earth. We focus on the interconnectedness of all life, and the issues in which we work are intertwined. Reality-based representation matters for everyone in New Jersey, especially young people and future generations, and purposefully underrepresented communities that have been that way for very, very -- far too long.

I grew up second generation in the intentionally diverse community of Teaneck in Bergen County, of which I am proud. Waterspirit, as a member of Fair Districts New Jersey Coalition, welcomes the increased transparency and release of these maps. The times have changed since I grew up in Teaneck; so in the same breath, the Apportionment Commission must ensure growing communities of interest are receiving equitable representation that reflects and respects this growth in the mapmaking and voting process.

For example, both the Turnpike and Parkway maps must do a better job incorporating communities of interest feedback, which was received at public hearings and collected through the Fair Districts Coalition's community mapping drives.

Some examples of split communities include Camden and Pennsauken/Merchantville -- are kept split in the Turnpike map. In the Parkway map, the New Brunswick, North Brunswick, and Highland Park community of interest was split in the Parkway among those three different districts.

I'm also going to be pretty brief.

We urge the Commission to schedule opportunities for public comment, including a public comment portal on its website, to allow for even

more feedback. It is important that the Commission takes steps to accommodate all relevant public feedback on these maps, not merely through this second of an overflowing hearing, scheduled two days after the maps were released.

Democracy, like water, is fluid. And the population of young potential voters from across the land are paying close attention to the process unfolding in the Garden State.

I deeply appreciate those who have spoken out this week, and speaking today, to illuminate what is a microcosm of those interested in this process. You might think it's a lot of people, but it's not. There are many more who are not here in this meeting today, eager to make it work for everyone.

Thank you for the opportunity, and I encourage your continued engagement in ongoing dialogue with everybody, in addition to the New Jersey Fair Districts Coalition.

Thank you.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Ms. Davis.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Rachael Brookes, followed by Barbara Eames.

RACHAEL BROOKES: Good morning; thank you so much.

Good morning. My name is Rachael Brookes. I'm the Chair of the Rockway Township Republican County Committee, and I'm also a Township Councilwoman.

I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to share my concerns regarding the Turnpike map and its potential negative impact that it will have on Rockaway Township.

We're roughly over 40 square miles, with a large portion of our Township with County-maintained roads and parks, and an ever-expanding shopping mall.

Denying Rockaway Township the representation of individuals from our specific County is unfair, and we can't help but feel left out and that we're being singled out by being pushed into a Sussex-based County District.

And it feels it's simply just trying to dilute our representation based on an attempt just to remove our current representation. And that's really not fair to Rockaway Township.

I'd also like to share our disappointment in the timing of all this. As I do appreciate, like said before, the opportunity to come and speak amongst you, the timing was quite short, and I feel that during all that's been going on, we've been slightly distracted. We're working on trying to regain normalcy to our constituents in our Township, and this has kind of been snuck in. And it really does seem simply just to weaken the Morris County representation.

That being said, once again I thank you for your time.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Miss Brookes.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Barbara Eames, followed by Sue O'Dougherty.

B A R B A R A K. E A M E S: Good morning, Commissioners.

My name is Barbara Eames; I represent the Working Together for New Jersey Coalition in New Jersey.

Martin Luther King famously stated that Americans should be judged by the content of their character, not by the color of their skin. From prior testimony, it seems that redistricting is all about ethnicity, nationality, and race. In 2008, the voters of this nation elected the first African American President. We are not a racist nation, and we should not judge people first by their skin color. All Americans deserve to send their children to good schools, secure a good job, provide for themselves financially, and live in safety. That should not be an issue of race. God says there is one race, the human race. I pray that we can come together as a nation to secure these rights for all Americans.

I will speak to my opposition to the Turnpike map and what it does to Morris County. Guidelines for apportionment standards require that districts be compact, contiguous, and connected. There is deference given to county boundaries and communities of interest. Disruptions every 10 years should be avoided, and creating districts where incumbents must compete against one another should be avoided.

This map negatively affects Morris County in all of these ways. The Turnpike map places approximately 50 percent of the land area of Morris County in a legislative district outside of the boundaries of the County, and leaves only District 25 representing entirely Morris County. It creates a laughable, and barely even contiguous, District 40 that stretches from Hanover through Passaic and Bergen County, nearly to the northern border of New Jersey, that is neither compact, contiguous, or connected. It destroys

Morris County as a community of interest and will likely result in more representation by legislators outside of Morris County.

Ten years ago, six of our County's eastern towns were moved to District 27 in Essex County. Please let this move be back into a Morris County District. Further, by removing Morris Plains and Jefferson Township from District 25, its two Assembly members, Jay Webber and Christian Barranco, will be moved into District 25 and District 24, respectively, leaving no incumbent legislators in District 26, and pitting them against popular Republican incumbents in both of the new districts. Further, Christian Barranco is a newly elected Cuban American, and the only Republican Hispanic in the Assembly.

As for partisan fairness, the Turnpike map forces primaries against two Morris legislators, who courageously stood up against Governor Murphy's tyrannical and unscientific vaccine passport mandates for legislators to enter in the State House. Both Jay Webber and Brian Bergen have been forceful and articulate in expressing opinions counter to the current narrative that comes out of Trenton. It looks highly suspect and non-coincidental to say the least. This was even recognized on Wednesday by the Democratic Chairman of Jefferson Township.

In short, the Turnpike plan removes a senior member of the Republican leadership, a Hispanic legislator, leaves two vacancies in District 26 to be targeted by Democrats, and forces two primaries among four incumbents. It guts Morris County.

Please vote "no" on this blatantly partisan plan.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Ms. Eames.

Madam Secretary.

The next speaker is Sue O'Dougherty, followed by Dan Pagano.

S U S A N O ' D O U G H E R T Y: Thank you; thanks for your patience with my slow tech.

And I just want to thank you -- I really want to thank Barbara Eames who just spoke; and also Jay Webber for making me feel empowered by the political system a little bit more. And also many courteous people I encountered trying to figure out how to access this whole thing. And I apologize for the phone.

So I just want to say I do think it is a bad faith item. And when my husband and I went around to see if we should have, in Morristown, maybe limits for our local government, our Mayor -- we talked to some people in Morristown who were -- one very nice, talkative, and powerful Democrat woman who said, "Yes, you know, we are going to turn Morris County completely purple, and then gradually to completely Democrat." So maybe it does raise suspicion.

So I just want to read this; so it says, "District 24 could send Jefferson, Rockaway, and Wharton to 26, and 25 could send Morris Plains to 26, and 26 could send West Milford, Ringwood, Bloomingdale, and Wanaque to 24. And with these small adjustments, the standards of the Commission are respected."

So I do feel the Turnpike is intended to take away leadership that I have come to trust and count on. And I don't-- That's a bad feeling, because leadership is important for most of us. Most of us are pretty small players, and we know that. We have limited time, resources, and maybe sometimes whatever experience, and we need leadership. And so we count

on leaders. We all do whatever our backgrounds and beliefs are. We count on leaders to help us, and Webber is such a leader.

So we don't want to see him targeted. And yes, we don't want to see Morris County broken up. Because I live in Morristown, and that's oddly Democrat, and we feel that. But we do feel the County government also gives us the subsidiaries for empowerment, and we want to keep that, okay?

Thank you.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Ms. O'Dougherty.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Dan Pagano, followed by Greg Quinlan.

DANIEL PAGANO: Good morning, and thank you for the opportunity to speak.

I will limit my comments to the Turnpike map and its effect on Morris County.

I live in Montville, which is in Morris County, and I am on the County Committee, along with my wife, in District 6.

From my perspective, the Turnpike map is unfair because it creates political upheavals in Morris County unnecessarily, by completely disrupting what is referred to as *continuity of representation*. The Turnpike map is a bad faith map, and it simply -- it appears to be simply a raw political power grab. Otherwise, why would you carve Morris County into six legislative districts, and why would you create primary contests between at least six elected legislators?

So I think there is so much bad faith to this map that it calls into question the credibility of the entire Turnpike map.

There's an old saying that goes, "Sometimes it's difficult and takes great courage to see what is right in front of your nose." I have faith that this Commission has the courage and is able to see what is directly in front of its nose with the bad faith Turnpike map.

Thank you very much for your time.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much, Mr. Pagano.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Greg Quinlan, followed by Paul Szesko.

REVEREND GREGORY QUINLAN: Hello; I'm Reverend Gregory Quinlan.

I am really discussing the Turnpike map; I'm concerned about what it is doing to Morris County. And not to repeat what's already been said, but it does effect an ethnic community inside Morris County -- and that's those of the Asian community, particularly those from the subcontinent of India. It divides them separately into two separate districts; it divides the community, and again I have to believe that this is a power grab.

So the dividing of an ethnic community that we know is there - - it's been well-established -- smacks of an intention to do so.

So I do oppose the Turnpike map; I particularly oppose what's being done in Morris County, where I moved to Morris County back in 2007. So I really would appreciate that we look at the damage being done to the voters in Morris County.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much, Reverend Quinlan.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Paul Szesko, followed by Janna Williams. (no response)

Mr. Szesko is using a phone, and he's currently on mute.

P A U L S Z E S K O: Sorry about that.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak.

And I just want to say that the Turnpike map is terrible for Morris County. It just breaks up like a family. And for Parsippany-Morris Plains, which have a large Indian population -- that's what you're doing. You're breaking up a family.

And then, also, Christian Barranco -- he's Cuban, and you're just trying to get rid of him, it seems like, by doing this with this particular map. And you're breaking up all our legislative leaders.

And I would like to, also, read a little bit from the Supreme Court, *Davenport vs. Apportionment Commission*, 65 N.J. 125 (1974), 319 A.2d 718.

“Article IV of the Constitution requires an adherence to county lines to the extent possible...placing many Senate districts as possible within whole counties. It argues that since the county unit has always been considered a political entity in this State, with its citizens sharing a community of interest in government matters, as many Senate districts as possible should be placed within whole counties so as to preserve to the voters in the Senate districts so placed this community of interest. It is urged that such is mandated by our present constitutional language.

“In reaffirming this concept, as it applies to Article IV, Section 2, I am retaining an age-old interpretative tradition which is strong supported by this State's long history of recognizing the county concept. Justice

Haneman, in his scholarly concurrence in *Jackman vs. Bodine*, 43 N.J. 453, 479 (1964), indicated that the one Senator per county ideal or the utilization of counties as building blocks for Senate districts, is a concept older than the Republic itself.”

This State also has realized the importance of treating citizens of the same county as a unified political group. And the advantages gained thereby when Chief Justice Weintraub, in *Jackman vs. Bodine* 43 NJ 453, 462-463 (1964), stated, “The citizens of each county have a community of interest by virtue of their common responsibility to provide for public needs and their investment in the plants and facilities established to that end. Anciently, and still today, the counties reflect different economic interests, although of course these economic interests are not perfectly contained or separated by any political line, municipal, county or State. So certain counties have a dominant concern with manufacturing and commerce; others have a large stake in agriculture; still others lean heavily upon the resort industry; and finally a few counties have a special interest in the products of the sea. And of course there may be competing area interests in such matters as highways, taxation, and water supply.”

Thank you, thank you very much.

MR. JONES: Thank you.

MR. SZESKO: You’re welcome.

MR. JONES: Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Janna Williams, followed by Mayor Christian Bollwage.

JANNA WILLIAMS: Good morning, everyone.

I just want to thank the Commission for the opportunity to come before you and voice my concerns.

I come to you, first and foremost, as a veteran, as a single mom of three who actually uses all resources in Elizabeth and Union.

I voice my support for both maps, the Turnpike and the Parkway. There's been times when we didn't have the recreational opportunities available to us in Roselle, and I've had to venture out into Elizabeth, where I was welcome, for my children to use the recreational facilities.

Our economy in Roselle is strongly tied to Elizabeth and Union. And also our access to the County Seat, with using Warinanco skating rink and the turf fields.

I strongly support both the Turnpike and the Parkway district maps to make sure that Roselle stays in the 20th Legislative District in both of these proposals.

Thank you.

MR. JONES: Thank you.

Madam Secretary, let's go to the speaker.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Mr. Chairman, the next speaker is Mayor Christian Bollwage, followed by Kyle Holder.

MAYOR J. CHRISTIAN BOLLWAGE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Your Honor Philip Carchman, and members of the Apportionment Commission.

My name is Chris Bollwage, the Mayor of the City of Elizabeth.

Our citizenry has had a rich history and long association with other towns in Union County. We have served as the core of our legislative district for years.

This pivotal relationship continues to have a significant regional impact on initiatives, projects, and partnerships; which have yielded the quality of life improvements, increased accessibility, the expansion of services, and the creation of opportunities; as well as enabled the ability to coordinate efforts in order to address needs and meet demands.

Therefore, as the largest municipality within Union County and the County Seat, I strongly urge this Commission to keep New Jersey's fourth-largest municipality with other communities in Union County. We are a diverse urban community, sharing many of the same concerns, priorities, and demands of neighboring Union County cities. At one time, Elizabeth extended all the way to the Westfield; hence, the name the *West Fields of Elizabeth*.

Supportive leadership and valued partnerships are vital to the success of all communities, particularly as it relates to long-term projects and initiatives, which can have lasting countywide and regional impacts. In the past, tiebreakers have nixed the idea of merging Bayonne and Elizabeth into the same district.

And 10 years ago, Alan Rosenthal did not support this suggestion, as crossing the Arthur Kill to remain contiguous did not work. It would force legislators to physically cross a waterway, leaving their district for a period of time in order to get back in.

This proposed action would contribute to a disruption as it relates to the continuity of districtwide service delivery, as well as produce potential challenges for legislative representatives pertaining to the ability to provide countywide representation and support in the event of an emergency

or imminent threat, as we most recently experienced with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The definition of *contiguous* in New Jersey has been a district where it is possible to travel between any two points within that district without crossing into a different district.

In further reviewing the meaning of *contiguous*, it relates to electoral districts. The definition states that a district is considered *contiguous* if all parts of that district are in physical contact with some other part of another district. If the district is split by a body of water, there needs to be a method of transportation over that water, such as a bridge, for a true physical connection to be maintained and an ability to be reasonable.

New Jersey requires State legislative districts to be contiguous; this does not meet that definition. This proposal adversely impacts our residents. Elizabeth is interwoven in the history with communities such as Union Township and Roselle. Our economies are intrinsically linked, recreational programs, and Portuguese Americans, Caribbean Americans, Hispanic, African American communities are vibrant and flourishing. Kean University on the Elizabeth Union border is one of the State's foremost educational institutions, and Warinanco Park between Roselle and Elizabeth provides exceptional recreational opportunities for all of our citizens.

I thank the Commission for your time and your patience.

Have a nice day.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Mayor. Good seeing you, and we appreciate those comments.

MAYOR BOLLWAGE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. JONES: Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Kyle Holder, followed by Alison Spatola.

KYLE B. HOLDER: Good morning, Co-Chairs, Judge Carchman, and Commissioners.

My name is Kyle Holder, and I am currently a resident in the City of Linden; and similarly to some previous speakers, I too advocate for my city to remain within Union County.

Prior to living in Linden, I was a resident in Middlesex County. And when I recently read about a map that put Linden in a new district with towns like Edison, Metuchen, and Highland Park-- Although I enjoyed my time in Middlesex County, I'm to here to speak out against that map, and moving Linden into Middlesex County.

There's nothing against my friends in Edison and other Middlesex County municipalities, but Linden has less common interests with Edison and other towns. Currently, Linden is in the 26th Legislative District, primarily made up of Union County municipalities. We share common interests with those towns, from shopping, schools, transportation, businesses. These are towns that need to stay together.

Another map was released that adds Union County towns to Legislative District 22. That map I'd support. That District -- it creates a geographically compact district of like-minded towns and people, and I think that District expands many of the Commission's common themes. It brings communities of interest together; it maintains our current representation; and it brings more communities that use the same parks, shopping districts, transportation options that currently Linden and other LD 22 residents are using.

So again, I'm here to oppose any map that puts Linden in a Middlesex County district. I support the map that keeps Linden in the Union County District and adds Union County towns to that district. That makes it more compact.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you all today, and for your anticipated consideration.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Holder.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Alison Spatola, followed by Stephanie Falana.

ALISON SPATOLA: Good morning.

I'd like to thank everyone for giving me time to speak.

As a concerned citizen of our state, I have deep concerns about the proposed Turnpike map. Uppermost in my mind -- that we should have the idea of fairness that all stakeholders are represented in an equal manner -- Black, white, Hispanics. All people want the same things for themselves and for their families, regardless of their race, religion, or creed.

People all strive for the same goals; therefore, the map must be done with equal-handedness that does not favor one party over the other. The Turnpike map appears to change the continuity of representation, especially in Morris County. Towns were divided into districts, I believe, in a helter-skelter fashion, with no basis for geographical location. In some cases, towns that have heavily voted for Republicans in the past have been moved to more Democratic-leaning districts in order to break up their effectiveness. This does not seem fair to these particular towns.

In the case the Indian community -- it is being split by placing Morris Plains and Parsippany in separate blocs. That seems to be a blatant attempt to dismiss the Indian's community influence, yet another example of minorities being unfairly targeted to limit their influence.

And if I'm not mistaken, I think that Morris Plains actually shares a post office with Parsippany. They are linked in many, many ways, and they have a bond that I believe should not be broken.

I humbly ask the Commission to consider the points that I've raised in making their determination regarding these two maps; fairness above all else.

Thank you for your time and have a great day.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Ms. Spatola; all points duly noted. We appreciate your testimony.

MS. SPATOLA: Thank you.

MR. JONES: Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Stephanie Falana, followed by Cynthia Atkins.

STEPHANIE FALANA, Ed.D: Good morning.

My name is Dr. Stephanie Falana, and I am a resident of Roselle since 2010.

I am currently the Planning Board Secretary, and I do support and appreciate the fact that the Commission has kept Roselle in District 20. And that is my testimony -- my support. And I appreciate the new leadership in Roselle, and I would hope that it would stay this way so we continue to grow and make things better for our diverse community.

Thank you.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Ms. Falana.

And Madam Secretary, I think we have some background noise from Ms. Spatola. If we can just be attentive to that.

Next speaker, Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Yes, we have muted Ms. Spatola at this time.

The next speaker is Cynthia Atkins, followed by Donald Shaw.

MR. JONES: Very good.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker would be Donald Shaw, followed by Maria Quigley.

MR. JONES: Mayor Shaw.

MAYOR DONALD A. SHAW: Thank you, Chairman; and good morning to you and to the Commission.

And I want to thank you guys for putting on this Zoom “Town Hall,” or open talk.

I’m Mayor Shaw, and today I’m voicing my support for both those proposed maps for the intent that Roselle’s continued place in the 20th Legislative District remains.

Roselle’s place alongside Elizabeth and Union maintains a majority district with regional bonds protecting communities of interest in all our municipalities.

It also strengthens continuity of services amongst all our legislators.

Roselle’s close relationship with the city of Elizabeth and the Township of Union has made our community stronger.

We feel that the District has struck a proper balance of representation, and oppose moving Roselle to another District which would

put us and our newly elected Assemblymen against other incumbents of color, and water down a minority representation of legislators. Mayor Bollwage said it the best. We have, over the years, gained a stronghold as it relates to taking care of our communities of Caribbean, Hispanic, and Black voters. So we would definitely like to stay in the Legislative 20th District.

And again I thank you and appreciate the time offered for us to express this.

Thank you.

MR. JONES: All right; thank you, Mayor. We appreciate your time and comments; and all duly noted.

Madam Secretary, the next speaker.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Maria Quigley, followed by Kathy Stanzione.

MR. JONES: Ms. Quigley.

MARIA QUIGLEY: Yes, good morning.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to comment today.

It's clear that there is considerable interest in speaking to this Commission by the numbers.

But I do not believe that this interest is driven solely by the redistricting process; but rather it represents a new level of engagement for many New Jersey residents in the political process as a whole.

These last two years have caused many of us to learn more and question more about the workings of our government at all levels. It has actually energized many of us to get involved. In fact, this past year I was elected as a County Committee member for Florham Park. I only explain

this so that you can understand my frustration and the frustration of many who may not be represented here today.

I would like to speak frankly, but respectfully, and say that even as a novice, looking at the proposed Turnpike map, one can clearly see gerrymandering.

Focusing on the issues related to the Turnpike map, Morris County clearly appears to be under attack. Morris County is being carved up into six different districts -- randomly it appears. Doing so would diminish the representation, particularly of District 26, for no legitimate reason; and would require primaries among at least six legislators.

This would destroy the continuity of representation within the district, and it would needlessly divided communities of interest. I know these are all issues that have been brought up already; I just wanted to reiterate those.

As for my own town of Florham Park -- it will be lumped into a district collected from three different counties; very different communities needs and issues of representation. And I fear that my voice will not be heard.

So one starts to think, could this all be an attempt to weaken the Republican leadership? I believe so. Morris County Republican legislators have spoken out against the perpetual state of emergency the Governor has placed us under. They have fought against the policies of division related to arbitrary COVID mandates. They have tried to bring legislation that would restore the balance of power in our state. And basically, they have done nothing more or less than represent the people.

Are they being penalized?

I ask these questions not to create further division or strife, but to bring an understanding to the Commission of the frustration that exists within our state and within our country. And I ask for a fair consideration of these points that are being brought to you today.

That is my statement; I thank you very much.

Have a good day.

MR. JONES: We thank you very much, Ms. Quigley, and you have a great day, too.

And your comments are duly noted. Thank you.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Kathy Stanzone, followed by Marcella Crossman.

KATHY STANZIONE: Good morning, everyone.

My name is Kathy Stanzone, and I would like to just take a minute to provide you with some background information to understand my perspective.

I am a retired teacher; I began my career in private and parochial schools, and then transitioned to public school, where I spent the last 25 years. I've taught different grade levels; I am certificated in multiple areas, taught multiple subjects, and students of all abilities.

So my understanding of fairness and equality of opportunity is based on empirical data and years of experience.

I'd like to now focus on the Turnpike map, because it is a far cry from fair and equitable. The way the Turnpike map is organized, Morris County will be decimated if it's approved. The intent is clearly to destroy the County and its representatives. Geographically, this map breaks Morris

County into six legislative districts, and spans four counties -- from Florham Park all the way to Franklin Lakes. The map is disjointed and nonsensical.

Morris Plains and Parsippany will be split apart after 50 years. This map is an attempt to decrease the Republican seniority, and will dilute representation from hometown candidates, therefore destroying any opportunity for us to govern ourselves.

The Turnpike map completely marginalizes Hispanic representation, and breaks up the second-largest Indian American constituency in the state. Their representation will fall by the wayside. The chances are extremely high that Morris County would never have any representation at all. We would literally and figuratively be wiped off the map.

The Turnpike map is a compilation of raw partisan gerrymandering and is designed to guarantee one party rule, basically rendering the ballot box irrelevant and completely disenfranchising an entire constituency of voters.

As an educator, I view the partisanship as being analogous to stacking the deck for a teacher in the classroom. When you place all the gifted and talented students in one classroom, initially the teacher comes out looking like a winner. And the teacher who has all the IEP and basic skills students ends up being labeled as *needing improvement*.

However, there is no winner. The academically talented students remain stagnant because eventually they lack the ability to interact and relate with others, no longer accepting differing points of view. While the teacher only has one direction to go, and that's down, because education is all about showing improvement. The low proficiency students end up further and

further behind academically, because they have no opportunity for advancement. Peer-to-peer collaboration of opposing views, or exposure to diversity of learning, and the teacher never has a chance to move out of the *needs improvement* classification.

It's a vicious cycle. Those students are pigeon-holed, and will be faced with the same expectations -- the status quo -- for the rest of their lives. Basically heterogeneous versus homogeneous, and that's exactly how I view these maps.

The Turnpike is inherently discriminatory, designed to solidify one party to hold a majority, and that the status quo will remain in place for decades. The Parkway map is unquestionably more reasonable, although not perfect, and leaves room for change that can reflect its constituents' evolving needs and desires.

I thank you for your time.

MR. JONES: Thank you. Ms. Stanzione, and we thank you for your service to our young people of this state.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Marcela Crossman, followed by George Bauman.

MARCELA BARREZUETA - CROSSMAN: Hi, good morning.

My name is Marcela Barrezueta-Crossman. I'm a former Marine, mom of two children -- 11-year old daughter and 7-year-old son -- and I made my career in the financial services industry.

My parents are blue collar workers; my dad is a welder with a fourth-grade-level education and my mom barely has a high school education.

And they raised us in Jersey City, and now we're part of this -- in the middle of this war of redistricting.

I believe that the Latino community is severely underrepresented. Comparing the two maps, I was troubled to see that the Assemblyman, Cristian Blanco, would be placed into a primary fight against two incumbent Assemblymen in District 24. Diversity in the State Legislature is something that we should all value and strive for. And I'm shocked that one of the maps would jeopardize the only Hispanic conservative in the caucus by throwing him into a new district.

So I'm here to ask that you reconsider the decisions you're making.

Thank you very much.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Ms. Crossman. Thank you for your service to this country, and Semper Fi.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is George Bauman, followed by Jeff Grant.

It looks like Mr. Bauman is no longer on the call, so the next speaker will be Jeff Grant, followed by Beverly Marinelli.

J E F F R E Y E. G R A N T: Hey, good morning, everybody.

And I want to thank the Commission for this opportunity to opine on a very, very important matter that's going to affect us for the next 10 years.

Thank you, Judge, for being part of this and presiding over these issues.

I'm Jeffrey Grant; I live in Belle Mead, New Jersey, and I want to first applaud the perspectives of Barbara Eames and Greg Quinlan, that I summarize as follows.

The objective of this Commission is keeping communities and individuals together, not dividing people by race and not dividing people by political affiliation. I'm the father of three who has lived in Montgomery Township, in Somerset County, for the past 18 years, having moved from Franklin Township, where we lived for the prior five years. The towns are separated by the Millstone River.

You have a natural life flow community, formed by the Millstone River to our east, 287 and 78 to our north, and the Delaware River to our west. And by *life flow*, I'm referring to natural pathways for shopping, entertainment, worship, and friendships.

Although I live a minute's drive from the Griggstown causeway to Franklin Township, the natural flow emerges to dine in Montgomery, Hillsborough, Somerville, Raritan a lot, Flemington at Marinelli's, Stockton at the National Hotel, Sergeantsville and Lambertville, where there are many great places to eat; and worship in Raritan Borough.

By contrast, when we lived in Franklin Park, we went to church at Saint Augustine's in South Brunswick, dined in many restaurants on 27 and south in New Brunswick, and rarely ever crossed the Millstone to Montgomery in the west.

Life flows and relationships in our towns have naturally solidified over the years. So it does not make sense to couple Montgomery with Franklin Township as shown on the Parkway map.

As for the Turnpike map, it shows Princeton and West Windsor connected to Montgomery South, with South Brunswick tacked on to the east on the other side of the Millstone River. Princeton and West Windsor seem a good fit together; however, including them with Montgomery and Hillsborough, as shown on the Turnpike map, adds towns that have little natural flow or commonality.

Finally, comingling disparate towns that straddle the Millstone, as shown on the Parkway map, splits communities and creates a political monopoly dominated by Democratic voters, offering little competition to facilitate advancing diverse policies.

The Millstone River, 287, and 78 are natural boundaries defining our community; and this needs to be preserved because combining contiguous towns in this framework preserves meaningful living and recreational relationships. And this approach allows for diverse representation by both Republicans and Democrats that, over time, produces balanced policy that benefits everybody.

And to the extent that Somerset County might be shared with multiple districts -- that currently I think it's five are shared in Somerset County -- we expect that the constitutional limits of a maximum of two districts is respected.

Thank you very much.

MR. JONES: Thank you, sir.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Bobbie Beitz, followed by Beverly Marinelli.

Bobbie Beitz is no longer on the call.

The next speaker will be Beverly Marinelli, followed by Joseph Bucs.

MR. JONES: Ms. Marinelli, you're up.

B E V E R L Y M A R I N E L L I: Good morning.

MR. JONES: Good morning.

MS. MARINELLI: Thank you; I'd like to thank the Commission for this opportunity.

My name is Beverly Marinelli; I live in Lumberton Township in Burlington County, which is currently in the 8th Legislative District, and represented by Senator Jean Stanfield, Assemblyman Brandon Umba and Assemblyman Mike Torrissi.

I'm very concerned about the Turnpike version of this map, which changes everything I just said. If this map were to be adopted, I would no longer live in the 8th District; I would be moved into the 7th District. I would no longer have Jean Stanfield as my Senator; in fact, there would be no incumbent Senator, and I would no longer have Mike Torrissi representing me in the Assembly.

This slate of candidates was elected in November. They won their seats because the voters believed they better understood the needs of our District. To cast them into three separate districts is a purely calculated and political play that puts partisanship ahead of the residents of the 8th District.

I know New Jersey has a low bar for ridiculous and nefarious things happening in politics. But putting three legislators into three different districts-- It's like they didn't even try to pretend that they respected the will of the voters, or the needs of the communities they represent. What's worse,

this map puts two incumbents, Jean Stanfield and Troy Singleton, into the same 8th Legislative District. Jean Stanfield is one of only three Republican women serving in the Senate, and the only one from South Jersey. Let me repeat that sentence. Jean Stanfield is only one of three Republican women, and the only one from South Jersey. Combining her district with another incumbent looks like a blatant effort to reverse the outcome of November's election, and eliminate a strong woman who has proven to be an effective leader. In 2022, we should not accept efforts to marginalize a woman who is seen as merely an inconvenience.

This map just does not make sense for our region. The concerns I've raised just don't affect Lumberton; the Turnpike map also splits our local regional high school, Rancocas Valley. There are five sending districts, and two of them will remain in the 8th District, and the rest will be moved to the 7th. And as far as Burlington County as a whole, there are currently 15 Burlington County municipalities in the 8th District; they will move nine of those municipalities into different legislative districts; nine.

On the flip side, the 17 Burlington County municipalities in the 7th Legislative District, 11 are moved into the 8th District. When all is said and done on the Turnpike map, 25 of the towns will be moved into a different legislative district. Sixty-three percent of the towns would have legislative district change.

The biggest culprit I see, is this Turnpike map splits communities that should stay together. It splits up our school district, it splits up the river towns along the Delaware River, it splits the more rural part of the county. And I've already discussed it splits my current legislative team, pitting incumbents against each other.

I would ask you to reject the mass disruption that the Turnpike map would cause.

Thank you for this opportunity.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Ms. Marinelli.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Joseph Bucs, followed by Joe Branco.

J O S E P H B U C S: Hi, this is a Joe Bucs.

Thank you.

Joe Bucs; I'm from Springfield Township in Burlington County.

I'd like to thank you today for the opportunity to comment.

I'm speaking in favor of the Parkway map, with a focus on District 8.

Keeping Springfield in the existing 8th District of the Parkway map allows it to benefit from a shared legislative agenda that benefits multiple similar-situated communities.

Springfield, like our neighboring communities to the south of us in Burlington County, is a rural community, and it focuses on keeping our farming heritage. When you speak to our elected representatives here in Springfield, you'll hear them use the term *rural by design*, and that's something that we keep a real focus on. And to put that in perspective, we're a community that has minimum lot sizes measured in acres, not in feet, like communities that the proposed new district would put us with. Towns like Delran, and Willingboro, and Riverside -- there's not development there that's done in acres.

So the people who live here in Springfield either have been here for multiple generations, or they've made a very conscious decision to live here and to preserve our rural community. We were founded in 1688, which obviously predates a lot of governing jurisdictions, and the descendants of those founders still live here in Springfield.

Springfield and Hammonton -- which is also a question here with the map -- have very similar agricultural needs that can best be served by legislators who have an understanding of the challenges faced by today's growers. The Turnpike map would inhibit a legislator, because the proposed Turnpike map would commingle those dense urban communities with sparsely populated farmland.

Urban and rural communities have needs and priorities that are in opposition to each other. Towns like Delran, Riverside, and Willingboro have needs that are focused on increasing development, addressing redevelopment, or dealing with large commercial properties. Farming communities, like Springfield, Southampton, Shamong, and Hammonton focus on preserving farmland and protecting our state's natural resources.

Now, one of the things that people don't think about and consider is-- You know, preserved farmland -- and most people don't talk about this -- really helps to stave off global warming; and it's going to become more important as we talk about climate change, and that becomes a greater issue for all society to deal with.

I'm sure many of you have seen the *No Farmers-No Food* signs and bumper stickers. Well, splitting our farming communities across districts makes the reality of no food much more likely. In fact, it would even threaten our slogan of *New Jersey, the Garden State*.

Springfield, like Hammonton and several others in the current 8th, is also one of 56 municipalities within the Pinelands National Reserve. And it's important that those communities that have those shared burdens have a legislative team that could advance issues that are important to those communities that have those burdens.

And again, the Turnpike map really separates us from many of these towns, and it puts us together with populated towns along the Delaware River. And again, that's a challenge for anybody from a legislative perspective.

And I'm going to try to wrap up here.

Outside of any farming and land-use concerns, our school districts are also vastly different. I'm currently a Springfield Township Board of Education member. I've not been authorized to speak on behalf of my Board, but I can tell you that the legislative priorities that we have, as a rural district, are very different from the urban districts. And I've already personally worked with our existing LD8 representatives to draft legislation that's actually helpful to us.

So again, combining us with an urban situation that the Turnpike map proposes is not something in our interest.

And then, finally, in 2021 we had 897 residents of Springfield, which everybody thinks, 897 -- that only represents 65 percent of our total voters -- they voted for Jean Stanfield. And as Beverly had mentioned earlier, she's one of only three elected Republican women Senators in New Jersey, and the only one from South Jersey. I would ask the Commission to please vote to support the Parkway map. The Turnpike map is detrimental to agriculture, to climate change, and to education.

And again, thank you for your time. I appreciate it.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Bucs. Sorry for that interruption.
Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Mr. Joe Branco,
followed by Iveth Mosquera.

J O S E P H B R A N C O: Thank you.

Good morning, Commissioners and State officials.

My name is Joseph Branco, and I thank you for allowing me to
speak today with you about the importance of representation for our
community.

A little background about myself -- as someone who grew up in
an affordable housing apartment in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, I am of Puerto
Rican descent, and was the first person in my family to graduate from college.
I've always been an active member of my community, with a passion for
making sure that all community members have a voice and have access to
services and programs they need and deserve.

I am the immediate past President of the Jersey City Rotary and
the first Hispanic Chairman of the Hoboken Republican Party. I do all of
this because of my general belief that we should be active participants and
contribute in our local communities.

Today I'm here to reinforce the importance of equity and
representation. In comparing the two maps, I am concerned that one of
them, the Turnpike map, places Assemblyman Christian Barranco, currently
in Legislative District 26, into a primary fight against two incumbent
Assemblymen in District, 24.

Diversity in the State Legislature is something that we should all value and strive for; and in fact, proactively seek out. I am troubled that one of the maps would jeopardize the only Hispanic Republican in the caucus, moving him into a new District. I hope this change is reconsidered so that we can ensure fair representation in all of our local and State governments.

Thank you, everybody, for the time. And please support the Parkway map, moving forward.

Thank you.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Bronco.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Iveth Mosquera, followed by Karen Arakelian.

I V E T H P. M O S Q U E R A: Good morning, everyone.

Good morning, everyone.

First, I would like to thank Chairman Jones for appointing a Latina to this Commission. Congratulations, Laura.

I commend you for releasing the maps prior to certification, allowing the public a greater opportunity to participate in the redistricting process. However, I ask you to please consider scheduling more opportunities for public feedback, including a public comment portal on your website.

I was born, and raised, and educated in Newark, New Jersey. I have lived in Kearney, New Jersey, Hudson County, 32nd District, for more than 20 years; and I am proud to have raised my two sons here.

Now, my older son is going to college in New Jersey, so I'm here to represent the interest of not only my children, but all future generations.

I am an active member of my community. I serve as Vice President of the Board of the League of Women Voters of New Jersey. I work in Somerset County at Matheny, a nonprofit organization for children and adults with developmental disabilities; and I am President of LUPE, Latinas United for Political Empowerment, the largest nonprofit organization for Latinas in the state.

LUPE's mission is to educate, empower, and engage Latinas, to promote leadership and civic engagement. Our Board members and volunteers work hard to increase Latina representation in all areas of the public and private sectors through advocacy, mentorship, scholarships, and more.

I am here to urge the Commission to try to keep communities of interest together. Unfortunately, both proposed maps, Turnpike and Parkway, fail to fully account for the significant growth of Latino, Black, and Asian communities. I was disappointed to learn that currently both maps only contain two majority Hispanic districts. Given the large and growing number of Hispanic population -- 22 percent in the state, up, 29 percent in the last 10 years -- the Commission should draw four majority Hispanic districts to ensure that we have adequate representation for the next 10 years. It is not right or fair for New Jersey's communities of color to be cut up and continue to be underrepresented in the Legislature, especially given the demographic changes in the last 10 years.

The Fair Districts Unity Map, released by The New Jersey Institute of Social Justice and so many other amazing advocacy groups, created a map that fairly represents residents of New Jersey and keeps

communities of interest together. I feel the Unity Map does a better job than both released maps.

Thank you so much for allowing me to testify today.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Ms. Mosquera. We appreciate those comments.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Karen Arakelian, followed by Alok Sharma.

KAREN ARAKELIAN: Good morning.

This is Karen Arakelian. I actually had the opportunity to speak Wednesday, and you have my written statement that was e-mailed to you.

And I just want to reiterate the Parkway map is what I think is the most fair. And splitting up our minority communities and just all the Republican districts, piecing them out into different districts, is really an atrocity.

So if you have my statement, you can read it. I did give it on Wednesday.

Thank you for the opportunity.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Ms. Arakelian; and we thank you for your written statement and taking the time out to come on today.

MS. ARAKELIAN: You're welcome.

MR. JONES: Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Alok Sharma, followed by Samip Joshi.

A L O K S H A R M A: Good morning, Chairs, Commissioners, and participants.

Namaste.

So I'm Alok Sharma from the town of West Windsor, Mercer County.

Five hundred years ago, when Columbus discovered America, it was by mistake. He was actually trying to reach India. He was desperately trying to reach India to buy spices from there, and he put his life in danger for that -- to find a trade route to India.

He could not reach India, but we Indians reached America and we settled here, and we have been welcomed here with open hearts, and we have prospered.

Today, if Columbus came to my town West Windsor -- or neighboring towns Plainsboro, South Brunswick, Montgomery -- he would be extremely happy to find a significant Indian population. There are numerous Indian restaurants, grocery stores, Bollywood movies, and lots and lots of cultural events.

He would, however, be extremely unhappy that Indians and Asians lack representation in our government and elected offices. They are way below the representation and the number of seats at the table that they are invited to. That's way less than what they fairly deserve.

Many of the towns that I mentioned before have a unique similarity -- that they are located on the Northeast Corridor train lines. That's because most Asians work or used to work in New York City where there were jobs when they came to America. They had jobs in New York City but wanted a larger home to raise a family. And that's why you will see that many towns from West Windsor to the south, all the way to Edison in the north,

and in between towns like Plainsboro, South Brunswick, Montgomery, North Brunswick, Franklin Park have significant Asian populations.

But this creates a drawback and an unfair treatment in representation. And that needs to be fixed by this esteemed Commission.

These towns should not be splattered across multiple legislative districts; like these towns, right now, in the Turnpike map are distributed across three different districts. In the Parkway map, they are in one district, Legislative District 17. So the Asians in New Jersey-- I mean, look, we have contributed very meaningfully to the economy and the society of New Jersey and to our nation. And we would like to contribute more to the governance, to the lawmaking, to the Judiciary. I mean, if you will please allow us by helping us get representation in these bodies, no?

So I saw the redistricting idea; it's a map called *Parkway*. And that has LD 17 being made from West Windsor, Plainsboro, South Brunswick, Montgomery, North Brunswick, and Franklin Park. It is an idea whose time has come. It is actually an idea whose time is now long overdue.

Thank you for hearing me out, and *namaste*.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Sharma. We appreciate those comments.

Madam Secretary, I think next is Mayor Sam Joshi, from Edison.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Yes, Mr. Chairman; followed by Mayor Zapparello.

MR. JONES: Thank you.

Mayor, how are you?

MAYOR SAMIP 'SAM' JOSHI: Good, good; how are you?

Thank you.

Good morning, Judge Carchman, Chairman Jones, Chairman Barlas, and all of the members of the Legislative Apportionment Commission.

First, I'd like to thank the Commission for the historical number of public hearings, so that the Commissioners can hear directly from the public before voting on a new legislative map that will impact New Jersey for the next decade.

I also appreciate all of the maps that have been shared and discussed since the start of this process.

There have been many maps discussed and scenarios presented to this Commission, but many pack communities of color together, specifically the Asian community, while hurting the chances of the increased Asian representation to be elected in other scenarios.

New Jersey's Asian population grew faster than any other large ethnic or racial group, according to the Census numbers released last year, and account for a little over 11 percent of the state's population. Our collective voice increased Asian representation in the New Jersey State Legislature to seven total members because of the creation of coalition districts. Packing Asian voters into districts will do more harm to the progress we've made. Coalition districts allow for greater representation; trust me. I am the newly elected and first Indian American Mayor of Edison, and my election was possible because of coalitions.

Legislative districts with growing minority populations at around 20 percent create a pathway for greater diversity. We have seen this happen with the Latino community in Passaic County, with the election of Senator Nellie Pou when the currently enacted map was drawn. The opportunities for Asian representation have grown under the currently enacted map. We

saw it in 2013 with the election of Assemblyman Raj Mukherji in the 33rd District, due to the growing Jersey City Asian community. In 2017, with the election of Senator Vin Gopal in the 11th District, and the growing Asian community in Eatontown and Ocean Township, and solidified this past November, when Assembly members Sadaf Jaffer, Ellen Park, Shama Haider, Brandon Umba, and my representative, Sterley Stanley, were elected for their first term -- all made possible because of coalition districts.

The Parkway map, made public earlier this week, made it difficult for the Asian community to keep the representation we worked so hard to accomplish. It put the only Asian Democratic State Senator in a district with a Democratic performance under 49 percent, and a newly elected Muslim Assemblywoman out of Somerset County in a district with a Democratic performance under 47 percent. We cannot pack diverse communities, and we cannot turn back the clock on progress.

I thank you for your time and your consideration, and I wish you luck on the apportionment process.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much, Mayor.

MAYOR JOSHI: Thank you.

MR. JONES: Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Mayor David Zapparello, followed by Mayor Ruggieri.

MR. JONES: Mayor, you're up.

MAYOR DAVID ZAPPARELLO: Thank you.

Good morning, Judge Carchman, Chairman Jones, and Commissioners.

My name is David Zapparello; I'm the Mayor of Buena Borough in Atlantic County.

I'd like to make a very brief comment to oppose the redistricting map identified as the *Turnpike* proposal.

This places Buena Borough, and my neighbors in Buena Vista Township, in District 9. Under this map, residents would have to drive over an hour to meet with representatives in the District Office in Ocean County.

At quick glance, having Buena Borough and Buena Vista Township in the same District as Seaside Heights Borough, is beyond reason. It appears in this map, both Buena Borough and Buena Vista Township are an afterthought just to satisfy the wishes of much larger communities.

It has taken the seven-square-mile Borough of Buena many years to cultivate relationships in Atlantic County. And to see them vanish in this manner would truly be a disappointment.

And while I understand the process and the progress we are attempting to make with this exercise, Buena Borough and Buena Vista Township form a combined community of interest whose needs should be recognized.

Of course if I could wave a magic wand, I would keep Buena Borough and Buena Vista Township in District 2. But if that's not possible, the ideal landing spot for us would be District 1, where our neighbors in Vineland share many more similarities with us, including culture; which encompasses vast farmland and parks; commerce -- residents of Buena Borough patronize supermarkets, drugstores, and restaurants in Vineland. .and a sense of community. Many of our residents worship at the same

churches, and our closest medical center is Inspira Hospital in the heart of the City of Vineland.

Thank you for allowing me to speak and to be part of the process.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much, Mayor. We appreciate your thoughts and comments; duly noted.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Mr. Chairman, the next speaker is Mayor Ruggieri.

MR. JONES: Welcome, Mayor.

MAYOR WILLIAM RUGGIERI: Good morning; thank you. My name is Bill Ruggieri; I'm the Mayor of Buena Vista Township.

I want to thank everyone for allowing me to be part of this process today, and for the overall level of involvement we've been allowed to have in this undertaking as it's continued its progression.

I'd like to make a few comments regarding our proposed realignment as it relates to both Buena Vista Township and Buena Borough.

Both of these potential options on the table inadvertently distance us from the hubs where we conduct business, and from the individuals we need to engage with in order to enhance the communities we represent.

I see firsthand, working for Waste Management -- which is the largest solid waste hauler in North America -- how distance hinders our service offering as we venture further from our main hubs. Our drivers, maintenance equipment, and account managers decline significantly when we go beyond 30 minutes; and it tapers off almost to a point that is unable to be

recognized when you venture out further than 45 minutes to an hour, just in terms of how we service our customers.

And I liken that very similar to this process. My primary concern is going out, as Mayor Zapparello had mentioned, into that hour-plus. It's hard enough to get individuals engaged within the community to come across town to attend things when we're asking people to go an hour, hour-and-a-half to conduct business. I think it significantly diminishes the willingness to remain engaged.

I humbly ask that you guys take that into consideration as this process continues its evolution.

As Mayor Dave had mentioned, I think it logically likens itself that we would remain in District 2; and if that is absolutely not an option that's on the table, I would ask it to be taken under advisement to potentially look at the Buenas being aligned with LD 1. Vineland is, by far, interwoven into both Buenas, economically and geographically. I actually live in the East Vineland portion of Buena Vista Township, on a road -- a four-mile road -- that is half Vineland, half Buena on the single road. I think that lends credence to how interwoven we are to our adjacent community; that this process kind of continues to fragment us.

I thank you guys again for allowing us to be a part of this meeting today, and I hope that you guys have a great weekend.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much, Mayor. We appreciate your comments, and, as always, thank you for your service

MAYOR RUGGIERI: Thank you.

MR. JONES: Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Mr. Chairman, I believe we have called on every speaker, but if there's anyone that we missed, they would announce now. (no response)

I believe we have called everyone, Mr. Chairman.

MR. JONES: Okay; thank you, Madam Secretary.

Given that this is the last scheduled public hearing that we have, I'll just move to Chair Barlas for any closing comments, and then to Judge Carchman for any closing comments.

Chair Barlas.

MR. BARLAS: Sorry; I hit the wrong button.

I'd just like to say, on behalf of the Republican members of the Commission -- and I'm sure Chair Jones and Judge Carchman also agree, as well as our fellow other Commissioners -- this has been a very healthy, enlightening, at times entertaining, process. We have enjoyed the feedback that we've gotten from everyone. It is certainly valuable; it has been great to get the perspectives of so many people from the far corners of the state who we may not normally interact with. So I certainly want to thank everyone who participated, and let you all know that your comments have been heard and are noted, and we will be taking them into serious consideration.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Judge Carchman.

JUDGE CARCHMAN: Yes, I would just like to echo Chairman Barlas' comments.

And first, I'd like to thank the Chairs for ensuring that we would have this sort of participation with a record number of public hearings.

I would also like to thank the other members of the Commission for their graciousness and willingness to participate in such an extensive and expansive process.

But most of all, I'd like to thank the public and those were willing to come out and have their voices heard. For me, it has been enlightening. I have learned so much about a State that I thought I knew so well. And I think so much of what has been presented by the public will become critical in our deliberative process, as we move forward in devising a map that will serve the interests of the public.

So just a thanks to all for participating in this process, and I look forward to us moving forward to complete our charge and responsibility.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Judge.

And before I lend my comments in closing, I just want to take this opportunity, on behalf of myself and Chair Barlas, to recognize a birthday of one of our Commissioners tomorrow. Commissioner Cirillo, we wish you a very, very happy and healthy birthday tomorrow, and many more to come, as we move forward.

DR. CIRILLO: Thank you, Chairman. I appreciate that.

MR. JONES: You're welcome.

And again, on behalf of myself and Chair Barlas and Judge Carchman, and the entire Commission, both delegations, I want to thank everyone who has participated in our public hearings over the last several months. They've offered meaningful and thoughtful testimony. Their comments have been informative, substantive, extremely thought-provoking. And it's embraced the spirit of our democracy.

We are moving toward putting together a map that fairly represents New Jersey and all its New Jerseyans. A map that will be fair and representative to the constituencies, that we have an awesome responsibility to uphold.

And I want to just reiterate the fact that while today is our last public hearing, we would encourage the public to continue to submit any feedback in writing through the Commission's website, and they can do so by visiting the *apportionmentcommission.org*. And we look forward to working together as a Commission to produce a map that I indicated -- that will be fair, and representative, and best serves the residents of New Jersey.

So I want to thank all, and offer you all a wonderful weekend.

But also let me take this opportunity to -- and I would be remiss if I did not recognize the members of the OLS team that have so keenly and professionally supported us through this entire process and will continue to do so. So Madam Secretary -- to you, and the members of the Office of Legislative Services, we are so appreciative of all the time and effort that you guys have put into this process, and we thank you so much.

So with that, again, we thank all who have been a part of this process; particularly, those countless number of residents who have offered their testimony to this process. We thank you again. And to all, have a wonderful, wonderful weekend.

Madam Secretary, do I have a motion to adjourn?

SENATOR BRAMNICK: So moved.

MR. JONES: Moved by Commissioner Bramnick.

Do I have a second?

MR. BARLAS: Second.

MR. JONES: Seconded by Commissioner Barlas.

All in favor? (affirmative responses)

We are adjourned.

Thank you so much, and our process continues.

(MEETING CONCLUDED)