
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 2, 2022
12:00 p.m.

MEMBERS OF COMMISSION PRESENT:

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



ALSO PRESENT:

Raysa Martinez Kruger
Office of Legislative Services
Commission Secretary

Jessica Oestreicher
Roshard Williams
Office of Legislative Services
Commission Aides

*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 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

COMMISSION NOTICE

TO: MEMBERS OF THE APPORTIONMENT COMMISSION

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

SUBJECT: **COMMISSION MEETING - FEBRUARY 2, 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 2, 2022 at 12:00 PM.

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

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

Those wishing to testify must register online in advance of the meeting at <https://www.apportionmentcommission.org/schedule.asp>. Registration is also available at <https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/>. Select February 2 on the calendar and click on Apportionment Commission for the registration link. Registrations must be received by Tuesday, February 1, 2022 at 3:00 PM. Upon successful registration, you will view a printable receipt on screen. At a later date, you will receive an email with instructions for testifying.

(OVER)

Apportionment Commission

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February 2, 2022

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

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

You may also submit written testimony instead of, or in addition to, oral testimony by email to OLSaideAPPC@njleg.org by Tuesday, February 1, 2022 at 3:00 PM. Written testimony will be included in the Commission's record and distributed to all Commission members.

Issued 1/26/22

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

Welcome to the public hearing for the New Jersey Apportionment Commission.

Today, we've got quite a few people scheduled to testify; and I believe there is a group that is also going to present a map. We've asked that group to hold until the end so we can get through the public statements first.

We have asked, given the number of people who are scheduled to testify, that everyone limit their remarks to three minutes or less. If you have written testimony, please feel free to submit it to our website through OLS, and they will get it all to the Commissioners.

With that, Madam Secretary, would you like to take roll?

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

Commissioner Testa.

MS. TESTA: Here.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Commissioner Taffet.

MR. TAFFET: Present.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Commissioner Matos.

MS. MATOS: Present.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Commissioner Lavery. (no response)

He's here; he's in his car.

Commissioner Kean.

SENATOR KEAN: Here.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Commissioner Dubois.

MS. DuBOIS: Here.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Commissioner Cirillo.

DR. CIRILLO: Present.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Commissioner Bramnick.

ASSEMBLYMAN BRAMNICK: Present.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Co-Chair Barlas.

MR. BARLAS: Here.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Co-Chair Jones.

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

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Eleventh member Carchman.

JUSTICE PHILIP S. CARCHMAN (11th Member): Present.

MR. BARLAS: Great.

So before we go to the public testimony portion, I believe Judge Carchman has a few remarks that he would like to make.

Judge, the floor is yours.

JUSTICE CARCHMAN: Good; and I will keep this under three minutes. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN BRAMNICK: There's no timer on you. (laughter)

JUSTICE CARCHMAN: Okay. Thank you, Chairman Barlas and Chairman Jones, and the other Commissioners, and the public.

I have a brief statement that I would like to make for the record.

Over the past few months, the New Jersey Apportionment Commission has been privy to one of the high points in the apportionment process: the ability of the public to address the Commission and share their insights, concerns, and hopes about the next decade of electing their chosen

representatives. One dominant theme of the public hearings has been that maps should be available for public comment.

In my discussions with the Commission, I proposed that maps be posted on the NJAC website one week prior to the commencement of our deliberative process, that the Commission accept public comment on the maps; and that at least one public hearing be scheduled after the posting of maps to allow the public to comment directly to the Commission.

I'm pleased to announce to the public that, pursuant to my request, two maps will be posted on February 7 for public comment. I have requested, and the parties have agreed, that neither map be labeled as a *Democratic* map or a *Republican* map. I do so because I do not want the maps to contain partisan labels, and I want to eliminate any bias that may be attached with a partisan designation.

I add a cautionary note. As I advised the parties, I do not expect these maps to be the final maps, but hope that these maps will prompt public comments, recommended changes, and discussion which will prove helpful in making appropriate adjustments to move us forward to a final map to be adopted by the Commission.

I appreciate the cooperation of all of the Commissioners from both delegations in agreeing to this procedure as we all advance New Jersey's position as a leader in the bipartisan apportionment process.

The publication of these maps should make us all proud of what New Jersey has achieved so far to garner public participation. The Commission serves the public, and the publication of these maps will assist us all in fulfilling our constitutional charge.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you, Judge.

Madam Secretary, shall we begin?

Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Would you like to use the spreadsheet for the order of speakers?

MR. BARLAS: Yes.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Okay,

MR. BARLAS: Madam Secretary, I'm sorry. But you know the group that we're holding to the end?

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Yes.

MR. BARLAS: Perfect.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The first speaker would be Stacey Abenstein, followed by Awni Abu-Hadba.

S T A C E Y A B E N S T E I N: Hello; my name is Stacey Abenstein, a 30-year resident of Livingston, and the Field Director for NJ 11th for Change, an unaffiliated, grassroots group dedicated to advocating for all people of New Jersey's 11th Congressional District through outreach and education.

As our focus is Morris and Essex counties, I've spent many hours analyzing the municipalities in these counties and would like to share my conclusions and map with you.

There are two growing communities in Morris County that deserve a strong vote and representation, Latinx and AAPI. You have heard from these groups in previous sessions. But I'd like to stress the importance of grouping together towns of common interest.

After starting with core towns that represent these groups, rearranging a bit, using our other surrounding towns to balance districts, I drew a map with two competitive districts with strong minority or global

majority representation. In LD 26, the voting age population -- VAP -- would be more than a third global majority and more than 20 percent Latinx. In LD 25, VAP would be almost a third global majority, and nearly 18 percent AAPI.

Moving east to Essex County, my map includes a West Essex District, LD 27, heavily populated by our historically Jewish communities. As I am not sure you have access to demographic information on religion, I am including a map from a study recently done by the Jewish Federation of MetroWest, in conjunction with Brandeis University, showing the dense population of Jews in West Essex. While the high concentration of Jews started in eastern Essex, the community moved to the suburbs in the 1960s. In fact, I belong to Temple B'nai Abraham, a congregation that started in Newark in 1853 and thrived there through the 1960s, relocating to Livingston in 1973 after the migration of Jews to the suburbs.

With anti-Semitism and hate crimes on the rise in New Jersey and everywhere, it is important that this group has strong influence in one district with representatives who can advocate for the needs of this large community.

My version of the diverse LD 34 eliminates Clifton, but maintains the 37 percent global majority currently present in a compact, Northeast Essex-only District. The new LD 29 creates a majority Latinx district, which is not the case now, with the help of Belleville and the West Hudson County towns of Kearny, Harrison, and East Newark. My version of LD 28 would continue to be majority Black, and representation should reflect that majority.

In conclusion, I respectfully request that you consider the new map I submitted. The Morris County Districts are competitive and give a much needed voice to the growing communities of interest. In Essex County, LD 27 becomes predominantly West Essex; LD 34 includes all Northeast Essex, besides Belleville, which then moves to help to create a majority Latinx District in 29; 28 continues to be majority Black.

The new Districts are well within the accepted deviation, compact, use county lines as a guide, and are competitive wherever possible. Additionally, 15 of 18 incumbents are written into the current Districts.

I received support for this map from Wind of the Spirit, an immigrant advocacy group based in Morristown.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I have submitted this testimony, the Jewish Federation map, and the new legislative map analysis for your consideration.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you Ms. Abenstein.

And you submitted those documents, right?

MS. ABENSTEIN: (Indiscernible)

MR. BARLAS: I said "thank you," and you submitted those documents, correct?

MS. ABENSTEIN: Yes; yes, sir.

MR. BARLAS: Perfect, we appreciate it. We will definitely take a look at that.

MS. ABENSTEIN: Thank you.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you again for your time.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Mr. Chairman, the next speaker is Awni Abu-Hadba; followed Paul Brown.

A W N I A B U - H A D B A: Good afternoon.

MR. BARLAS: Good afternoon.

MR. ABU-HADBA: Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Awni Abu-Hadba; I am the former Deputy Mayor of the great City of Paterson.

My family has been there in Paterson, roots in New Jersey, for over 40 years. We have been able to be a part of the government of Passaic County, calling Paterson and Clifton home.

The diverse Arab MENA population may trace their ancestry to different countries, speak different dialects and languages, practice different religion, and fall into a broad range of socio-economic categories; however, we have much more in common and want to be represented by leaders who understand our community's ethnic diversity and unique needs. We can trace our economic contribution to New Jersey by Syrian immigrants who established silk manufacturing soon after the City of Paterson was founded in 1792. And by 1924, there were 25 Arab American-owned factories in Paterson and Hoboken.

There are an estimated 113 Islamic nonprofit organizations in New Jersey, and many Arabic organizations throughout New Jersey. They have become a home and safe haven for thousands of people seeking assistance and connection with their community.

But we are also limited in our ability to provide social services, as many funding streams are limited to data and government sources of

information that do not track our community; a community that shares a uniquely immigrant experience, with specific community needs that can only be addressed by someone who understands the complexity of the community.

Please consider keeping our community in Hudson County together, and keeping the cities I mentioned together as a voting bloc. Even though our community can trace its history to the establishment of the City of Paterson, we have seen a significant increase in our population over the last 30 years, giving us the ability to gain leadership positions throughout local governments. But we currently have no representation in Trenton or Washington, D.C.

PACC -- the Palestinian American Community Center -- will submit a community of interest map, highlighting five cities and townships in six counties with significant Arab-American population. I hope you can take this map into consideration when drawing your district lines and are able to keep these cities together as a voting bloc.

Thank you very much.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you, Mr. Abu-Hadba.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Paul Brown, followed by Dale Collins.

BISHOP PAUL BROWN: Good afternoon.

MR. BARLAS: Good afternoon.

BISHOP BROWN: Thank you, Chairman Jones, Chairman Barlas, Judge Carchman, and the members of the Legislative Apportionment Commission, for allowing me to testify.

My name is Bishop Paul Brown. I am the Senior Pastor, First Pentecostal Church in Neptune, New Jersey. My church is located in the heart of the Midtown area, where Midtown meets Asbury Park. In fact, Oxonia Avenue, where the church is located, is only a few blocks away from Ridge Avenue, where the town of Asbury Park begins.

I have been the Pastor of First Pentecostal Church for over 30 years; and a resident of Neptune for 37 years. I have been a member of the Planning Board for the past 15 -- over 15 years, and I currently serve as the Chairperson of the Neptune Township Planning Board.

Midtown is dear to my heart; and I have dedicated much time to community service in the area, serving residents to the best of my abilities, along with the church and with other nonprofit organizations, such as Merck.

Midtown is a concentration of people of color, as is the west side of Asbury Park where two towns meet. And I ask you to keep that in mind when drawing the new legislative maps. Midtown -- specifically Springwood Avenue, West Bank Avenue -- was a thriving downtown where families lived, worked, and shopped, where famous people often frequented. Upon the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, we saw what many towns experienced -- riots and burning down of businesses and homes.

Asbury Park and Neptune are communities with a shared interests: investment in its people, particularly its people of color.

So I'm pleased to see that the congressional map has now reunited these communities into the same district. We must be sure to keep these towns together, to have representation that understands the importance of helping out the most vulnerable, and investing in their well-being.

So I urge, respectfully, that this legislative Commission -- please keep Asbury Park and Neptune Township in the same legislative district so that those communities of interest can stay together.

Thank you very much for your time.

(timer rings)

Right on the bell. (laughter)

MR. BARLAS: Right on the bell; well done, Reverend. (laughter)

Thank you.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Dale Collins, followed by Amalia Duarte.

D A L E C O L L I N S: Hello; my name is Dale Collins. I'm from Morristown; retired from a career in software design, programming, and support. And I pay a lot of attention to detail.

I've sent you background documents to my testimony, which include the descriptive document and three spreadsheets of data that support my position.

Studying the statewide voter list last September, I noticed many inconsistencies in how voters were matched to their county, municipal name, municipal code, ward, district -- congressional and legislative districts. On September 17, 2021, I submitted an OPRA request for a detailed explanation of the process the Board of Election uses to assign these values when they are registering or re-registering a voter. I'm still waiting for that to be fulfilled.

I saw an article in the *New Jersey Globe* about a recent case, Ward 4 in Old Bridge. It says Judge Daniel McCloskey threw out the election for a Ward 4 Council seat after finding that 27 voters were sent incorrect ballots,

and that 17 of those who were sent those ballots participated in the 2021 election; and he has ordered a new election. McCloskey said the court was gravely concerned about demonstrated fatal errors in the database that incorrectly assigned voters to the wrong Ward. The spreadsheets I provided include a count for a legislative district of those who may have been cast in the wrong legislative district. Incorrect assignments happened across 37 of the 40 legislative districts to over 1,000 -- I said 1,000 voters; well, more than the 17 for which the Judge has ordered a new election.

Widening my review of the problem to all registered voters more than 2,300 across all 40 legislative districts looked to be wrongly assigned. That could affect future elections.

Widening my review further to include errors in any of the matching fields of county, municipality name, municipality code, ward, district -- congressional or legislative district -- applies to over 33,000 voters.

What does this have to do with apportionment? You're about to switch up lots of boundary lines. Your county election officials and the vendor who controls the entire statewide voter database -- off-site -- will have lots of voters in the wrong place, jeopardizing the results of more races than just Old Bridge. No matter how well you legislate this, if you do not get them to apply it correctly to the State database, it's kind of a moot point.

I would appreciate-- If you have any way to help me move that OPRA request along, I would appreciate it.

Thank you.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you, Mr. Collins, for your testimony today.

And if you'd like to reach out to Brian Alpert from our team, through OLS, we could surely, maybe, try to help you along with your OPRA request.

MR. COLLINS: Thank you.

MR. BARLAS: Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Amalia Duarte, followed by Kevin Escobar.

A M A L I A D U A R T E : Thank you, and good afternoon.

Thank you for allowing me to speak this afternoon as part of the public testimony.

You have an incredibly important job ahead of you. I appreciate the time and focus you're dedicating to this work, and I also really appreciate the news that you will be releasing maps in advance of finalization to maintain full transparency as part of this process.

I also want to thank Chairman Jones for appointing Laura Matos to this Commission, because representation matters; and that is my theme today.

I serve on the Mendham Township Committee; I'm in my second term. I'm the Chair of the Elected Officials Caucus of the Morris County Democratic Committee. I'm also a founding member of the Latino Caucus.

Our County and our State are changing and becoming rapidly more diverse, as reflected in the new census figures. One in five New Jersey residents is Latino; 21 percent. In Morris County, it's 14 percent of residents.

Communities, such as Dover, Parsippany, and Morris Plains, have large new immigrant populations. Communities where I live -- the

Mendhams, Washington Township -- do not. We are more rural, we are more homogeneous. Currently, most of Morris County is split between LD 25 and LD 26. The Districts, as currently drawn divide some communities of interest. For example, Mendham Township and Dover are in the same District; yet our communities are vastly different. Mendham Township is only 6 percent Latino, we have 92 percent owner-occupied homes, 74 percent of our residents have attained a college degree or higher, our median household income is \$196,000.

Dover, by contrast, is 68 percent Latino, has a median household income of \$72,000, and is a majority renter community.

Part of the goal of creating voting districts is to align communities of interest, who have common concerns, problems, and needs, to ensure those needs are addressed by elected officials and aren't ignored. Prior to the 2020 Census, the Strategic Plan for Morris County recognized the need to address the growing diversity of Morris County -- issues related to public transportation and housing affordability. Many people who work in Morris County cannot afford to live here. (Indiscernible) Asian communities are heard, and not overwhelmed by being part of a district that does not share their concerns.

My simple recommendation is to keep communities of interest together; moving Parsippany and Morris Plains into LD 25; and perhaps moving out towns such as the Mendhams, Bernardsville, Chester, or Washington Township, which are very different in their makeup. I believe this will lead to a district that elevates the voices of residents in those towns and gives greater influence and forces more accountability of our elected officials.

Thank you so much.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you, Ms. Duarte, for your testimony this afternoon.

Madam Secretary

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Kevin Escobar, followed by Sylvia Gonzalez.

KEVIN ESCOBAR: Good afternoon.

For communities that are disadvantaged in terms of resources and political power, what does it really mean to have equitable representation?

My name is Kevin Escobar; I live in Morristown, New Jersey. I am a member and Board Trustee of Wind of the Spirit. We're a nonprofit, faith-based Immigrant Resource Center here in Morris County.

But even simpler than that, what we really are is a group of immigrants and allies who are fighting for ourselves; fighting for our own community's interests. For over 20 years we've worked to leverage our power to influence local, State, and Federal legislators. We've had many victories on the State level, including driver's licenses for all, wage theft laws, occupational licenses, and more.

Our community is culturally rich, vibrant, hardworking, and large, as many other speakers have spoken to. We sit in one of the wealthiest areas in the country. There are two sides to Morris County that are important to understand for the purposes of political representation. Over the past decade, gentrification has changed Morristown fundamentally, from being a small- to medium-sized town with a mix of many races and ethnicities, to

being an exhaustively expensive place filled with luxury developments, versus aging and decrepit apartment stock.

This town is filled with memories of many community members who used to live here, who have since had to leave to other towns, such as Dover, Mount Olive, Netcong, where rents are more affordable by comparison, for now. Rents over the past three years in Moorestown have increased, in some cases, by 30 percent, and we know because we've done the outreach in the community, and we've done the research in the town halls, and we've seen these numbers. Communities of color have been displaced as a result of real estate speculators inflating rental prices near transit hubs, like Morristown and Dover.

We cannot wait. Our communities cannot wait to have the full weight of our representative power to confront the issues impacting our communities. These issues threaten our place within locations that we've lived in for years. And the true disparity is in the numbers. Medium income in Morris County is high. Wealth is concentrated in areas such as Morris Township, Mendham Township, Chester, and Harding. So what results is a dichotomy of homeowners and landowners, versus people who, as a result of necessity, rent; we are mostly renters. Being grouped in with these towns politically results in low-income housing and, in general, social investment being unsurprisingly absent from the political discourse of our representatives in Trenton.

We acknowledge this Commission's recent addition as a positive step in a direction towards equity; but we need more. We're not asking for a head start or advantages of any kind; we don't need them. Our community

is well-prepared and educated to advocate for ourselves within the political system. But what we need is a fair starting point.

We ask the Commission to group Morristown, Morris Plains, Wharton, Mount Olive, Rockaway Township, and Parsippany together in the same legislative district.

Thank you.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you, Mr. Escobar.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Mr. Chairman, the next speaker is Sylvia Gonzalez, followed by Liz Glynn. (no response)

Sylvia Gonzalez is in the waiting room, but she's currently muted.

Mr. Chairman, maybe we'll move on to Liz Glynn, and come back to Ms. Gonzalez.

MR. BARLAS: Absolutely.

S Y L V I A G O N Z A L E Z: I'm here, I'm here.

Good afternoon, everyone.

My name is Sylvia Gonzalez. I'm a supervisor in the Fairview Public Schools, and I've been part of the elementary educational community for over 19 years here.

Fairview is located in Bergen County, and it's a small borough that borders Hudson County. And this testimony is a plea for Fairview to transition districts that parallel its geography and voter demographics.

I have deep-rooted ties to this community. My family has owned a business in the commercial strip for over 39 years, and it was one of the first Latino-owned establishments. I eventually moved to Fairview eight years

ago because I felt it would enable me to build personal relationships with the families of our school district, and create an outreach of resources within the community in a language that they could understand.

To have Fairview transition districts, from District 32 in Hudson County, to 36 in Bergen County, just makes sense. Our students, for example, are tied to Cliffside Park. They begin their education in Fairview, and they culminate it with a high school graduation in Cliffside. So friendships are built between the communities that last a lifetime.

Our business district is also an extension to one another geographically, to the point that you can't distinguish where one town begins or the other one ends. And local business owners often help one another as neighbors often do. The demographic population -- they mirror one another, and there's a high population of minoritized groups that have built a network in this community -- that they often lean on one another to assist one another in after-school care, child drop-off and pickup.

So it should be a Bergen County District so that resources, like recreation programs and in-school programs, can be interchangeable and benefit all of the students.

To me, Fairview is not just a place on a map. It's a small community; I call it *home*. And because of that, I want the best for it. So transitioning to District 36 is not only logical because of what I've aforementioned, but it would solidify the community connection that already exists between towns like Fairview and Cliffside Park.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to speak.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you, Ms. Gonzalez, for your testimony this afternoon.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Liz Glynn, followed by Joseph Hendershot.

MR. BARLAS: Ms. Glynn.

L I Z G L Y N N: Good morning, Commissioners.

My name is Liz Glynn. I'm the Director of Organizing with New Jersey Citizen Action. We're a statewide organization that advocates for economic equality, and we also provide direct services to low- and middle-income families.

We are here today because drawing the lines of our legislative districts is foundational to democracy. And the decisions of this Commission profoundly affect future decisions made by our representative government, and it affects all of our livelihoods.

We have concerns, both with this process in the actual drawing of the new map-- First, I just need to state that we do still believe and advocate for structural improvements to this redistricting process -- to prioritize public participation and transparency in the mapmaking over partisan politics.

You know, redistricting shouldn't be a fight to win between the two major political parties. Meanwhile, the public and communities of interest lose out.

We celebrate the announcement today that the proposed maps will be publicly available prior to the certification vote. We appreciate Judge Carchman striving for greater collaboration and public input, and we're hopeful that this will help ensure public input guides the final mapmaking decision, and should help create a better, more fair, final map.

Third, we believe when the lines of the map are drawn, racial equity should be prioritized to reflect our increasingly diverse state. As I know many other people testified, they have also stated this.

According to the latest census data, 21 percent of New Jersey residents are Hispanic or Latino, 15 percent are Black, and 11 percent are Asian. Within the next 10 years, over 50 percent of our New Jersey population will be comprised of racially diverse communities. We should aim for 50 percent of our districts to hold a majority of these racial populations, reflect these changes, and to achieve racial equity. And this will help ensure a racially diverse Legislature and give communities of interest the opportunity to influence their decision makers.

Anyone who has spent time with the various mapmaking programs can see there are a hundred ways to cut our districts. There are innumerable ways to achieve racial equity. Various groups have presented maps that illustrate these different ways. We currently aren't advocating for one specific map, but believe the Commission should aim for this goal of prioritizing it while drawing the lines.

We are part of the Fair Districts Coalition, and that has released a helpful map and guide that outlines specific communities of interest. And we strongly encourage the Commission to review it and aim to keep the identified communities intact.

Finally, I agree with Judge Carchman's statement, outlining the principles that should be followed. We also agree with these priorities to protect communities of interest, aim for partisan fairness and competitiveness, strive for compactness and continuity of representation, and, of course, follow the Voting Rights Act.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today, and we're looking forward to reviewing the proposed maps early next week.

Thank you.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you, Ms. Glynn, for a very thoughtful testimony this afternoon.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Joseph Hendershot, followed by Toni Hendrix.

J O S E P H H E N D E R S H O T: Thank you, everyone, for giving me the time to speak today.

My name is Joseph Hendershot from the New Jersey League of Conservation Voters Education Fund.

NJLCVEF raises awareness of key environmental challenges and works to increase the efficacy of the environmental community here in New Jersey.

I'm here today in support of the Unity Map being proposed at the end of the session. The League wants to ensure that the districts in New Jersey truly and justly represent the people who live within the state. It is important that communities of interest are grown, reinforced, and maintained, as communities know best their issues and resources in ways in which they can protect the environment, among other issues. That may be a little biased.

The map to follow has been developed with a goal of ensuring the voice, and by extension, political power of these communities are kept whole. With that being said, I ask you to take the following Unity Map, at the end, into consideration.

That is all I have.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you, Mr. Hendershot.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Toni Hendricks, Followed by Claribel Cortes.

T O N I D. H E N D R I X: Good afternoon, Commissioners; all elected and appointed officials, again, good afternoon.

My name is Toni Hendrix. I live in Somerset, Franklin Township, where I've been an active community and civic engagement member for over 20 years. It is my pleasure to address you today to share with you the story of my community, greater New Brunswick area.

My community is the home to many different groups of color. We have a strong Black American community, a growing African community, a very diverse Hispanic/Latinx community, as well as Asian Americans of many different backgrounds. We are truly an extremely diverse community, representing many different cultures, but united through common interests and a desire to have our voices matter.

New Brunswick serves as our anchor city, with a walkable downtown that boasts many excellent restaurants and artistic options for all groups. The New Brunswick campuses of Rutgers University are major institutions in our District, with many students who are part of our community. The Rutgers-Piscataway campus provides housing for many of the students, and numerous community activities are routinely conducted in the Piscataway Campus student union buildings; and of course, the Rutgers sports venues.

The New Brunswick area is also the home of two excellent healthcare facilities, Robert Wood Johnson Hospital and Saint Peter's Hospital, with many extended healthcare offices spread throughout Piscataway and Franklin Township.

Hamilton Street and Easton Avenue are major arteries that extend from downtown New Brunswick through Franklin Township, and serve as a connective corridor featuring many professional services and small businesses that serve our greater New Brunswick area.

The economy of the District is fueled by both white-collar business -- such as Johnson & Johnson headquarters and Rutgers Cancer Institute -- as well as numerous financial and professional services businesses. The District also enjoys blue collar jobs, with the recent addition of a significant number of large-scale warehouses, such as Amazon and Federal Express.

Similar to areas such as Newark, greater New Brunswick has an extremely robust arts and cultural Commission, as well as performing arts spaces, which unites our diverse community in art. Binding it all together is the diversity of our houses of worship -- so large and so diverse that Franklin Township has named a major street, Cedar Grove Lane, as *Interfaith Way*.

In closing, extremely diverse communities are an excellent place to live and raise children. I personally have chosen to reside here in my retirement years, living in one of several beautiful active adult communities. Our community needs representation that understands the challenges of continuing to provide economic programs to support all of our diverse groups, along with providing access to low-income housing, and a strategy to address homelessness. It is also vital to expand public transportation beyond the core

of downtown New Brunswick so that everyone can access jobs and vital services.

Thank you for listening to me today, and please strongly consider keeping my community -- New Brunswick, Piscataway, and Franklin Township -- together when drawing new maps.

Again, thank you.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you, Ms. Hendrix, for taking the time to give us that very insightful testimony today.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Claribel Cortes, followed by Tim Howes.

CLARIBEL CORTES: Hi, and thank you, Judge Carchman, and Chairman Jones and Chairman Barlas, and all of the members of the Legislative Commission for allowing me to speak today.

My name is Claribel Cortes, and I was recently elected to serve as the Middlesex County Surrogate. I serve as the Vice Chair of the New Jersey Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, but today I testify before you as a proud resident of North Brunswick, Middlesex County, and a constituent of the 17th District.

I appreciate the Commission's willingness to hear this public testimony on what the legislative districts will look like for the next decade. This will determine how communities elect representatives, and also how they will fight to secure resources at the State level; but also lay the foundation for communities to elect representatives who truly reflect the changing demographics of New Jersey.

As I mentioned to you before, I'm the current Surrogate for Middlesex County. Not only am I the first female Surrogate to represent Middlesex County, but I'm also the first Latina to serve as a constitutional officer in the County. This is not only a personal point of pride, but a reflection of the diversity Middlesex County has embraced.

Middlesex County is almost 62 percent non-white, and our countywide elected leadership reflects that. Middlesex County also includes four of the most 25 diverse towns in the state, according to the 2020 Census. For the first time, all three constitutional offices are held by women, led by Sheriff Mildred Scott, the first African-American sheriff elected in the State of New Jersey. And all the elected leaders of Middlesex County Board of the County Commissioners are majority female, and reflect each of the growing minority groups throughout the County.

This is a powerful message and a narrative to take with you as you consider redrawing the legislative boundaries of the districts within, and that touch, Middlesex County. There are many positive pathways for greater representation for Middlesex County voters that were created over the course of the last decade in the current enacted map. Female representation grew from two to five women in the Legislature, and there are now four minority legislators representing Middlesex County.

This is an opportunity for even more growth in representation if the legislative configurations stay relatively the same.

The 19th District, home to Assemblywoman Yvonne Lopez -- one of the 10 Latino legislators in the State -- currently includes Perth Amboy, Woodbridge, and Carteret. The 19th Legislative District is a majority-minority District, and 37 percent Latino. The growing voice of the

Latino community since the map last was enacted allowed the opportunity for Assemblywoman Lopez to be elected in 2017.

The diverse Latino communities in Perth Amboy, Woodbridge, and Carteret rely on representation in Trenton, and splitting up these communities would lead to irreparable damage to the almost 90,000 Latinos who currently live in the District.

Thank you for your time, and I hope that you can consider my testimony today as a proud resident of North Brunswick, one of the most diverse towns in the state.

MR. BARLAS: Ms. Cortes, thank you very much for your detailed testimony on the diversity of your County. It is greatly appreciated.

MS. CORTES: Thank you.

MR. BARLAS: Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Tim Howes, followed by Marc Kline.

W. TIMOTHY HOWES, Esq.: Thank you.

Thanks, Chairman Barlas, and the entire Commission, for giving me some time here.

I'm a resident of Somerset County, Peapack-Gladstone. I've practiced law in Somerset County for the past 31 years.

I really am not here to ask you to draw any particular lines, nor do I take any position on any particular maps.

There are several principles that have been spoken about here. I'd like to add one to that list of principles that this Commission will have to consider -- one that was seemingly thrown in the garbage 10, 11 years ago. The New Jersey Constitution, Article IV, Section II, paragraph 3 limits the

number of legislative districts that a county or municipality can be cut into. Eleven years ago, your predecessor Commission rightfully reduced Newark and Jersey City to only two districts. However, the same consideration was not given to my 345,000 residents, who are now cut into six districts.

We are represented by 18 wonderful legislators. I love most of them, like some of them, one or two of them I could do without. But if you look at the principle embodied therein -- based on the population of Somerset County, based on the population of the State of New Jersey, using the formula in that paragraph, it would come out to one-and-a-half districts. Now, I know that that can't be the case, because there are other principles that are at play here, this is only one of them.

We're in six. The current map splits up a community of interest -- the burgeoning South Asian population on the north end of the County is in three different districts. The Somerset Hills School District, home to 19,000 people -- it's only a Group 2 school -- is in three districts. We have nine legislators representing one of the smallest high schools in the state -- Peapack-Gladstone and Bedminster in 23, Far Hills in 21, and Bernardsville in District 25. Again, in Watchung Hills, you have orphaned Greenbrook from the rest of the District; it's in District 22.

We've now taken perhaps one of the most educated counties in the state, with one of the best community colleges in the country, and reduced it to a County where no residents are in the New Jersey Senate. I have two Senators from Union County, two from Middlesex County, one from Morris, and one from Warren. They're all wonderful. But there's a degree to which Somerset County was divvied up to -- on the altar of all the other considerations.

I would ask that you take into consideration and remember the legal requirements of Article IV, Section II, paragraph 3 of the New Jersey Constitution.

Thank you, Chairman Barlas, for this opportunity.

Thank you, Mr. Howes, for your testimony this afternoon.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Marc Kline, followed by Elizabeth Lynch.

RABBI MARC KLINE: Thank you, Judge Carchman, Chairman Jones, Chairman Barlas, and all of the members of the Apportionment Commission.

Let me express my appreciation, with many others, of the bipartisan support for the work that we're going to be doing here.

I'm here to certainly advocate, as many have, on behalf of their own communities. The Jewish community of Legislative District 11 is a cohesive community, and we've had the blessing for multi generations of being able to speak with a legislative office, and being able to have meaningful relationships with State government without having to be in lots of separate places.

I'm advocating on behalf of another piece that was not talked about, and that's the interrelationships between communities. It's not just the Jewish community of this District that is at stake. We have formed incredible ties with the broader religious and cultural communities serving homelessness, serving people who are at risk, working in education. And so as we re-district, everyone has to take into consideration the needs of making sure that we have voting blocs and representation for our piece of the pie, if

I may. But a big piece of the pie is also how we relate with each other, and the people in the relationships that we've depended upon. In this District, we have brought very diverse people into some incredible work together because we've had relationships with a set office for many generations now. And I would want to make sure that however we redraw the map, that we don't forget, beyond the special needs of certain cultural groups, that we take into account the impact on the wider community, as we would risk separating relationships that have done so much good for so many people.

So it's a much broader picture than thinking about our own special needs, because our special needs really are invested in the special needs of the much wider community.

I have served in this community for eight years. I'm a rabbi at Monmouth Reform Temple in Tinton Falls. I serve as volunteer Chaplain for the Hackensack Meridian Hospital systems. I co-created the Red Bank Police Department chaplaincy, and I'm working with the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office in creating their chaplaincy team. I'm also the Interfaith Chair for the Jewish Federation in the Heart of New Jersey. So I'm blessed to be able to walk in this wide, wide circle to see how important it is to maintain the integrity of these relationships beyond, like I said, just our narrow needs.

So however we do this work, my prayer is that we make sure we take into account the much broader need for keeping people together in the common work that we do to take care of the state.

So thank you very much for the opportunity to be here today.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you, Mr. Kline, for that perspective. I believe it is the first time we've heard that, so that's certainly something new for a lot of us to consider. So I thank you for coming on today and testifying.

RABBI KLINE: Thank you.

MR. BARLAS: Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Elizabeth Lynch, followed by Layla Odeh.

E L I Z A B E T H L Y N C H: Actually, I'm going to beg your pardon. I did not come here prepared to testify, but simply to listen. And I guess I'll just take the opportunity to express my appreciation for all the amazing and informative perspectives that my fellow citizens have been sharing today.

So again, my pardon for any possible misunderstanding here. But I will now basically yield the floor to whoever is coming next.

Thank you.

MR. BARLAS: Not at all. Thank you, Ms. Lynch, for taking the time out of your day to listen. It's actually nice to hear that there are folks who are participating in this process.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Layla Odeh, followed by Adrian Orozco.

L A Y L A O D E H: Good afternoon, Commission.

My name is Layla Odeh; I live in Bergen County, and I'm here with the Palestinian American Community Center, located in Clifton, as the lead of our Get Out the Vote team. And I am also a college student at Montclair State University.

To begin, I would like to state that I endorse the map that Fair Districts New Jersey is presenting today. Considering the growth New Jersey has experienced regarding our prominently diverse constituency, I think it is the closest, at the moment, to representing a racially equitable map. More specifically, in regards to my community, though we have a long journey ahead, I think this map is heading in the right direction in terms of the growth of that diversity expanding in New Jersey.

So as we know, as we've seen with the recent census data, the U.S. Census counts people who hold Arab ancestry, other Middle Eastern and North African origins within the white racial category. And being lumped into this white race category has real impact on our community, specifically health, socio-economic relief, admissions into schools, psychological effects, and impact on immigration issues. And some of my other members in my group will also be touching upon this, in terms of funding as well.

The South Paterson Arab American community is a great example of our contributions to New Jersey, and it leads economic development for the entire city of Paterson and, predominately, Passaic County as well. Constituents within the Arab American community have created a sense of empowerment within themselves and for other community members through these economic contributions, and within the social service aspects. It can only be preserved if they are kept together and receive the representation needed to address policy change the community needs.

Please consider keeping my community together as a voting bloc to better serve our needs.

Thank you so much for your time.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you very much, Ms. Odeh.
Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Adrian Orozco,
followed by Cara Parmigiani.

A D R I A N O R O Z C O: Hi.

I also won't be speaking today; just watching.
Thanks.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you, Mr. Orozco.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Cara
Parmigiani, followed by Miriam Solomon.

C A R A A. P A R M I G I A N I, Esq.: Good afternoon, Your Honor,
and respected dignitaries.

I'm here today in my individual capacity. I was born in Morris
Township. I was -- I lived in Morristown, and now I live in Morris Plains.
So I've had the benefit of living in all three municipalities, and I can tell you
about their interrelationship as communities of interest.

It's hard to even tell where one town begins and ends. Morris
Plains is connected via Speedwell Avenue to Morristown; it's a major -- and
Morris Township -- as a major intersection of interest. We have folks who
share ZIP codes. We share recreation, such as pools, fields, programming.
We share schools, such as Morristown High School, where all residents are
able to attend -- all three: Morris Plains, Morristown, and Morris Township.

Morris Plains also sends 100 percent of its sewage to Morris
Township's Butterworth sewer plant. We share water. They're also -- all
three of them are a part of a six-town working group that received the NJDCA

LEAP Grant to identify and implement costly public works, and equipment, and maintenance functions between all of them.

They're connected via a train line. I mean, there are so many interconnections between Morris Plains, Morristown, and Morris Township, it just does not make sense that they're all not interconnected in the same legislative district. And presently, Morris Plains is in the 26th, Morris Township and Morristown are in the 25th.

I'd like to persuade Your Honor, and this board, that, if possible, all three should go together. All the Morrises should be a part of the same group, as they are all connected in these interests. And so, accordingly, that's what I request, and I thank you very much for your time and consideration today.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you very much, Ms. Parmigiani.
Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Miriam Solomon, followed by Herb Tarbous.

MIRIAM SOLOMON: I would like to thank the Commission for the opportunity to speak about my community.

My name is Miriam Solomon. I have been living in North Bergen most of my life, and I've also been a homeowner since 2009. I choose to own a home in North Bergen due to this area's diverse community. In this District alone, there was a jump in the Latino population. The District went from 48.8 percent Latino to 57.16 percent. This kind of population growth should be looked at as an investment to the community.

Our District has services that cater to our diverse population. We have food pantries for those in need, community services that cater to

our diverse population. Programs like immigration services, ESL programs, public transportation -- although it could be a bit better by an expansion project.

We have a regional hospital that is strategically placed. We have grocery stores that cater to the demographics of the District. I feel it is important to highlight these features of my District.

Because of everything I have previously mentioned, I think District 32 is an important district in New Jersey. New Jersey's minority population is at 48 percent. It is important to note that the current maps do not reflect this data. New Jersey needs fair districts, like District 32. When we have districts that accurately reflect the data, there is more of a successful chance to tackle bigger social justice issues.

This Commission is tasked with an important role. This map this Commission certifies will be our legislative districts for the next 10 years. I urge the members of the Commission to prioritize data and the communities of interest over political party goals.

Let's focus on progress. New Jersey's largest ethnic and racial group is Latinos. Despite making up 20 percent of the population, Latinos only make up 8 percent of the Legislature. At the State, we need to do better.

Families in New Jersey have a right to be represented by politicians of our choice.

I want to thank the Commission again for this opportunity to speak.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you so much for sharing your thoughts on your community and your District.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Herb Tarbous, followed by Helen Zamora-Bustos.

HERB TARBOUS: Good afternoon.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

I'm grateful for the decision which brought Ms. Matos onto the Commission, greatly improving the gender and ethnic diversity of this body.

I consider myself fortunate to have been raised in diverse New Jersey. I'm here as a 30-year resident of Piscataway, one of the most diverse municipalities in our great state.

Now I'm grateful for the dozens of fellow citizens who have passionately pled for proper representation. We are the stewards of how we cultivate, actuate, and celebrate our diversity.

I'm a retired systems engineer with over 30 years experience with companies formerly associated with Bell Laboratories.

There are two metrics I wish to speak to today. First, the measure of diversity. New Jersey ranks among the most diverse states in the nation, along with New York, Florida, California and Texas. Our state is incredibly diverse racially, ethnically, educationally, linguistically, and politically.

The second measure is the measure of a Legislature's ability or capacity to embody diversity in its membership. I propose an appropriate measure for this is the size of legislative districts, where smaller legislative districts would lead to greater capacity to embody diversity. Here in New Jersey, we have a glaring disconnect between these two measures.

As evidenced by both census data and impassioned testimony, New Jersey is clearly among the top echelons of states embodying diversity in its population. However, the second measure of New Jersey's legislative

apportionment plan is clearly near rock-bottom, as 40 legislative districts will contain roughly 230,000 constituents, the second largest in the nation. In fact, there are 36 states with smaller and less diverse populations but, in an apportionment structure, with a diversity capacity greater than the New Jersey. This includes such states as Alabama, Tennessee, and Kentucky. We can do better. The constraint of only 40 districts renders the task of incorporating our state's diversity into a single map nearly insurmountable.

Article VIII of the bylaws of this body, the *Report to the Legislature*, states the Commission "may submit to the Legislature recommendations for modifying...existing laws or modifying the State Constitution." Increasing the number of legislative districts would simplify the map-drawing process while raising the voices of the people.

I respectfully request this body to go on the record in its final report with a suggestion to increase the number of legislative districts in New Jersey.

I wish for you wisdom, guidance, and camaraderie in your task.

Thank you for your time, attention, and consideration.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you, Mr. Tarbous, for your testimony, and we really appreciate you pointing out that there is the option, within our bylaws, to provide a report to the Commission. So I'm sure we will all, at some point, have a very robust discussion on exactly what you talked about.

Thank you.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Helen Zamora-Bustos, followed by Matt Dragon.

HELEN ZAMORA-BUSTOS: Good afternoon.

My name is Helen Zamora-Bustos. I am a Public Policy and Community Organizer with Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center, working with the immigrant community as a non-profit, faith-based organization for more than 20 years.

Today, I want to point out that while our communities share a lot of interests, like the population demographics show, a lot of our members are divided between Districts 26 and 25 in Morris County. The demographics show, and it is increasingly clear, that the Latin American immigrants and Spanish speakers -- and various indigenous languages as well -- are not always provided with language accessibility in their communities and, more importantly, within the schools of the communities that they are members of.

This is in part due to their needs not being heard, let alone being met. Like I've mentioned before, our members are split between Districts 25 and 26. The schools are not different; the schools, like Rockaway from Rockaway Township, and Wharton Township. Rockaway is located in District 26, and Wharton is located in District 25. And they share a school district. The community already had this shared interest in their needs not being met and the things that are needed for those specific communities.

Morristown and Morris Plains -- Morristown, located in District 25, and Morris Plains located in District 26, also share a school district and they have common interests and common needs. And those are not being met because they keep being separated.

It is important to keep these communities together, and their voices strong for their needs to be met with the right representation.

Thank you, today, for your time, and I ask that you please take into consideration keeping all of these communities together within the same District so that they have a stronger political presence, and the right representation according to the demographics of those communities.

Thank you, and have a good afternoon.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you, Ms. Bustos, for taking the time to testify here today.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Mr. Chairman, the next speaker is Matt Dragon, and after Mr. Dragon there's a group of five speakers that will start with Henal Patel.

MR. BARLAS: Great, thank you.

Mr. Dragon. (no response)

MS. AVELENDA (Commission Staff): Raysa, Matt texted that he dropped off.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Okay, thank you.

Mr. Chairman, therefore we have a group of five speakers; they are the last five speakers for today. They will start with Ms. Henal Patel, followed by Phil Hensley, Chris Estevez, Amy Torres, and Rania Mustafa.

MR. BARLAS: Great.

Ms. Patel.

H E N A L P A T E L, Esq.: Yes, thank you.

Hello, Commissioners.

Actually, Philip Hensley, my colleague, will start first, but we are waiting for-- Thank you so much; Roshard has the map up; we hope everyone can see it, and we'll try to describe it as we go.

Philip.

MR. JONES: Roshard, can you just enlarge that just a little bit? Thank you.

PHILIP HENSLEY: Thank you, everyone.

I want to thank, first, OLS and the Commission, for allowing us to present this map in this way at this time. We greatly appreciate that.

Good afternoon. My name is Philip Hensley, and I'm here on behalf of the League of Women Voters of New Jersey and the Fair Districts New Jersey Coalition to present testimony and this legislative map we are submitting.

I will describe the principles that guided the creation of this map, the process that produced it, and provide a brief overview of some of the specific districts that were drawn. And then Henal will describe the remaining districts.

So the Fair Districts Coalition has consistently advocated for three primary principles that we believe should govern redistricting.

The first is racial equity. We believe in reinforcing the principles of the Voting Rights Act, and ensuring that New Jersey's communities of color have an equal opportunity to participate in the political process.

Second, we believe that redistricting should preserve communities of interest to the greatest extent possible.

And third, we believe district plans should not be drawn solely to favor or disfavor a political party or candidate for office.

So those principles are what guided us in designing this map. But we also engaged in extensive outreach -- with individuals and local organizations throughout the state -- to identify communities of interest. The Fair Districts New Jersey Coalition and our partners held community

mapping sessions across the state, where we asked New Jerseyans to define and map their own communities. These mapping sessions produced over 50 community of interest maps. And we submit these community of interest maps to the Commission, in addition and alongside our own proposed legislative map.

In addition to the mapmaking criteria I've described, Fair Districts New Jersey has also consistently called for a transparent process that incorporates significant public input. So we would especially like to thank and acknowledge Judge Carchman and all the Commissioners for the announcement today -- that two maps will be released February 7. We hope the Commission will schedule additional hearings and opportunities for the public to comment following the release of those maps. And we would also like to urge the Commission to ensure that those maps are released in convenient electronic format -- so shapefiles -- to facilitate analysis by outside experts. Because we believe that analysis will be invaluable, both to the public in understanding the maps you're proposing, and to the Commission itself.

So before I get to the map, one last thing. I would like to talk about some of the significant demographic changes we've seen in New Jersey, and how they informed this map. Census results show that New Jersey is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse. Latino populations grew by 29 percent, and Asian populations grew by 44 percent. Overall, New Jersey was found to be 52 percent non-Hispanic white and 48 percent Hispanic, Black, Asian, Native American, Pacific Islander.

We know that due to systemic census undercount, New Jersey's communities of color are, in reality, an even larger share of the population than 48 percent; likely, 50 percent or more. So accordingly, this map creates

20 majority people of color districts, out of 40. Just five more than the current map.

So I'm going to briefly outline the map that shows the individual districts, starting in South and Central Jersey. My colleague, Henal Patel, from the Institute for Social Justice, will provide an overview of the remaining districts. And additional members of our Coalition -- Chris Estevez of the Latino Action Network, Amy Torres from the New Jersey Alliance for Immigrant Justice, and Rania Mustafa with the Palestinian American Community Center -- will speak in greater detail about specific districts, as well as about the map more generally.

So given constraints of time, I won't speak about every single district. But starting in South Jersey, you see in green there, the 2nd District. So this is the first new majority people of color district in our map. Currently, there are none in all of South Jersey. And this reflects a significant growth of both Latino and Asian populations in the area, and especially in the greater Atlantic City area.

This District is entirely within Atlantic County. And in addition, and in accordance with testimony before this Commission and our community mapping sessions, Galloway and Port Republic are included in the 2nd District, as these towns share an important community of interest with Atlantic City,

All right, let's speak about District 3. It's there in purple -- Salem, Gloucester, and Cumberland counties. Community outreach indicated the towns of Vineland, Millville, and Bridgeton, which have a substantial and growing Hispanic population, constitute a community of interest and should be kept together in one district -- which this district

achieves. So these communities are also combined with Fairfield Township and Salem City, which both have substantial Black populations.

I'd also like to note that the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape State-Designated Tribal Statistical Area includes both Fairfield Township and Bridgeton. And so keeping those towns together in one district is important -- or not divide the Native American community in this part of the state.

Next, I'd like to talk about the 4th District; that's in red.

We identified a community of interest in Winslow Township, which also covers nearby areas in Chesilhurst and Monroe Township. And those were important to keep together in this District.

The next District is in yellow; that's the 5th District. And it is our second majority people of color district in South Jersey. Community mapping sessions and feedback from partners in Camden County identified Camden, Pennsauken, and Merchantville as an important community of interest. And it's for that reason that we drew them together in this 5th District.

Moving a little bit further north now, in peach color is the 30th District, which is centered on Lakewood. And I'd like to acknowledge the significant growth of Lakewood; it's worth highlighting. And so we opted for a least-changed map that keeps Lakewood with Howell and Wall townships, while shedding some Shore towns for equal population purposes.

Relevant to that decision, just north of the 5th District is the 11th District -- which you've heard about already -- in green. That District, centered on Neptune and Asbury, takes in some additional Shore towns in our map, including Belmar -- which we identified from our community mapping sessions, and with the input of the Latino Coalition -- as part of the

growing Latino community of interest in this part of Monmouth County; including not only Long Branch and Asbury Park, but also Belmar, Red Bank, and, of course, Freehold Borough.

You've already heard about the importance of Neptune, Neptune City, and Asbury Park; those also were identified through our community outreach sessions and should be kept together in this District. And that's what we do in this 11th District.

The next District I'd like to talk about, in that brownish-olive color, is the 14th District, extending from Hamilton Township to Monroe Township. It keeps Cranbury, Robbinsville, and East Windsor together, and these three towns have significant and growing API populations via community mapping sessions held with the assistance of SALDEF, the Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund. We identified the importance of keeping those three towns together.

Just north of the 14th District is the 15th District in orange. And with multiple community mapping sessions, with multiple organizations, the importance of a community of interest between the towns of Trenton, Ewing, and Lawrence was very apparent. So the 15th District keeps Trenton, Ewing, and Lawrence together, while adding additional townships for population purposes.

The next door 16th District, in green, along with community mapping sessions I just discussed in other parts of Mercer County -- the 16th District has a significant and growing Asian and Asian American population. Particularly, we identified West Windsor and Plainsboro as constituting a community of interest, and we kept those towns together, along with towns north. This District has a 31.4 percent Asian and Asian American

population; an Asian-influenced District, reflected in the growth of that community in this part of the state.

Just next door in that gray-blue color is the 17th District. That's Piscataway, New Brunswick, and nearby towns. A community mapping session with the New Brunswick NAACP provided us with a community of interest map -- the importance of keeping New Brunswick and North Brunswick together, as well as the existing college community of interest between Piscataway and New Brunswick. So those are kept together in the 17th District.

Finally, I'd like to talk about the 18th District, in yellow. This is the first of two Asian plurality districts in this map. So currently, in New Jersey, there is not a single AAPI majority or plurality district in New Jersey, even though Asian Americans constitute the fastest-growing population in this state. This District combines the community of interest that was identified, Edison-Metuchen, with South Brunswick, to draw the first API plurality District; over 40 percent Asian American -- nearly 44 percent -- with the possibility of growing into a majority Asian District over the course of the decade.

With that, I'd like to turn it over to my colleague.

And I want to thank again the Commissioners and OLS staff for allowing us to present this map today.

MS. PATEL: Thank you, Philip.

Hello, everyone. My name is Henal Patel. I am the Director of the Democracy and Justice Program at the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice.

I do -- I want to echo some of the comments Philip made. We thank you -- thank the Commission for agreeing to release your maps on February 7. We think that's tremendous for public participation.

I will just say-- So the Institute -- we are a social justice legal advocacy organization. I've testified before you before, so I won't repeat much of that, except to say we do believe and know that redistricting is about power -- which is why we've been centering this on communities throughout the state.

Today's map-- I wanted to high-- Before we get into the rest of this, I wanted to mention that the map is supported by a number of our partners: The League of Women Voters; obviously, Latino Action Network; New Jersey Alliance for Immigrant Justice; Palestinian American Community Center; Fair Share Housing Center; the New Jersey NAACP; Salvation and Social Justice; SALDEF, the Sikh American Legal Defense Fund; and the New Jersey League of Conservation Voters all support this map, as well as the Latino Coalition of New Jersey.

This map, broad level, has, as Philip mentioned, 20 majority people of color districts which we think reflects the population of New Jersey that now, in the last 10 years, was -- wherein the entirety of the population growth came from people of color. This map also has three majority Black districts, voting age population Black Districts; the current map only has one. We think that better reflects 15 percent of the population that is the Black population. Four majority Hispanic Districts and an additional two plurality Districts, and two Asian plurality Districts.

This map also crucially follows all the criteria that Judge Commissioner Carchman laid out last month, including that all the districts

are within the 2.5 percent deviation, minimizes pitting incumbents against each other. Although we do not-- We did not draw -- we did not prioritize continuity of representation over the other priorities. The rest were clearly more important for us, and based on the criteria laid out by Judge Carchman.

So I will go into some of the rest of these districts now.

In North Jersey, the first being District 20, which is our first drawn majority Hispanic District that accounts for the growth in the Latino community throughout Northeast New Jersey, well into Union County. So, this District combines Elizabeth, Linden, Carteret, and becomes a majority Hispanic District.

Moving a little bit to the West -- District 22 includes the community of interest of Plainfield and North Plainfield. And we also included South Plainfield there, and it remains a majority people of color District.

District 21 has a number of the suburban areas -- Westfield, Cranford -- those areas in that District.

I think it makes sense now to head a little west, and we'll come back around in a clockwise fashion to Northeast New Jersey.

District 23 includes a lot of our rural areas; notably it includes all of Warren County in this District. We know we had some testimony in the past to try to maintain; that District does.

Moving up, District 24 includes a lot of Sussex County and more of the rural areas there.

Our District 26 includes a lot of the Latino communities that we heard testimony for today. Dover, Mine Hill, Wharton, Roxbury -- all of

these towns, as well as Morristown, and combines them together into this District here in 26.

Our District 25 actually goes from Union up into capturing a lot of the-- And it is a majority people of color District. It has Parsippany, East Hanover, and Livingston, to acknowledge the growing Asian American community in this area, and keeping those communities together so that they have influence in this District. So they are about 24 percent of the population in this District.

I'll move slightly up into District 40 now -- is our community up here. This District -- and District 35 -- actually acknowledges the growing Arab community that you've heard testimony for, and that we've also listened to and acknowledged with communities of interest. So District 40 includes Wayne and Pompton Lakes, while District 35 has Paterson and the communities around that, so that we keep these Arab communities together when possible. Because as they've said, they are not in the data themselves; so we have to listen to them.

District 35 is the -- in addition to the Arab community, is a majority Hispanic District. As it is the currently, District 35 is a majority Hispanic area. The Latino community is significant here and growing. And this community puts these areas together with Paterson, Haledon, North Haledon, Woodland Park, and those areas.

District 39 is some of the Bergen County areas in this District. I should also mention District 40 includes some of the -- a lot of the areas of the Ramapo Lenape tribe in Ringwood and Mahwah. We also have a community of interest map from them that we've submitted to the Commission.

Moving a little down, I'll mention 37, and then kind of circle into Essex County and Hudson County. District 39, as I said, is around Bergen County. District 37 combines many of the towns-- It includes Englewood and Teaneck, which are a community of interest and combines a number of the communities with growing Asian populations. This District is over 30 percent Asian. So it includes an influence district for that community.

I will mention District 36 and 38 now. Both are majority people of color districts. District 38 includes a number of the diverse areas in lower Bergen County and Passaic County. District 36 includes both Clifton and Passaic, which is a community of interest that shares a lot of the same demographics, and a lot of the same interests and community there. So that's District 33 (*sic*), which is about 45 percent Hispanic. It is a Hispanic plurality district, and will likely grow into a Latino majority district in the next 10 years.

Now we'll move a little south to Essex County. And what we've done here -- which we're really proud of -- is we drew-- We're able to draw, pretty easily, multiple ways, three majority Black districts to really reflect the existing and also growing Black population in Essex County. So District 27 that we have goes from Hillside up, and includes a number of the -- West Orange all the way up, and includes and captures Roseland.

District 34 includes -- goes into Newark, mostly just in the Central Ward. It includes Montclair, East Orange, and those communities. If you can see when Roshard goes over them -- you can see the towns on the right side -- the towns pop up. So its from Bloomfield, Cedar Grove, Montclair.

District 28 is the third majority Black district. When I say *majority Black*, I mentioned -- they're majority by voting age population. The same thing for all the Hispanic majority districts I've mentioned. District 28 includes much of the West -- it includes all of the West Ward of Newark, much of the South Ward, and into Bayonne.

And then District 29 is an additional new majority Hispanic District. The current -- I should mention the current map only has two, District 32 and 35. We've drawn additional ones. District 29 has the growing Latino population in Newark and other parts of Essex County, and Hudson County -- so Kearney and Belleville are in this District as well.

Then, finally, Hudson County, my home County. It includes District 31, which is just truly-- I think District 31 kind of reflects the diversity of Jersey City in many ways. It is an Asian plurality District by a hair. It's 28 percent Asian, which kind of reflects what Jersey City is now, too, by a hair, an Asian plurality city. And a District that includes Jersey City and it goes into Secaucus.

District 33 is our final-- A Hispanic plurality District. It includes parts of -- the rest of Jersey City, Union City, Hoboken -- that area.

And then, finally, District 32. The map that is currently -- the District that is currently a majority Hispanic District, was drawn 10 years ago to be a majority Hispanic district and should remain one now. That reflects the growing Latino community in North Hudson, which has been here for decades and continues to thrive. So this includes the towns of North Bergen, West New York; all around the Bergenline Avenue corridor, and reflects that community of interest and goes into this area.

So these are our-- This basically covers our map. We thank you for your time.

I will turn it over to my colleague, Chris Estevez, then Amy Torres, and then Rania. I know Madam Secretary can call on them too, but they will talk about specific areas in the map.

Thank you.

CHRISTIAN ESTEVEZ: Thank you.

I'm Christian Estevez; I'm the President of the Latino Action Network.

Thank you, Judge Carchman and all the honorable members of the Commission.

You know, as we've said before, and I'm going to-- I'm trying not to be repetitive, but as the Latino Action Network, I have testified in the past -- and other members have testified -- Latinos, as you know, make up almost 21 percent of the State population now; yet we continue to be highly underrepresented in the State Legislature, making up only 7 percent of the Senate and only 8 percent of the State Assembly.

When we entered into the whole redistricting process, the Latino community was very dismayed that there was no Latino representation on the Commission. And we are pleased to see that this omission has been remedied by the recent appointment of Laura Matos to the Commission. And while this is definitely a step in the right direction, now the real work begins of making sure that this process results in a map that truly represents the great diversity of our State.

As many others have already testified, the 2020 Census shows that communities of color now make up almost half the state population.

The Latino Action Network is proud to be part of a presentation of this Fair Districts Unity Map that demonstrates how it is completely possible to draw a legislative map where half of the districts are made up of people of color as the majority, in line with the changing demographics of the state.

You know, I can't stress enough how important it is for Latinos -- for us to do everything we can to create more opportunities for Latinos and Latinas to run for office and be able to -- and for Latinos to have a voice in Trenton, commensurate with our size, as a part of the population.

Henal and Philip did a great job of running through all the districts. I will focus on speaking about where a lot of the Latino growth happened -- basically in the Bergen and Passaic county area. And this is really where we need to see some changes. And that's probably where you see a lot of changes in relation to the existing map.

You know, we have a situation in part of Passaic County and in southern Bergen County where Latinos are a growing part of the population, yet we have no Latino representation. And that's why, in this map, we put together the City of Passaic and the City of Clifton as a community of interest there.

And in other parts of the state, as has been mentioned, we sought to increase the Latino voice in places like Monmouth County, where we tried to keep the Latino community together in order to increase our community's ability to have influence there with the elected officials. So keeping towns like Red Bank, Belmar, Asbury, Freehold, and Long Branch together are very important to our community. Philip mentioned earlier about, in South Jersey, keeping Bridgeton, Millville, and Vineland together. Because in the current map, some of those towns are separated.

So basically-- And you've already heard about Plainfield and North Plainfield. I mean, we can go on and on; there are so many places where we need to make adjustments to increase Latino representation. It's too numerous to say at this moment, but I will say that we really implore the Commission to make every effort to create increased opportunities for Latino representation. Because our community is growing; it's the largest-growing population in the state. And I would say the reason why we didn't go backwards in the state in terms of population growth is because of the Latino and Asian communities, and we ask that the Commission make every effort to draw districts in ways that will increase our ability to choose representatives of our choosing to go represent our interests in Trenton.

Thank you for your time.

I'm going to pass it over to my colleague, Amy Torres.

AMY TORRES: Hi, everyone.

Thank you, Chris; and thank you, Judge Carchman and the Commission, for the opportunity to testify today.

The New Jersey Alliance for Immigrant Justice is a statewide coalition that fights for policies that empower and protect immigrant New Jerseyans.

And before I get to my testimony, I just want to say how thrilled we are that the Commission is making history by releasing their versions of the maps in advance. And as much as others have already noted this, it bears repeating that this decision is a historic one. It's one that's long overdue for the State, and sets a really important precedent for how the State works with the public to involve us and work in transparency as we go through this mapping process together. It's a credit to both the advocacy community that

came together to ask for this, and the Commission to decide to release the maps in advance for consideration.

But again, in that spirit of precedence and transparency, it's important that the second part of the public's ask -- which is that there's an opportunity for public comment after that release -- is also honored. So we look forward to working with you on that, and are hopeful that we get the opportunity to provide feedback. And we're very excited to see your versions of the maps.

So people unfamiliar with our State's population often wonder why an Immigrant Justice Coalition would be at the table for redistricting. So it's important, first, for me to lay out some of the data on the table about who immigrants are in New Jersey and, indeed, who New Jersey is as a state.

New Jersey is more diverse than we've ever been; effectively a state that is half people of color. Nearly one in four New Jerseyans is foreign born, a majority of which are naturalized citizens and eligible voters; so 17 percent of the State's voting-age citizens.

Over 40 percent of New Jersey's children belong to an immigrant family and represent a growing diversity in native-born, but second-generation, populations. But these numbers alone don't speak to the racial and ethnic diversity within the immigrant community. New Jersey is one of the most ethnically diverse states in the nation, with some of our counties also outranking all other counties in the nation in our ethnic diversity.

And the rate -- the ethnic and racial groups that are growing the fastest tend to see the least representation in public office, and in response of public policy, and historically have been divided across district lines. And I want to acknowledge that many of the Alliance's member organizations are

testifying either today, or have testified in past hearings. And their communities of interest are something that have been a part of consideration in this Unity Map that we're presenting.

Importantly, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders -- one of the fastest-growing racial groups nationwide -- is over 10 percent of the state's population now, and also one of the fastest-growing here -- up 30 percent over the last 10 years. That's why they are included as two plurality districts in our Unity Map. We also know that subgroups within the larger Asian American and Pacific Islander bucket outpaced other foreign-born peers in eligibility for naturalization; a trend that we can expect to accelerate now that naturalization and citizenship ceremonies are beginning to open up again -- there was a pause during the pandemic -- and as we see Federal attempts to clear application backlogs for naturalization.

As my colleagues Henal, Philip, and Chris mentioned, this map prioritizes how to draw communities together, with an emphasis on community over incumbency. This map draws half of the districts as people of color majority coalition or plurality districts, because again our priority is this effort for community over incumbency. And we recognize that there are many ways to get to this number, where people of color -- again, half of the state are represented by half of the map.

Now, it might seem reductive to point out that the percentage of legislators of color in New Jersey right now is lower than the state's overall population. But more importantly, we, as advocates, who are in the racial, social, economic, and immigrant justice movement, too often see that lawmakers view immigration policy priorities as niche issues that often flatten the identity and diversity of experiences that I just spoke to. So immigrant

New Jerseyans outpace native-born peers in their rates of aging, in disparities in homeownership, in insurance coverage, and other key factors, making all of the decisions that are before the Legislature an immigrant priority issue or a foreign-born issue.

When we talk about advancing equity, advancing inclusion, mitigating the historic legacies of segregation on the state, it's really important that the Legislature is centering communities of interest in their public policy priorities as well, which is why we're really pleased to be a part of this effort in the map.

It has been a very fruitful and humbling conversation alongside of our colleagues. And we hope that this Commission will take as much intent and care in your drafting of your own maps as this coalition did.

I will now pass it over to my colleague Rania; and I'm also available for questions after her testimony.

RANIA MUSTAFA: Hi, everybody; good afternoon.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify again today. And a special thank you to the Commission for giving the Fair Districts Committee the opportunity to present this map.

My name is Rania Mustafa. I'm here on behalf of my community, and as Executive Director of the Palestinian American Community Center, or PACC for short.

I'm also here to endorse the Unity Map that Fair Districts New Jersey just presented. I think it is the closest, at the moment, to representing a racially equitable map that captures the diversity that New Jersey embodies. Our New Jersey community originates from culturally, geographically, and religiously diverse backgrounds, embodying many experiences and narratives

that cannot be distilled into a single experience or partisan lines. More specifically, though we have a long journey ahead, I think this map is heading in the right direction of building political power for the Arab American community in New Jersey.

To give some context -- I was born and raised in Paterson, the epicenter of Arabs in New Jersey, and I have lived within the same one-mile radius for most of my life. And in the last eight years, I have seen firsthand the effects that PACC has had on our community. The PACC has quickly become a staple and a pillar in educating and providing critical services for community needs. We have worked with various Arab American community leaders throughout the state to map Arab American community pockets. New Jersey is home to one of the most diverse Arab, and Middle Eastern, and North African communities in the country. Specifically, New Jersey has the second-largest community of Palestinians in the United States. At least 3.5 million Arab Americans live in this country, yet we're not represented in the census data as unique racial and ethnic categories; and we're still categorized under the white race.

The population who identified as Arab-speaking in the U.S. Census grew more than 42 percent between 2000 and 2017. The number of New Jerseyans who claim an Arab ancestry has more than doubled since the census first measured ethnic origins in 1980; and is among the fastest-growing Arab populations in the country. According to the Census, the statewide Arab American population is 116,240 individuals, However the Arab American Institute estimates about 257,868 Arab Americans live in New Jersey.

That is a gross undercount of our community's population, and this is why, in addition to endorsing the Fair Districts map, we have submitted our own community of interest map. Our community of interest is diverse in geography and primarily lives in Passaic, Hudson, Bergen, Essex, Middlesex, and Monmouth counties.

We thank the Commission for taking it into account in the mapmaking process. And we urge you to consider the map that the Fair Districts Committee is presenting. In our map, we point to the cities and important landmarks -- like mosques, churches, business, community organizations, and schools -- with high populations of Arab Americans. It is very important that our community of interest is recognized, and is mapped together, when possible, so that we can continue building political power and elect candidates of our choice to address our specific community needs.

Thank you very much for your time and attention to this very important matter.

MR. BARLAS: Henal, Philip -- anyone else from your group?

MS. PATEL: No, we're good. Thank you so much for the time. We appreciate -- we know it took a little while, so we really appreciate it.

MR. BARLAS: Okay. So I'm going to take a little bit of liberty here and say, on behalf of all 11 of us on this Commission-- To Philip, Henal, Christian, Amy, Rania, and your entire group at Fair Districts -- very nicely done. You guys clearly put a lot of effort into this. You guys took your time, you met with various stakeholders, you outlined a lot of the rationale behind why you drew what you drew. And I think it's safe to say, on behalf of all of us, we really, truly appreciate the effort that you folks have put into this process; and your thoughts, and your comments, and your insights.

I know we are all going to take this back -- between the pamphlet you guys sent yesterday, and this stuff -- and really, really put it to good use. So on behalf of all of us, I just want to say thank you to you guys and the hard work that all of you put in. It is certainly recognized and absolutely appreciated by all of us.

With that, Co-Chair Jones, Judge Carchman, would you have anything?

JUDGE CARCHMAN: I just would echo your thoughts, Chairman Barlas. And I thank all of the participants today; the presentation of this map. It gives us food for thought. We do appreciate the effort that went into it, as Chairman Barlas said. And certainly we will take into account what has been presented to us today.

So thank you.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think you summed it up -- the group made an excellent presentation. A lot went into it. It's very, very thought-provoking, and I think it's going to be an important document for us to consider as we move forward with this process.

So to all the presenters today who came before us to testify, we appreciate your participation; and to the group that presented their map, a job well done.

MR. BARLAS: Before I do a motion to adjourn, I'd just like to remind everybody that we have another public hearing this Saturday at 10 a.m. It is virtual. So we look forward to hopefully seeing a lot more folks there as well.

May I get a motion to adjourn?

MR. JONES: So moved, Mr. Chairman.

MR. BARLAS: All in favor? (affirmative responses)

Okay; thank you very much. Everyone, have a great afternoon.

ALL: Thank you.

MR. BARLAS: Bye-bye.

(MEETING CONCLUDED)