
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 5, 2022
10:00 a.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
Office of Legislative Services
Commission Aide

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

Meeting 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 5, 2022

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

The Apportionment Commission will meet remotely via Zoom on Saturday, February 5, 2022 at 10:00 AM.

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

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

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 5 on the calendar and click on Apportionment Commission for the registration link. Registrations must be received by Friday, February 4, 2022 at 3:00 PM. Upon successful registration, you will view a printable receipt on screen. At a later date, you will receive an email with instructions for testifying.

(OVER)

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

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

You may also submit written testimony instead of, or in addition to, oral testimony by email to OLSaideAPPC@njleg.org by Friday, February 4, 2022 at 3:00 PM. Written testimony will be included in the Commission's record and distributed to all Commission members.

Issued 1/28/22

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.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Lauren Albrecht Chair New Jersey LGBTQ Democrats, and Policy Consultant Garden State Equality	3
Sara August Private Citizen	6
Fihmi Abdelfattah Member Palestinian American Community Center (PACC), and President North Hudson Islamic Educational Center	8
Stephen Barratt Representing Coalition for Citizen Initiative NJ	10
James R. Barberio Mayor Parsippany-Troy Hills Township	12
Ryan Bates 1st Vice President New Jersey State Conference Youth and College, and 1st Vice President Youth Council Camden County East Branch National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)	13
Kevin Bernard 2nd Vice President New Jersey State Conference Youth and College, and President Montclair State University Branch National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)	15

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

	<u>Page</u>
Stephen Burke Member Town Council Fairview Borough	17
Grisele Camacho, Esq. Recording Co-Secretary Latina Civic PAC	19
Elizabeth Cohen Private Citizen	21
Lizbeth DeJesus Councilwoman-at-Large Woodbridge Township	23
Susan Druckenbrod Co-Chair Committee on Racial and Economic Equity Unitarian Universalist Church in Cherry Hill (UUCCH)	26
Susanna Interpreter/Translator	27
Sandra Agudelo Member 32B SEIU	28
Dora Puentes Member 32BJ SEIU	30
Kohav J. Dantara Private Citizen	32

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

	<u>Page</u>
Patricia E. Doherty Research Director NJ 11th For Change	35
Matthew L. Duffy, Esq. Special Counsel Redistricting, Democracy, and Justice Program New Jersey Institute for Social Justice (NJISJ)	37
Charly Dutton Senate President Student Government Association Winslow Township High School	40
Kristi Hanselmann President Republican Club, and Deputy Mayor Mullica Township	42
Dianna A. Harris President Midtown Urban Renaissance Corporation (MURC)	44
Rohn Hein Co-Chair Reparations Task Force Unitarian Universalist Faith Action New Jersey (UU FaithAction NJ)	45
Darryl L. Jeffries President Oranges and Maplewood Branch National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)	48
Danielle M. Jones Member Borough Council Eatontown Borough	49

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

	<u>Page</u>
Kristine Keefe-Hassan Private Citizen	51
Vijay Khadse Private Citizen	52
Thaddeus J. Kobylarz, Ph.D. Mayor Borough of Chatham	53
Albert Lukin Member Borough Council Fairview Borough	56
Bruce S. Morgan President Board of Directors New Brunswick Area Branch National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)	57
Joseph Marchica Chair Our Revolution Trenton Mercer	60
Fedah Mohammed Office Administrator Palestinian American Community Center (PACC)	63
Diab Mustafa President Board of Directors Palestinian American Community Center (PACC)	65

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

	<u>Page</u>
Francis Nuñez Director Community Organizing Faith in New Jersey (FINJ), and Representing West Ward Newark, New Jersey	67
Suha Obeidallah Member Palestinian American Community Center (PACC)	69
Raed Odeh Member Board of Directors Palestinian American Community Center (PACC)	71
Kimberly O'Brien President Atlantic County Democratic Club	72
Elizabeth Redwine Private Citizen	75
Glorianne Robbi Member League of Women Voters New Jersey (LWVNJ), and Former Mayor East Amwell Township	76
Jigar Shah Private Citizen	77
Ashok K. Sharma Private Citizen	79
Robert Soni Private Citizen	80

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

	<u>Page</u>
Herb Tarbous Co-Founder, and Volunteer Team Lead Voter Choice New Jersey (VCNJ)	83
Charlene D. Walker Executive Director Faith in New Jersey (FINJ)	85
Holly Willett Member Committee on Racial and Economic Equity Unitarian Universalist Church in Cherry Hill (UUCCH)	87
APPENDIX:	
Testimony submitted by Lauren Albrecht	1x
Testimony submitted by Fihmi Abdelfattah	3x
Testimony submitted by Stephen Barratt	5x
Testimony submitted by Elizabeth Cohen	7x
Testimony submitted by Kohav J. Dantara	8x
Testimony submitted by Patricia E. Doherty	10x

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

APPENDIX (continued)

	<u>Page</u>
Testimony submitted by Charly Dutton	13x
Testimony submitted by Rohn Hein	14x
Testimony, plus attachment submitted by Thaddeus J. Kobylarz, Ph.D.	16x
Testimony submitted by Joseph Marchica	19x
Testimony submitted by Fedah Mohammed	22x
Testimony submitted by Diab Mustafa	24x
Testimony submitted by Suha Obeidallah	26x
Testimony submitted by Raed Odeh	27x
Testimony, plus attachment submitted by Kimberly O'Brien	28x
Testimony submitted by Glorianne Robbi	30x

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

APPENDIX (continued)

	<u>Page</u>
Testimony submitted by Ashok K. Sharma	31x
Testimony submitted by Robert Soni	33x
Testimony, plus attachments submitted by Rania Mustafa Executive Director The Palestinian American Community Center (PACC)	35x
Testimony submitted by Layla Odeh Lead Organizer Get Out the Vote Palestinian American Community Center (PACC)	47x
Testimony submitted by Khalid Anjum Private Citizen	49x
pnf:1-92	

LeROY J. JONES, Jr. (Democratic Delegation Chair): Good morning, everyone, and welcome to our ongoing series of public hearings for the New Jersey Apportionment Commission.

Let me just start by going through a roll call with the Commissioners.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER (Commission Secretary):
Commissioner Testa. (no response)

She's here.

Commissioner Taffet.

MR. TAFFET: Present.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Commissioner Matos.

MS. MATOS: Present.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Commissioner Lavery.

MR. LAVERY: Present.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Commissioner Kean.

SENATOR KEAN: Present.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Commissioner Dubois.

MS. DuBOIS: Present.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Commissioner Cirillo.

DR. CIRILLO: Present.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Commissioner Bramnick.

SENATOR BRAMNICK: Present.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Co-Chair Barlas.

AL BARLAS (Republican Delegation Chair): Here.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Co-Chair Jones.

MR. JONES: Present.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Eleventh Member Carchman.

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

MR. JONES: Madam Secretary, we have a quorum -- no?
Obviously.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Yes we do, Mr. Chairman.

MR. JONES: Thank you.

Before we get started-- Chairman Barlas, any comments for the
record before we get started?

MR. BARLAS: Not from me; the floor is yours.

MR. JONES: Thank you, sir.

Judge Carchman, any statement, comments before we get
started?

JUSTICE CARCHMAN: No, thank you.

MR. JONES: You're welcome.

So to the-- There are so many witnesses who have signed up
today-- Madam Secretary, how many do we have? It's about 50--

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Yes, Mr. Chairman, we have in the
50s. Would you like to do a timer for today's meeting?

MR. JONES: Absolutely. With the number of speakers we have,
I'm going to just ask that the speakers try to limit their statement to the three
minutes. I'm going to have to enforce that, because I want to give everybody
an opportunity to be heard. But the information that you have to share, try
to-- If it looks like your statement is longer than three minutes, try to

summarize the salient points so that we can get all of the testimony on and up within that three minutes.

So Madam Secretary, we're going to go in order of your roster; which means that the order of the individuals' signing up. So we will start with the first one, Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Okay, Mr. Chairman.

The first speaker who is present is Lauren Albrecht, followed by Sara August.

MR. JONES: Good morning, Ms. Albrecht.

L A U R E N A L B R E C H T: Good morning, Chairman. Thanks for having me.

MR. JONES: Thanks for being here.

MS. ALBRECHT: Thanks for having me, Judge Carchman and esteemed Commission members. And thank you to the other New Jerseyans giving testimony and using their voices to effect positive change in the state that we all love so much.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you on the important subject of legislative apportionment, as it relates to our New Jersey LGBTQ community.

I'm Lauren Albrecht; I'm a lifelong resident of New Jersey and current resident of Wall Township. I Chair the New Jersey Democratic State Committee's LGBTQ Caucus, I am proudly Garden State Equality's Policy Consultant, and I wear several other various hats in politics and policy on the County, State, and Federal spectrums.

By far, my most rewarding and challenging role is that of representative of, and advocate for, the LGBTQ community. Seizing on this

once-per-decade opportunity to increase LGBTQ representation and visibility, I am here to make the statement that -- in the same vein as the communities of interest regarding race, religion, ethnicity, immigration, and economic standing -- our communities' concerns are heard louder when we can speak as a collective voice. And when our voice is diluted by splitting up areas of LGBTQ-concentrated communities, we are more likely to suffer systemic erasure; which, unfortunately for us, often results in the removal of our legally protected rights in military service, healthcare, workforce, education, housing, physical safety, economic security, and basically every metric by which the success, health, and wealth of a community is measured.

At the most recent estimate by the HRC, in 2020, LGBTQ people comprise 6 percent of the population. This is merely an estimate, and arriving at this estimate is hampered by a few different factors; most notably, the lack of a sexual orientation gender identity category on the census, coupled with the fact that self-identification as LGBTQ can be detrimental to personal safety or employment security. This estimate is culled from a variety of resources, such as polling favorability of marriage equality and the results of ballot questions, as well as healthcare data and door-to-door data collection. Some LGBTQ organizations put the estimate closer to 12 percent of the total population, falling somewhere into the overall category of LGBTQIA+. If 6 to 12 percent of the population is LGBTQ, truly equitable representation would, in New Jersey, mean that 6 to 12 percent of our 120 members of Legislature would identify as LGBTQ.

That would be, at a minimum, seven members of the Legislature. Right now, there is currently one, and zero members of our Federal delegation. Despite this absence, which is not for lack of our trying, and

despite what the Census says, we exist. Study after study, and most recently in New Jersey a report of the Transgender Equality Task Force convened by Governor Murphy, show the needs of our community to be unique.

Ideally, the goal is that one day, our Legislature accurately reflects who we are as a population, and this is more likely to happen when our voices are heard as a bloc, rather than a diluted smattering.

I'm going to skip some of the more glaring statistics in deference to the time limit and get to the more salient points, like Chairman Jones said.

So this leads me to my next point: The independent member's standard of partisan fairness, as set forth in the Statement of Standards of Philip Carchman, 11th member of the New Jersey Legislative Apportionment Commission, and dated January 27, 2022.

In New Jersey, overwhelmingly, the LGBTQ community has found its allies in our Democratic members of the Legislature who pay more than lip service to creating true, lived equity through legislation and policy. It follows logically then that overwhelmingly our New Jersey LGBTQ community turns out to vote for Democratic members of Legislature, because this is where our community finds its needs met, with a few notable exceptions. I can personally attest to this every time my own legislators introduce bills to deny the rights of trans people to use the bathroom that matches their gender identity, and when they fail to affirm my right to marry who I love by voting "no" in 2022 on Marriage Equality in New Jersey. Therefore, I would respectfully request that the Commission consider the negative impact of moving LGBTQ-dense municipalities out of Democratically held districts, and I would also respectfully request that the Commission consider keeping or reapportioning LGBTQ-dense

municipalities into the same districts as other LGBTQ-dense municipalities; obviously while observing the process set forth under Article 4, Section 3 of the State Constitution and Section 2 of the Federal Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Thank you again for your time, and for providing me this space in which we are all heard equally to advocate for my community.

Thanks.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Lauren. I appreciate that. And thanks for being sensitive to the time. I know you got a little jammed there with the audio.

MS. ALBRECHT: I could have gone for many more.

MR. JONES: I know you could have; that's what I was going to suggest. Can you submit that testimony so that we can review the entirety of the statement?

MS. ALBRECHT: Absolutely. Thank you, Chairman.

MR. JONES: We appreciate it.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Sara August, followed by Fihmi Abdelfattah.

S A R A A U G U S T: Good morning.

MR. JONES: Good morning.

MS. AUGUST: Good morning. Thank you so much for being here, and for listening, and for everyone's ability to be here and listen as well.

So I am Sara August; I live and go to temple in Scotch Plains.

I am here to ask that you respect the growth of communities of color and origin to be sure that they have adequate representation in our next round of maps.

So our community is largely made up of many origins, ethnicities, and races. So we are bordered by South Plainfield on one side and Mountainside on one side. There's Fanwood in the middle and Clark on the other side. We have a reservation nearby. We have lots going on around here. Included in our community is Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School, the downtown Fanwood, and the train that stops in Fanwood. We have a JCC, a YMCA. We have 14 churches, two temples, a Chabad Center. We have great diversity in this town.

We're split between the 7th and 12th Congressional Districts and part of New Jersey's 22nd State Legislature (*sic*). So the town is so incredibly diverse, it really needs to be kept together. We're a mix of middle class with different races, ethnicities, religions. You know, Scotch Plains' history comes from the fact that we had the very first African American country club. They're doing a whole history on Kramer Manor, which is a largely Black neighborhood, or was, and still is in part too, that grew and thrived despite all the obstacles -- by refusal of Federal funding for mortgages; from the Great Depression, the World War, and systemic racism.

So due to this, and all that has happened in our community, I work with a group -- a collective group of parents, neighbors, alumni, allies to bring together representation, equality, anti-racism, and diversity in this town.

As parents, we came together, a group of us, to really stand up and make sure that all of our diversity is heard in our school district, in each

of the schools. And I ask that you keep our community together because of the diversity it has. We have diversity, like the town of Maplewood; and they are tight and together as we should be, too.

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

Again, thank you so much.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much, Ms. August.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Fihmi Abdelfattah, followed by Stephen Barratt.

MR. JONES: Good morning.

F I H M I A B D E L F A T T A H: Hello, good morning.

MR. JONES: Good morning.

My name is Fihmi Abdelfattah. I'm the President of North Hudson's Islamic Educational Center. I'm a businessman who immigrated to this country over 40 years ago. I'm currently leading the largest mosque in Hudson County.

I'm here to support the Unity Map presented by the Fair Districts New Jersey.

I have been working with the Palestinian American Community Center to help map Arab communities throughout the State of New Jersey in hopes that the Commission would take my community' into consideration when redrawing the State District map.

The diverse Arab/MENA population in New Jersey can trace their ancestry to different countries, speak different dialects and languages, practice different religions, and fall into a broad range of socioeconomic categories. However, we have much more in common, and we want to be represented by the leaders who understand our community's ethnic diversity and unique needs.

We can trace our economic contributions to New Jersey by Syrian immigrants that established skilled 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, New Jersey.

There are an estimated 113 Islamic nonprofit organizations in New Jersey, and many Arab organizations throughout New Jersey, including my own in Union City. We have become a home and a safe haven for thousands of people seeking assistance and connection with their community. But we are 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 my community.

In Hudson County, we live -- where I live -- I have mapped the following cities as having significant Arab population, including Jersey City's *The Heights* area; Union City, where my mosque and community center is; West New York, mainly centered around Bergenline Avenue. This community of interest shares uniquely immigrant experiences with specific community needs that can only be addressed by someone who understands the complexity of my community.

Even though our Arab American community can trace its history to the establishment of the City of Paterson, there has been a significant

increase in our population over 30 years, giving us the ability to gain leadership positions throughout local government. But we currently have no representation in Trenton or Washington, D.C.

The Palestinian Community Center has submitted a community of interest map highlighting 25 cities and townships in six counties with significant Arab American populations. This map is also included in the Unity Map presented by Fair Districts New Jersey.

I hope you'll take these maps into consideration when drawing new district lines. I hope you are able to keep Jersey City, Union City, and West New York together as a voting bloc to ensure we get the representation we need.

Thank you all very much.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much, sir.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Stephen Barratt, followed by James Barberio.

S T E P H E N B A R R A T T: Good morning, Chairman and Commissioners.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning.

I'm a member of the Coalition for Citizen Initiative and the New Jersey Independent Voters. This includes roughly 2.4 million New Jersey voters who are not members of either of the two major parties.

People like to say, "We aren't really independent; that we all lean Republican or Democrat." The truth is that we vote for the best candidate on issues, and not on party identity. May the best candidate win.

On Wednesday, February 2, Fair Districts New Jersey presented the Commission with a nonpartisan map. The primary focus of this map was on distinctive communities of common interest. We are grateful for the efforts of Fair Districts New Jersey to prepare this nonpartisan map. We're also grateful to the Commission for agreeing to publish the maps that have been submitted from the two factions in advance of the decision. The degree of risk to the Commission for this voluntary transparency is understood and appreciated.

In a proper reapportionment process, voting districts would group people of common interests, and then politicians and their parties would compete for the privilege of representing those districts. Beyond good ideas and the hard work of campaigning, there would be no advantage baked into the system for any candidate or party.

So in that spirit, we have a map that has been conceived with a lot of public input, and which was developed by people who have no partisan interest.

I urge the Commission to adopt, as a compromise, the nonpartisan Unity Map submitted by Fair Districts New Jersey. It is not an overstatement to say that this would be a heroic and courageous choice by the members of the Commission.

Thank you very much for your attention.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Barratt. We appreciate your comments.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is James Barberio, followed by Ryan Bates.

MR. JONES: Welcome, Mayor.

MAYOR JAMES BARBERIO: Well, thank you, Chairman.

And good morning, Chairman and the Commissioners.

I'm Mayor James Barberio, the Mayor of the Township of Parsippany-Troy Hills. I've been a resident of Parsippany for 57 years, but I'm only 35 years old -- if you believe that. (laughter)

That's beside the point. I'm here to speak with regards to the redistricting of District -- Morris Plains, and possibly separating Parsippany and Morris Plains out of the District. I can tell you firsthand -- I've been here since a little boy, and I always thought Morris Plains *was* Parsippany because we had so many Morris Plains addresses; we have an ample amount of them. But we do a lot with Morris Plains. We shop in Morris Plains, because we have two sides of town in Parsippany. And Morris Plains is like a-- And I can tell you that a lot of individuals tell me, "You know, Mayor, I would vote for you if I lived in Parsippany; but I live in Morris Plains." The fact of the matter is, they do live in Morris Plains.

I think it would be a big mistake to take two neighbors, like Morris Plains and Parsippany-Troy Hills, and divide them. We have so much connectivity, and one of them is the Asian population. I've been blessed to grow up in Parsippany. I grew up in an apartment complex, which was a diverse community within the apartment complex. I mean, we had the first Black family in parts of the complex I lived in, we were all friends -- a Hispanic community, Italian American community, and now, with the population of the Asian community -- which they treat me like their own family. It also segues all the way into Morris Plains. So there's a lot of interconnection with the Asian community as well.

So I can go on forever; I know that I'm timed. But I would ask this Commission to please keep Parsippany-Troy Hills and Morris Plains in the same district. We are family, we are together, we are neighbors, and we do have a lot in interchanging with each other.

So I thank you for this opportunity to speak -- to represent Parsippany-Troy Hills. But also, I don't represent Morris Plains -- but Morris Plains, where we share a lot of not just neighborhoods, we share a lot of friendships as well. I think it would be a big mistake separating those two.

So thank you, Chairman, for giving me this opportunity to speak.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Mayor; I appreciate your comments, and thanks for sharing some time with us.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Mr. Chairman, the next speaker will be Ryan Bates.

In the meantime, I wanted to let you know that we are calling for the translation services for Agudelo and Puentes. When we get the translator on the line we will let you know, and we will move on to those two speakers.

Right now, Ms. Ryan Bates.

MR. JONES: Very good; thank you.

Welcome, Ms. Bates.

RYAN BATES: Good morning.

MR. JONES: Good morning; how are you?

MS. BATES: Good; how are you?

MR. JONES: Good.

MS. BATES: So my name is Ryan Bates; I am a 17-year-old senior. I am currently the 1st Vice President of the Camden County East Youth Council, and I'm the newly elected 1st Vice President of the New Jersey State Youth and College.

I live in Camden, New Jersey -- specifically in the Parkside section -- and I worship at New Fellowship UAME Church in Camden, where we have members from Camden and other neighboring cities.

My community is largely made up of African Americans and people of Latino descent.

Camden currently is very large. It is bordered by Cooper River Park. It has numerous parks located in the city, such as Camden High Park, which is Farnham Park -- which was newly built -- which consists of Camden High, Big Picture Learning Academy, Creative Arts, and Brimm.

We also have a business district along the Haddon Avenue corridor, which includes restaurants, drug stores, and clothing shops. We have highways on all sides and all exits.

There are at least 100 different schools in Camden, which include charter, public, and private. We also have Donkey's Place, which specializes in cheesesteaks, which was featured on Anthony Bourdain's show. And we have Lady of Lourdes Virtua; and Harleigh Cemetery, where Walt Whitman is buried.

My community is in the 1st District. There are a couple of reasons why we need representation. The pollution made by plants is life-threatening, and we need strong leaders to help our ecosystem and to fix the issues.

Another issue is abandoned houses, which is very high in Parkside. They're in disrepair and they need to be fixed or knocked down just to make this a safer environment.

This is where we learn to work together to benefit everyone.

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

And I want to say again, thank you so much for the opportunity.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much, Ms. Bates. Well spoken, well said, and much appreciated.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Kevin Bernard, followed by Stephen Burke.

K E V I N B E R N A R D: (Mr. Bernard's testimony was severely hampered by a bad connection) Good morning.

MR. JONES: Good morning.

MR. BERNARD: All right; allow me to introduce myself.

My name is Kevin Bernard. I live in Newark, New Jersey, and attend Montclair State University.

I serve as 2nd Vice President of the New Jersey Youth and College NAACP Branch. I am also the President of Montclair State Branch as well.

I'm here to testify about the essential features of my community.

The West Ward of Newark, New Jersey, features several parks and public recreation facilities that make each neighborhood a place where

the community drops. And in addition to the economic confluence of the South Orange Avenue-Orange Street (indiscernible) serve as major retail shopping strips within this Ward itself. Here you will find a diverse set of shopping options, and restaurants, and many Caribbean and West Indian flavors that make these areas an exciting place for tourism and culture.

My community is bordered by the West Ward, including Vailsburg, Fairmount, West Side, Lower Clinton Hill. And since this land was under development in the mid-19th century, many central (indiscernible) can be found. And after the City Council banned (indiscernible) boroughs within the central city.

In addition to the street life and our affair with the small businesses -- such as beauty supply, international cuisine, takeout food, liquor stores, and more -- large businesses are placed on the street for travelers and residents to benefit from.

My community knows that includes the urban growth, and evolved within the tenancies within the city. The beauty of results (indiscernible) encircle in the downtown area, a populated area, where you will see the small businesses, giant corporations, (indiscernible). My City, Newark, New Jersey, has been engulfed in some of the historical landmarks and demonstrated its foundation, and absorbed what happened in places within its own community.

A group of (indiscernible) established itself, and carried the name *The City of Churches* that can be found within its own area. In many ways, Newark is the second wave in (indiscernible) the racial tensions of education disparity, urban renewal, and quality among the health services that emerged from residential populations.

Of course, the City of Newark is always reflected by the economic problems; and also within those problems itself comes the oppression among my own community. So within the City itself, and the urban white flight that was generally marginalized and the population had essentially entered to the surrounding urban life, where it was intentionally filled with the white population close to an amount of 400,000.

Nevertheless, the change was essential in the Newark riots, and the process itself was certainly changed, and the majority within the matter were innocent.

And such lives of the racial differences, those who were not given the same highlight of discrimination within my own community, will show case establishing a color found in boundaries has been set inside.

The community and project housing that is 10 minutes away from those exact same buildings, have not been improved in centuries. (Indiscernible) brings a connection, based on the observation, and local investors are planning to move within the next (indiscernible) within the City of Newark.

To sum it up, Newark, New Jersey, is a tight-knit community, and we're deeply rooted in the area and we hope to represent in a new district map.

I thank the Commission for listening to me and today's testimony; and consider you keep my community together in the drawn map.

Thank you.

MR. JONES: Thank you; thank you, Mr. Bernard. Your testimony was spot on. It was a pleasure listening to you, and thank you for your testimony this morning. A job well done.

MR. BERNARD: Thank you.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Stephen Burke, followed by Grissele Camacho.

STEPHEN BURKE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity to speak to the Commission.

I represent the Borough of Fairview. My name is Stephen Burke; I've been on the town Council in Fairview for the last 25 years.

It's a wonderful little town. We are in the extreme southeast corner of Bergen County. Our neighbors are Ridgefield, Cliffside Park, Edgewater, Pal-Park. We share the same concerns and challenges as those communities, as well as services. We send our children to Cliffside Park High School. We share a senior center with Cliffside Park. We have administrative shared services with our neighbors as well. We're part of the Southeast Bergen Mutual Aid for fire. Everything we do has a Bergen County focus. Our representatives, of course, since we're in Bergen County, are the Bergen County Commissioners.

Yet the challenge for us is when we get to the legislative level. Instead of working with a Bergen County-based legislative district, we are in District 32, which is Hudson County. And truly we are an outlier in Hudson County. We are, by far, the tiniest community in that legislative district. It would make much more sense to put us in District 36, where we could be part of the southeast Bergen County bloc of communities, where we fit and align much more easily with-- And our voices could be heard, and it will allow us, as a community and as a local government, to be able to deliver those services that our residents expect and deserve.

Thank you.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Burke. We really appreciate that.
Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Grissele Camacho, followed by Elizabeth Cohen.

GRISSELE CAMACHO, Esq.: Good morning.

MR. JONES: Good morning.

MS. COMACHO: I thank the Commission for giving me this opportunity to address you, on behalf of the Latina Civic PAC, concerning the State legislative redistricting process that you have been appointed to conduct.

The concept of apportionment, as you well know, is based on Article I, Section 2 of the United States Constitution. By requiring the counting of persons living in the United States, the founding fathers intended to ensure that representation in Congress reflect comparative population, not comparative wealth; and that comparative power would shift every 10 years to reflect population changes.

The New Jersey Constitution incorporated a similar scheme in Article IV, Section III, which requires that Senate districts and Assembly districts be established, and that the Senators and members of the General Assembly should be apportioned among them by an apportionment commission.

The purpose of our legislative apportionment is also to ensure that our Legislature reflect the population of the state, and that the political power in the Legislature reflect population changes.

You, ladies and gentlemen, who having been selected to be on the Commission, have the constitutional duty to ensure that this happens.

The population of New Jersey has dramatically changed in the past decade. The 2020 Census tells us that approximately 22 percent of New Jersey's population is Hispanic or Latino, the largest minority group in the state, and the largest minority voting bloc in the country. Yet we are grossly underrepresented in elected office.

I am testifying today to ask that you carry your constitutional duty of drawing fair legislative lines that will be representative of our state's rich diversity, and one that will provide equitable opportunities for Latinos to run for office.

We are aware that this task is easier said than done. We know that drawing districts to ensure representation is a challenge, but that is your mandate. And we urge you to do so without diluting our communities' ability to elect candidates of our choice.

The Latina Civic PAC appreciates that Chairman Jones understood that representation of the Latino population was needed, and appointed Laura Matos as a member of this Commission. We applaud that. Further, we stand ready to review your forthcoming proposed maps, and provide our feedback and insight to help you apportion in a manner that allows a community that is presently underrepresented in the branches of our State government to have a more equitable role in our Legislature.

Thank you.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much, Ms. Comacho. We appreciate your testimony.

Madam Secretary, next witness.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that the Spanish-to-English translator has joined the call.

Would you like to ask the interpreter to please identify themselves?

MR. JONES: If the interpreter would please identify themselves.
(no response)

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: OLS IT, is the interpreter still on the call, or has the call dropped off?

IT TECHNICIAN: They dropped out of the meeting.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Okay. Mr. Chairman, we will try this again.

In the meantime, we will move to the next speaker. And that person will be Victoria Campbell, followed by Elizabeth Cohen.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Madam Secretary. (no response)
Is that speaker on?

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: It looks like Ms. Campbell and Ms. Cohen are no longer with us.

E L I Z A B E T H C O H E N: No, I'm here.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Oh, Elizabeth Cohen; yes.

MR. JONES: Okay, Ms. Cohen. Go right ahead.

MS. COHEN: Okay, thank you.

MR. JONES: You're welcome.

MS. COHEN: Good morning, and thanks for this opportunity.

My name is Liz Cohen; I live in Princeton, New Jersey, and I'm speaking as a constituent of District 16.

I'm a strong believer in the adage, "If it's not broken, don't fix it." And I see District 16 as a model of what the Commission is looking to create in your redistricting efforts.

I view our District with several lenses. As a volunteer canvasser, I've knocked on doors throughout this central New Jersey District many times, and have a sense of both the diversity and wholeness of the District. There's a solid mix of small-to-moderate sized towns, diversity of ethnicity, race, financial security, and political leaning, and a solid degree of engagement and connection as a District. This was evidenced by the outpouring of support in response to District 16 legislators' calls for collections of cleaning supplies, household goods, and money to help Manville residents after last fall's disastrous flooding.

As a poll worker, I know the value of continuity of representation. Citizens feel more confident and compelled to vote when they're familiar with what district they belong to. While review and adjustment is necessary, and mandated, and made very clear by the speakers' presentations this morning, this consideration is very meaningful when you find the existing boundaries to be working well, as they are in District 16.

As a member of the nonpartisan New Jersey Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism, I have advocated on many issues of social justice with congregants from around the state. And in organizing Trenton Advocacy Days, I've gained an appreciation for the complex interweaving of needs and interests across the state. We've done a lot of teaching about the importance of State governance in gaining familiarity with our districts and our legislators.

Our District 16 members come from all parts of the District, and feel tied together as a community. We have appreciated the availability of our legislators from both sides of the aisle to all constituents.

On a personal note, I live in Princeton and worship in Hillsborough. It has been very meaningful for me to be able to tie these two communities together for me as a constituent, and I very much hope that will continue. But of course your charge is for the overall good governance of the State. It's my strong sense of connection to this District, and my belief that our community is strongly tied together that compelled me to speak today.

I believe you will find that District 16, as is, well adheres to the standards you seek, with good balance of recognition of communities of interest, competitiveness, continuity of representation, and partisan fairness.

Thank you for this opportunity this morning.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much, Ms. Cohen.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Kohav Dantara, followed by Lizbeth DeJesus.

We will come back to Mr. Dantara; he said he might have to step away temporarily.

So the next speaker will be Lizbeth DeJesus, followed by Susan Druckenbrod.

L I Z B E T H D e J E S U S: Good morning, Judge Carchman, Chairman Jones, Chairman Barlas, and members of the Legislative Apportionment Commission.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with all of you this morning.

My name is Lizbeth DeJesus, a proud, 22-year resident of Woodbridge Township; and for the past seven years, a Councilwoman-at-Large.

Apportionment is a huge task, and I applaud the members of this Commission for their dedication to transparency in holding several public meetings. It is truly appreciated.

Today, I am here to describe the communities of interest that form Legislative District 19, a District that has remained intact for the past 31 years, and I argue must remain intact for the next decade.

One of the tenets of successful reapportionment is to keep communities of interest together. And I would argue that there are few districts in this state as intrinsically connected as District 19. Composed of Woodbridge, Perth Amboy, Sayreville, South Amboy and Carteret, District 19 is one big community. Bordered by the Arthur Kill and Raritan Bay, our communities all endured damage from Hurricane Sandy, and are concerned with flood mitigation strategies; leading to the creation of the Resilient NJ Raritan River and Bay Communities Collaborative, an organization in which all of our communities make up a majority of the Board.

We all share infrastructural aspirations. For example, both Carteret and South Amboy are currently planning and receive funding for ferry terminal operations from State and Federal resources to bolster our interconnected economies and bedroom communities that serve North Jersey employment centers, such as Newark, Jersey City, and New York City.

On any given Friday, you can see our Woodbridge parents playing against Carteret Ramblers or Sayreville Bombers, highlighting a parent and student community that is strong and present in the District.

From a healthcare perspective, our community also relies on Hackensack Meridian Raritan Bay Medical Center, and the Jewish Renaissance Medical Center in Perth Amboy, the only two hospitals available for our residents in the District within a 10-minute drive -- both of which were incredibly important through the COVID-19 pandemic, offering bilingual programs to educate Latino residents in Carteret, Perth Amboy, and Woodbridge.

We also share parks, roadways, nonprofit organizations, and business districts that our residents utilize, travel to, and visit routinely. Our residents also share houses of worship with many Sayreville, Carteret, and Perth Amboy residents, attending Sunday service at St. James Roman Catholic Church in Woodbridge; as well as our Sikh residents in Iselin and Carteret, visiting the Gurudwara Singh Sabha Temple in Carteret, and the Gurudwara Dashmesh Darbar Temple in Port Reading, interchangeably by.

By way of arts and culture, our residents attend the various festivals our communities share. That is the Latino Festival in Carteret, St. James Street Fair in Woodbridge, and Summer Concerts by the Bay series in Perth Amboy. The events are all geared to residents, with extended family members in those towns.

Legislative District 19 also elected the first Latina representative to the Assembly.

I believe, and it is my hope, that I have demonstrated with concrete examples the many ways in which our District forms a strong community of interest; that I have successfully advocated for our District to remain as it is in the new map. Splitting District 19 in any way will serve as a tremendous impediment and disservice to our residents on every level

positive. Moreover, splitting the District would disenfranchise and cause irreparable harm to our Latino and South Asian communities, who enjoy the representation that this map creates and allows.

Thank you for having me today, and I apologize for the tardiness.

MR. JONES: No problem.

Thank you so much, Ms. DeJesus.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Susan Druckenbrod, followed by Matt Duffy.

S U S A N D R U C K E N B R O D: Okay, good morning.

Thank you for allowing me to speak.

I'm a resident of Cherry Hill. I am a member of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Cherry Hill; and I'm Co-Chair of our Social Justice committee, which is called the Committee on Racial and Economic Equity.

So I want to thank the Commission for holding this hearing, and allowing all members of the public to speak.

I'm here to urge the New Jersey Apportionment Commission to draw a racially equitable State legislative map, and to lend my support to the Fair Districts Unity Map recently released by the New Jersey Institute of Social Justice and other New Jersey advocacy groups.

Now that we are effectively a state that is half people of color, it is only fair that New Jersey's districts be drawn so that half of them, 20 out of 40, are majority people of color.

And I also -- I really love that the student from Camden spoke. And I would encourage the Commission to also keep South Jersey in mind when you're drawing the map. Specifically, Camden, Pennsauken, and

Merchantville have a significant community of color population, and those communities have never been grouped together. So I would like you to keep that in mind.

And I'm going to be brief, and I'm going to end right there.

And thank you very much.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that the Spanish-to-English translator has joined our call. Would you like to ask the interpreter to please identify themselves?

MR. JONES: Absolutely.

Would the interpreter please identify themselves?

INTERPRETER / TRANSLATOR SUSANNA: Good morning.

My name is Susanna; ID 14537.

MR. JONES: Thank you.

Is that satisfactory, Madam Secretary?

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Yes.

Good morning, Interpreter. You will be interpreting for two witnesses this morning. The first one will be Ms. Agudelo, Ms. Sandra Agudelo. The next one will be Ms. Dora Puentes.

Please stay on the line until they both have received interpretation services.

I will now ask Ms. Sandra Agudelo to please unmute and join the call. I will repeat this in Spanish.

(addresses witness in Spanish)

MR. JONES: Madam Secretary, please remind them of the three minutes as well.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Mr. Chairman, I believe the persons who need interpretation have a more generous time limit. Is that okay?

MR. JONES: Yes, absolutely.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Okay.

(addresses witness in Spanish)

S A N D R A A G U D E L O: Thank you.

(speaks in Spanish)

INTERPRETER/TRANSLATOR: Good morning, Commissioners.

I am Ms. Agudelo. I have lived in Paterson for seven years, and I am going to represent SEIU 32BJ on behalf of my neighbors and my friends.

MS. AGUDELO: (speaks in Spanish)

INTERPRETER/TRANSLATOR: Our Latin community from Paterson and District 37 in which there are a lot of people from our community.

MS. AGUDELO: (speaks in Spanish)

INTERPRETER/TRANSLATOR: With the growth we experienced during the last 10 years, we know that we are mostly Latins, with the percentage of 53.3 percentage of Latin Americans.

MS. AGUDELO: (speaks in Spanish)

INTERPRETER/TRANSLATOR: We know that District 35 looks better for our community, but sometimes it's more because of the situation than any other thing.

MS. AGUDELO: (speaks in Spanish)

INTERPRETER/TRANSLATOR: We try to find more convenient (indiscernible), as well as support.

MS. AGUDELO: (speaks in Spanish)

INTERPRETER/TRANSLATOR: Having said this, we know that we have to face a lot of things, such as infrastructure, security, and dealing with violence inside schools.

MS. AGUDELO: (speaks in Spanish)

INTERPRETER/TRANSLATOR: We need more quality of life, because this kind of indifference broadens the inequality.

MS. AGUDELO: (speaks in Spanish)

INTERPRETER/TRANSLATOR: I really believe that finding the maps -- it will help to find equality and justice.

MS. AGUDELO: (speaks in Spanish)

INTERPRETER/TRANSLATOR: Not only for our Latin American community in Paterson, but in all the state. We are 22 percent as a community.

MS. AGUDELO: (speaks in Spanish)

INTERPRETER/TRANSLATOR: We're just 8 percent of the Legislature.

MS. AGUDELO: (speaks in Spanish)

INTERPRETER/TRANSLATOR: And we have low attention to (indiscernible) and law projects.

MS. AGUDELO: (speaks in Spanish)

INTERPRETER/TRANSLATOR: Finally, I would like to ask you to consider all the maps where the Latin Americans are--

MS. AGUDELO: (speaks in Spanish)

INTERPRETER/TRANSLATOR: --to compete with more fair districts that will represent our community.

Thank you for the opportunity.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much for your contribution to our hearing. And we will certainly take all that into consideration.

Madam Secretary, if that testimony can be uploaded so that we can go back and reflect as we continue our deliberations -- that would be helpful.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Certainly, Mr. Chairman.

MR. JONES: Thank you.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker requiring the interpretation services is Dora Puentes.

(addresses witness in Spanish)

D O R A P U E N T E S: (through interpreter) Good morning. (speaks in Spanish)

INTERPRETER/TRANSLATOR: My name is Dora Puentes; I live in Bound Brook, New Jersey. I'm here with my colleagues from SEIU 32BJ, and with my neighbors from the Latin Action Network.

MS. PUENTES: (speaks in Spanish)

INTERPRETER/TRANSLATOR: The community here from the 23rd District -- it has a minority with 13.6 percent in total.

MS. PUENTES: (speaks in Spanish)

INTERPRETER/TRANSLATOR: But it's still a small percentage compared to the more than 72 percent of the majority, which is white.

MS. PUENTES: (speaks in Spanish)

INTERPRETER/TRANSLATOR: And this District is important -- that we make sure that nobody is ignored.

MS. PUENTES: (speaks in Spanish)

INTERPRETER/TRANSLATOR: I really believe that finding fair maps is needed to find equality and justice; not just for our District, but for the whole state.

MS. PUENTES: (speaks in Spanish)

INTERPRETER/TRANSLATOR: And just 22 percent of the population in New Jersey, and having just 8 percent of the Legislature -- we have low attention--

MS. PUENTES: (speaks in Spanish)

INTERPRETER/TRANSLATOR: --and the support of the law that could benefit us.

MS. PUENTES: (speaks in Spanish)

INTERPRETER/TRANSLATOR: Finally, I want to ask you to take into consideration all of the maps that are in the Latin American community.

MS. PUENTES: (speaks in Spanish)

INTERPRETER/TRANSLATOR: Complement the work, and then look for the communities in which we can create more for communities--

MS. PUENTES: (speaks in Spanish)

INTERPRETER/TRANSLATOR: --and that could represent our community.

MS. PUENTES: (speaks in Spanish)

INTERPRETER/TRANSLATOR: Thank you.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much, Ms. Puentes, for your testimony. And we really appreciate it, and we'll make sure that that's also uploaded for the benefit of the Commissioners to peruse it in writing as well.

Thank you so much; and Madam Secretary, we'll move on to the next witness.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Okay, Mr. Chairman. Would you like to allow the translator to leave the call?

MR. JONES: Absolutely. Translator, thank you so much. We appreciate your assistance in this.

INTERPRETER/TRANSLATOR: Thank you for calling. This is your translator Susanna, ID 14537, signing off.

MR. JONES: Thank you.

We can proceed, Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Kohav Dantara, followed by Patricia Doherty.

K O H A V J. D A N T A R A: Good morning, members of the Commission.

My name is Kohav Dantara, and I have been a resident of West Windsor Township for practically my whole life.

I'm currently a 16-year-old junior in the West Windsor Plainsboro Regional School District. I'm a South Asian constituent of the 15th Legislative District, which also covers East Amwell, Lambertville City, West Amwell, Ewing, Hopewell, Lawrence, Pennington, and Trenton municipalities.

Demographics-wise, according to the Census, the population of the 15th District is 224,002 people; 39 percent were white, 26 percent were

Black, 12 percent were Asian, 24 percent were Hispanic, and the remainder were Native American.

In the town where I reside, West Windsor, 40 percent of the residents were born abroad, making it the largest proportion of immigrants in the 15th District. Furthermore, the median household income in West Windsor is higher than any other municipality within the District, at \$169,312.

Plainsboro is a town in the 14th District that is largely similar to West Windsor, demographics-wise. The West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District is regional, and spans the two communities. The school district has contributed to the tight-knit community between the two towns. So I ask that the Commission considers keeping the two communities together.

Back to the 15th District -- the District contains vital roadways, including I-295, Route 1, and easy access to Route 130 and I-95, which allow passage up and down the Northeast Corridor into New York City and Philadelphia.

With regards to the school systems -- the municipalities of the 15th District have seen stark contrast between one another. Of the eight municipalities and seven school districts, only one school district ranks in the top 20 percent of all ranked districts in New Jersey, according to Niche. This is low in comparison to District 14, where three districts ranked in the top 20 percent.

For District 15, the sole District to be ranked in the top 20 percent, is West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School's ranking, 4th in the state.

While also considering the median household income of each of these municipalities, I ask that the Commission ensure that the needs of students living in other municipalities of the 15th District with lower median household incomes are met, as they equally deserve the highest level of education possible.

Under current policies, all students are eligible to receive free lunches, which I've seen as a large benefit.

Concerning the real estate market -- the most expensive home in West Windsor is listed at \$1,899,900, and the cheapest home is listed at \$372,500, according to Zillow. The high numbers have been an increase in home prices over the last 10 years, indicative of the increasing difficulty to buy a home in West Windsor in comparison to other towns. Furthermore, the disparity in prices is higher than in neighboring municipalities, such as Lawrence, where the most expensive home is currently at \$1.2 million, and the cheapest is \$175,000.

Most townships in these municipalities rely on either the Princeton Junction train station, Trenton train station, or the Hamilton train station, which provide transportation through the cities of Princeton, New Brunswick, Newark, Secaucus, Philadelphia, as well as New York City.

Between the corridors of several of these towns, such as West Windsor and Trenton, New Jersey, NJ Transit buses provide convenient public transportation.

I want to thank the Commission for their time, and hopefully they will be able to craft a map that takes into account the needs of students, employees, individuals, and families.

Thank you.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Dantara. We really appreciate the comments; and I'm appreciating more and more -- and I'm sure all the Commissioners are -- the voices of students from around the state. That's very reassuring. It adds to our diversity from a generational standpoint. Much appreciated.

Thank you.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Mr. Chairman, the next speaker, Patricia Doherty, submitted a map for display during her testimony. If she could confirm whether it's okay to share that map.

And then after Patricia Doherty, the next speaker will be Matthew Duffy.

MR. JONES: Go right ahead.

PATRICIA E. DOHERTY: Yes, the map is certainly available.

Thank you.

Good morning, Chairmen Barlas and Jones, Judge Carchman, and Commissioners.

My name is Patricia Doherty. I'm a 24-year resident of Nutley, and also the Research Director for NJ 11th For Change. Leslie Bockol and Mara Novak, Co-Executive Directors, and Stacey Abenstein, our Field Director, have previously provided testimony, data, and this submitted map, describing the changing demographics of both the current and newly constituted Congressional District 11 that our organization represents.

We support legislative districts that recognize the diversity in our changing New Jersey landscape, strongly advocating that communities of interest are represented with vital opportunities for participation in the

political process. Our map shows the recent expanding AAPI and Latinx communities -- as well as the older established Black and Jewish communities in Essex, Morris, and parts of Bergen, Passaic, and Hudson counties -- can be accommodated in these proposed compact districts following the prescribed deviations.

This map (indiscernible) dense and diverse municipalities encompass shared county relationships, services, and businesses that cross township boundaries. These towns also share similar environmental concerns to address flooding, Brownfields, ongoing remediation of lead-contaminated water supply, and school districts with 100-year-and-over older facilities needing rehab, updating, or replacing.

Our proposed LD 29 creates a robust Latinx district with easy access to culturally oriented businesses, social services, and language services. The new LD 28 is majority-Black, retaining much of the long-established communities in Newark and Irvington. These two Districts have many of the same environmental concerns as the 27th and 34th. In addition, some areas are affected by the lack of affordable and decent housing, often with conditions of unsafe lead paint that disproportionately affects the children of Black and Latinx families. It is critical that these communities be represented by legislators who understand the wide breadth of their social, health, and economic needs.

In our LD 25 and 26, AAPI and Latinx households comprise growing communities of interest that must have the political influence that only competitive districts would provide. In addition, housing availability with high costs create conditions in which immigrant residents have difficulty finding available, affordable housing suitable for those needs. These areas

have common environmental issues, such as local flooding from the Passaic River, which directly impacts housing, business, transportation, and work.

In closing, our proposed map also reflects continuity of representation that is so critical for voter trust and engagement, turnout, and civic participation. I would urge the Commission to consider the hyper-local community needs that would not necessarily be addressed by just mapping with the numbers plugged in to fulfill the formulas.

NJ 11th For Change also thanks the Commission for the release of the final maps, with a follow-up for public concerns.

Thank you so much for listening.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Ms. Doherty. We appreciate your testimony and the display of the map. It was very helpful.

MS. DOHERTY: Thank you.

MR. JONES: Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Matthew Duffy, followed by Charly Dutton.

MR. JONES: Mr. Duffy, you're up.

MATTHEW L. DUFFY, Esq.: Hello, my name is Matthew Duffy. I'm originally from Morristown.

I'm currently living and raising my family in Summit. I'm also the Special Counsel for Redistricting with the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice, and I'm speaking in that role today.

Specifically, I'm here to speak in support of the Fair Districts Coalition Unity Map, submitted by a coalition of social and racial justice organizations of which The Institute is a part. We've said that our map meets the standards laid out by 11th member Carchman in early January, and I

wanted to quickly touch on how the map meets some of those standards today.

First. I'll start with the constitutional standards. The Fair Districts' Unity Map -- districts are of substantially equal population, in line with the fundamental precept of one person, one vote. None of the 40 districts deviate any more than the 2.5 percent above or below the ideal population size. All of the districts are contiguous, and they're as compact as possible, given other legal and constitutional requirements.

In line with Article IV, Section II, paragraph 3 of the New Jersey Constitution, no municipalities are split between districts, with the exception of Newark and Jersey City.

I do want to make one note on this Section of the New Jersey Constitution, as it has been raised at previous public hearings. This Section also contains limits to how many times the Commission can split counties, and how many times it can split the state's largest municipalities. However, under the New Jersey Supreme Court precedent, both these have been found to be non-binding on the Commission for various reasons. So under current jurisprudence, the Commission can divide counties, as well as Newark and Jersey City, as many times as they need to satisfy other redistricting criteria. You can also see this historically; every map since 1972 has divided counties more than Article IV, Section II, paragraph 3 calls for. And every map, except one, has divided Newark and Jersey City more than once as well.

We sent you a legal memo. It's very long and probably much more boring -- detailing all of this in intricate detail. So feel free to read that, too.

The Fair Districts Unity Map meets the standards of Section 2 of the VRA by ensuring districts are drawn so that people of color -- who, as many here have noted now make up half the State's population -- have a reasonable opportunity to elect a representative of their choice. Half of our Unity Map's districts are majority people of color, reflecting that 100 percent of new growth in New Jersey has come from those communities.

And we didn't just draw these communities by looking at numbers on a map. This Unity Map builds on more than 50 community of interest maps to be collected from groups across the state. We held sessions with student groups, grassroots organizers, and faith communities to ensure that we were not splitting or marginalizing these groups when drawing new district lines.

Finally, while they were not our dominant standards, we made sure that our map minimized pitting incumbents against each other, contained competitive districts, and is considered fair under all well-known partisan fairness metrics, including plan score. We've actually contracted with an expert to conduct a full and thorough review of our map to ensure this. We will be sending you a comprehensive memo detailing their findings soon. Some select findings include other metrics for gauging partisan fairness, including the Stokes test, which found that our map has a 0 percent partisan bias when calculated using the 2017 gubernatorial election.

Finally, just some final points of why we think this map is so great. In addition to the 20 majority people of color districts, the map includes three majority Black districts, where the current map only has one; four majority Hispanic districts, while the current map only has two; (Indiscernible) districts, where the current map doesn't have any.

Thank you, to the Commission, for listening to me today. I wish you best of luck in this very difficult process.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Duffy.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Charly Dutton, followed by Kristi Hanselmann.

MR. JONES: Mr. Dutton.

CHARLY DUTTON: It's *Ms.*, actually.

MR. JONES: I apologize.

MS. DUTTON: You're fine. (laughter)

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

My name is Charly Dutton. I am a senior at Winslow Township High School in Winslow, where I have resided for my entire life.

I'm a new member of the NAACP Camden County East Youth Council, where Kennedy Abbott is President.

While I am one of several NAACP members to testify today, we have many others viewing together as a group via a watch party, along with members of the New Jersey Redistricting cohort of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, and the New Jersey Institute of Social Justice.

I'm currently the Senate President of student government of my high school, and I am very active in my community. I attend Christ Care Unit Missionary Baptist Church located in Sicklerville, and I am employed at McDonald's in Sicklerville. I've attended the Winslow Township School District all my life.

Our community is in the 4th State Legislative District.

The Winslow Township community is a good example of what our nation should look like, with a great blend of diverse ethnicities and backgrounds. African Americans and Hispanics are the most populated minority groups in my Township. Many citizens, who live on the rural side, have resided in this town for generations. Our community thrives on its diversity. However, I believe there's an economic gap regarding the income of citizens, where the middle is found between the suburban and rural communities.

My community is crisscrossed by major State roads, such as U.S. Routes 73, 30, 143, and the Atlantic City Expressway. My community includes eight schools, including Winslow Township High School, the Pinelands Reservation, and our historical church of St. Jude Syro-Malabar Catholic mission.

Although I reside in Winslow Township, my community includes Sicklerville and Chesilhurst. Our community is a lot like our neighboring city of Chesilhurst, where they are also a diverse suburban area.

To sum all this up, the heart of Winslow Township is very vibrant, with a growing community. We hope to be represented well in the new maps of the district.

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

I'm also asking that another hearing be added at least a week after the map is published to grant individuals and advocacy groups time to

evaluate and assess the maps, and provide an educated opinion of such to the Commission.

Again, thank you.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much, Ms. Dutton. We really appreciate your time spent with us, with very insightful testimony and adding to the chorus of voices of students this morning. That makes us all proud.

Thank you.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Kristi Hanselmann, followed by Dianna Harris.

DEPUTY MAYOR KRISTI HANSELMANN: Hi, good morning, Chairman.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

My name is Kristi Hanselmann, and I am the municipal leader, as well as the Republican Club President; as well as the Deputy Mayor of Mullica Township.

I'm here today on behalf of all of the residents of Mullica Township though. Mullica Township is a unique Pinelands community that is approximately 56 square miles, with only about 5,800 residents. And we are 100 percent restricted by Pinelands regulations.

Our town has struggled tremendously for decades with trying to reduce the tax burden on our residents. But we have been unable to make little, if any, headway due to the overwhelming development restrictions imposed on us by the Pinelands Commission. For example, out of the top 25 taxpayers in our town, only seven of them are businesses. One is an

apartment complex, and one is a mobile home park. The other 16 top taxpayers in our town are simply residents.

With the economic struggles that we face here in Mullica Township, we ask that the Commission take into consideration demographics of communities and the representation that they have in the Legislature while deciding your maps. Right now, our community has amazing legislators who always show up, and answer the phone, and they're willing to help in any way possible. They represent our communities' best interests, not based on party lines, but based on what is best for all of our citizens; and we have not had representation and support like this in recent history.

I know that redistricting is largely a numbers game, but please do not allow our residents to just be a number while deciding your legislative districts. I implore you to keep Mullica Township in Legislative District 2, and maintain the representation that we currently have. Because it is unlike any representation that we have had in the recent past. Our legislators know our community, they know our residents, and they work hard every day to help our town -- and we would like to continue to be represented by them.

Mullica Township is big in size, but we are small in population. We have not had a voice like we do now in years, if ever. So please consider leaving Mullica Township in Legislative District 2, because it truly gives our town the representation that it deserves.

Thank you very much for your time today.

MR. JONES: Thank you very much, Deputy Mayor. We really appreciate your time, and certainly your thoughts and comments.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Dianna Harris, followed by Rohn Hein.

D I A N N A A. H A R R I S: Thank you, sir, for allowing me the opportunity to speak today on behalf of the Midtown Community of Neptune.

I represent a nonprofit known as the Midtown Urban Renaissance Corporation, which is a New Jersey 501(c) 3 nonprofit located in Neptune.

We were established back in 1998, and inducted into the State's Neighborhood Empowerment Program, under the Urban Coordinating Council and administered by the Redevelopment Authority. This was largely due to the support of the late Senator Tommy Smith, who understood the relationship of the Midtown section of Neptune and the west side of Asbury Park. These communities are one in our eyes. It has the same needs, which include the need for more affordable housing, (indiscernible) funding into our public schools, into our Brownfield problems that we have within our community; and just the attention that needs to be given, or more attention that needs to be given, to public service -- or public safety.

The mission of MURC is to encourage the empowerment of our residents, and that's what we intend to do as we move forward with the completion of our redevelopment. I ask that when you are redistricting, that you please keep in mind the relationship and the togetherness that these two communities have. And I speak to that in reference to our need, as I said, for our public schools and the restoration of redevelopment, and for public safety that resides in our community -- that is needed in our community.

So I ask for that attention to that matter; and whatever means necessary, please keep these two communities together when you are redistricting.

Thank you.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much, Ms. Harris. We appreciate your testimony.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Rohn Hein, followed Darryl Jeffries.

R O H N H E I N: Good morning.

MR. JONES: Good morning.

I want to thank the New Jersey Apportionment Commission for this opportunity to give testimony this morning.

My name is Rohn Hein, and I live in Maple Shade in Burlington County. I'm the Co-Chair of the Reparations Task Force of UU Faith Action New Jersey, which is a coalition of all the Unitarian Universalist Churches in the state.

Judge Philip Carchman got it right when he said that this is truly participatory democracy. Unitarian Universalists are committed to seven core principles, and our fifth principle states "The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large." Your desire to hear the voices of ordinary citizens is to be commended. And the fact that the maps to be considered have been made public prior to the final vote is a great achievement.

It is our desire that you strongly consider and adopt the principles that are reflected in the Fair Districts Unity Map that was presented earlier.

You know, common sense tells us that the legislative district should be representative of its citizens and their communities. Partisanship and protecting incumbents should not be a consideration. However, since human beings, who happen to be politicians, are empowered to perform this task, it's no small wonder that the end results have, in the past, fallen short of goals and expectations.

Consider the existing legislative map. Currently, people of color represent almost 50 percent of the citizens in New Jersey, but the State Legislature only has 25 percent people of color to voice their dreams and aspirations. Now, I recognize that the election of representatives involves many variables. But if the districts are designed so that the voices of color are diluted through careful carving up of communities of interest, we're not even playing on a level playing field to start.

The Fair Districts Unity Map provides the racial equity that is needed. With the redrawn boundaries, one half, or 20 districts, would contain a population of color that is in the majority. Currently, there's only 15 districts like that.

The Unity Map has been meticulously created to measure the exact number of all racial interest groups -- white, Black, Hispanic, Asian, indigenous -- in every district, and takes into consideration where segregation takes place and where diversity exists. Since the last census 10 years ago, the growth in New Jersey is directly related to the increase in the number of

people of color in this state. To turn one's back on this is to make a mockery of the process.

We have confidence that you will look at the Unity Map with an open mind and heart and see the wisdom in its breadth and logic.

You know, I've been living in South Jersey for the last 20 years. I lived in Pennsauken starting in 2000. You know, I was serving on the Pennsauken Alliance on Substance Abuse for five years, and I came to understand clearly how the City of Camden and the Township of Pennsauken are very closely tied together. The migrations back and forth have been extreme and historical.

MR. JONES: Mr. Hein, can you summarize, please?

MR. HEIN: Yes, I will.

And the town of Merchantville is completely surrounded by Pennsauken.

So I urge you strongly to recognize that community of interest -- Pennsauken, Camden and Merchantville -- and include them in one district.

I want to thank the Commission for the time today, and I know that you will do diligent work in making sure of creating fair districts for all the citizens of the state.

Thank you.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much, and thank you for your testimony.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Darryl Jeffries, followed by the Danielle Jones.

DARRYL L. JEFFRIES: Good morning.

Thank you, Commissioners Jones, Barlas, and Judge Carchman for providing this opportunity for public testimony.

My name is Darryl Jeffries; I currently serve as the President of the Oranges and Maplewood NAACP. We are the oldest Branch in the State of New Jersey, third oldest in the nation, and we represent half of Essex County.

I'm here to urge the New Jersey Apportionment Commission to draw a racially equitable State Legislature map, and to lend my support to the Fair Districts Unity Map recently released by the New Jersey Institute of Social Justice and other New Jersey advocacy organizations.

The Oranges-Maplewood area is very diverse; our area's most densely populated area in the State of New Jersey, with a large African American, Caribbean, Haitian, and people from the African diaspora in the area. It's a very socio-economically diverse group as well. Our communities -- we represent 11 of the 22 communities in Essex County. Our communities are shared and contiguous in terms of shopping areas, of resources, in terms of healthcare, in terms of all of the support services that are needed to sustain our communities.

I know that some of the members of the Commission have recognized this, and I want to reiterate the importance of districts being drawn to reflect all of New Jersey's population growth over the last 10 years. And much of it has come from New Jersey's communities of color, yet these communities are seriously underrepresented.

Now that we are effectively a state that is half people of color it is only fair that New Jersey's districts be drawn so that half of them, 20 out of 40, are majority people of color.

New Jersey's Black population -- around 15 percent of our state -- there is only one majority district in the Legislature -- our District, the 34th Legislative District. The Commission should draw more majority Black districts to ensure that Black residents, who too often have been historically suppressed and excluded from the political conversation, have fair representation.

I thank the Commission for all their hard work, and ask them to please prioritize racial equity in the next round of legislative maps by accepting priorities laid out in the Fair Districts Unity Map, submitted by the advocacy groups, which does this so successfully.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity to give testimony at this hearing.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Jeffries. We appreciate your testimony as well.

Thank you.

MR. JEFFRIES: Thank you, Chairman.

MR. JONES: Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Danielle Jones, followed by Kristine Keefe.

MR. JONES: Ms. Jones?

COUNCILWOMAN DANIELLE JONES: Good morning, everyone.

Thank you, Chairman Jones, as well as your Co-Chair, for letting me speak.

I originally did not have a testimony prepared. But I represent the Borough of Eatontown as a Councilwoman for the Borough, as well as I reside in Legislative District 11.

My only comments are to echo the different members of this public testimony -- is that we encourage all the Commissioners to continue to draw out maps that are fair, equitable, and represent the populations of the State of New Jersey.

I want to ensure that all of our legislative districts are representative of our members, and community members, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, disability, veteran status, and all the different things that we look at.

One of the things that I believe -- as elected officials, we need to speak justly and fairly for those who are not able to be in the room to make those decisions. So we must remember, as we draw up these legislative districts, that we keep them in mind, and we make sure that we are fair and equitable in our representation of them.

I thank you all for your time and your hard work, and I'm looking forward to see the redrawn legislative districts that will represent our communities for the next 10 years.

Thank you.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much, Councilwoman. We appreciate your attendance and your comments.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Kristine Keefe, followed by Vijay Khadse.

K R I S T I N E K E E F E - H A S S A N: Thank you, Judge Carchman, Chairman Jones, Chairman Barlas, and all the members of the Legislative Apportionment Commission, for allowing the public to not only submit maps, but also to allow residents to comment on any of the public maps that have been presented or submitted.

My name is Kristine Keefe-Hassan; I'd like to talk about my town of South Plainfield. I know firsthand that removing South Plainfield from the 18th Legislative District in Middlesex County would not be in the best interest of our residents.

I have been a high school Spanish teacher in Edison Township Public Schools for the last 21 years. I am the mother of two children; my daughter Sophia is 15, and my son Dean is 10. My children's own circle of friends and interactions, to a large extent, includes Edison and Metuchen. Our athletes practice together at the Metuchen Sports Complex during the winter months, which is within the larger Edison Township borders. Our high school sports teams in South Plainfield and marching band compete with schools throughout the County and throughout the Legislative District 18. South Plainfield is a diverse town, where everyone is welcome.

Our residents of different faiths attend churches in Edison and Metuchen; temples in Edison and Highland Park. My husband and our family's mosque is Masjid Al-Wali in Edison. South Plainfield students attend the Middlesex County Vocational School, Middlesex County Academy for Science, Math, and Engineering. Many of our residents attend Middlesex College, and many of our high school students are part of the

Middlesex STARS program. The Edison, and Metuchen, and South Plainfield fire departments answer calls in each other's towns. Our volunteer firefighters are trained at the Middlesex County Fire Academy; our hometown Senators are working with Middlesex County to extend the greenway to connect from its present terminus in Metuchen through Edison and into South Plainfield, literally connecting the three towns.

I could keep going, but just to sum up: South Plainfield is connected to Middlesex County and the other towns that are part of the 18th Legislative District in many essential ways. And I'm concerned it would effectively disenfranchise many of our voters to be placed in another district that mostly is towns from a different county.

So thank you for your time and your consideration.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Vijay Khadse, followed by Thaddeus Kobylarz.

V I J A Y K H A D S E: Good morning, and thank you for hearing me this morning.

My name is Vijay Khadse, and I'll be describing my experience living in Morris Plains for over 30 years, and its association with the neighboring town of Parsippany.

I've worked in Parsippany for about 10 years in the past. And in the context of children, who take over our lives, I'll just follow that course of thought.

When my children were born, of course childcare is essential. Parsippany offered an enormous availability -- in availabilities for childcare.

As they grew, Parsippany also had a temple, located relatively close, where we participated in many of the activities, as well as an enormous Sunday school that they had developed; over 350 children. The children attended the Sunday school, we volunteered as teachers in the Sunday school; and we participated in the activities and the annual functions -- which were huge -- that were held at Parsippany High School.

Although most of our affiliations and activities are with Morristown and Morris Plains, it is fantastic to have a cultural commonality which we share with Parsippany.

Thank you very much for allowing me to participate this morning.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: Mr. Chairman, the next speaker, Thaddeus Kobylarz, also submitted a stationary map. If you would like to let us know whether he would like the map to be displayed while he speaks. And then after Mr. Kobylarz, the next speaker is Albert Lukin.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Madam Secretary.

M A Y O R T H A D D E U S J. K O B Y L A R Z, Ph.D.: Ms. Kruger, I would like the map to be displayed. Thank you.

MR. JONES: There it is; go right ahead.

M A Y O R K O B Y L A R Z: Good morning, everybody.

My name is Thaddeus Kobylarz; I proudly served as Mayor of the Borough of Chatham, which is in Morris County, New Jersey.

Chatham Borough is currently situated in the 21st Legislative District, along with four municipalities in Somerset County, and 10

municipalities in Union. The only other Morris County municipality currently in the 21st District is Long Hill, which is not contiguous with the Borough.

During the 1990s and 2000s, Chatham Borough was situated in the 26th District, which was mostly comprised of Morris County towns. However, when redistricting was completed following the 2010 Census, the Borough's surrounding municipalities in Morris County -- including Chatham Township, Madison, East Hanover, Hanover, Florham Park, Harding Township, and Madison -- were moved into the 27th Legislative District.

While Chatham Borough appreciates the representation provided by its current 21st District representatives, all of whom are Union County residents, it cannot help but believe that being placed in a legislative district that is separate from the surrounding communities with which it shares particularly close historical, cultural, and commercial ties, diminishes its ability to have its concerns most effectively heard in Trenton.

I'm aware that the independent member of this Commission, the Honorable Philip Carchman, has issued guidance that recognizes that keeping communities of interest together is an important standard when drafting a fair map. Judge Carchman indicates that such communities of interest share common values, goals, and concerns, including shared infrastructure concerns, shared environmental concerns, and shared industry. In this regard, the Commission should be aware that Chatham Borough has endeavored to share many critical municipal services with surrounding Morris County towns, something that has been strongly encouraged by governors and legislators of both political parties.

The Borough has established a joint Municipal Court with Madison, Chatham Township, and Morris Township. It operates a joint sewerage system and treatment facility with Madison, which also provides Chatham Borough with a Building Department and IT services. Chatham Borough shares a sports and recreation program with Chatham Township. It is also part of a Regional School District with the Township, the aptly named *School District of the Chathams*.

The Chatham Emergency Squad serves the Borough and Township jointly, as does the Library of the Chathams. Indeed, Chatham Borough's civic and cultural ties with Chatham Township are so intertwined that Township residents commonly refer to the Borough's commercial district along Main Street as *their* downtown.

Emergency 911 services are provided by Morris County, and Morris County's MUA provides recycling services. The Borough has received State funding to explore the possibility of sharing public works equipment with other Morris County municipalities, and is working with County-based environmental groups to implement best practices.

In short, Chatham Borough has been a model for responsible integration of its operations with its neighbors, saving tax dollars while still providing the highest level of service possible.

It seems only appropriate that it should be situated in a legislative district with them as well.

I just want to close by saying it's my responsibility to advocate for the interest of the residents who elected me, and I respectfully suggest that the facts bear out that, to the extent that it is feasible to do so, Chatham Borough has made the case to be returned to its traditional legislative home

in a Morris County-centered district along with its surrounding neighbors, including Madison and Chatham Township.

I want to thank the Commission for allowing me to speak today, and good luck with your very difficult task ahead.

Thank you.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much, Mayor. Your testimony is much appreciated.

MAYOR KOBYLARZ: Thank you, sir.

MR. JONES: Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Albert Lukin, followed by Bruce Morgan.

COUNCILMAN ALBERT LUKIN: Good morning, Chairman; good morning, Commissioners; and good morning, Judge Carchman.

My name is Albert Lukin. I am here to provide testimony as a lifelong resident of Fairview, of 52 years; and I have had the honor and pleasure of being a Councilman for 27 of those years, currently serving.

The Borough of Fairview is located in southeast Bergen County, and currently resides in District 32. District 32 is a predominantly Hudson County District, and my advocacy is for Fairview to be considered for District 36, which is a Bergen County District.

Fairview currently shares a school district with Cliffside Park, one of our many neighbors here in Bergen County. Our children attend the high school in Cliffside Park, and our bus transportation for all our students out of district is handled by Cliffside Park.

Fairview is part of the mutual aid with Cliffside Park, Richfield, Palisades Park, and Edgewater.

We have many shared services with the surrounding neighboring towns here in Bergen County also. With Cliffside Park -- their DPW is located in Fairview, and we have a shared services agreement for equipment, fueling station, salt, and other services provided through the DPW.

The Fairview Senior Center and Cliffside Park Senior Center were combined, and the physical location of the Center is now in Cliffside Park.

With Palisades Park, Fairview has a shared service agreement with regards to the Court Administrator. And the Business District in Fairview -- our "main street," if you will, which is Anderson Avenue -- is connected to Cliffside Park's Business District along Anderson Avenue, and it's very hard to tell where one town ends and the other one begins, as we are very interconnected.

We've had long historical and cultural ties with the surrounding communities here in southeast Bergen County, as I said earlier, and as a previous Councilman from Fairview, Steve Burke has said as well.

I thank you for the opportunity to provide you with this, and wish you luck on your decision-making process going forward also.

Thank you very much.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Lukin. We appreciate your testimony.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Bruce Morgan, followed by Joe Marchica.

BRUCE S. MORGAN: Good morning, Chairmen Jones and Barlas, Judge Carchman, and the entire Apportionment Committee.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to present my thoughts on redistricting of the New Jersey State Legislative map.

I am Bruce Morgan, President of the New Brunswick Area Branch of the NAACP. NAACP -- my District of New Brunswick services 14 municipalities in Middlesex and southern Somerset County. I'm also the First President of the New Jersey State Conference of the NAACP, overseeing 14 units across Central New Jersey. And I have also chaired the Middlesex County Human Relations Commission for more than six years.

It's easy to see that I am familiar with the demographics, economic, cultural, historical, and community interest; particularly those of my home community, Highland Park, and the surrounding municipalities of Edison, Metuchen, and the rest of Legislative District 18.

I would like to point out that our community drew a community of interest map, with the Fair Districts Coalition, which we feel fairly incorporated into the Unity Map. This community of interest map was submitted to the Commission for your review as the Fair Districts New Jersey Unity Map.

Let me tell you a little about my community, Highland Park. The Highland Park community is a combination of working class and white collar workers who work at Rutgers, Johnson & Johnson, and other medical, pharmaceutical, and professional service companies. The community is extremely diverse, with a large and growing South Asian, Latinx, and AAPI community.

The Route 1 corridor is an active, highly commercial area where many people shop and work, and which ties together much of our community running north and south. There are warehouses and manufacturing centers,

which employ a number of blue collar workers clustered around the major highways of State Road 27 and U.S. Route 287, which runs through our area.

There are also many medical offices in Highland Park, Metuchen, and Edison, which employ many in the area.

Our community is proud of our public schools and our public spaces. Johnson Park, Roosevelt Park, and Donaldson Park are major places where people congregate. Highland Park has a very robust downtown area, where people shop and go out to eat. Metuchen also has a large downtown area where many people like to go out. There is a huge retail center serving the East Asian community along State Road 27, from Highland Park extending north to 287. The (Indiscernible) Avenue Shopping District is a major area serving the South Asian and AAPI community.

The Highland Park community is very much a microcosm of the municipalities and communities that make up LD 18, as defined by the Fair Districts New Jersey Unity Map. Therefore, I implore you to accept this configuration as designated. It will be the most practical way to create a district that's acceptable to the citizens, and allows for fair and equitable representation now.

It will also be a District that should be readily able to accommodate any changes sure to occur over the next 10 years until the next redistricting alignment takes place.

I would like to add that I hope you'll be--

MR. JONES: Mr. Morgan, can you summarize?

MR. MORGAN: It was coming right now. (laughter)

MR. JONES: All right; thank you.

MR. MORGAN: I would like to add that we'll be able to hear the comments from the public after you release the preliminary version of the map you intend to approve.

I thank you very much.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Morgan. I appreciate your comments, and sorry I had to push you along there.

MR. MORGAN: I understand. (laughter)

MR. JONES: Take care now.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Joe Marchica, followed by Fedah Mohammed.

J O S E P H M A R C H I C A: Good morning, Commissioners; everyone.

Thank you for the chance to speak.

My name is Joe Marchica; I'm from Hamilton Township in Mercer County, and I Co-Chair Our Revolution Trenton Mercer. We're a grassroots group within a national network of groups, supporting progressive policies and candidates, and planning for a more inclusive, just society that prioritizes working class people.

We applaud the Commission for agreeing to publish both proposed maps on Monday, and to hold multiple hearings afterwards. We also applaud you for appointing Laura Matos, resolving the egregious lack of Hispanic representation on this Commission.

And I also want to note that I'm personally here to support the Fair Districts Unity Map.

But most of all I am here to ask you to help fix New Jersey's broken democracy. Because right now, our primary election ballot format

and our gerrymandered districts combine to undemocratically pre-select our representatives, cutting voters voices out of the process.

Gerrymandering specifically minimizes the number of competitive districts, and it sets an expectation that our legislative elections will be non-competitive. And this Commission is going to determine whether or not we fix this for the next decade.

Now, demographic changes over the last decade -- the one before this -- made for some surprises back -- this last election, on November 2. We saw only-- Despite that, we only saw four districts where the incumbent party lost a seat; and we saw three others that were closer than expected. So that's a total of seven. But this is a decade since districts were last drawn, and it took that long to get only 7 out of 40 competitive districts. That's not a healthy democracy. With so few competitive elections, people feel like their vote doesn't matter, so they don't vote.

To engage New Jerseyans in their government, we must show them that their vote matters -- not just tell them exactly how important it is. Otherwise, our words ring hollow when we tell people to vote. We must stop drawing virtually every district to be non-competitive. This cuts voters out of our democracy, especially when, as I noted, it is combined with New Jersey's unique intentionally undemocratic primary election ballots. And this combination also protects the systemic racism entrenched in our State government and our history.

New Jersey county party leadership is disproportionately old, white, and male. Almost three-quarters of county party chairs are male, and about 85 percent are white. So these chairs tend to pick candidates to endorse who look like them, and grant these candidates preferential ballot

placement on the county ballot line. This rigs the primary election in their favor, where we haven't seen anyone successfully primary an incumbent State rep who's been placed on the county line for over 12 years.

And then when the districts are drawn to be non-competitive, we also know ahead of time which of these disproportionately white male candidates will win the general election. So not only do people's votes end up not mattering in either election, but our Legislature doesn't represent the diversity of our State. So is it any wonder that New Jerseyans are disengaged when they're repeatedly shown that our votes don't matter?

Some quick demographics I'm sure you've all heard before on the 2021 New Jersey Legislature. A little over 30 percent of the legislators were women, which is much less than half, and we're 25th nationally.

I'll wrap this up, and summarize briefly.

Half the Legislature is over 59 years old, and a whopping 92 percent are over 40. Millennials are grossly underrepresented and deserve far more than 9 representatives out of 120.

Seventy-three percent of the Legislature is white, versus 54 percent of New Jersey residents. In comparison, Asian Americans were underrepresented -- 2.5 percent of the Legislature -- versus 10 percent of the population; as are Hispanics and Latinos, which are 7.5 percent versus 21.6 percent.

This lack of diversity directly results from our unhealthy democracy, and that's how mostly white, mostly male county party chairs predetermine election outcomes to favor people who I will look like in 30 years, at everyone else's expense, especially people of color. And our legacy

as a State is rife with systemic racism, so it's long past time we take decisive action to fix this.

I just want to urge the Commission to act differently than the congressional group did in their redistricting process, where there was only really one obviously competitive district that came out of that.

MR. JONES: Summarize, Mr. Marchica, please.

MR. MARCHICA: Yes, I'm doing so.

I want you all to look hard at the Fair Districts Unity Map. It does an excellent job keeping communities of interest together; creates 20 majority-minority districts, which is half of legislative districts, that accurately reflects the diversity of New Jersey. And I urge you ultimately to do two things: and that's to draw fair, competitive districts where voters can actually pick their representatives -- it's necessary for a healthy democracy; and draw districts to enhance, rather than diminish, the voices of people of color, women, young people. It's very, very important, I think. The Fair Districts Unity Map does a fantastic job of the second point, especially.

Thank you for your time; thank you.

MR. JONES: Thanks for wrapping up, and I did not mean to push you on that. There are a number of speakers before you and a number after you. They all need due consideration that we want to give them for their time.

Thank you so much.

Madam Secretary, next.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Fedah Mohammed, followed by Diab Mustafa.

F E D A H M O H A M M E D: Good afternoon, Commission.

My name is Fedah Mohammed, and I am here on behalf of the Palestinian American Community Center and Fair Districts New Jersey.

I would like to just take a moment to thank the Commission for allowing me the space today to speak about my community's concerns.

There are at least 3.5 million Arab Americans living in this country, yet we are not represented in census data as unique racial and ethnic categories. And we are categorized under the white race.

According to the census, the New Jersey statewide Arab American population is 116,240. However, the Arab American Institute estimates that about 257,868 Arab Americans live in New Jersey. This is a gross undercount of our community's population, and if the census is the only demographic data source you are using, you are certainly not taking my entire community into consideration when mapping.

We have been working with Arab community leaders from across the state to map all significant communities with Arab American populations. We have identified 25 cities and townships and six counties with significant populations and economic contributions. Our community of interest map has been included in the Unity Map presented by Fair Districts New Jersey, and I hope the Commission takes it into consideration when redrawing our district maps.

As a recent college graduate, I have seen firsthand the significant impact community organizations such as PACC have played in my community. PACC currently services children, students, and young adults, engaging youth in democracy work and enabling us to get involved.

I am here to ensure that future generations of Arab Americans can get the representation we need to address our community's needs. It is

only through active participation and engagement that we can hold our leaders accountable.

PACC has presented our data and findings about my community, and I truly hope you take it into consideration so that we can elect candidates who will ensure our future generations have a voice at the table.

Thank you again.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much, Ms. Mohammed. We appreciate your testimony.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Diab Mustafa, followed by Francis Nuñez.

DIAB MUSTAFA: Good morning.

My name is Diab Mustafa. I am currently the President of the Board of Directors of the Palestinian American Community Center, known as *PACC*.

My family has roots in Passaic and Hudson counties for many decades, and I am a very active member of my community.

I was one of the founders of *PACC*. *PACC* was founded because we recognized the many needs of my Arab community in New Jersey. My work co-founding *PACC* gives me a unique experience in directly seeing how my community has grown over the last decade, and how we expect to continue to grow in the coming decade.

PACC has worked closely with First District New Jersey to ensure that our community of interest map is included in the Unity Map, which has been presented to the Commission. *PACC* has brought together Arab American community leaders from across the state to discuss how we

would like to be represented in Trenton and in Washington, D.C. We have mapped pockets of Arab American communities throughout New Jersey, which has significant economic and development contributions to the state.

I want to ensure the Commission recognizes my community as part of the redistricting process. As the process primarily uses census demographic data which characterizes the Arabs communities as white, because we are not counted in the census as our racial and ethnic category, we are invisible in the government process, cutting our ability to get funding or our policy concerns to be addressed.

PACC has drafted a community of interest map that encompasses 6 counties and 25 cities with the highest concentration of Arab American population, and businesses that contribute to the economic development of these cities in a significant way. Passaic County is considered the epicenter of the Arab American community in New Jersey, with Paterson being the highest concentration city; Clifton follows, and Woodland Park, Little Falls, and Wayne all have significant Arab populations.

Essex County also has a high Arab American population, centered around Bloomfield and Nutley. Middlesex County also has a high concentration of Arab population in New Brunswick, Piscataway, South River, Old Bridge, Edison, and Sayreville.

Monmouth County cities of Holmdel and Middletown have the highest concentration of Arab Americans.

You will hear from other representatives speaking about our Arab American population in Hudson and Bergen counties. By focusing on these 6 counties and 25 cities with a high population of Arab Americans, it would

be a great starting point for our community to receive the representation we deserve.

I hope you take the Unity Map, presented by the Fair Districts New Jersey, and PACC community of interest map into consideration when redrawing district lines. This is the Arab American community's only opportunity to get fair representation for the next decade.

Thank you very much for your time.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much, Mr. Mustafa, for your testimony, and be careful driving out there.

Take care now.

Madam Secretary, next.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Francis Nuñez, followed by Suha Obeidallah.

FRANCIS NUÑEZ: Good morning, Chairmen and Commissioners. Thank you for letting me speak this morning.

My name is name is Francis Nuñez. I'm here representing Faith in New Jersey as Director of Community Organizing. But I'm also representing the West Ward of Newark, New Jersey, where I live, and my parents have lived and owned property for almost 20 years.

I've lived in New Jersey for most of my life, leaving only to attend college in New England, and work to jumpstart my career in community relations. And I'm proud to say that I recently accomplished a really big goal of mine, which is to come back home to New Jersey and to Newark, and pour into my community as a New Jersey citizen.

Genuine and authentic community work takes a lot of on-the-ground understanding, and I'm still learning how New Jersey has changed in

the 10 years that I spent abroad. But luckily for me, I have a few things, including census data and the lived experience of my family and my neighbors, to help me get reacquainted. And as suspected, New Jersey has changed a lot in some many amazing ways.

The Latino and Hispanic populations, for example, growing by almost half-a-million people in the last 10 years, according to census data. And communities of color have expanded greatly in the last decade, due to the increase in these populations. But as a community organizer, I feel a great responsibility to highlight the lived experience of Black, indigenous, and people of color in my communities. And it's easy to get lost in data points. And data is helpful to informing the best decisions being made, but the stories are what continue to be told long after the data points shift.

So voting in Newark has been, and is still, very annoying, especially in local elections. I just wanted to make that plain. It's the reason why even the most engaged voters don't go out and vote. And my mother, for example, had some confusion, being an American citizen of Latino descent, when she noticed that her polling site was in a completely different city because of our proximity to city lines. The person who she and her neighbors usually vote for never wins, and she always comes back and says that. So it doesn't take a fancy map for our people to know there's something strategically wrong with our legislative maps, and districts are split. This is the case for most legislative districts, as we've heard from other testifiers this morning.

So the Fair Districts community map, as you've seen -- it has been referenced throughout this morning and this hearing -- would be a step

in the right direction towards ensuring that the voices of the people who are voting in District 34 and beyond are being properly represented.

Thank you so much for your time.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much, Ms. Nuñez, for that excellent testimony. I appreciate it, and I know all the Commissioners do.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Suha Obeidallah, followed by Raed Odeh.

S U H A O B E I D A L L A H: Good afternoon, everybody; good afternoon, Commissioners.

My name is Suha Obeidallah. I grew up in Palestine; I migrated to New Jersey 30 years ago. I live in Passaic County. I am a member of the Palestinian American Community Center.

I am a bilingual ESL teacher at School 9 in the City of Paterson. School 9 has the highest enrollment of Arab American students in the state. I work directly with these families, and see firsthand the disparities that exist within my community. I am one of a few in the school who can assist students and parents with language access needs. I also run an Islamic school during the weekend, where I teach Arabic and Islamic Studies.

I see firsthand the importance of having representation in these families' and children's lives. If I was not there to provide this very important and needed service, many of these families would go without their needs being addressed.

This is why I am here to endorse the Unity Map presented by Fair Districts New Jersey. Fair Districts New Jersey has worked with the

Palestinian American Community Center to map Arab American communities throughout the state.

I see how vital it is for me to engage school and district leadership in order to get my students' needs met. And that is why I stand before you today. I see how the Arab American student enrollment has grown over the last decade in my school and my school district. The economic contributions of my community are significant and will only continue to grow as I educate the next generation of leaders.

The Palestinian American Community Center has worked closely with community leaders throughout the state to map our community and provide that information to you. We have highlighted six counties with significant Arab population, including Passaic, Hudson, Bergen, Essex, Middlesex, and Monmouth counties.

I hope that you take our community of interest map into consideration, and think about the future generation of voters that can either have representation, or go another decade without it.

Please consider the Unity Map presented by Fair Districts New Jersey.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to talk and represent my voice -- the voice of my community.

Thank you.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Ms. Obeidallah. Very well said, and right underneath the bell.

MS. OBEIDALLAH. Yes. (laughter)

MR. JONES: Madam Secretary, who's next?

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Raed Odeh, followed by Kimberly O'Brien.

RAED ODEH: Hello; good afternoon, everybody. Hello, Commission.

My name is Raed Odeh, a proud business owner of Passaic County. And I am here on behalf of my Arab American community, and the Palestinian American Community Center, known as *PACC*.

I am a trusted leader within my community, and I am informally known as the *Other Arab Mayor of Paterson*. I am here to support the community of interest map presented by PACC.

They have worked with community leaders across the state to map the most significant Arab populations. We have found that 6 counties and 25 cities in New Jersey have the most significant Arab populations. Our community can even trace its history to the establishment of the City of Paterson.

We have seen a significant increase in our population over the last few years, giving us the ability to gain leadership positions throughout local governments.

The City of Prospect Park currently has five elected officials who are Arab Americans, including Mayor Mohamed T. Khairullah and the Chief of Police, Ammen Matari, demonstrating that our population is significant enough to elect candidates of our choosing.

The City of Paterson has two elected officials of Arab descent, including Mayor Andre Sayegh. The City of Clifton has two Board of Education elected officials with Arab heritage. The City of Haldon also has two Arab American elected officials, including Council President Mounir

Almaita and Council member Mohammad Ramadan. North Haledon has two elected officials of Arab descent, including Mayor Randy George.

There are currently 13 additional cities in New Jersey with 14 elected officials of Arab American heritage, demonstrating that our community will elect candidates of their choice when given the opportunity.

We currently have no representation in Trenton or Washington, D.C. We hope you take the map built by PACC and by Fair Districts New Jersey into consideration so that we may get the representation needed throughout the State government. Please ensure we have fair representation in New Jersey, and utilize the vital information being presented to you by community leaders throughout the state.

Thank you so much for having me.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much, Mr. Odeh. We appreciate your testimony.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Kimberly O'Brien, followed by Elizabeth Redwine.

MR. JONES: Ms. O'Brien?

KIMBERLY O'BRIEN: Good afternoon; thank you, everyone, for having me. Thank you to the Commission for very patiently listening to all of our testimonial of our concerns.

I was actually registered last week, but I couldn't wait; I had another meeting to go to, so I had to start. That's not a complaint; I just know how much you've been listening and how much you've heard this past week, so I appreciate that.

I have been a resident of Somers Point for 20 years. I'm also the President of the Somers Point Democratic Club. I'm here to testify in response to the possibility of moving Somers Point from Legislative District 2 to Legislative District 1. LD 2 is a primarily made up of towns in Atlantic County, whereas LD 1 is Cape May and Cumberland counties.

I've discussed this issue with many residents, and all agree that leaving LD 2 would be a detriment to Somers Point.

I grew up in Cape May County; it's a great place. I was a Wildwood High School Warrior when I played basketball, and it was a lot of fun to have the run of the streets this time of year when we had a lot of snow, because there are just no cars coming whatsoever. It's just a very different place than Somers Point, where I live now.

Somers Point is not contiguous with Cape May County. I have a map, which I'll submit with my written testimony to you. But you can envision the Cape May and Atlantic County region, where Somers Point is at the bottom of Atlantic County. We're separated by two miles of water to the south, to Cape May County; and another two miles of water to the west, to Ocean City. So we're really not right next to each other. It's kind of far for residents to travel to Cape May County.

Moving to LD 1 would create an obstacle of distance for our residents. There's no direct bus route to a legislative office there, and the closest one is about 20 miles away. In contrast, we share a bike path with the towns of Lynwood and Northfield, which is used by the students of all three towns to walk to high school. All three towns are sending districts to Mainland High School, which is overseen by the Atlantic County Superintendents of Schools, not the Cape May County Superintendent.

So our needs, our economy, and our public institutions are strongly aligned with Atlantic County, and we need leaders with whom we have established relationships. Many of our residents work in Atlantic City at the casinos. We need to be represented by leaders who understand and are directly involved with the casino industry.

We're all here because we understand the importance of legislative representation, and complicating that process by moving us to a different district will confuse and disenfranchise voters.

When I first learned that this was happening, I went to a former city council member who remembers when this happened 10 years ago -- when we were moved to LD 1, and then moved back again. And he said that it was very confusing and very chaotic for our voters to understand where to vote, who was representing them, and who the leaders who were running even were -- because they're not our neighbors; they don't live here.

And finally, I registered and introduced myself as a Democrat. I've spoken to members of my party who knew that this is detrimental for us.

I'll summarize.

I just want you to know that we are working together with our Republican friends, and congratulate you on bringing us together. Because this is not a party issue at all; it is an issue for our residents.

So thank you again for hearing my testimony.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Ms. O'Brien; we really appreciate that.

And if we've lent to a spirit of bipartisanship, I think that bodes well for, at least, one of the small deeds that this Commission will hopefully render in this process.

Thank you so much.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Elizabeth Redwine, followed by Glorianne Robbi.

E L I Z A B E T H R E D W I N E: Hi; thank you so much for the opportunity.

And I just have to say -- I know we're getting into the afternoon, and I swear I'll be under three minutes -- but it is kind of beautiful that we have 50 people here on a Saturday morning, now afternoon, sharing their perspectives on this. So I've been totally inspired by everyone. So maybe I just had too much coffee, but I'm very, very grateful to everyone for-- It's just, I've learned a lot.

So I'm just going to read what I wrote out, and I'll try to keep it as quick as I can.

I'm a resident of West Orange; I've lived here for 18 years. I wear a lot of hats in the community.

But the reason I'm here today is just to advocate that districts should reflect the incredible diversity of our state. And, you know, we are the best state; 50 people on a Saturday showing up to advocate for these issues. Obviously, New Jersey rules, and so we want to advocate for that incredible diversity.

But empowering voters requires that individual districts are not all uniform. Areas of the state that are predominantly non-white need to be reflected by districts that honor and reflect those communities. So representation matters, and ensuring that there are adequate districts with a racial or ethnic majority should be the primary focus of this Commission.

So what I'm saying is, we should also strive to keep communities of interest unified; but neither racial demographics nor communities of interest should be used as cover for packing or cracking voters. We owe the voters of New Jersey fair districts; and for our biracial, indigenous, and people of color communities, that means having districts and, hopefully, representatives that look like them.

So thank you so much. That's what I had to say. And I know it's been an awesome morning, but it's been a long time. So I want to give other people the opportunity to speak.

Thank you so much; I really appreciate all that you've done.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much, Ms. Redwine. We really appreciate those comments.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Glorianne Robbi, followed by Jigar Shah.

G L O R R I A N N E R O B B I: Good morning, Judge Carchman, and members of the Apportionment Commission.

Thank you for providing me with time to speak today.

I am Glorianne Robbi, a resident, since 1967, of East Amwell Township in Hunterdon County.

I've held local government office in East Amwell, the first woman elected to the Township Committee, in 1984 through 1989, serving as Mayor for three years.

The residents' need for transparent government was what drew me into running for elective office.

Judge Carchman deserves our appreciation for his leadership and the Apportionment Commission members' agreement to hold open meetings for public testimony and questions. A significant step for the process' transparency is Judge Carchman's decision that both parties, on February 7, publicly display, on the Apportionment's website, their proposed apportionment maps without partisan identification.

The League of Women Voters of New Jersey, of which I am a longtime member and a former Executive Director, is an advocate for the Fair Districts Unity Map, which was released February 2 for the Apportionment Commission's consideration. There is sufficient time for the Commission's members to review the Fair Districts Unity Map, based on its extensive accompanying data, and ensure that community interest is accounted for in the final map chosen.

Fair Districts New Jersey, a nonpartisan coalition, working to reform New Jersey's redistricting process, believes redistricting should be impartial, transparent, and community-driven.

Redistricting must prioritize public engagement.

Thank you.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much, Mayor Robbi; and thank for your years of service. Much appreciated.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Jigar Shah, followed by Ashok Sharma.

J I G A R S H A H: Good afternoon, Judge Carchman, Chairmen, and the members of the Commission.

My name is Jigar Shah. I've been a longtime resident of Parsippany-Troy Hills, my mailing address is Morris Plains; and I've been involved in the Asian Indian community for many years. I have known members of our Parsippany residents in Morris Plains over 35 years.

One of the reasons -- the benefits I have, the relations that I have with the Indian community are because I am in the import-export business in Indian food products; I have retail outlets and wholesale distributorship. Mainly, I'm speaking in reference to the relation, more so because of Parsippany and Morris Plains, and I am requesting -- why not to split these two towns.

Parsippany-Troy Hills and Morris Plains has the third-largest Asian Indian community in New Jersey. The majority of the residents still (indiscernible) the first generations of Indian community. They are more involved-- If they have any issues or something, they understand they go to the community leaders. And I was one of the lucky ones that, when Mayor Barberio became the Mayor of the Township of Parsippany, they appointed me as his liaison to the Asian Indian community, which gave me more opportunity and understanding of the problems and the issues between the two communities.

I'm requesting humbly -- please do not split these two towns. Why? Because they are like one family. If you know, in Parsippany there are over six religious temples; many of our businesses are in Parsippany and Indian organizations. In this -- it's like one family. And the community from Morris Plains and Parsippany -- they all work together. Whenever they have issues, they come up to us; and we have built relations with the elected officials in the community and the representatives of the elected officials.

So if you understand -- if you divide us, it's like you're breaking up the family.

So my humble request to the Commission -- please look into this matter, try to keep the community together, and the interest and the benefit of the community also.

I thank you for your time, and I hope you understand my humble request that you try to keep Parsippany and Morris Plains Township in the same district.

Thank you.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Shah; duly noted. I appreciate your testimony.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Ashok Sharma, followed by Rob Soni.

A S H O K K. S H A R M A: Good afternoon.

MR. JONES: Good afternoon.

DR. SHARMA: This is Ashok Sharma, and I live in Plainsboro. I am here to tell the Commission why Plainsboro should be kept in the 14th District -- Legislative District.

The 14th District is now 18.7 percent Asians. We are a District where Asians can successfully compete for political office. We have been increasing in Asian population, and that will only continue. Plainsboro now has 57 percent Asian. Robbinsville has 28 percent, Monroe has 27 percent, East Windsor has 23 percent, and Cranbury has 21 percent.

We have many Asians coming up through the ranks. We have Asian council people in Plainsboro, Cranbury, as well as in Monroe.

There are many minority group members on the Mercer and Middlesex County Board of Commissioners, and at least nine Asian school board members.

For over 40 years, Hamilton, Plainsboro, and Cranbury have been a part of the 14th District. They have, in effect, become communities of interest because they have shared economic, environmental, and other interests over many years.

Plainsboro has shared the school district with Mercer County since 1969. Cranbury has sent its children to Princeton High School in Mercer County since 1988.

There have been many Plainsboro and Hamilton candidates of both parties who have run successfully for legislative seats for 40 years. Hamilton has been represented by three Plainsboro residents, including two women, in both parties, for over 30 years. Plainsboro has been one of (the most politically active towns in the 14th District. So if Plainsboro is removed from this District, 40 years of progress will disappear.

So I humbly request of you, please do not remove this town from District 14.

Thank you very much.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Dr. Sharma. We appreciate your testimony.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Rob Soni, followed by Herb Tarbous.

R O B E R T S O N I: Thank you, Chairman, for allowing me to speak today.

I'm Robert Soni, and live in Randolph, New Jersey. My wife and I have been residents of New Jersey for 24 years. We've raised three children. We've also lived in Randolph for about 15 years, and we previously lived in Parsippany with a Morris Plains postal address for about eight years. We really enjoy New Jersey, and my family has greatly appreciated the community.

I'm a technology leader at a company called VMware, as a fully remote worker, having previously worked locally in New Jersey at Nokia-Bell Labs for almost 23 years as a senior scientist and Bell Labs Fellow.

I am an active volunteer, and I taught Sunday school for Hindus in a school called Vidyalaya, based in Parsippany, for the past 12 years.

I've also served for two years on the Randolph Board of Education, and was Vice President of that Board of Education.

We worship at Yogi Divine Society and Sanatan Mandir, two temples based in Parsippany.

Please note that all my comments and opinions are my own, and do not reflect the opinions of my employer or my past affiliation with the School Board, Vidyalaya, or YDS, or Sanatan Mandir.

While I was attracted to New Jersey by a burgeoning telecommunications industry in the 1990s, my family has found New Jersey to be welcoming to those of Indian origin and descent, despite a very challenging period in the 1980s. Hindu Americans were met here -- I don't know if you know this -- with rather rampant racism. Today, many Hindus and Indian Americans have seen the benefits of creating communities of interest, and linking them together within legislative boundaries to help defeat racism.

Today we are happy to live in a state with the highest per capita allocation of Indian Americans, and particularly Hindu Americans, in the U.S.A. Hindus and Indians are widely dispersed in New Jersey, but have strong concentrations near Princeton, Iselin, Edison, and Parsippany. We moved to Randolph as we outgrew our house in Parsippany; and shifted to Randolph, which now has one of the fastest-growing Indian American and Hindu American communities in New Jersey. And if you know -- Randolph has one of the best school districts in the area, as does Parsippany, which typically tends to attract Indian Americans regardless of their commutes.

One of Randolph's elementary schools now exceeds 20 percent with connections to the Indian diaspora. This impact is not unknown to Parsippany residents, where the high school has greater than 20 percent of the population connected to the Indian diaspora.

Today, most Indian Americans must leave Randolph to worship, and travel to Parsippany to educate their children about their cultures and religions. Despite the lack of local temples and schools, our local politicians in town Council -- all Republican -- still found the ability to recognize how fast our community is growing by honoring Hindu Heritage Month and recognizing Diwali. This was after two years of advocacy by the Hindu American community in Randolph.

I have observed, unfortunately though, that our LD 25 delegation has spoken out quite vocally regarding the celebration of Columbus Day or Rosh Hashanah in Randolph schools, but did not speak about the importance of celebrating Diwali, nor has it recognized the growth of this community. It is well known that Randolph, and some of the surrounding communities, are Italian American or Jewish American -- one in

three in either population or community. I believe that this is now the opportunity to link Italian American and Jewish American communities in Parsippany with Randolph, which has several synagogues and a vibrant Italian American community, as well as bring together the Hindu American and Indian diaspora for us.

There's opportunity for us to redistrict and link these two communities in a beneficial way. While many religions and cultures are covered by Indian Americans, I'd really like to highlight how it might bring values to Hindus, Muslims, Jains, Sikhs, and Buddhist to create a strong community of interest.

Thank you, Commission and Mr. Chairperson, for allowing me to speak today.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Soni. We appreciate your testimony, and thanks for wrapping it up right near that bell there. We appreciate you.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next speaker is Herb Tarbous, followed by Charlene Walker.

HERB TARBOUS: Good afternoon.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

In two previous statements, I've strived to advocate for the people of New Jersey as clearly, concisely, and completely as I am able. At the risk of being redundant, I am once again honored to remind you of Article VIII of the bylaws of this body, which provides for the report to the Legislature in my request to recommend that the Legislature increase the number of legislative districts to accomplish three things.

One, to simplify this reapportionment process. Secondly, to give more voice to the people of this state through additional representation. And third, to increase the capacity of the Legislature to embody, reflect, and enshrine the unique and wonderful diversity of our state.

I trust the value of this change is clear. It will lead to a more representative and sustainable democracy.

I trust that we have a consensus in which creating, nurturing, and maintaining a sustainable democracy is *the* common goal which unites us. Personally, I believe the work of creating this target democracy requires a firm commitment to truth, transparency, and inclusivity.

I've been studying the various components and dynamics of our current political system. I'm sorry to report that it tends to characterize aspects of the entrenched bipartisan bureaucratic system; as fair, transparent, and/or inclusive have, at best, been elusive.

The primary force which continues to empower the entrenched bureaucracy is the exclusion of the voices of the people of New Jersey from the legislative process -- for decades, if not centuries. Both the Commission as a whole, and you as individual patriotic citizens, have in your hands the opportunity to turn the tide. Very simply, the people have spoken.

I urge the Commission to adopt the Unity Map presented by the Fair Districts Coalition. In a larger context of the history of this great state, this is a rare opportunity for the voices of the people to be enshrined in the legislative map.

I wish to express solidarity with my fellow Jerseyans of Middle Eastern descent. I am here today as the grandson of Syrian refugees who

sought refuge from the Armenian genocide, settling in North Plainfield over 100 years ago.

Thank you again for your time and attention, and I wish you wisdom and divine guidance in completing your task.

Thank you very much.

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

Madam Secretary.

The next speaker is Charlene Walker, followed by Holly Willett.

MR. JONES: Ms. Walker?

CHARLENE D. WALKER: Yes, I'm here.

Hello, everyone; thank you. Thank you to the Commission for the opportunity to provide testimony for fair districts that ensure that the voices of every New Jersey matter in our democracy.

My name is Charlene Walker. I'm the Executive Director of Faith in New Jersey, a grassroots multi-ethnic, multi-faith organizing entity in New Jersey with membership in every single county.

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

In our conversations across the state, we found many communities of interest that are reflected in the Fair Districts Unity Map from the Fair Districts Coalition, of which we are part of. As such, we identify communities of interest based on where people worship, shop, spend their spare time, the paths they commute, infrastructure needs -- especially around

flooding -- economic concerns, safety, and healthcare needs. We urge the Commission to use communities of interest to demonstrate a commitment to racial equity to prevent the gerrymandering of the global majority. Please keep communities of interest together.

I'd like to highlight just a few.

The City of Roselle and Linden are common communities of interest. Their spending habits cross townships, both frequenting the local businesses of each town, as well as banking. Route 1 and 9 and St. George Avenue are central to their lives, and everyone seems to frequent the local bakery, Pinho's, myself included. Both communities frequent houses of worship across borders, utilize the bus system, and Roselle residents use the train in Linden to get to work every day.

Both communities are also greatly concerned with flooding in primarily Black and brown areas, and have immigrant communities that need their voices heard.

The members of the City of Camden, Pennsauken, and Merchantville often spend their time in community. Camden and Merchantville residents shop in Pennsauken, worship there, and their families are members and reside in Pennsauken. As one resident, put it, "I'm in Pennsauken multiple times a week."

Pennsauken residents utilize the Camden Waterfront for recreation, and they go to Rutgers Camden and utilize Camden hospitals, to shop, as well as Merchantville.

New Jersey has one of the largest Haitian populations in the country. The Haitian communities in Irvington and the City of Orange are communities of interest. They worship together, frequent restaurants, utilize

childcare in both communities, as well as public transportation. They have similar concerns of language access across government agencies that they interact with, due to travel habits between townships.

In closing, the drawing of maps should (*sic*) reflect serving any political agenda that protects incumbents, rather than one that helps to actually build a true democracy -- a democracy where the votes of the global majority are valued as equally as their white counterparts. One where 20 of the legislative districts reflect our beautiful diversity in New Jersey.

I urge this Commission to be unapologetic about fighting a regressive democracy that welcomes gerrymandering, that silences the voices of constituents in favor of one party over another.

Please put racial equity at the center, and thank you so much for all of your efforts.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much Ms. Walker.

Madam Secretary.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: The next and last speaker on our list today is Holly Willett.

MR. JONES: This is the last? We don't have more? (laughter)

HOLLY WILLETT: You want more? (laughter)

MR. JONES: Absolutely. We saved the best for last, right?

MS. WILLETT: Oh, I hope so.

MR. JONES: Okay.

MS. WILLETT: My name is Holly Willett. I am a resident of Glassboro, but I attend church in Cherry Hill at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Cherry Hill.

And I am representing the Committee on Racial and Economic Equity, from which we've heard from Sue Druckenbrod much earlier in the proceedings.

I'm very grateful to be here today. I'm grateful to everyone of you who are on the Commission, and I'm very grateful to all of the speakers. It has been a real pleasure to listen to people talk about their communities in the wonderful State of New Jersey.

I am here to support the Fair Districts Unity Map. We have all heard the demographics; we don't need to go through those again. I just want to remind everybody that this map meets the criteria that Judge Carchman set out last month.

But I want to talk about some of my personal experiences.

Every Thursday morning I drive into the City of Camden. I drive into the City of Camden with great expectations and great hope and real love. I go as a volunteer to an elementary school, where I'm helping a first grader improve his reading skills. And next week I will start with a second student, I believe.

But as I drive into Camden, I look around me and I see the streets and the housing that are available to my student and his family, and I want better for him.

I live in Glassboro; it's not a wealthy community. Our schools were rated as a B-level district. We are only one step above Camden. But I have the privilege of living in a community that really respects how we live and where we live. And I want that for my student. I want that for all the students in that school. When I go into that school, I see teachers who are doing everything they can to improve the education of those students. I see

parents there, I see other community members working really hard. We all care very much. And the only way that they can really make it, I think, in Camden, is if we have the Fair Districts Unity Map. Because they need that opportunity to vote with Pennsauken and Merchantville so that their voices are heard.

We're all human beings. We may have varying political opinions, but we are more alike than we are different. And I hope that the Commission will think about what you want for your own families and friends in terms of their voting rights, and do as much as you can, to do as much of the Fair District Unity Map, so that other people in the state will have the same voting rights that your families and friends enjoy.

Thank you so much for this opportunity; I really appreciate it.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much, Ms. Willett. And it's a fine way to close this out. The theme was certainly appropriate.

Madam Secretary, Ms. Willett was our last speaker?

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER: There are no other speakers on my list, Mr. Chairman.

MR. JONES: Okay.

Chairman Barlas, any parting comments? (no response)

Okay, maybe the Chairman took a little break.

Judge Carchman?

JUSTICE CARCHMAN: Yes, I just will take one minute.

I'd like to expand the record, if you will.

While I appreciate Mayor Robbi giving me all of the credit for all of the wonderful things that this Commission has accomplished to date, I think that would be unfair. Because I think the public should recognize the

extraordinary leadership of Chairman Jones, and Chairman Barlas, and all of the members of this Commission.

And I point to something that I've referred to before: The historic number -- an expanded number of public meetings, that has been put in place under the leadership of the two Chairs and the agreement of the members of the Commission, has resulted in this extraordinary outpouring, if you will, of participation by the public.

So credit where credit is due. And again, I appreciate Mayor Robbi's comments, but the leadership here has really led in this regard.

So that's all I have to say.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Judge.

Chairman Barlas.

MR. BARLAS: I apologize; I had to walk away. I had two children who were screaming at each other.

So-- But no, listen Judge. I think everyone is echoing your points -- this is everybody, right? You know, Chairman Jones and I-- You know, obviously, our goal was to keep this as cordial and as collaborative as possible. All of our Commissioners, I think, on both sides agree with that sentiment and that feeling. And, you know, you certainly have played a role in it. And, nobody here believes we could have gotten this far without your efforts in this process as well.

MR. JONES: And I co-sign that as well, Judge.

You know, let the record reflect that we are out of speakers. It's been a robust two-and-a-half-hour session with testimony that has value-added to this process. We want all the speakers to know and understand that.

We have another hearing scheduled for next week, the-- What date is that now? The--

MR. BARLAS: Wednesday, February 9.

MR. JONES: The ninth. So just to let everyone know that we are still taking testimony. We are still anxious to hear from the public, and are appreciative of the testimony that we've received to date.

So if there is nothing--

MR. BARLAS: Chairman Jones, if I may, real quick.

MR. JONES: Sure.

MR. BARLAS: To sort of piggyback off what you're saying about our Wednesday meeting: It has been changed to virtual to accommodate both, sort of, the public health emergency of COVID and restrictions of how many people can be in a particular room; and also because we are obviously releasing maps. The Commission is releasing maps on Monday, and we want to afford more people the opportunity to actually be a part of that process and share their thoughts in the meantime.

MR. JONES: Thank you so much, Chairman; and I'm glad you clarified all that. I appreciate it.

If there's nothing else before the Commission, do I hear a motion to adjourn?

MR. BARLAS: Motion.

MR. JONES: It's been moved, and seconded by--

DR. CIRILLO: Second.

MR. JONES: --Commissioner Cirillo.

All those in favor? (affirmative responses)

Guys, have a great weekend, everybody.

(MEETING CONCLUDED)