

1 ALBANY COUNTY LEGISLATIVE OFFICE

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3 JOINT PUBLIC HEARING

4 LOCAL LAW 8 for 2019

5 Authorizing the Notice of Publication regarding
6 The 30-day period for public review and comment,
7 Concerning Realigning Albany County's Thirty-nine
8 Districts

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10 Minutes of Hearing, on 14th day of April, 2022

11 commencing at 4:09 p.m., at 112 State Street,
12 Albany, New York.

13
14 BEFORE: CHAIRMAN LARRY VOLK
15 CHAIRWOMAN MARIE ALLEN CAMPBELL

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17 Reported by James Maglaras
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1 APPEARANCES :

2 ADRIENNE SMITH-KISS
CAITLIN SEVERY

3 CONSTANCE GRAVES
DOMINIC MAZZA

4 DONA BULLUCK
GWEN POPE

5 JEFFREY WICE
JOAN CUNNINGHAM

6 JOAN RAMSEY
JULIA REEB

7 JUSTINE MCCARTHY
KESHANA OWENS-CODY

8 LARRY MAULDIN
LARS DAHL

9 LEIF HARTMARK
MARIE ALLEN CAMPBELL

10 MARISSA ZANFARDINO
MARK MCCUMBER

11 MAZZA, DOMINIC
NASEEM RAMDANI

12 NICHOLAS GLASS
PATRICIA SIBILIA

13 PRITI MATHER
PRIYA SANKALIA

14 SAM MATHER
SITA SUBBARAM

15 TOM CLINGAN
WARREN HAMILTON

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1 (The meeting commenced at 4:09 p.m.)

2 CHAIRPERSON VOLK: Good afternoon. I'm going
3 to call to order this joint public hearing of the
4 Albany County Redistricting Commission, and the
5 Majority Minority District Redistricting
6 Subcommittee. I am Larry Volk, chairman of the
7 commission. I would like to briefly let everyone
8 know what we're going to do today. We have a
9 couple of speakers who have asked to speak early
10 in today's hearing. And so, after the roll call
11 of the commission and the subcommittee members,
12 those two will have their opportunity to speak.
13 Then I and the chair of the subcommittee will
14 provide a brief overview of the redistricting
15 process, and the special role of the commission,
16 and the special role of the subcommittee.

17 Following that, Professor Jeffrey Wice,
18 counsel to the commission and the subcommittee,
19 will provide some legal background, and discuss
20 the differences between this process and the
21 process the State of New York engaged in. The
22 mapping consultant for the commission will
23 describe the current legislative districts, and
24 show how populations have shifted, necessitating
25 changes to district lines. And the mapping

1 consultant to the subcommittee will describe the
2 maps the subcommittee has posted, and their
3 minority composition.

4 Following that, we will hear from any other
5 persons wanting to provide statements at this
6 public hearing. For the record, I'm going to call
7 the roll of the members of the commission. The
8 other members of the commission are Tom Clingan.

9 MR. CLINGAN: I am here.

10 CHAIRPERSON VOLK: Warren Hamilton.

11 MR. HAMILTON: Present via Zoom.

12 CHAIRPERSON VOLK: Leif Hartmark.

13 MR. HARTMARK: Present via Zoom, thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON VOLK: Mark McCumber.

15 MR. MCCUMBER: Here.

16 CHAIRPERSON VOLK: Joan Ramsey.

17 MS. RAMSEY: Here.

18 CHAIRPERSON VOLK: Julia Reeb.

19 MS. REEB: Here.

20 CHAIRPERSON VOLK: Patricia Sibilialia.

21 MS. SIBILIALIA: I'm here.

22 CHAIRPERSON VOLK: And Sita Subbaram.

23 MS. SUBBARAM: I'm here.

24 CHAIRPERSON VOLK: We're also joined on Zoom
25 today by Nick Glass, an intern working with the

1 commission, Jeffrey Wice, and Marissa Zanfardino
2 of New York Law School, counsel to the commission
3 and the subcommittee, and Priya Sankalia of
4 AppGeo, the commission's mapping consultant.
5 Marie, do you want to call the roll for the
6 subcommittee?

7 MS. CAMPBELL: Yes. Thank you, Larry. Good
8 afternoon. My name is Marie Allen Campbell, and I
9 am currently serving as chair of the M.M.D. In
10 addition to myself, the other commissions, which I
11 will now call, are Keshana Owens-Cody.

12 MS. OWENS-CODY: Here.

13 MS. CAMPBELL: Constance Graves.

14 MS. GRAVES: Here.

15 MS. CAMPBELL: Dominic Mazza.

16 MR. MAZZA: Here.

17 MS. CAMPBELL: Dona Bulluck.

18 MS. BULLUCK: Here.

19 MS. CAMPBELL: Larry Mauldin.

20 MR. MAULDIN: Here.

21 MS. CAMPBELL: Adrienne Smith-Kiss. We also
22 have two interns, Justine McCarthy and Naseem
23 Ramdani, and we are also joined by our mapping
24 vendor, ARC Bridge, Sam Mather and Priti Mather.

25 CHAIRPERSON VOLK: Our first comments today

1 are to be from Gwen Pope of Guilderland, joining
2 us on Zoom. Is Ms. Pope there?

3 MS. POPE: I am here, thank you. To the
4 redistricting commission for their ... thank you
5 for allowing me this time to present before you.
6 My name, as stated, is Gwen Pope. I'm a property
7 owner in the Town of Guilderland, and a lifelong
8 resident of Albany County. This afternoon, for
9 your consideration, I am submitting a map to the
10 commission, which consists of thirty-nine
11 districts. And of that number, I believe that
12 there are seven majority minority districts, or
13 M.M.D.s.

14 Some of the advantages of the M.M.D.s are
15 increased ... representation to minorities in the
16 way they deserve to be represented. It brings
17 together communities of interests, and it reflects
18 the growing population of minorities in additional
19 areas of the county. Lars Dahl provided his
20 assistance in the creation of the matter, which is
21 available in ... Mr. Dahl provided his technical
22 expertise on how to draw a map, but was not
23 involved in any substantive decisions. This map
24 was drawn to encourage and to assist the
25 commission in drawing seven M.M.D.s. The map is

1 shared with all users and more, under the account
2 Lars, capital L-A-R-S, underscore Dahl, D-A-H-L,
3 with the map title being Seven M.M.D. Map. Again,
4 I thank you for this opportunity, and we have ...
5 good day.

6 CHAIRPERSON VOLK: Thank you, Ms. Pope. I
7 don't see Joan Cunningham on the screen yet, so we
8 will -- and she was to be the next speaker. We
9 will take her when she arrives. But I would like
10 to speak briefly about redistricting.

11 Redistricting is a process that applies to every
12 legislative body in the country, and takes place
13 after national census, to realign the legislature
14 to account for population changes. The Albany
15 County Redistricting Commission was established by
16 Local Law 8 of 2018, to provide a recommendation
17 for how to realign the Albany County Legislature's
18 thirty-nine districts.

19 Local Law 8 requires the commission to hold
20 no less than four public hearings. The purpose of
21 today's hearing is to allow members of the public
22 to have input into our redistricting process
23 before we draft countywide maps, as well as any
24 comments you may have on the subcommittee's first
25 draft of minority districts. We would like to

1 know what concerns members of the public have, and
2 what specific concepts people would like to make
3 sure we are considering as we draw maps. We are
4 particularly interested in knowing what groups or
5 areas you do not want broken up. The commission
6 will be holding additional public hearings to get
7 your reactions to district maps of the full
8 county, as we get further into the process.

9 The goal is to complete this process and have
10 a report to the county legislature by the end of
11 June. In undertaking redistricting, we are
12 subject to three separate sets of legal
13 constraints -- federal, New York State, and Albany
14 County. At the federal level, redistricting is
15 subject to the equal protection clause of the
16 Fourteenth Amendment, and the Voting Rights Act,
17 which together require that each district have
18 about the same population, and that they are not
19 created in a racially discriminatory fashion.

20 In October of last year, Governor Hochul
21 signed a law that establishes very specific
22 parameters for county redistricting. That new law
23 established six criteria in rank order, from the
24 most to least important. First, the districts
25 must be as nearly equal in population as possible,

1 but in no event can there be a difference of more
2 than five percent between the largest and the
3 smallest.

4 Second, lines cannot be drawn to deny or
5 abridge rights of any racial or language minority
6 group. Third, districts need to be contiguous;
7 that is, you need to be able to go through the
8 entire district without ever leaving it. Fourth,
9 each of the districts needs to be as compact in
10 form as possible. The fifth criterion is really a
11 whole package of things -- not drawn to discourage
12 competition, maintain the core of existing
13 districts, consider political subdivisions and
14 communities of interest, and, to the extent
15 practicable, not divide cities, villages and
16 towns.

17 And the final criterion is to promote the
18 orderly and efficient administration of elections.
19 And now, Marie Allen Campbell, chair of the
20 subcommittee, will discuss the requirements of
21 Local Law 8, and the special role of the Majority
22 Minority District Redistricting Subcommittee under
23 that local law. Thank you. Marie?

24 MS. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Larry. The
25 redistricting Commission and the Majority Minority

1 District Redistricting Subcommittee were
2 established under Albany County Local Law 8 for
3 2019. Albany County Local Law 8 for 2019 is
4 essentially about fairness and equity. It was
5 established to facilitate a non-partisan,
6 independent, inclusive and participatory
7 redistricting process. The establishment of this
8 law followed three legal challenges to Albany
9 County's redistricting efforts that followed the
10 1990, 2000, and 2010 census.

11 All of these challenges resulted in increased
12 representation for minority communities, with the
13 creation of additional majority minority
14 districts. The majority minority district is
15 essentially a district in which a racial group or
16 groups comprise a majority of the district's total
17 population. Under the Voting Rights Act, majority
18 minority districts can be created to prevent
19 minorities' voting strength from being diluted.

20 The M.M.D. was created under the law, to
21 provide a laser focus to ensure fair
22 representation of Albany County minority
23 communities and all aspects of the redistricting
24 process. Under the law specifically, we're
25 charged with fully examining the issues that are

1 unique to majority minority communities and
2 residents, protecting the voting rights of
3 minority residents, and ensuring electoral
4 representation of minority residents residing in
5 majority minority communities. We also have a
6 charge to make a recommendation to the
7 redistricting commission regarding the
8 configuration of majority minority districts.

9 The law requires that we work closely and
10 collaboratively with the Redistricting Commission,
11 that incumbents, candidates and political parties
12 are not considered in drawing district lines, that
13 we don't have undue influence from political
14 parties or candidates in our redistricting
15 process. It also requires that we make available
16 to the public, on the Albany County website, and
17 through electronic media efforts, any draft
18 redistricting plans and concepts or other released
19 data that we come up with, in a form that makes it
20 easy for the public to review it, analyze, and
21 comment on it.

22 The law also requires our redistricting work
23 to be guided by the goal of equal and fair
24 representation of all people in Albany County,
25 consistent with established federal, state and

1 local laws, as interpreted by courts in
2 appropriate jurisdictions. To be transparent,
3 accountable and independent without the undue and
4 improper influence of city-elected officials and
5 their representatives, in that the redistricting
6 work that we do, above all else, be driven by
7 public input.

8 Under Local Law 8 for 2019, the M.M.D. was
9 authorized to acquire its own legal and mapping
10 expertise and staff resources. We're also
11 authorized to hold our own hearings and public
12 forums, to collect and consider information and
13 input from communities at large. The success of
14 this redistricting work is highly dependent on
15 engagement and input from you, the public.

16 We encourage you to visit the redistricting
17 website at albanycounty.com/acrc, and to stay
18 tuned for additional opportunities to participate.
19 In addition, questions, comments, submissions can
20 also be emailed to us at
21 MMDredistricting@albanycountyny.gov, or to the
22 Redistricting Commission at
23 redistrictingcommission@albanycountyny.gov. Thank
24 you.

25 CHAIRPERSON VOLK: I still don't see Ms.

1 Cunningham having appeared. Professor Wice, could
2 you take on at this point?

3 PROF. WICE: Sure, I'd be glad to. Well,
4 good afternoon, commission members and the public.
5 I am Jeff Wice, a professor at New York Law
6 School, based in New York City, and we are
7 providing non-partisan legal guidance and
8 assistance to both the commission and the Majority
9 Minority Subcommittee. I'm also joined -- not in
10 presentation, but here on Zoom -- with Marissa
11 Zanfardino, a law student at New York Law School,
12 who's been assisting me in this effort.

13 The co-chair just gave a very good overview
14 of the law, and I'll just try to flesh out a few
15 key points a little bit more. A basic thing I'll
16 put out there is why redistrict. Now, we know
17 that article one, section two of the U.S.
18 Constitution requires that a census be taken once
19 every ten years, and that districts, from the
20 congress to the state legislature to the county
21 legislature, all have to be based on what's called
22 a one-person, one-vote doctrine, that all
23 districts have to be equally populated -- that one
24 district has to be of somewhat the same size as
25 every other district.

1 And as Chairperson Volk mentioned, under New
2 York law, the size of this difference under one-
3 person, one-vote, can't exceed the overall
4 difference of five percent, meaning that districts
5 will be on average the same population, but they
6 can differ by perhaps two and a half percent
7 points under, or two and a half percent points
8 over the average population of each district. And
9 we have this redistricting process because it's of
10 such critical importance to everyone's daily
11 lives.

12 If you look outside your window, at the
13 streets, the hospitals, the schools, the senior
14 centers -- everything that government does, in one
15 way or another, is determined, as the basic root
16 of it all, by redistricting because the people who
17 represent you in Washington, in the state capital
18 of Albany, in the county legislature in Albany,
19 are all elected based on the lines that are drawn,
20 that we use to elect them to office. And the
21 lines that are being enacted this year, for the
22 county legislature, will be in place for ten
23 years.

24 We don't do this more than once a decade.
25 There are no second chances. We want to make sure

1 that we get the job done right. And we also
2 followed other laws that were mentioned before.
3 We have the federal Voting Rights Act. We have
4 the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution,
5 and we have the New York State Constitution
6 Statutes, as well as the Albany County Local Law
7 8. And in essence, under the federal law, under
8 the Fourteenth Amendment to the Voting Rights Act,
9 we'd like to make sure of a few things.

10 First, that where we have situations where
11 the minority community in a single-member district
12 can comprise fifty percent or more, based on the
13 ... voting-age population, and the situations
14 where there's a high level of racially polarized
15 voting. By that I mean where the white majority
16 voters outvote or deny minority voters their
17 ability to elect their preferred candidates. Now,
18 if Albany County has been found to have violated
19 the Voting Rights Act on several occasions, that
20 would directly to this new process of the county,
21 and the creation of the Majority Minority
22 Subcommittee.

23 In 2015, under the directive of a federal
24 judge, Judge Kahn, in the Northern District
25 Federal Court of New York, Albany County was found

1 to have violated the Voting Rights Act, and was
2 directed to create a number of new minority
3 districts with the county legislature. Those
4 districts are still in effect, and it's the task
5 of this commission to determine how to best
6 continue those districts in a new plan. Albany
7 County will make every effort to avoid a Voting
8 Rights violation again in the future.

9 The Fourteenth Amendment also does something
10 called prohibiting racial gerrymandering. Now, on
11 one side of the coin, we want to ensure that
12 minority vote dilution -- I'm sorry, that minority
13 voters are not diluted, that minority voters be
14 afforded a fair, adequate reasonable number of
15 minority districts. We also wanted to makes sure
16 that we don't unnecessarily add too many minority
17 voters into a district, and then waste their vote.

18 If a district could be created -- and I'm
19 being purely hypothetical here -- where there are
20 fifty or fifty-one or fifty-two percent minority
21 voting-age population -- and by that, I mean
22 people who are eighteen and over -- and the social
23 signs tell us that we can elect the preferred
24 minority community candidate, then anything over
25 that could be considered ... or denying the

1 minority voters their ability, in a neighboring
2 district, to elect their preferred candidates
3 there as well.

4 So we want to make sure we avoid a Voting
5 Rights Act violation, which the county has already
6 encountered, and we want to make sure that we
7 avoid ... Those are really the two guiding
8 principles for minority representation. You know,
9 under federal law also, the Fourteenth Amendment
10 to the Constitution had been seen by some as
11 banding so-called partisan gerrymandering, for
12 district lines for partisan gain.

13 That is likely one issue this commission is
14 going to avoid because we are not taking into
15 consideration political data, except where it's
16 necessary for Voting Rights Act analysis and
17 compliance. So for all intents and purposes, I do
18 not think that partisan gerrymandering is going to
19 be a major factor. At the state level, we have
20 New York State statutes, referred to usually as
21 ... Municipal Home Rule Law. And the Municipal
22 Home Rule Law was amended last year, as the chair
23 indicated, to create, for the first time, criteria
24 that all counties and cities and townships in the
25 state have to follow.

1 And, as mentioned earlier, that includes the
2 five percent overall population deviation
3 standard, the fair representation of minority
4 voters, but also that districts have to be
5 reasonably compact -- that they can't be fifty-
6 five sided monstrosities that look like a
7 Rorschach test, but that they are -- I won't say
8 round or square or rectangular, but more or less
9 regular-shaped, compact. Also, districts have to
10 be contiguous. You have to be able to travel from
11 one end of the district to another, and not leave
12 the district.

13 And then other criteria include looking at
14 communities of interest, usually self-defined as
15 socioeconomic, religious, racial, ethnic,
16 educational, medical. We look at where people
17 self-identify as where they live, having a
18 community of interest with their neighbors. So we
19 have that criteria to look at. We also want to be
20 able to look at the cores of the preexisting
21 districts, and to look at established neighborhood
22 ... So those are the various kinds of criteria
23 that we have to deal with.

24 It's our goal to make sure that when the
25 process is over, by the end of June, that each

1 district that's developed by this commission
2 stands up to this federal law and to the state
3 law, to the extent that each one is defensible,
4 that each one of these districts is one that
5 withstands any legal challenge. And Albany County
6 is going through many firsts this year -- the
7 first time using this kind of admission, the first
8 time redistricting after the court litigation, and
9 as with every jurisdiction across New York State,
10 working with this new, untested, never used before
11 state criteria.

12 So we have several different challenges to
13 work with, and the public hearing process is a
14 critical step to be able to listen to the public,
15 to get your input, give your comments, listen to
16 what you want, and then hopefully develop plans
17 that will both follow your recommendations, but
18 also work with the law. And the law, of
19 course -- the criteria, you know, often require
20 judgment calls, but we're not at that point yet.

21 Now, let me close by just mentioning the
22 difference between Albany County's redistricting,
23 and the New York State process. For the last two
24 hundred and some odd years, New York State has
25 redrawn congressional and state legislative

1 boundaries through a simple act of the
2 legislature. The legislatures basically drew
3 their own lines, and drew the lines for the
4 congress members. In 2014, voters enacted a
5 constitutional amendment that changed that
6 process, essentially by approving two things in
7 one amendment.

8 The first is that the amendment created what
9 was called, on paper, the New York State
10 Independent Redistricting Commission, and that
11 would be -- and that was a commission tasked with
12 recommending to the legislature plans for
13 congress, the state senate, and the state
14 assembly. The commission, in name, was called
15 independent and fair. It was advisory, in that
16 its plans had to be sent to the state legislature
17 for approval, and then a sign-off by a governor,
18 before they could become law.

19 The second thing that the amendment did in
20 2014 was to create criteria for the commission and
21 the legislature to follow, not the same criteria
22 that the county has to follow. The state criteria
23 for the county to follow are actually ranked in
24 priority order. The state criteria were not
25 ranked in any order, and were left to either the

1 commission or the legislature to figure out how to
2 best accomplish that.

3 What happened with the commission, ten people
4 were appointed to serve. There were eight
5 appointees from the state legislature. Each of
6 the four legislative leaders -- the speaker, the
7 senate president and the two minority
8 leaders -- each appointed two people to serve, and
9 that totaled eight. Those eight people then
10 selected two additional members, neither of whom
11 could have been registered as Democrats or
12 Republicans, and they went ahead and did that, and
13 reached a total of ten members.

14 They were tasked with developing up to two
15 sets of plans to send to the legislature. The
16 first set of plans -- they couldn't agree on the
17 first set of plans, so in early January they set
18 two sets of competing plans with senate, assembly
19 and congress -- a Democratic plan, and a
20 Republican plan -- and the legislature rejected
21 both. Immediately afterwards, the commission was
22 tasked with going back and developing a second set
23 of maps to send to the legislature. But at that
24 point, the commission failed to even get that far,
25 and it basically went out of business, failing to

1 reach their second set of maps.

2 So at that point -- we're now in early
3 January, mid-January -- the legislature took it
4 upon itself to pick up where the commission left
5 off, and draw its own maps, and that culminated in
6 a rather rushed process because of the need to
7 have plans in place for the petitioning period
8 that started around March 1st, that on February 2nd
9 they passed a congressional set of assembly plans.
10 Governor Hochul signed the plans into law on
11 February 3rd, and about two, three hours later, a
12 lawsuit was filed, challenging the plans in
13 Steuben County State Supreme Court.

14 The judge in that case only had two months to
15 hear and decide the case, and his decision was
16 basically that the legislature did not have the
17 authority to redistrict because the commission
18 failed to do its job, by failing to send a second
19 set of maps to the legislature. The judge also
20 found that the subsequently enacted congressional
21 plan was a partisan gerrymander with the state
22 constitution ostensibly prohibited. And at that
23 point, the petitioning process was well under way,
24 using the new maps.

25 The judge's decision came down around late

1 February -- I'm sorry, in late March -- and it was
2 immediately stayed by the Appellant Division. And
3 where we stand now is that the Appellant Division
4 is letting the new plans that were enacted in
5 February, go forward and be used for the spring
6 primary. However, the Appellant Division is going
7 to hold a hearing on the merits of the ...
8 decision in Rochester, on April 20th. And whatever
9 happens at the Appellant Division level, which
10 would be either to uphold the maps that the
11 legislature drew, or reject them -- either way, it
12 goes back to Albany, not to just the legislature,
13 but to the State Court of Appeals to hear, and
14 they'll probably hear the case and decide it by
15 sometime in late May.

16 So the state process is up in the air. The
17 press are highly critical of what the legislature
18 did. Maybe there's some support for it. Either
19 way, the point I want to make and leave with you
20 is that the state process was done on a different
21 track, different rules, different process,
22 different procedures, different outcomes. So
23 regardless of whatever happens at the state level,
24 I'm not going to pass judgment on it.

25 What the county is doing is really on a

1 different track, on a different level, that the
2 commission here has been constituted in a way so
3 as not to break down. The new state criteria
4 provides very definitive guidance for the
5 commission to work with, and as opposed to what
6 the state legislature wasn't able to do, by virtue
7 of today's hearing and other hearings, have now
8 reached efforts that the commissions are making.
9 Efforts are underway to make sure that the public
10 is heard, and that your input is taken into
11 consideration. So that is my presentation on the
12 law, where things stand at the state level, and
13 why it's a different process here than Albany
14 County. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON VOLK: Thank you, Professor Wice.
16 We are now joined by Joan Cunningham of Bethlehem,
17 who wanted to make a statement to the commission
18 and the subcommittee. Ms. Cunningham?

19 MS. CUNNINGHAM: Yes. Thank you, and thank
20 you, Professor Wice. It's always very nice to
21 hear you simplify a very complicated process. I
22 first just want to applaud you all, and thank you
23 for your service, for this very, very important
24 redistricting process. I have to admit, this is a
25 little -- it's a little funny for me. I was the

1 primary author of the local law that created this
2 redistricting commission, and honestly it was with
3 such delight for me to read about all of you, your
4 bios, your expertise, kind of to see all of the
5 process steps in action on the website.

6 And honestly, you know, it's a little surreal
7 because we took such pains to kind of think
8 through a process that would make sense, and how
9 the M.M.D. subcommittee could sort of do its work
10 in the context of the broader commission. And in
11 drafting it, this took a long time -- a couple of
12 years -- ... couple of years, and a lot of push
13 and pull. And honestly, listening to Professor
14 Wice, it is my great hope that your work will be
15 successful, and that we could point to this
16 process as essentially a much more sort of
17 independent and community input and, you know,
18 sort of driven through this process that is
19 separate from the political apparatus.

20 Now, as a county legislator, I'm obviously
21 very interested in what you're going to do to
22 legislate a district thirty-four, and I know it is
23 in your capable hands. So I just mostly want to
24 just thank you. But I'm so proud of the work that
25 you are doing in the structure, and really the

1 credentials of all of you, which bring to this
2 process just decades of top notch relevant
3 community and academic and public service, and law
4 experience. So I'm a little ... because honestly,
5 this is like a real surreal kind of exciting
6 moment for me.

7 I did want to just highlight something that I
8 noted, and I'm not an expert -- and I am not an
9 expert in mapping and how to juggle this process
10 in the context of making sure you are adhering to
11 all appropriate statutes, and protecting the
12 voting rights of communities of color, and sort of
13 building out these new districts in a way that is
14 fair -- but it did strike me, as I looked at the
15 M.M.D. map to kind of see. That is your first
16 step, in kind of building out. And the one thing
17 I noted -- and again, you know, this is in all of
18 your capable hands. But I did note just one thing
19 with two sort of highlights for me. And one of
20 the election districts -- legislative districts
21 rather -- legislative district three, which runs
22 sort of that northern district, I did note that
23 there's sort of this interesting kind of appendage
24 where that district sort of goes into crossing,
25 you know, ... out of Albany and into that

1 community.

2 And, you know, I looked at the other
3 districts as well, and they seem to kind of make
4 more sense. But I did wonder about that, and I
5 wonder if in the context of making sure that the
6 voting rights and the representation for the rest
7 of that district essentially -- the Albany part,
8 you know -- we want to make sure that all of the
9 populous, their voting rights are protected, and
10 preserving that M.M.D. But I did wonder about
11 crossing those municipal borders, and whether that
12 would somehow compromise the goals of kind of
13 keeping communities together, and also, you know,
14 keeping neighborhoods together, and that
15 objective, and also the fact that it's obviously
16 aiming to preserving the voting rights of the
17 M.M.D.

18 So I just wanted to highlight that, as
19 something from a very interested observer who, you
20 know, was looking at this first step as being
21 obviously very, very pivotal. From this step, you
22 will need to obviously build out and create the
23 rest of the maps, but I would hope that you would
24 give that another look. And if there's any effort
25 that could be made to kind of leave that

1 appendage, and kind of bring that district three
2 more -- if you have to add to it, more into
3 Albany, kind of preserving. And it seems like,
4 from my very novice look at it, that that may be
5 possible, rather than pulling ... into that
6 district.

7 So that was my only comment, but, again,
8 congratulations to all of you for participating in
9 this, and I know you will all continue to do
10 excellent work, and I'm proud to have played a
11 part in the structure. I hope there aren't days
12 where you say to yourself who on God's green earth
13 created this map because it doesn't make sense at
14 all, how we structure this. We tried very, very
15 hard to actually think through each sort of step
16 to how it would work, and whether we remove these
17 things out. But obviously we might not have
18 thought of everything, so I hope that this
19 structure provides a good apparatus for you to
20 lean in and figure out how to accomplish the very,
21 very important job that you are tasked with. So
22 thank you so much for the opportunity to comment.

23 CHAIRPERSON VOLK: Thank you, Ms. Cunningham.
24 At this time, I would like to ask Priya Sankalia
25 of AppGeo to give us a description of the existing

1 thirty-nine districts, and how the population has
2 changed, and why all of the district lines are
3 going to need to change. Priya?

4 MS. SANKALIA: Good afternoon, everybody.
5 Thank you for joining us. My name is Priya
6 Sankalia. I am with Applied Geographics. We are
7 the consultants supporting the redistricting
8 commission in this redistricting effort. Thank
9 you also Professor Wice for your insightful
10 comments. And I will be -- I'm just going to
11 share my screen here, to give you a quick
12 presentation on what I'm going to talk about
13 today, and then hand it over to my colleague,
14 Caitlyn Severy, who is going to walk you through a
15 little bit of the software that we are using,
16 which is open to the public to submit plans, and
17 she will use that too, to also walk through the
18 districts and the changes, as we can see what the
19 old districts are, and how they need to be
20 changed.

21 So what they're going to do today as, you
22 know, I talk about the data that we used for the
23 current districts and population deviations, how
24 you can see them. You can also see them in the
25 application of how you, as the public, can provide

1 input -- provide it through the online software.
2 But of course, you know, there are other ways to
3 provide input as well, and then how do you submit
4 plans -- I'll talk about that -- and then we'll go
5 into the --. So you'll be using this state-of-
6 the-art software, called maptitude for
7 redistricting, to do all of this work. And the
8 job plans that are created by the commission will
9 be for these specific parameters that Professor
10 Wice also explained. And note that this is going
11 to be a very transparent process with public
12 input, and other commissions working together to
13 come up with plans that will inform the ...

14 As far as the current districts ... we have
15 generated a map, which is available on the
16 website, which shows you all the current district
17 with the 2020 population, and in this case
18 adjusted population ... individuals, so you can
19 see that is on the website, and you can scroll
20 around on that map. But you can also see this
21 right in the ... application, which is what will
22 be your default setting. You can see the current
23 map, and then ... There are two ways of looking
24 at the current map, and then at the population
25 deviations.

1 Now, as Professor Wice described to us, what
2 we are looking for is an ideal population ... of
3 eight thousand one hundred and five individuals.
4 There are thirty-nine districts in Albany, and the
5 goal is that there should be a plus or minus two
6 point five deviation from that ideal population.
7 The data that we've provided in the application
8 was drawn from the census, adjusted from ... You
9 can see the highlighted rows will show you how
10 that deviation is way off, and that needs to be
11 adjusted, and the only way that could be done is
12 essentially moving census blocks, groups or tracks
13 to adjust that population.

14 As far as how we provide the input -- like I
15 said, using maptitude online redistricting, also
16 called MORE. It is an online mapping tool
17 available to the public. You can go in, create a
18 login, and create your own ... Everything is of
19 course available on the website, and there is also
20 a user ... that you can follow. There are
21 instructions within the applications as well,
22 which guide you through the process, and you'll be
23 given a bit of a walkthrough today as well. And
24 there are other -- you know, all of this
25 information is on the website ... screenshot of

1 it, but all of this is available there.

2 As far as providing -- you know, submitting
3 other forms of input is you can provide a
4 description. You can provide testimony by coming
5 to these public hearings. You can also use other
6 software to write and submit your comments, your
7 maps, through ... As far as submitting draft
8 plans for the commission to review, the process is
9 that you create the draft plan using the online
10 tools, and then you can share it or submit it. So
11 the share would be you would share it with all
12 users, and we're ... because Ms. Pope mentioned
13 that she has submitted offline, which is shared
14 with everybody. So when my colleague Caitlyn
15 shows you the application, you will see it.

16 You can also submit a plan after making all
17 your modifications. That will go directly to the
18 commission, and we, as the consultants, will
19 receive that and check with the commission. You
20 can also submit a plan focused on particular
21 areas. So if you are concerned about a specific
22 area, you can, you know, create that plan and
23 submit it, to make sure that you describe what you
24 have done, and explain what you are submitting.
25 But it does not need to be a complete plan, so you

1 don't have to download the entire county and fix
2 all the deviations to submit it. You can submit
3 it even if you're just interested in a particular
4 area.

5 And then of course there's the step where the
6 commission reviews the plans. They will review
7 the submitted plans, and then also make them
8 publicly available on the website. We'll be
9 collaborating and incorporating all of these
10 comments, and post ... Okay, so I'm going to hand
11 it over now to my colleague, Caitlyn Severy, who
12 will walk you through the application, and also
13 through the districts and all the populations of
14 the current districts, and why we need to do
15 districts. Caitlyn?

16 MS. SEVERY: Thanks, Priya. Hi, my name is
17 Caitlyn Severy. I am a G.I.S. analyst with App
18 Geographics. I am going to do a quick walkthrough
19 here of the maptitude online redistricting, just
20 to give everyone an idea. Let me share my screen
21 real quick. So when you go to the Albany County
22 mapping website, this is what it's going to look
23 like. There is the online -- the user guide here,
24 which, if you need some help walking through, this
25 is where you're going to click on this maptitude

1 online redistricting.

2 It's going to bring you to this page right
3 here. You can create a new username for the
4 online redistricting commission. You're going to
5 have the same login here, which you'll enter here.
6 You can go and log in for members of the public.
7 It could be a new username. When you log in,
8 you'll come on to this site here. It will bring
9 you to your plans. Any plans that you have
10 created on your own username are going to be right
11 here. Any plans that have been shared, if you go
12 to new plan, shared, you can see the ...

13 As mentioned before, the plan is here. You
14 can go on create map, open up that map, see what
15 others have shared with the commission. If you
16 want to create your own plan from scratch, you're
17 going to go on initial, select legislative
18 district, and click create. You want to make sure
19 you go through this because it's going to have all
20 the current districts. Everything's going to be
21 set up as far as cities, roads, everything is
22 going to be ... and you can name this whatever
23 you'd like, so I'm just going to name it Test One.

24 So after this ... here, it's going to bring
25 up your map. So as you can see, I'm sure this

1 looks familiar to everyone. I'm going to go over
2 some of these tools here. So here you can switch
3 your language, if you like, to any of these common
4 languages here. If you forget any of this, and
5 you need some help walking through, you can click
6 on tips. It will walk you through what all the
7 boxes do here. The help button here is going to
8 bring up a side panel which will walk you through
9 the steps.

10 I do recommend using this, your first time
11 doing it, just to make sure you don't miss
12 anything, and it kind of keeps things a little
13 clearer. You can keep it up on the side while you
14 work over here. For this, I'm going to take it
15 away. Contact just brings up the email for the
16 redistricting commission, so anyone can email with
17 questions. My plans will take you back to the
18 page we were just on, that shows you all your
19 plans, where you can create new ones, or open
20 existing plans. Logout is going to log you out.
21 Anything that you do on here is --

22 MS. SANKALIA: Caitlyn, sorry to interrupt
23 you, but can you slow down a little bit?

24 MS. SEVERY: Yeah, absolutely. Sorry, I'm
25 trying to keep it short and sweet, but I can

1 definitely slow down.

2 MS. SANKALIA: Yeah, slow down. Thank you.

3 MS. SEVERY: Yeah, no problem. Anything you
4 do here, with any work that's done, is going to
5 save automatically. You do not need to press the
6 save button. There is no save button. As you can
7 see, it will save automatically. If you go back
8 to my plans, when you come back into it, it's
9 still going to be there, any work that you've
10 done. You could do compilation summaries. So for
11 reports, say you want to do any sort of summary
12 ... you press okay. It's going to bring up a nice
13 spreadsheet of the district number, the population
14 in the district, the deviation, and the deviation
15 percentage, and then whichever field you've
16 chosen.

17 So here you can choose as many fields as you
18 like. It's going to bring it up here. You can
19 share it, download it, print it, whatever you need
20 to do, which is very convenient. You can also ...
21 which is going to bring up every district here.
22 Let me scroll down -- same deal. You can share
23 it, print it, download it, whatever you'd like to
24 do. Do go over this a little bit later in my
25 presentation, it's just going to make sure that

1 you don't have any areas on your map that are
2 outside, or any areas that are non-contiguous.

3 Find -- if you're looking for a specific
4 address, you can click on the find tool here. You
5 can search for address, or if you'd like to search
6 for a district, you can search for the district
7 here, and it will zoom you right in. After you
8 search on the address and press find, it will zoom
9 into that address for you. Print map, if you'd
10 like to share it, and then share plan. So you can
11 email your plan to people in a shapefile format,
12 which is a geographic file, and you can email that
13 to whomever you'd like, if you want ideas, or if
14 you just kind of want to share it and see what
15 people think.

16 Share with all users is going to share with
17 everyone that connects us to the maptitude online,
18 so that's going to be the public. Submit to
19 administrators is going to submit it to just the
20 administrators, so that they can look it over, and
21 they can share it with all users if they'd like,
22 after reviewing. Here we have the zoom tools. So
23 you click on here, you can click it once to zoom
24 in just a little bit. If you'd like to get
25 further in, you can click, hold down, create a

1 box, and it will zoom you all the way in. Same
2 with the zoom-out tool -- click once, it zooms out
3 a bit. Hold and make a square, it will zoom out
4 more. Say you get lost in the map somewhere, no
5 problem. You can go ahead and click this, and it
6 will bring you right back to the initial display.

7 This hand tool -- the hand here -- is just
8 going to be for any sort of dragging. Whenever
9 you're going through the districts, and you want
10 to just drag down the map, you're going to use
11 this. The identify tool here is going to identify
12 anything ... clicking right here and it's going to
13 bring up all the data for that area, so any census
14 block data, census block brief data, cities,
15 rivers, streets -- anything you could need,
16 there's all sorts of data in here. So anything
17 you ... whatever you click on, is going to show up
18 here today.

19 As far as these toolbars on the side, the
20 three lines here are going to expand or contract.
21 So for display, right here for layers, this bar
22 right here is going to affect the label size.
23 Choose the big bars. If you find them getting in
24 your way, that's no problem. You can go back and
25 reduce them in size. For the demonstration I'm

1 going to keep them big because I think it's
2 helpful. Right here the layers are going to show
3 the census checks, villages and cities, towns and
4 districts. Districts are outlined in the black
5 here. For these, I find the ... helpful, but it's
6 not necessary.

7 The district I.D. will bring up a different
8 color for each district. I think that's very
9 helpful when moving things around, and you've got
10 to keep things more clear, or you can look at
11 population density, which is also very helpful.
12 And right here you can see all the map layers
13 updates. If you click on this map right here ...
14 right here, it's going to bring up all the sorts
15 of layers that you can look at. It's also going
16 to show you the display scale.

17 So as you can see, anything outside of ... is
18 not being displayed right now because we're too
19 zoomed out. If you go to the bottom left-hand of
20 the map, you can see what scale you're at right
21 now. So we can't see the Albany city
22 neighborhoods until we zoom in, but if we zoom in,
23 turn it on, it pops up right here with the names
24 for you. You can turn on and off anything you'd
25 like. It's up to you. Here are the ... It gets

1 rid of this.

2 Right here it's going to show all your
3 districts, and all your data for them. This is
4 helpful to keep up while you work on it. It shows
5 all thirty-nine, all the information. If you want
6 to focus on one thing, or you want to get rid of
7 something, you can click on this filter tool right
8 here. Okay, so let me do that. Click on the
9 filter tool right here, and you can move things
10 out. Say we don't want the population -- you do,
11 but if you didn't -- you click on it, press the
12 arrow to move it over. It gets rid of it in the
13 table. If you change your mind, you can go ahead
14 and select it, move it back over, and it drops it
15 right there. So this way you can kind of focus on
16 anything you'd like, and you can see a change ...

17 For the redistricting tab, this is how you're
18 going to be moving around your district in the
19 census blocks. So for target end source -- let me
20 zoom in a little bit here, to show you. Target is
21 going to be whatever district you want to move
22 things to. So source is going to be you're taking
23 away ... So say I want to take something from
24 thirty-one --district thirty-one there -- and move
25 it to district thirty-nine, my target is going to

1 be district thirty-nine. My source is going to be
2 district thirty-one.

3 So it helps with the green line. It's going
4 to be where you're moving to. The red line is
5 what you're taking away from. So it outlines that
6 for you, and makes it a little bit easier. You
7 can also -- if you would like to focus on one
8 district, but move from multiples, you can choose
9 all as your source. And anything you choose can
10 ... district thirty-nine. I recommend doing one
11 at a time, but it's sort of up to you. You can
12 select by census block, census block group, or
13 census tracked. So it's going to go smallest to
14 largest. Any way you want to do it, whatever's
15 easiest for you. I'm going to show from census
16 block, and there's a couple of different ways to
17 sort.

18 So when you choose the ... it's going to
19 choose one at a time, and it will highlight it
20 right here for you. You can select as many as you
21 like. Here we go. And when you press this
22 checkmark right here, it's going to go and it just
23 moves those right over to thirty-nine, voila. You
24 can see there's a piece missing here, and I'm
25 going to leave that as per the demonstration. But

1 you can see here, things have changed. When you
2 click on here, again, ... So you can see how the
3 population is going to change, the ... is going to
4 change. That's going to happen if you move this
5 into here.

6 You can also select via this circle tool. If
7 you click hold and drag, it will select anything
8 that the circle touches, and we can move that
9 over. Say you select the wrong thing, no problem.
10 If you press this X tool right here, it unselects
11 it for you. There is also this tool here. So
12 this is going to be a drawing tool, where you can
13 go ahead and draw online. You do not need to
14 outline what you're trying to pull over. As long
15 as it goes through the district even a little bit,
16 it's going to go ahead and catch there.

17 So just double-click to complete your
18 drawing, press okay, moves it over. If you made a
19 mistake, you can press undo, and it will go back
20 and just fix that for you. I can unselect here.
21 There we go. When you are finished moving things
22 around, and you have all your percentages
23 ready -- like you said, you want plus or minus two
24 point five percent, which is about two hundred and
25 three people. The ideal value is eight thousand

1 one hundred and five. If you have everything all
2 set, you can go ahead to your plan integrity, just
3 to double-check your ... areas. Awesome, there's
4 no ... areas, and that is exactly what we want,
5 perfect. And then we want to find non-contiguous
6 areas.

7 As you can see right here, this is a mistake.
8 That needs to be pulled in. It's going to
9 highlight the area that -- right here is one
10 particular ... If you press the zoom tool here,
11 it will zoom you right in to the area that needs
12 to be fixed. I'm just going to draw around it,
13 double click, okay. We have a name. I'm going to
14 go here, press it, perfect. Everything is all
15 good, I believe. When you'd like to submit it,
16 you can submit it to administrators. This will
17 also pop up with issues. So if you have districts
18 that are too large -- there's too many
19 people -- it's going to show you right here, hey,
20 there's an issue somewhere.

21 You need to go back and look at it and fix
22 it, before submitting it, or you can submit it ...
23 You can also share it with all users, or you
24 can -- like I said, most people actually let
25 somebody take a look at it. Now I'm going to put

1 the display on to district I.D. so you can get a
2 look at it. And we can go ahead and look at all
3 the districts here. So, like, if you pull up this
4 table right here, go a bit down. So the district
5 numbers are going to be what's on the top here.

6 This is district thirty-three, district nine,
7 district thirty-four, et cetera. And this is
8 going to be the percent deviation. So you want,
9 like you said, plus or minus two point five
10 percent. ... obviously this is not, but these are
11 the districts here. District thirty-six here has
12 a population of eight thousand four hundred and
13 sixty-five people. It is surrounding Bethlehem,
14 which is district thirty-five. Thirty-four, nine,
15 thirty-three, is going to be -- I'm sorry for my
16 pronunciation, but Voorheesville.

17 It has seven thousand six hundred and eighty-
18 nine people here. You can go through. You can
19 look at the population of minority groups as well.
20 There's also the data in here ... Like I said,
21 again, if you would like to focus on one group,
22 you can click filter, filter out whatever you
23 don't want to look at, and you can work from that.
24 New Scotland is going to be district thirty-eight.
25 District thirty-seven here, Caymans, Coeymans ...

1 thirty-nine. ... and I'm so sorry, my computer is
2 really freezing up on me. Up in district thirty-
3 nine -- Priya, do you want to see if you could
4 pull this up? My computer is really freezing
5 right now.

6 MS. SANKALIA: Oh, I can do it. Give me one
7 second.

8 MS. SEVERY: Sorry about that.

9 MS. SANKALIA: Okay, can you see my screen?

10 MS. SEVERY: Uh-huh.

11 MS. SANKALIA: Okay. So just following on
12 what Caitlyn was showing, this is thirty-nine. As
13 you can see, it is a whole point two one percent
14 of deviation from our point two five. It
15 encompasses several towns. It's a large district,
16 but it now at seven thousand seven hundred and
17 sixty-four. That's the population. If you look
18 at thirty-one, it covers a little bit of Knox and
19 Altamont. It has a deviation of three point o-
20 five.

21 I think Caitlyn already showed New Scotland,
22 and you can pan around and look at the entire
23 county this way, and see how -- where are the big
24 adjustments that ... And if you look, there are
25 some that are okay. But if you look further up

1 north, there seems to be a significant, you know,
2 need for change. As you can see this is eighteen,
3 which is eighteen point eighty-two percent
4 deviation. So this is definitely something that
5 needs adjustment.

6 Similarly, nineteen is nine point four six,
7 and you can see that the neighbors show you the
8 populations from those census groups. But this
9 is -- 2016 is also pretty high. The seventeen ...
10 high, but not as much, so a lot of adjustments
11 would be with the ... in these northern districts,
12 and you can actually take a lot of the blocks
13 down. And then you get into all these areas here,
14 which are just not ... You have fourteen, twenty-
15 five, twenty-four, twenty-six, which is I believe
16 twenty o-nine percent on that deviation, so that's
17 what it looks like in Albany's -- in all these
18 districts just north of Albany.

19 So I think this gives you a good sense, if
20 you are in the application as well, what are the
21 areas that are going to need attention. And what
22 I'm going to do now, of course, is hand over to
23 ARC Bridge, who will focus on the City of Albany,
24 which is where all these ... districts are, so I
25 won't give the details here. But ... you can

1 actually turn on the little bit more context when
2 you are looking at the M.M.D.s. So this is
3 your -- these are ... So that's it for us, and I
4 will hand it now back to ...

5 CHAIRPERSON VOLK: Thank you Priya and
6 Caitlyn. Appreciate that. Marie, do you want to
7 introduce Sam and Priti to talk about the M.M.D.
8 maps?

9 MS. CAMPBELL: Sure. At this time we're
10 going to have Sam Mather and Priti Mather, of ARC
11 Bridge, display the maps. The maps that they're
12 going to display -- the first one is a current map
13 with the census data layered over, that shows the
14 current M.M.D districts. They're also going to
15 display a map that shows minority population
16 across Albany County, and lastly they're going to
17 display a very preliminary map that shows an
18 increase of the majority minority districts. It's
19 all yours, Sam and Priti.

20 MS. MATHER: Very good afternoon. My name is
21 Priti Mather, and I am representing ARC Bridge
22 Consulting. I have prepared a PowerPoint
23 presentation for you, that I am going to walk
24 through, and then also, like Marie said, I'm going
25 to show you a very preliminary plan one -- or Plan

1 B, as we call it -- focusing on the N20 districts.
2 So I'm going to share my screen. So I want to
3 begin by showing you the county demographics based
4 on 2020 Census. So what you're seeing on this
5 part of the screen is the data which is used for
6 the district. And here we have the racial and
7 ethnic composition of the county, and we are also
8 showing it to you down in the graph below.

9 What you see on the right-hand side is the
10 current ... of the state-adjusted population for
11 the County of Albany. And just let me show you
12 that there is a minor difference, and this state-
13 adjusted population is adjustment for incarcerated
14 population. So you can see that Albany County is
15 sixty-six point eight percent non-Hispanic white.
16 We have a small percentage of Hispanic population,
17 thirteen point one-two percent non-Hispanic black
18 population, and seven point seven-one non-Hispanic
19 Asian population.

20 So with this, what we did was we looked at
21 the data. We looked at all thirty-nine districts,
22 and the county has thirty-nine districts, and we
23 looked at the ideal population. The ideal
24 population is the total population, divided by the
25 number of districts in the county. So that tells

1 you eight thousand one hundred and five. What we
2 did was we looked at the population -- the 2020
3 adjusted population of each district -- and we
4 color-coded them, so that we could see right off
5 the bat which districts have more population, and
6 which have less.

7 And since the county has a requirement of
8 keeping the maximum deviation under five percent,
9 we chose this color scheme. So you can see here,
10 in these districts up north, there is growth, or
11 the population is greater than the ideal
12 population. And then, the districts here, because
13 our goal is to focus on the minority majority
14 districts, we wanted to focus there on those
15 districts, and how we can keep them and look for
16 ... So looking at this map, now we focused on the
17 majority minority, or the majority ... minority,
18 in this case. So we found that they're all
19 focused over here, in this part of the county,
20 which is primarily the City of Albany.

21 And then we said we were looking at all
22 minorities in the previous map, but then we said
23 okay, what are those minorities, and we looked at
24 the districts, and we looked at all the
25 minorities, and we found that these are the

1 districts where we have non-Hispanic black
2 population, as majority ... So then what we did
3 was we focused on these districts, and we found
4 that if we looked at minority as a whole, there
5 are six minority districts, and when we looked at
6 non-Hispanic black districts, there are five.

7 So all this is good, and then now we wanted
8 to see if these districts need additional
9 population. And if they do, to come up to the
10 ideal population, are they still going to be able
11 to maintain the minority majority ... status that
12 we currently have. So you can look at these
13 districts, and almost all of our majority
14 districts need population. They have less
15 population. And district five here -- which is
16 kind of sitting in the middle, but it's not a
17 majority minority district -- has more population,
18 while all these others have less population. And
19 then these are of course ... we are focusing on
20 non-Hispanic black districts.

21 So the next thing was to look at the
22 population distribution, minority population
23 distribution by a census block. So here, if you
24 look at the color scheme that we have, if you see
25 the block which is in blue, that means it has a

1 non-Hispanic black majority. Hispanic is in red,
2 and green is Asian -- non-Hispanic Asian -- and
3 anywhere else we can see yellow -- light
4 yellow -- that is non-Hispanic white majority.

5 So now, in looking at our districts, we felt
6 how can we grow because we told them that they all
7 need population. So how can we add areas so that
8 we can still maintain this status? And so here
9 these are the districts, and we present to you ...
10 Most of the minority districts have less than the
11 ideal population. So the minority districts that
12 we have is one, two, three, four, six and seven,
13 and seven becomes a minority district when we look
14 at the minorities as a whole. So you can see that
15 these districts all need people, except for
16 district six, which can be left alone. It has
17 only a deviation of fifteen.

18 So district seven needs six hundred and
19 twenty. District four needs four ninety-five, two
20 ninety, five thirteen and ninety-seven. And when
21 you look at the percentages, in the table below we
22 provide you with Hispanic population, Hispanic
23 voting-age population, non-Hispanic white
24 population, non-Hispanic white voting-age
25 population, and the total population, as well as

1 voting-age population. And then we also give you
2 a minority which is everyone who's not non-
3 Hispanic white. So you can look at these
4 districts, and then you'll see that you're looking
5 at the total population, or the minority voting-
6 age population. All of them are strong minority
7 districts. They do need people, so we are going
8 to show you how we plan to address that.

9 If you look at non-Hispanic you will see that
10 district one and district six, they're strong ...
11 districts, and ... so we wanted to show you how
12 things are, as is. So on the next slide I'm going
13 to show you a draft -- a very preliminary
14 plan -- and we are showing you ... on the left-
15 hand side. The landlines and the color, they
16 denote how we are proposing those districts, and
17 the white and black lines that you see, those are
18 your current districts. So you can visually
19 compare to see what we have done.

20 Now, you can see that in district one, we've
21 got just a little one block, just to even the
22 boundaries out. And with that kind of change,
23 district one is now eighty-five people more. It's
24 within the five percent or two and a half percent
25 deviation, so if you were able to ... And if you

1 look at district two, it's only one percent short.
2 So the deviation is negative zero point zero one
3 percent. And then, if you look at district three,
4 in district three we did go up over here, and like
5 I said, we wanted the community to see because
6 that is where we have a non-Hispanic black
7 population.

8 And in order to keep it a majority minority
9 district, we went and ... that this is a draft
10 plan, and we wanted to show something to the
11 community so that they can come out and give us
12 comments, and give us feedback, so yeah. And this
13 has been ... and it's well-balanced. It stays a
14 minority district, and the deviation is negative
15 zero point four four. I also wanted to kind of
16 say that the City of Albany boundary is here, but
17 the way the district is right now, sitting at the
18 top, this was one of the choices that we
19 presented.

20 Now, district four, if you look at
21 it -- district four ... so we went down here into
22 district thirteen, where there is some non-
23 Hispanic black population. So we've got these ...
24 We've got this little ... and we've got some from
25 district two as well. So with that, district four

1 is twenty-seven people over. The deviation is
2 zero point three three percent, and it maintains a
3 ... If you look at district four, it's fifty-
4 three percent total population, and fifty-one
5 percent non-Hispanic black population. So
6 district six, you can see a very -- just a block
7 was added. And with that, we are only forty-five
8 people short, and the deviation is zero point five
9 six percent.

10 Now, district seven is the one that we said
11 is a minority district -- not totally based of
12 non-Hispanic black population, but the minorities
13 as a whole. And if you look at the map for
14 district seven, there were these two blocks, and
15 we just evened it out. And if you look at the
16 data there, you are going to see that it's fifty-
17 four percent, fifteen percent minority population.
18 Now, to take you to the map, so I'm going to stop
19 sharing my screen and show you in more detail the
20 plan we have. It's on the website, but I'm just
21 going to show it to you.

22 So here, this is the map that we have
23 prepared, and it is on the website, and it has all
24 the data that I talked about. It shows you the
25 as-is, and it shows you the draft plan A, and it

1 also shows you that we are just focusing on this
2 part where the minority districts are. So here,
3 and I'll just walk you through here, we have ...

4 MS. SIBILIA: ...

5 MR. HAMILTON: I don't think you're showing.

6 MS. MATHER: Oh, I'm so sorry.

7 MR. HAMILTON: All right, no problem. We
8 would have eventually told you, eventually.

9 MS. MATHER: Just bear with me for a minute.
10 I have to just close something. Okay, can you see
11 it now? Okay, good. Sorry about that. I've had
12 an issue. But anyway, this is the map which is
13 already on the website, and it's just thinking.
14 So we are provided the data on the site. All the
15 data that I showed you in my PowerPoint slides,
16 it's all there for you to see. And we have also
17 put in the municipal values, and we have put in
18 the neighborhood names. So you can see, and the
19 community out there can see and provide us with
20 feedback so that we can continue to revise what we
21 have, and also wanted to emphasize that this is
22 starting with the current districts. So this, we
23 used what is already out there, and using the
24 current districts, we adopted this plan.

25 So I can show you what I showed you in the

1 PowerPoint, that the black and white line is your
2 current districts, and how you've adjusted them,
3 so hopefully the community will be able to see the
4 streets, be able to see where the new lines are
5 being proposed, and these are all zoomable maps
6 that they have to just use the ... download it and
7 zoom in, and provide us feedback with what they
8 think should happen. And this is primarily a
9 starting phase, so people can give us feedback and
10 start thinking about ... And that is all I had to
11 share today, and I want to know if anyone has any
12 questions for me.

13 MS. CAMPBELL: Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON VOLK: Thank you very much,
15 Priti. We do have one more speaker, who has
16 requested a 5:30 speaking time.

17 MS. SIBILIA: He's here.

18 CHAIRPERSON VOLK: Oh, is he here? I didn't
19 realize that. Thank you. Mr. Dahl? The speaker
20 is Mr. Dahl from Albany.

21 MR. DAHL: Good afternoon, commissioners.
22 Thank you so much for having me here today. My
23 name is Lars Dahl, and I'm a resident of the City
24 of Albany. I will be speaking here today on
25 behalf of the League of Women Voters, a non-

1 partisan political organization that has been
2 working to protect and expand voting rights for
3 the last hundred years. Some of you may remember
4 me from my last testimony at the first public
5 hearing.

6 As I testified at that hearing, Albany County
7 has had a very complicated relationship with
8 redistricting. It is of the utmost importance
9 that it is done correctly this time. The
10 commission has made a lot of improvements, so I'd
11 like to applaud all of you for all of the work
12 that you do, but we still would always like to see
13 more improvements be made.

14 The first area that I would like to touch
15 upon is transparency. As I noted in my last
16 testimony, there was a lot of work I would like to
17 see, and I'm happy to report that you guys did
18 most of it, so thank you so much. We really
19 appreciate having the meeting minutes streaming on
20 YouTube, and having the MORE platform now on the
21 website. All of that is a really useful,
22 important tool, and it really helps us understand
23 the process more. However, there is still some
24 room for improvement.

25 We've seen very little from the Majority

1 Minority Subcommittee, and would like to see more
2 information on their agendas. We'd like to see
3 their testimony, so we can see more information
4 about how the minority districts are drawn. Prior
5 to the presentation that I just heard, from being
6 in this hearing, we really did not know how that
7 process, and how those maps were drawn. So having
8 that access to the subcommittee's materials would
9 be nice, as well as all of the other
10 subcommittees.

11 Another thing that we'd like to see done is
12 have the milestone timeline that the commission is
13 using, be put on the website. It's very
14 challenging for someone to go onto YouTube and go
15 open up a hearing and try to find the exact time
16 when you mentioned, oh, this is what we're
17 planning on next. We understand that the timeline
18 is constantly changing, but we think that whenever
19 the website is updated, we would appreciate an
20 updated version posted on the website, so it's
21 easy to access.

22 Another thing we'd like to see is the
23 commission to do more work on engaging people
24 throughout the county. The small number of people
25 here testifying today speaks of the fact that that

1 is something that the commission can continue to
2 work on, moving forward. Outside of transparency,
3 we do have a couple other general comments, before
4 we talk about the M.M.D. subcommittee map, which
5 we do have thoughts on.

6 Another comment that we'd like to talk about
7 is a certain mindset that we feel the commission
8 has gotten traction too. It's never been
9 explicitly said, but the commission seems to be
10 following the general mindset that the existing
11 districts shouldn't change at all, except for
12 minor changes to adjust for population deviation.
13 While we understand it is a requirement, there are
14 other requirements that we'd also like to see
15 prioritized, such as communities of interest.

16 That fact was made more reinforced because
17 whenever you're drawing a map and more, you start
18 off with those existing districts, and then you
19 start tweaking. So we would like to see the
20 commission be a little bit more creative. In
21 part, that is because we believe that the current
22 maps aren't perfect. The existing maps, as drawn,
23 actually split a majority of neighborhoods in the
24 City of Albany. I believe there's only three of
25 the twenty neighborhoods that are entirely within

1 one district, that are kept in place in the
2 existing map. So we'd like to see that in other
3 communities of interest, respected.

4 Another change we'd like to see to the
5 existing map, is we believe that the growth of the
6 non-white population necessitates the creation of
7 at least six majority minority districts, compared
8 to the current five. Given that the non-white
9 population makes up around nine percent more of
10 the county, compared to the last census, we think
11 that the creation of at least one more district is
12 appropriate.

13 The creation of a sixth majority minority
14 district would ensure that more non-white voices
15 are heard in the county, and may necessitate
16 making significant changes to the other existing
17 districts. But that's okay because those changes
18 to the map, to create that sixth district, would
19 be justified because under New York State's county
20 redistricting law, the second most important
21 priority is to make sure that minority voices
22 aren't silenced -- the only priority that's more
23 important is low population deviation -- and it's
24 possible to do that.

25 As the last part of our testimony, I would

1 like to comment on the map proposed by the M.M.D.
2 subcommittee. We applaud the M.M.D. subcommittee
3 for drawing a map with the intent of having six
4 majority minority districts. However, the League
5 of Women Voters is concerned that the seventh
6 district, which is one of the districts that was
7 considered to be a majority minority district, as
8 just presented, is not actually a majority
9 minority district. And I understand that this
10 part of the testimony might get complicated, so
11 feel free to stop me if you have any questions.

12 In the last Albany County redistricting court
13 case, Hope versus the County of Albany, it was
14 established that for the purposes of legal
15 compliance in Albany, minority voters would
16 consist of the black alone population, and anyone
17 who identifies as Hispanic. That definition did
18 not make any reference to Asian voters. It did
19 not make any reference to Native American voters.
20 No reference to Pacific Islander voters. It would
21 all be counted, not as white, not as minority, but
22 as their own category.

23 Now, depending on what your voting rights
24 expert, Dr. Hanley, finds in her research -- I
25 understand she's doing for the commission -- the

1 definition of minority can be expanded to include
2 those other groups that weren't included in the
3 original definition. However, if that's the case,
4 we expect there to be more than just six majority
5 minority districts. Given that, under that
6 expansive view of the word minority, the non-white
7 population of the county would be roughly forty
8 percent of the people living in the county. We'd
9 expect to see more than just six majority minority
10 districts.

11 For now, we encourage the commission to keep
12 the existing definition, as it is the safest
13 definition of just black and Hispanic only, unless
14 we hear otherwise from the expert that, in fact,
15 that definition can be changed. And if the
16 commission does decide to drop that broader
17 definition, we do ask that the commission make
18 that a public vote, and talk about that, and have
19 some kind of discussion.

20 I don't believe that there is any reference
21 to the definition potentially being changed to
22 make the seventh district majority minority.
23 Under the existing definition, which again is just
24 black alone, and Hispanic, for the 2015
25 lawsuit -- which is when it happened, that

1 proposed sixth district that's on the Majority
2 Minority Subcommittee's plan -- the district is
3 only thirty-eight point six eight percent minority
4 voters, and forty-eight point nine three percent
5 white voters, and that's among the voting-age
6 population.

7 In short, the district is ten percent more
8 white than it is minority voters, under the
9 existing definition of minority voters, as
10 established in the most recent court case. That
11 minority population would have a lot harder
12 trouble getting elected to this district because
13 primary elections are oftentimes a lot more whiter
14 than the general election, and in a district like
15 the seventh, which voted for Biden by around eight
16 to two, the winner of the primary election will
17 almost certainly be the winner of the general
18 election -- at least the winner of the Democratic
19 primary will be the winner of the general
20 election.

21 To that end, the League of Women Voters would
22 like to see district seven be changed to be at
23 least five percent more black and Hispanic, and
24 five percent less white, to be in a better
25 position of creating the goal of six majority

1 minority districts. This would mean that there
2 would be more black and Hispanic voters in the
3 district, than white voters in the district.
4 Outside of that, which I know might be a little
5 complicated, there are other concerns that we do
6 have with the map proposed by the M.M.D.
7 subcommittee.

8 The map was drawn to make as few changes as
9 possible, which it did a very good job
10 of -- changes compared to the existing map -- but
11 it does not seem to focus on communities of
12 interest which, again, is legally just as
13 important of a priority. Many neighborhoods are
14 split up in this map, including the Delaware
15 Avenue neighborhood, which is split into three
16 separate districts under that map. Other
17 districts that are really badly split up, include
18 the Washington Square neighborhood, the warehouse
19 district, ... the South End, are all split into
20 multiple districts under this proposed map.

21 As we also heard from an earlier speaker, the
22 Village of Menands is unnecessarily split in this
23 map, and puts around two hundred and fifty people
24 from Menands in a district that's entirely
25 comprised of voters from Albany. That's out of

1 those two hundred and fifty residents. This is by
2 no means a list of every community that's present
3 in those areas, nor a reflection of every single
4 way that you can draw the maps. But I do
5 encourage the M.M.D. subcommittee to look hard at
6 those key communities, and make sure that all the
7 communities are represented in those districts,
8 and that neighborhoods aren't unnecessarily split.

9 We do want -- and again, we do reiterate our
10 position that there should be at least six proper
11 majority minority districts, and we do applaud the
12 commission again for trying to do that. Thank you
13 for your time, and listening through my testimony,
14 and I encourage the commission to keep working.
15 You guys are doing a really good job. I know our
16 testimonies can be a little harsh, but again,
17 thank you so much for your time, and I'm happy to
18 take questions per email or in person as always.

19 MS. CAMPBELL: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON VOLK: Thank you, Mr. Dahl.

21 MR. DAHL: Of course.

22 MS. CAMPBELL: Can we have a written copy of
23 your statement?

24 MR. DAHL: Yes. I can email that to you
25 right now.

1 MS. CAMPBELL: Okay, thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON VOLK: Is there anyone else who
3 wishes to make a statement to the commission, or
4 the M.M.D. subcommittee? Hearing none, we will
5 adjourn this hearing. Thank you very much.

6 (The meeting concluded at 5:38 p.m.)

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1 STATE OF NEW YORK

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3 I, JAMES MAGLARAS, do hereby certify that the
4 foregoing was reported by me, in the cause, at the
5 time and place, as stated in the caption hereto,
6 at Page 1 hereof; that the foregoing typewritten
7 transcription consisting of pages 1 through 65, is
8 a true record of all proceedings had at the
9 hearing.

10 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto
11 subscribed my name, this the 28th day of April,
12 2022.

13

14 *James Magalaras*

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16 JAMES MAGLARAS, Reporter

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