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# ***Public Hearing***

before

## NEW JERSEY REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

*“Testimony from interested groups and members of the public regarding the establishment of Congressional districts for New Jersey for use during the 2000 decade”*

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**LOCATION:** New Jersey Transit Headquarters  
Newark, New Jersey

**DATE:** August 9, 2001  
7:00 p.m.

### **MEMBERS OF COMMISSION PRESENT:**

Alan Rosenthal, Chairman

Leonard Coleman  
George Gilmore  
Elizabeth Randall  
Candace Straight

Karen Brown  
James Dugan  
Zulima Farber  
Dana Redd  
Frank Robinson



### **ALSO PRESENT:**

Frank J. Parisi  
*Office of Legislative Services*  
*Commission Secretary*

*Hearing Recorded and Transcribed by*  
The Office of Legislative Services, Public Information Office,  
Hearing Unit, State House Annex, PO 068, Trenton, New Jersey

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**ALAN ROSENTHAL (Chairman):** We're going to begin the public hearing of the Congressional Redistricting Commission.

Will the secretary please call the roll of members?

MR. PARISI (Secretary): Certainly. Karen Brown.

MS. BROWN: Present.

MR. PARISI: Len Coleman.

MR. COLEMAN: Here.

MR. PARISI: James Dugan.

MR. DUGAN: Here.

MR. PARISI: Zulima Farber.

MS. FARBER: Here.

MR. PARISI: Dale Florio. (no response)

George Gilmore.

MR. GILMORE: Here.

MR. PARISI: Lonnie Kaplan. (no response)

Liz Randall.

MS. RANDALL: Here.

MR. PARISI: Dana Redd.

MS. REDD: Here.

MR. PARISI: Frank Robinson.

MR. ROBINSON: Present.

MR. PARISI: Candace Straight.

MS. STRAIGHT: Here.

MR. PARISI: Gary Stuhltrager. (no response)

Chairman Rosenthal.

MR. ROSENTHAL: Here.

The Congressional Redistricting Commission is constitutionally mandated, and this is one of the constitutionally required public hearings that we are holding. The first public hearing was held in Trenton, in central New Jersey. The second hearing was held in Atlantic City, in South Jersey, and this hearing is being held here in Newark, in the North Jersey area.

We have about eight individuals who are signed up to testify, and we have a number of letters to read into the record. Your testimony, or any submissions you make to this Commission at a public hearing, will be public record and will be available to anybody who requests them.

I should mention that the one submission of some note, since it's been discussed in the New Jersey press, is a submission by the Congressional Delegation. It came in this evening. And I'll begin by just reading the cover letter of a map, a districting plan, submitted by the 13 members of the New Jersey Congressional Delegation and signed by the 13 members of the Congressional Delegation. The date of the submission is August 9th, today, and the cover letter reads:

"Dear Mr. Chairman:

"We the undersigned members of the New Jersey Congressional Delegation respectfully submit the attached map for the consideration of the Commission. We believe this map represents a legally sound, fair, and unbiased bipartisan plan that will remain responsive to the voters of New Jersey for the next decade.

“This proposed map satisfies the constitutional one person-one vote provision by minimizing population deviation between districts. As the statewide population is not evenly divisible by 13, there is a minimal deviation of 4. The bipartisan map has 12 districts with a deviation of zero and 1 district with a deviation of 4.

“We are confident that the attached map satisfies Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. Furthermore, we are confident that the map has no other legal vulnerabilities.

“Consideration was given to the preservation of the core of all prior districts. Consideration was also given to incumbency. No two incumbents were drawn into the same district, nor was any incumbent forced to relinquish their geographic base. A significant majority of the population remain in their current districts under this proposal, thereby minimizing voter disruption.

“Given that the current congressional map has been relatively free of political bias and responsive to shifts in the electorate for the past decade, it was important that the bipartisan map did not harm this quality. Having analyzed the attached map based on past election results, it is clear that it remains politically fair, unbiased, and responsive.

“In closing, we find the attached map to be a legally sound, politically fair, bipartisan compromise that will serve the people of New Jersey well over the next decade. We appreciate your consideration of this proposal.”

There will be copies of the map available, or the Congressional submission available, from the Office of Legislative Services tomorrow just as soon as we can get copies made. And if anyone wants a copy, please get in

touch with Carl Povich, P-O-V-I-S-I-L-S, at the Office of Legislative Services. His number is 609-292-9106.

I read that -- there are a number of other letters which we will save for later, but I read that letter first, because that is a very significant submission of a map, and I thought that some of you who are testifying may, indeed, be testifying with regard to the Congressional submission.

The first person to sign up as a witness is Ira Jersey of the Jersey City Republican Party. I would ask you, if you can, to be relatively brief, try to hold your remarks to five, six, or seven minutes. Thank you.

**I R A F. J E R S E Y J R.:** I probably won't even be five minutes, Mr. Chairman. Thank you again for this indulgence. As the first person to testify, and if I recall the only person to testify, at the first public hearing, I appreciate this second indulgence.

I just wanted to bring your attention to a letter that I hope you've all received at this point. This is a letter that was submitted to me last year by, actually, my opponent for the General Assembly and Mayor of Bayonne, Joseph Doria, in favor of exactly what I spoke about last week, and also, a potential proposed redistricting of the 10th District. I know that it will be difficult to incorporate this, but just as an example of how the 10th District might be able to be made.

And with that, I won't waste any more time, and hopefully, we'll hear some good discussion here tonight.

Thank you.

MR. ROSENTHAL: Thank you very much, Mr. Jersey.



The second person who has requested a hearing is Finn Caspersen Jr.

**F I N N C A S P E R S E N JR.:** First of all, I want to thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak here tonight. It means a great deal to me.

Esteemed members of the Redistricting Commission, I'm honored to have the opportunity to address you this evening. You are all charged with a very difficult task, a task vital to upholding the democracy here in our great state. I'm certain that you will perform with the same diligence and thoughtfulness that your predecessors have. I'm here this evening to speak on the critical issues of balance, competitiveness, and fairness, and how they relate to the process of redistricting here in New Jersey.

I've had the terrific opportunity over the past several months to speak with many fellow residents of my congressional district, the 12th. What they have told me reflects what I myself feel at a very deep level, that in a democracy, competition is healthy and should be maintained wherever possible. Unfortunately, we live in an era marked by disinterested voters and declining voter turnout. Twice a year here in New Jersey, people have the chance to cast their precious vote and participate in this great democracy we are so blessed to be a part of. But instead of embracing the chance to make a difference in the voting booth, people are disgustingly turning their backs with the belief that their single vote will fail to make an impact on our democratic system.

The 12th District is one of the places where this simply does not apply. People's individual votes do matter. In fact, some of the most competitive races in the entire nation have been fought in the 12th District. Last year, there were 291,673 votes cast in the great congressional race in the 12th

District. And do you know what the difference between those two very capable candidates was, a mere 651 votes, less than one-half of 1 percentage point. This is what American democracy is all about, particularly given-- Not too long ago, I believe in 1994, the fellow who ended up losing this time around won by almost 70 percent. This is America, which has a right to change its mind -- changing its mind and voting and getting what they want.

Voters are energized and motivated in the 12th District. We might be living in an era of disinterested voters, but you won't find too many of them in the 12th. People are excited to be a part of our great system of democracy, and to erase that excitement with new district lines that extinguish competition would be nothing short of a shame. We must do all we can to embrace the vanishing concept of competition in politics. Redrawing district lines that take away the true power of an individual's vote is not the way to do this.

Here I'd like to point out that a full 60 percent of the voters in the 12th District are independent. Some years these folks -- independent or undeclared, but they've made a choice either not to declare or to declare as an independent. Some years these folks vote Republican. Other years they vote Democrat. But the point I'd like to make is that they have voluntarily decided that they will swing back and forth from candidate to candidate, year to year, party to party, and you take away the competition that is now so vital and such a vibrant part of the 12th District, and you take away this choice.

I am also aware of the role of incumbency protection in the redistricting process. New Jersey has a fine set of capable legislators who have worked hard to serve their constituents. As incumbents, it is only natural for these members of Congress to seek districts that would make their reelection

bids more likely, but it is not impossible -- it is not impossible -- to successfully juggle the dual objectives of incumbency protection and competitive balance. It's a very possible endeavor, and we can do it. And in the name of fairness and competition, we should do it.

While I am certain that members of the Commission have studied proposal after proposal very carefully, I am sure that there is a way to protect both the interests of incumbent members of Congress and those of the voters of our state. We have an obligation, indeed, a responsibility, to ensure that we carefully study all proposals with a dual interest of incumbent members of Congress and voters in mind. After all, the interests of members of Congress and voters who crave competitive elections are not dueling, competing interests. Rather, they go hand in hand.

The House of Representatives, when created by our founding fathers, was intended to be the people's house, a body whose representatives are particularly responsible and responsive to the people who elect them. Redrawing district lines to ensure that members of Congress are artificially reelected by a wide margin really does not echo the intention of the framers, nor does it reflect what today's citizens of New Jersey really want. Most of our incumbents win by wide margins as a result of their hard work on behalf of their constituents, not because the district lines are redrawn to bring new areas more favorable to the incumbent.

One proposal that currently sits before the Commission involving the 12th District allows changes that are far too radical, in my judgment. As the competitive 12th District presently stands, the incumbent member of Congress was elected last year with 50.2 percent of the vote, or a 0.4 percent margin. The

current proposal would likely boost the congressman's vote percentage to over 58 percent -- over 58 percent -- an astounding increase taking him from less than half a percentage point margin of victory to over a 16-point margin of victory. In other words, increasing his margin of victory by an astounding fortyfold -- forty times. He's made forty times stronger.

Realistically, the proposal will offer a safe seat to the member of Congress for at least the next 10 years, which in my humble opinion is mind-boggling when one considers that he won by less than half a point not nine months ago.

I, along with many residents of the 12th District, feel that the current proposal is far too dramatic. We feel that other plans have been put forward that better compromise the important issues protecting our incumbents and retaining the competitiveness of our congressional districts. We have put together a plan that effectively accomplishes these goals. This plan offers safer districts to members of Congress from the 7th and the 12th, while maintaining some degree of competition for each of the district's voters.

In the 7th District, my plan would increase Congressman Ferguson's winning percentage from 51.2 percent to a potential 54 percent, over threefold, and both a healthy and fair margin. In the 12th District, my plan would also increase Congressman Holt's winning percentage from 50.2, not to 58 percent as the current plan proposes, but to the still quite comfortable total of more than 54 percent, and still a twentyfold increase over last year's numbers. This plan is both fair and viable for all interested parties, voters, incumbent members of Congress, and for the members of the Redistricting Commission. The plan

provides better districts for incumbents while still allowing voters to have a voice in competitive elections.

The process which eventually determines the lines of the new district should be conducted openly and fairly within your body here in New Jersey, not in Washington, D.C. Also, the law, as I understand it, requires that communities, towns, and counties should only be broken apart when all other options are exhausted and when after a thorough demographic analysis, coupled with a methodical attempt to maintain the integrity of a community, may a town or county be broken into two or more districts. A current map under consideration breaks up many towns, even very small ones. It appears many towns were divided more for purposes of politics and less because no geographic alternative existed.

I urge the Republican-- I'm sorry. I urge the Redistricting Commission to truly exhaust all other alternatives before dividing towns and to so divide such towns and counties when, and only when, the Commission truly has no other choice. We must seek a fair balance between maintaining competition and voter choice on the one hand and protecting the interests of our current members of Congress on the other. I am certain that you will act with the interest of democracy close to your heart.

Thank you very much for your time and for your consideration.

MR. ROSENTHAL: Thank you.

Are there any questions from members of the Commission of Mr. Caspersen? (no response)

Thank you, Mr. Caspersen.

MR. CASPERSEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. ROSENTHAL: Do you have a plan to submit, or are you sending a plan in?

MR. CASPERSEN: Yes, we do have a plan, and we will submit it forthwith.

MR. ROSENTHAL: Okay.

MR. CASPERSEN: We have talked about it, but we will officially get it in front of the Commission this evening or tomorrow morning.

MR. ROSENTHAL: All right. Thank you.

MR. CASPERSEN: Thank you.

MR. ROSENTHAL: Senator Joe Vitale.

**SENATOR JOSEPH F. VITALE:** Good evening, Mr. Chairman and Commission members. I do appreciate the opportunity to be here this evening and just to offer my testimony on the proposed changes, at least those changes that are rumored to be taking place, specifically where it relates to the Township of Woodbridge, a community of nearly 100,000 individuals in Middlesex County and one in which I live and represent in the Senate.

There have been published media accounts of a plan that would divide Woodbridge into three congressional districts -- the 6th, the 7th, and the 13th. Currently, Woodbridge is divided into two districts -- the 7th, represented by Congressman Ferguson, accounts for approximately 90 percent of its population, with the balance resting in the 13th District and represented by Congressman Bob Menendez. The prospect of redefining Woodbridge by further dividing it would essentially be a 45-45-10, three-way split is unacceptable to me, and I believe will only serve to destabilize its aggregate

voting power, and ultimately and most importantly, confuse its residents and undermine their access to equal representation.

The Commission has been given the task of dividing New Jersey's communities into 13 equal districts -- no easy task. And what the Commissioners should ask themselves is what principles will guide them in this process. The goal should be to have the most direct representation possible and is not achieved by taking a community of people with common interests and dividing them arbitrarily into three districts.

While I understand there is no easy task to define congressional districts and that some communities must be divided, it seems to me that if this Commission is going to redefine districts, it should be based on natural common boundaries and interests or ethnic or racial balance with minimal disruption to its citizens. This proposed map does not appear to be driven by any of these principles, particularly in Woodbridge.

The current way in which my constituents are represented at the Federal level makes clear sense. The communities of Sayreville and South Amboy are represented by Congressman Frank Pallone. Recently, as an example, a local factory that employs nearly 200 workers was being unfairly treated by the Federal government, and we turned to one Congressman. Congressman Pallone responded quickly to the problem and has taken on the cause of those employees. In Perth Amboy and Carteret, where the local governing body has needed assistance from the Federal government for their extensive redevelopment projects, Congressman Bob Menendez has been there at every turn working through the system and bringing much-needed resources to those districts.

In each of these cases, the communities spoke with one voice and to one representative, but the people in these towns also have the power to speak with one powerful voice if they believe that their representatives are not serving their common interests. All of this is democracy at its best.

As I stated earlier, Woodbridge is currently divided into two districts. Approximately 90 percent is in the 7th, represented by Congressman Mike Ferguson, and the balance is in the 13th, represented by Congressman Bob Menendez. If what I've read and heard is an accurate description of the proposed map, it calls for removing approximately 50 percent of the 7th and placing it into the 6th District, represented by Congressman Frank Pallone, thereby creating those three congressional districts within Woodbridge.

I'd like to offer one very unscientific alternative, though understanding that any change in this map has a ripple effect on other districts. This option would be to place the entire 90 percent of Woodbridge, currently represented by Congressman Ferguson, into the 6th District. To make up for the loss of population, Congressman Ferguson could, as an example, include an additional town or towns, such as the balance of Franklin Township, currently represented by Congressman Holt. Congressman Holt could then pick up Monmouth County residents from Congressman Pallone, who would have to lose population by having taken the balance of Woodbridge from Congressman Ferguson.

This proposal will continue to provide the citizens of all the communities within those districts, particularly Woodbridge Township, with a more seamless and fairer level of representation, based upon their right to reasonable access. After all, it must be the goal of this Commission to place the



interests of the tens of thousands who are being represented above the interests of the few. I ask that you consider their needs and their rights above all else.

I submitted written testimony that -- before the hearing. I just want to spend just a moment, a brief moment, talking about some of the political realities of that district. You know, the 7th District has been-- Woodbridge Township has been in the 7th District since 1990, represented by Congressman Franks at first, now by Congressman Mike Ferguson. And just talking a little about sort of partisan politics, it's really no secret that Congressman Ferguson would like to lose all of Woodbridge Township in his congressional district, when Woodbridge Township represents most of the registered Democrats in that district. And if there is ever a political threat to a sitting Republican congressman, it comes from Woodbridge Township. And so, if Congressman Ferguson wants to lose Woodbridge, then God bless him and let him lose Woodbridge and not just half of it. Because by leaving the other half, he's sort of the reluctant congressman.

I mean, politically speaking, he'd like to lose it and pick up Republican communities to the west, to the south, that would serve his purpose in terms of assuring his reelection, at least going a long way in assuring his reelection chances. And that also gives the opportunity to have Congressman Frank Pallone represent 90 percent of the community, where it's easy and it's seamless and it makes sense when you have legislators like me and legislators that also represent their community -- mayors, council people -- go to one congressman, by and large, in a large community like that to make their case about issues and about projects. By dividing it, it doesn't help us at all. In fact, it hinders that process. And politically speaking, when you have a community

like Woodbridge that can exercise its voting power, whether it's for or against someone, they have the right to do that. And when they have common interests, whatever they are, whether they are transportation issues, whether they're issues of choice or issues of whatever, they can speak with one clear voice to one congressperson to make their point, to make their case. I mean, this is the basis for this representative democracy.

I don't want to go too far and criticize the process and criticize the map and criticize the process that got us here, but I can tell you that the people in Woodbridge, the local governing body, aren't happy about this. I mean, there was never any consultation, never any discussion, rumored maps going on for months and months and months. And now we have this. I could tell you that we're not happy, but we're not happy because it's going to hurt the chances of our residents to be fairly represented equally and easily in this process.

So, if you have any questions, I'll be glad to answer them, but thank you for your time and indulgence. Thank you.

MR. ROSENTHAL: Thank you, Senator.

Any questions from members of the Commission? (no response)

Thank you, Senator Vitale.

Trish Morris-Yamba.

**TRISH MORRIS - YAMBA:** Good evening, Mr. Chairman, and members of the Commission. My name is Trish Morris-Yamba, and I am the Executive Director of Newark Day Center, which is located in the 10th Congressional District of New Jersey, which is represented by Congressman Donald Payne. I am also a resident of this district.

I believe as a resident that New Jersey is well-served by the current congressional district map and should be maintained the way it has been currently configured. Congressman Payne has gained seniority, and that is good. There is a distinct advantage in protecting one that has served. The longer they are in office, the more resources they can provide for their district, as well as for the State. New Jersey has just begun to regain its seniority and clout that it lost in earlier years.

The 10th Congressional District is very diverse. It includes urban as well as suburban constituencies. A multiethnic population, it stretches throughout parts of Essex, Hudson, and Union counties. Any map, in my opinion, that the Commission supports should respect the resources of a one man-one vote clause. The current map as it is currently projected certainly does this.

Finally, and I'll be brief, because I've heard some of the things that I was going to say. As an executive director of an agency which will soon celebrate its 200th anniversary of serving children, youth, young adults, and seniors, I urge the Commission to move ahead forward, to culminate this process to allow our representatives and Congressman Payne to focus on the things that they do well, and that is to serve their constituency.

Thank you very much.

MR. ROSENTHAL: Thank you very much.

Are there any questions from members of the Commission? (no response)

Thank you, Ms. Yamba.

Assemblyman William Payne.

**ASSEMBLYMAN WILLIAM D. PAYNE:** Good evening, Mr. Chairman and members of the Commission. The preceding speaker said that she was the head of an organization that's been there for 200 years, and I just asked was she there the entire time? (laughter) And she said yes. She looks good for her age though.

First of all, I'd like to let you know that this is the 29th Legislative District and that I am the representative for the 29th Legislative District. I will officially welcome you to my district. I am glad to be able to do that. It's a repeat performance for me, because during the State legislative redistricting, I had the unique opportunity of being able to welcome you here. It's always great to have such esteemed public servants to come here to our district, and I do hope that this will not be the first time that you will visit us. Come back again many, many times.

I would like to also say that it's a very unique situation where we have a bipartisan delegation in the State of New Jersey, Congressional Delegation, which has apparently agreed that the current map that we have basically is a map that serves us well. I am very, very pleased that, as I said, it's a bipartisan support. It's very, very unique, and New Jersey has been served well by our representatives. I am particularly happy that my Congressman -- and I reside in the 10th Congressional District -- I'm particularly pleased that my Congressman is also a part of this group that is supporting this map. The first opportunity I get, I'm going to commend my Congressman on coming together with his colleagues to see to it that we have a map that will be a map that will serve us well for the next 10 years.

I truly hope that we all recognize that this map that we are proposing is a map that is, you know, is beneficial to the greater good for the greater number. And I'm sure Jersey will continue to benefit from the bipartisan support that we have here, even though there are some particular issues that some of our delegation does not agree on. Generally, they do agree on those issues that have benefitted the State of New Jersey and will continue to do so, I'm sure.

So I'm here just to offer my support for those, for this map, and ask that this map be adopted by this Commission. I want to commend you for the very, very responsible work that you've done in seeing to it that the citizens of New Jersey will be served well for the next 10 years.

Thank you very much.

MR. ROSENTHAL: Thank you, Assemblyman.

Any questions of Assemblyman Payne? (no response)

Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN PAYNE: (speaking from audience) Somebody might want to ask who my congressman is? (laughter)

MR. ROSENTHAL: That's all right. We don't have the foggiest idea.

Mario Drozdz.

**MARIO DROZDZ:** Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I come here this evening as a lifelong resident and taxpayer of the State of New Jersey, and also as a former mayor and council member from the Township of Belleville, which I served eight years with a nonpartisan council. I've had the pleasure of working with Democrats and Republicans on all levels of government through

my many political involvements. I believe New Jersey is well-served by the current congressional district map. I believe it should stay the way it is. It is important for all of us to have incumbency protection. Seniority is good for all in New Jersey. The longer in office, I believe, the more that can be provided for the district and state.

In the past, we had long-serving house members, like Bob Roe, Frank Guarini, and Bernard Dwyer, all who served well. It has taken us 10 years to get back the senior members in the House of Representatives. Any map that the Commission supports should respect the equal protection clause of the U.S. Constitution. I hope that the redistricting is completed as soon as possible.

Finally, the political aspirations of no individual should play a role in the deliberations of the Commission. Once again, I would like to say that the current district serves all of us well.

And once again, thank you for your time this evening.

MR. ROSENTHAL: Thank you, sir.

Any questions? (no response)

Ingrid Reed.

**I N G R I D R E E D:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Commission members. I am here from the Eagleton Institute of Politics. I'm a colleague of your chair. I'm not speaking for the Institute, but I'm speaking from the experience of working with people in New Jersey and having people turn to us at the Institute for information.

I would like to encourage you, as you consider your final map and the suggestions that have been made to you, to respect the municipal boundaries. People who pay casual attention to politics, and there are many in

New Jersey, find it hard to figure out who they belong to. And municipalities are really the base of people's involvement. The division of particularly smaller municipalities into different congressional districts really confuses people. And the tone of voice that I hear when I get questions about where do I belong is one that signifies a bit of cynicism or mistrust.

I think for the system to work well citizens have to have some assurance that they can start with their municipalities. And as you know from listening to your representatives, they have lots of constituents who contact them individually, and we're not sure exactly how that contact is made. But there are many times when it's the municipality as a whole that relates to a representative, and it's very frequent that a representative relates to a municipality as a whole.

So I urge you, and I am cautioned by your Chair, that you have a formidable challenge to make sure that the districts are equal, but you also have a unique opportunity to look at how those districts are put together and to maintain, if possible, total municipalities within a district. I think you will serve the voters best if we can achieve that goal.

Let me also add that if in achieving that goal you find that making a district a bit more competitive is the result, you might look at it also from the voter's point of view. That our studies of the two recent congressional elections shows that those districts that are more competitive, and this may be obvious to you, are ones that provide more information to the voter. There's more campaign activity. Newspapers cover them better, and they basically have more involvement. So, if you want to serve the voters to the best extent, those voters

that are not paying attention particularly to what you are doing here, maintaining municipalities in whole within the districts would be a great service.

I know from reading the newspaper that you are thinking of dividing some of the larger municipalities, and if that's the case with what I've read about Trenton doing it along ward lines, obviously, makes a great deal of sense, because people do relate to those. It is a way that others can explain to voters who are confused where they belong.

So I hope that your formidable challenge can include thinking about the voters who are not very well informed, but who do turn out to vote and who are interested and many times are confused. I think you would help them greatly.

Thank you for considering this, and I know you have a challenge ahead of you.

I was wondering if I might ask one other favor of you, and that is, you will not be meeting again. This is a one-time activity for you. But in 10 years, others will be coming. I think it would be helpful if you could recommend to them that your required three hearings maybe have a bit more advance notice and might take place after Labor Day. I'm very impressed with the number of people who have come here tonight, but I do know that it was difficult to get out notice. We posted the notice on our Web site, because of the week or so notice for the first set of hearings. I don't need to remind you it is summer, and so maybe if you file that as a recommendation in your report, in 10 years, we might increase the amount of participation and avoid some confusion and maybe get the newspapers to pay a little bit more attention to the



meetings that are being held here, because they really weren't publicized very well in the newspapers.

Thank you.

MR. ROSENTHAL: Any questions? (no response)

Thank you, Ingrid Reed.

Gerard Donohue, I guess, on behalf of Byron Baer, Senator Byron Baer.

**GERARD DONOHUE:** Good evening, and thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, for this opportunity to address you very briefly this evening. My name is Gerry Donohue, and I am the legislative aide for State Senator Byron Baer. I am here to testify tonight about the outstanding job that Congressman Steve Rothman has done in establishing a very tight and productive working relationship between members of the State Legislature and his office.

As well you know, work on major projects such as transportation, airport noise, environmental cleanups, crime prevention, and many others require State and Federal cooperation. Only by working together can we hope to achieve the desired goals set out by our mutual constituents. This cooperation is not achieved easily, and it often takes many years to develop both an understanding and appreciation for the issues that affect people in a given area, especially in light of the fact that the Bergen County region is one of the most densely populated and diverse areas in our nation.

Senator Baer has asked me to express his appreciation for the smooth working relationship that has been established with Congressman Rothman. In addition, I want to express Senator Baer's, as well as my own

thought, that this Redistricting Commission give serious thought to allowing the 9th Congressional District to remain as closely intact as possible, in order to continue the progress that has been made together toward improving the lives of the residents of the 9th Congressional District.

Congressman Rothman has established strong bonds with the voters during his years in office. He has learned the needs and wishes of those voters, and that knowledge should not be dissipated and new learning process become necessary. Allowing the district to remain intact will help us ensure that the progress we are making on some of the issues discussed above will continue without interruption.

Thank you for taking the time to hear some local input, and I hope this Commission will make the right decision with regard to redistricting for the residents of New Jersey.

Thank you and good evening.

MR. ROSENTHAL: Any questions? (no response)

Thank you, Mr. Donohue.

A. J. Joshi.

And I apologize for any mispronunciations. There have been probably several.

**A. J. JOSHI:** Good evening. I am a resident of Little Ferry, which is in Bergen County and which lies in the 9th Congressional District. I am an environmental engineer working for the New Jersey DEP. I am also the Chairman of the Little Ferry Environmental Commission. I am here tonight to implore this Commission to allow the 9th Congressional District to remain intact.

As an environmental engineer, I can tell you firsthand that the environmental problems we face in Bergen and Hudson Counties are very complex, from flooding concerns in our Meadowlands to the constant rattle of aircraft noise over our heads daily, nights, from Teterboro Airport, which is right next door to Little Ferry, to the never-ending flow of traffic up and down Routes 4 and 17. In this way, the 9th District is very unique in many of the issues we face. These issues are not simple to understand, and they often affect not only this region, but the entire surrounding area as well.

Steve Rothman has spent his entire life in this area and over the last five years has spent countless hours meeting with the local officials, the residents, and concerned citizens about the problems they face. He has worked tirelessly trying to solve our aircraft noise, which is a big problem, and has even walked the streets of Little Ferry on countless occasions in other towns to see firsthand the effects of development that it has had on our streets.

I have had the opportunity on several occasions to work with Mr. Rothman and his staff on a number of problems facing Little Ferry, including the ones that I just mentioned before, and each time they have proven to be caring, and most importantly, to have an understanding of what the problems are and how to solve them. This understanding does not come overnight. It is my hope that this Commission in its deliberation over redistricting will take into serious consideration the previously mentioned facts.

All of us, including those of us who do volunteer work in our communities to help better it, are interested in continuing our progress, not starting from beginning with new representation. I believe that Steve Rothman understands our problems and the goals we have set to overcome them. In fact,

he has been very instrumental in envisioning those goals. It would be a shame should they not materialize.

Thank you, and have a good evening.

MR. ROSENTHAL: Thank you.

Questions? (no response)

Thank you, Mr. Joshi.

William Brach.

MR. PARISI: Brach. (indicating pronunciation)

Brach, thank you.

**WILLIAM BRACH:** That's perfectly all right, Mr. Chairman. Good evening to you and--

MR. ROSENTHAL: I may as well try to get it right anyway.

MR. BRACH: That's okay. It's been abused for years. (laughter)

In any event, good evening, Mr. Chairman, members of the Board. I also appreciate the opportunity to speak briefly on the subject of the evening. I am from Montclair, New Jersey. I'm in the 10th District end of Montclair, not the 8th District, and I've served as the Democratic Chair of Montclair in the past. I speak on my own behalf and not on behalf of any organization. I suppose, if I were given to cliches, I would begin with, if it ain't broken -- and I do think that really is the theme here.

You're blessed by having a unanimous delegation proposal. You're blessed by the fact that over the 10 years, there's been little reflection of dissatisfaction with the congressional district breakdown. And while there is some small modifications that are being considered in the proposed map of the delegation, it nevertheless reflects a truly bipartisan, seven to six -- couldn't be

more even than that, if you have an odd number total. And I think that that speaks for itself in terms of the proposed map.

Montclair is a community with two districts. And perhaps the point has been raised as to whether or not there is an interest in consolidating into one district.

We've been served well. We've been served well, because the part of the district in which I live, which is in the 10th District, is -- relates well to West Orange, to Orange, to East Orange, and is not as close, by any means, to the Passaic end of the district, where the rest of Montclair resides. So there's some good, natural reasons for us to have two different districts in which we're served. And I don't believe I've felt, in the years I've been active in Montclair, that there's been a feeling that we need to have a single congressman and speak only to one person. We've been served well by Congressman Pascrell in the 8th District, and we've been served well by Congressman Payne in the 10th District. And I would -- here tonight to urge that full consideration be given to the proposal before you of the Congressional Delegation.

Thank you very much.

MR. ROSENTHAL: Questions? (no response)

Thank you, Mr. Brach.

Marty Etler.

**DEPUTY MAYOR MARTY ETLER:** Good evening.

My name is Marty Etler, and I'm Deputy Mayor of Fair Lawn.

I will make my testimony tonight brief, but I wanted to point out a matter that I hope that this committee will take into consideration before rejoining the congressional lines.

As you know, this country is experiencing a growing problem with voter apathy. I can tell you my constituents say to me they don't have time to get involved. They got kids in school, they got parents to take care of and bills to pay. They can barely keep up with who their U.S. representative is, let alone who their other elected officials are. This attitude is seen all over New Jersey and is a growing concern throughout the nation.

We, as elected officials, have to spend countless hours communicating with our constituents not only to let them know what is going on, but to let them know what we can do for them.

Congressman Steve Rothman was born and raised in Bergen County and has been a congressman dedicated to reaching out to constituents and keeping them informed of the goings on in Washington, D.C. More importantly, however, Mr. Rothman's drive to inform constituents of their -- what his office does and the services of what they're entitled to.

As part of this regular routine, the Congressman sends out newsletters to inform people where they can get help -- where they can help with social security, immigration, IRS, Medicare, and veterans' affairs and many other issues. This is often a vital information to people, especially to those who have nowhere else to turn.

A case in point is when Fair Lawn's property and equipment was devastated by Hurricane Floyd. His office gave us invaluable help in our dealings with the Federal government, via FEMA, so our city could receive proper reimbursement.

Perhaps another congressman could have done the same thing. However, because of his familiarity with all the towns in his district, and not only Fair Lawn, he became an effective voice for us on the Federal level.

In addition, I know the Congressman also frequents local supermarkets -- I know, because I've been with him -- reaching out to his constituents rather than waiting for them to contact his office. Here, they can make an initial contact that oftentimes leads to a swift resolution of the difficulties they are experiencing. He also attends fairs, summer concerts, senior clubs, and many other events to help inform people of what he does and where they can reach him.

After five years of his effort, many individuals and groups now know how and where to get help. The Congressman's offices are located in Hackensack and in Jersey City, just minutes from the bus and rail terminals for those who do not drive. This makes it less difficult for any concerned citizen to find help when they need it without the feeling that they have to jump through the hoops to find them.

I urge this committee to consider allowing the 9th Congressional District boundaries to remain intact as possible. Congressman Rothman has worked hard to inform his constituents of who he is, and more importantly, what he does. It would be very unfortunate if we had to go back to the people he had represented so well and let them know they have a new representative who may or may not know and have the understanding of their problems.

So I thank you for your time and effort, and I hope you will take my testimony this evening into consideration.

I thank you.

MR. ROSENTHAL: Thank you very much, Mr. Etler.

Any questions? (no response)

Thank you.

Senator Garry Furnari.

**SENATOR GARRY J. FURNARI:** Good evening, and thank you for the opportunity to allow me to address this group here this evening.

My name is Garry Furnari, and I'm the Senator from the 36th Legislative District, a district that is split with its congressional districts. About half of my legislative district is represented by Bill Pascrell in the 8th Congressional District, and half by Congressman Rothman in the 9th Congressional District.

Issues that people sometimes like to raise when they say that our districts should be drawn somewhat differently, or different and not ever splitting municipalities, I can tell you, are truly not that significant or difficult. It is, in fact, quite easy for my constituents to know precisely who is their congressman and deal with them very effectively. You've heard much testimony here tonight from my constituents who are either represented by Congressman Rothman or Congressman Pascrell, and you can see the attachment that each have. And, quite frankly, it's been very good for a Senator to have two congressmen to turn to.

But it's not just the issue of working that I think you ought to consider. And I am here tonight to urge you, insofar as the 8th and 9th Congressional Districts are concerned, that we attempt to preserve those districts the way they are and the way our congressional district has agreed that they ought to be.



One of my constituents here, and former mayor, Mario Drozdz, I am happy to see here -- former mayor of Bellville, who stood up to speak about the issue of seniority. And that issue is a very important one. And I can tell you, as a freshman Senator, you learn quickly what it is to be a freshman in a legislative house, particularly when you're in the minority. We remember back to Congressman Roe. We remember back to our congressman who had great seniority and the amount of things that they were able to bring back to the State of New Jersey. And as Mayor Drozdz says, that is a very good thing.

I do, however, want to echo some of the comments made by my colleague, Senator Vitale, because oftentimes when we go through this process, an enormous task that we must undertake, we forget to think about the people that are in the districts, the people that are closest there. You can draw those maps on the wall, and you can hear from pundits and people who study these things, but really, some of the most important things are listening to the local mayors and to the local legislators who know what it's like to have to deal with lines that we draw that hold us in place for the next 10 years. I think you ought to listen to some of the things that Senator Vitale said and some of the other people who have come up and told -- and can tell you, because of certain economic or geographic reasons, certain towns ought to be included or certain towns certainly should not be split.

And finally, I would urge you and ask you to remember that the political aspirations of no one individual should play a role in deliberations and the duties performed by this Commission.

I thank you for your time. I thank you for listening to me and the constituents of the 36th Legislative District.

MR. ROSENTHAL: Thank you.

Any questions? (no response)

Thank you, Senator Furnari.

SENATOR FURNARI: Thank you.

MR. ROSENTHAL: Baye Wilson.

**B A Y E W I L S O N:** Good evening, Commission.

My name is Baye Wilson. I am a resident of the 10th District -- a resident of Newark. And I'm here to just represent myself.

I want to talk about two issues, diversity and demographics as it relates to congressional redistricting. In particular, I would like the Commission to consider and be sensitive to the issues of diversity and demographics in the redistricting; in particular, issues of race, ethnicity, and economic background.

Oftentimes, when poor and working-class people are put into a district or a pool where they are the sort of numerical minority and a smaller portion of the community, the issues are not prioritized in a way that they feel their issues are being addressed; in particular, issues such as school vouchers or health care or crime. So, in considering the redistricting, I think it's important to just look at the race and class backgrounds for those issues.

Also, there was a study done by -- an article written by Frank Gillans (phonetic spelling) in the *American Political Science Review* that discussed that in major cities, black representation -- when cities that had higher black representatives -- there was a higher participation of black people in the (indiscernible) -- the higher black voter turnout in districts that had black elected officials.

I think this is particularly important given the problems of the last election that the Congressional Redistricting Commission take into consideration issues that increase access, increase participation, and is as open as possible so that people don't feel that they've been redistricted out of power or out of influence.

Third, and lastly, another issue I feel is important, in terms of race, is that we're looking at different ethnic groups, especially in a state like New Jersey that is so diverse, that the ethnicity of particular communities be considered in the redistricting so that there's an opportunity for emerging groups to have representatives from their own particular community. With the-- Newark, in particular, has 50 different ethnic groups, but there's communities all in New Jersey where there's sizable Dominican populations, Ecuadorian, West African. And in these communities, it's important that redistricting gives emerging groups the opportunity to participate so that there's new people and new groups that can make it to the Federal level.

That's really all that I have to say. I'd like to thank you for the opportunity for -- to testify before you.

And good evening.

MR. ROSENTHAL: Any questions? (no response)

Thank you, Mr. Wilson.

Kevin McMillan.

**KEVIN B. McMILLAN:** Good evening, Mr. Chairman and members of the Commission.

Thank you for holding this hearing and receiving my testimony tonight.

My name is Kevin B. McMillan. I am a member of the Neptune Township Committee and have also served as mayor for the Township of Neptune for the year 2000.

The reason I have come here tonight is to endorse the current makeup of the congressional district I live in and to urge the Commission to keep not only my district intact as much as possible, but the rest of the congressional districts as well.

My district is the 6th Congressional District, which has been represented by Congressman Frank Pallone since it was drawn 10 years ago. In fact, Frank Pallone has represented Neptune in the old 3rd District from 1988 to 1992 and also represented Neptune in the State Senate from 1983 to 1988.

His service to our district should not be overlooked. Having a quality representative from our area for an extended period of time serves our community well. And I believe that our voice grows louder, and we are heard better, every year of his service. In fact, all New Jersey was fortunate this year that it did not lose its seat to redistricting like our neighbors in New York and Philadelphia. They are losing two seats apiece. This Commission should take advantage of our good fortune and draw a map that keeps our representations in Congress the way it is.

In these recent years, we have seen our delegation's seniority grow and assume seats on key committees and in leadership. It's the duty of the Commission to foster New Jersey's growing influence by keeping the map and its membership intact.

As for my own district, I can tell you that its makeup and issues are well-suited for my congressman. He has spent long hours keeping our beaches

safe and clean, ensuring that our industries clean up their messes, and keeping our hospitals funded, and getting the needed funding for our universities and military installations.

Again, I urge this Commission to draw a map which continues to serve our current delegation, maximize its influence and seniority, and continue New Jersey's renewal.

Once again, thank you, Mr. Chairman and Commission members. And I appreciate the opportunity for you letting me express my views tonight.

MR. ROSENTHAL: Questions? (no response)

Thank you, Mr. McMillan.

Patricia Perkins. And I cannot read-- What is the--

**PATRICIA PERKINS - AUGUSTE:** Auguste. Auguste.

MR. ROSENTHAL: Thank you.

MS. PERKINS-AUGUSTE: Patricia Perkins-Auguste.

I am currently the Council President for the City of Elizabeth Municipal Council. I've been serving for the last nine years on that council, and I serve at large.

I'm also a part of the 10th Congressional District, and I come seeking your support that you keep the current congressional map intact. I can go on and on about all the good things that have come to the City of Elizabeth because of Congressman Donald Payne and Congressman Robert Menendez.

My congressman is Congressman Donald Payne from the 10th Congressional District, but also, Congressman Robert Menendez serves the City of Elizabeth, and I can name project after project -- without the dual support

of both congressmen fighting for the City of Elizabeth, many projects would not be in place today, for one, our HOPE VI grant.

All of you are welcome to come to the City of Elizabeth at any point in time, tomorrow may it be, to see how important it is for us to keep our congressional staff -- our congressional districts the way they are. I can name the dredging issue, which Congressman Menendez has fought for. I can mention the Head Start Program to make sure children have food -- Head Start children have food and also school-age children have food, that Congressman Payne has fought for. I can mention the AIDS epidemic that Congressman Payne is currently helping us to find solutions for in the City of Elizabeth. I can go on and on and on. You see a great big mall that we have in the City of Elizabeth and the flyover that was built there. That is because we have strong congressional leadership. Ten years it took for us to establish our place in the City of Elizabeth and the State of New Jersey. And I want to keep moving my city forward. I love the State of New Jersey, and I love Elizabeth.

I was born and raised in Elizabeth. So was my mother. I have strong roots there. I believe what we have in Elizabeth is a good thing, and Congressman Donald Payne and Congressman Bob Menendez--

Please consider-- You heard a lot of people saying that we want this. Please understand that people are tired of politicians playing politics with their lives. You as commissioners-- You have a lot of people's lives in your hands when you begin to redraw these lines. Understand, people want to believe in our government, people want to believe in the rights of the people. It's up to commissions like yourselves to set the framework for people like myself and others to do the job.

I hear it every day. People want to put trust back in the voting process. We need you to not play politics. We need to not let one person's or people's influence influence the way you draw up this map.

It's good. It's bipartisan. It's bipartisan, and it's good. And it has done the City of Elizabeth well.

I thank you for your time. I thank you for your consideration. I hope God be with you when you make your deliberations.

Thank you.

MR. ROSENTHAL: Questions? (no response)

Thank you very much.

Joseph Caliendo.

**J O S E P H C A L I E N D O:** Good evening, Mr. Chairman and Commission members. I thank you for hearing my testimony tonight.

My name is Joe Caliendo. I am the Democratic Municipal Chairman of the Township of Middletown, Monmouth County, Districts 6 and 12.

I'm here tonight to urge the committee to do the job as soon as possible and to avoid another partisan fight. I've read several newspaper accounts, and as of recently as yesterday's *Star-Ledger*, that the Republicans and Democrats in our delegation have come to an agreement on a new map for the next decade.

Given the increasingly partisan nature of New Jersey politics in recent years, I was pleased to learn of the agreement. By and large, a delegation to the House of Representatives has done a fine job. The voters of New Jersey

has sent them back to Washington year after year, and this Commission should respect that. The Commission should not undo the will of the people.

As a Democrat, you might think that I want a map that would seek out every advantage for my party. However, I am well aware of the presence and concerns of the Republican party. They have dominated Trenton for 10 years. So, rather than try to draw a pro-Democrat or a pro-Republican map, this Commission should draw one which takes care of both parties.

According to the paper, both parties of a House delegation have come to an agreement on a map. While the Commission should take this process seriously and deliberate as long as necessary, the people of New Jersey would not benefit from a long, drawn out partisan battle. If there is a bipartisan deal, we should save everyone's time and the taxpayers' money and move forward. Doing so will allow the necessary adjustments to be made for the municipalities in a sensible manner -- allow the voters to get to know of any changes in their representations.

To be certain, this deal may not please everyone, but is what compromise is all about. There are a lot of lip service paid lately to change the tune of our politics. Here is an opportunity where the Commission can indeed make its mark by ratifying a bipartisan deal which puts New Jersey's interest ahead of any partisan victory.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Commissioners.

MR. ROSENTHAL: Thank you very much.

Any questions? (no response)

Thank you, Mr. Caliendo.

Is there anyone else here who wishes to testify? (no response)



If not, we'll read into the record several letters and statements that have been submitted.

MR. PARISI: Okay. The first one is a statement from former Governor Thomas Kean to the Redistricting Commission. It's dated August 9, 2001.

"I'm urging members of New Jersey's Redistricting Commission to evaluate proposals threatening to transform our historically competitive congressional districts into safe Democratic or Republican districts.

"The State should have districts in which citizens have the opportunity to participate in close elections. Each party then has a fair chance to win. For instance, in 1998 in the 12th District, Congressman Rush Holt defeated Republican Michael Pappas in one of the closest races in the state. And last year, Holt defeated Republican Dick Zimmer by only 651 votes. The competitive nature of the 12th is healthy and should remain.

"It is good for the people of the state to have situations where competition is encouraged and balance maintained."

The next statement is from Assemblyman Leonard Lance, from the 23rd Legislative District.

"Dear Members of the Commission:

"I am writing to express my views regarding the redistricting of New Jersey's congressional districts. I regret that I am unable to testify personally at tonight's public hearing.

"New Jersey currently has six predominantly Republican congressional districts and six predominantly Democratic congressional districts. The remaining district, the Twelfth, is highly competitive.

“In 1998, the Democratic candidate won the Twelfth District by approximately 5000 votes, the smallest margin in the state. In 2000, the Democratic candidate retained his seat by fewer than 1000 votes, again the smallest margin in New Jersey. For this reason, I favor keeping District Twelve as competitive as possible and urge the Commission to reject any plan that would unfairly benefit one party over the other, as has been suggested.

“I appreciate your consideration of my letter.

“Sincerely, Leonard Lance.”

The third and final statement is from Senate Majority Leader John O. Bennett.

“As a former candidate for New Jersey’s 12th Congressional District, I believe it is in the interest -- the best interest of our state, and moreover, the process of democracy to ensure competitive elections.

“American government was designed to promote full representation -- from one end of the spectrum to the other. Here in New Jersey, and across the country, we have successfully established good, effective government. It is our moral obligation, as elected officials and community leaders, to uphold the true essence of a representative democracy and encourage competition in every election.

“Specifically, Monmouth County has many unique interests dominated by the Jersey Shore, open states -- open space,” excuse me, “and environmental concerns. The current 12th District does not contain any urban center. The addition of the City of Trenton would result in extreme diverse issues that make the community of interest argument a difficult one to sustain.

“Whenever possible, there should be the common interest that can tie a congressional or legislative district together. The current proposal puts aside community interest for individuals’ interest which I believe should be rejected by this Commission.”

MR. ROSENTHAL: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Is there someone who wishes to testify?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: Just a letter for the record, Mr. Chairman.

MR. ROSENTHAL: Oh, a letter for the record.

Thank you.

MR. PARISI: Would you like me to read it, Mr. Chairman?

MR. ROSENTHAL: Yes, please.

MR. PARISI: Okay. This is New Jersey Redistricting Commission. This is addressed to George Gilmore, who is the Republican Chair.

“I am writing on behalf of -- Republican--”

This is from Tom Davis, M.C., NRCC, National Republican Congressional Committee.

“Dear Chairman Gilmore:

“I am writing on behalf of the National Republican Congressional Committee to offer my unequivocal support for the bipartisan redistricting proposal agreed to by all 13 members of New Jersey’s delegation to the U.S. House of Representatives.

“I have carefully reviewed this proposal -- along with other proposed congressional redistricting plans for New Jersey -- and believe that not

only is the bipartisan delegation proposal the most fair and best, but also meets each of the important constitutional requirements for any redistricting plan.

“While other states are waging fierce battles over congressional redistricting, including protracted legal proceedings, I believe New Jersey and each of its congressional representatives are to be commended for agreeing to this bipartisan proposal. This spirit of bipartisanship bodes well for New Jersey’s residents; with each of its congressional representatives working together in a bipartisan manner, every New Jersey resident benefits.

“I respectfully urge that the Commission approve the bipartisan redistricting plan.

“Sincerely, Tom Davis, M.C., National Republican Congressional Committee.”

MR. ROSENTHAL: Members of the Commission, is there any further business, any statements? (no response)

If not, do I hear a motion to adjourn?

MS. FARBER: So moved.

MR. ROBINSON: So moved.

MR. ROSENTHAL: Second?

MS. RANDALL: Second.

MR. ROSENTHAL: All those in favor, signify by saying aye.  
(affirmative responses)

The ayes have it. The public hearing is adjourned.

Thank you.

**(HEARING CONCLUDED)**

CERTIFICATION

I, Harold White, Hearing Unit Coordinator for the Office of Legislative Services, certify that the foregoing is a complete and accurate transcript of the recording of the New Jersey Redistricting Commission Public Hearing, held in the City of Newark, on the 9th of August, 2001.

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Harold M. White  
(Certified Transcriber, AOC Certificate 509)

Office of Legislative Services  
Coordinator,  
Hearing Unit

Date: \_\_\_\_\_