
Commission Meeting

of

APPORTIONMENT COMMISSION

*"Testimony from the public on the establishment of legislative districts
in New Jersey that will be in effect for the next 10 years"*

LOCATION: Atlantic City Convention Center
Atlantic City, New Jersey

DATE: March 11, 2011
2:00 p.m.

MEMBERS OF COMMISSION PRESENT:

Assemblyman John S. Wisniewski, Co-Chair
Assemblyman Jay Webber, Co-Chair
Nilsa Cruz-Perez, Co-Vice Chair
Irene Kim Asbury, Co-Vice Chair
Senator Paul A. Sarlo
Senator Kevin J. O'Toole
Assemblyman Joseph Cryan
Assemblyman Sheila Y. Oliver
Bill Palatucci
Alan Rosenthal



ALSO PRESENT

Frank J. Parisi
Office of Legislative Services
Commission Secretary

Meeting 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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ASSEMBLYMAN JAY WEBBER (Co-Chair): Good afternoon.

My name is Assemblyman Jay Webber; I'm a Co-Chair of the 2011 Apportionment Commission. I want to welcome you to our sixth public hearing; it's an unprecedented number of hearings for an Apportionment Commission. And we will be taking testimony today from the public regarding the shape and the future of our next legislative map -- a map that will determine the 40 legislative districts for the next decade in New Jersey.

By agreement between the parties, Assemblyman and Co-Chair John Wisniewski chaired yesterday's public hearing; I will chair today's public hearing. And our newest, 11th member of the Commission, Professor Alan Rosenthal of Rutgers, will chair the hearing that will occur -- the seventh, the final public hearing that will occur on the 16th of this month -- next Wednesday in the City of Passaic.

I want to go through a couple of housekeeping items for people who are interested in testifying. If you want to testify today, there should be witness slips outside on the table. Please fill those out and submit them-- Frank, where are we submitting them -- over here?

MR. PARISI (Secretary): Or to Raysa.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Okay, to Raysa at the table, or to Frank Parisi, the Secretary of the Commission.

The order of the witnesses today will be determined not by me or by Chairman Wisniewski, but by the Secretary of the Commission, Mr. Parisi, who works for the Office of Legislative Services.

The only rule we have in terms of the order of the witnesses -- other than OLS governs -- is that if a witness testified at yesterday's public hearing, they will be put to the back of the queue so that everybody has an opportunity to testify today. We have a five-minute time limit, and Mr. Parisi has a polite egg timer that will go off after five minutes. Please keep your remarks, if at all possible-- Well, please keep your remarks to five minutes. When you hear that egg timer, please wrap it up so that everyone has an opportunity to participate today.

If you have written testimony, feel free to submit it. You can submit it to Mr. Parisi or to his assistants. If you do have written testimony, please don't feel compelled to read your written testimony and then submit it. We will read it. If you summarize your written testimony, that would make the afternoon go much more expeditiously.

And the way I'll do this is to call out a series of names so that the next witness will be called out, but I'll also call out the next two witnesses so that they're on-deck and they know that they're next up. If you know that the witness is here with you and may have stepped outside, perhaps you could go get the witness to make sure that he or she doesn't lose his or her place.

Other than that, I want to make everyone aware that the Commission does have a website, www.apportionmentcommission.org; and whatever you don't get to say today, or you have other submissions that you think about after you leave, the website is accepting any and all comments and documents. If you have maps or analyses that you want to share with the Commission, please feel free to log on and go to the Commission's website and submit them there.

With that, I don't think any of the Commissioners are going to make opening statements. I will have Mr. Parisi call the roll.

MR. PARISI: Okay, Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry to report that the egg timer seems to be missing (laughter) but I'll be using the timer on my telephone, and I will just indicate when five minutes is expired -- if that's okay with the Chair.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: That would be fine.

UNIDENTIFIED MEMBER OF AUDIENCE: Could we start with a flag salute before we begin the proceedings?

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: I have no objection to that. Let's call the roll and then I'd be happy to accommodate.

MR. PARISI: Senator Sarlo.

SENATOR SARLO: Here.

MR. PARISI: Bill Palatucci.

MR. PALATUCCI: Here.

MR. PARISI: Senator O'Toole.

SENATOR O'TOOLE: Here.

MR. PARISI: Speaker Oliver.

ASSEMBLY SPEAKER OLIVER: Here.

MR. PARISI: George Gilmore. (no response)

Assemblyman Cryan.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Here.

MR. PARISI: Vice Chair Nilsa Cruz-Perez.

MS. CRUZ-PEREZ: Here.

MR. PARISI: Vice Chair Irene Kim Asbury.

MS. KIM ASBURY: Here.

MR. PARISI: Co-Chair John S. Wisniewski.

ASSEMBLYMAN JOHN S. WISNIEWSKI (Co-Chair):

Here.

MR. PARISI: Co-Chair Jay Webber.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Here.

MR. PARISI: Eleventh member Alan Rosenthal.

DR. ROSENTHAL: Here.

MR. PARISI: You have a quorum.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thank you, Mr. Parisi.

If you'd all join us in the flag salute.

(recite Pledge of Allegiance)

Thank you.

Our first three witnesses this afternoon will be Senator Jim Whelan, Councilman Mo Delgado, and Donna Amon.

Senator, thank you for joining us.

SENATOR JIM WHELAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me first welcome you and this Commission to Atlantic City; we're delighted that you've visited us. We know that you can't go to every municipality or even every district, so we're very, very happy that you've chosen to come to Atlantic City for one of your forums.

I think a lot of times we view this as a political question, and certainly there are elements of politics in this. But I think there is a more important public policy question as we look at the reapportionment process. I think, too, many people have commented that the dominant issue in our public life today is the issue of polarization and a lack of civility. And I think when we look at creating districts, the question is: Do we want

districts where we pack minorities into what are relatively safe, Democratic districts; and bleached suburban and rural districts so that they become safe, Republican districts? Is our public discourse more civil or less civil as a result of that? Do we have more or less polarization as a result of that? I would think that, speaking for myself in terms of my district, I think that diversity within a district is a very positive thing.

I know you heard yesterday -- because I saw a clip on NJN -- from a farmer; and she said she wanted to be in a district of farmers. I will tell you I think that's very short-sighted on her part. What happens the next time a governor -- as we saw the last Governor -- suggests, "Let's do away with the Department of Agriculture." I'm a city guy; I live here in Atlantic City, I work in Atlantic City. I've spent a lifetime in cities. I've never lived anywhere but a city. But when that proposal was made, I can tell you that the farmers within this district -- and I know many of them, from Mullica, from Galloway, from Egg Harbor City, from Estelle Manor, and so on -- they were pretty quick to get in touch with their Senator and tell him what a bad idea doing away with the Department of Agriculture was. If you took this district and made it a shore district, let's say from Brigantine down to Cape May and perhaps the mainland communities, I wouldn't have that input. I would not have been one of those voices saying, "Doing way with the Department of Agriculture is not such a good idea." So again, I think the diversity within a district -- whether it's geographic diversity, ethnic and racial diversity, economic diversity -- I think that's a good thing and I think it ultimately makes us better as legislators.

So I think every legislator would probably sit here -- those of us who are in the Legislature -- say, "Leave my District alone." The reality is,

I'm one of those districts that is above the population so we know we're going to have to shrink a little bit. But I would hope that whether it's in the 2nd District where we are today, or the other districts throughout the state, that concept of diversity within a district would be something that you would consider, and the benefits of that to our public discourse in terms of addressing the lack of civility and the polarization that we're experiencing in public life.

And with that, I'd be happy to try and answer any questions, if there are any.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Any questions?

SENATOR O'TOOLE: Chair?

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Senator O'Toole.

SENATOR O'TOOLE: Great, thank you.

Thank you for the welcome, Senator. I appreciate coming down here -- not as often as some would like, but we try and get down here as much as we can.

And talking about the 2nd District, you talk about some of the various diversities that you've mentioned. All things being equal -- populations being equal -- would you keep your district as is? Is that what you're suggesting?

SENATOR WHELAN: I would love to keep the district as is, but we're above-- In fact, quite frankly, I feel like we're missing-- We cover 18 of the 23 towns in Atlantic County. I mean, I know we're not going to go back to the 21 Club, but in a perfect world, that may not sound so bad.

SENATOR O'TOOLE: Senator, you're a Democrat; the two Assembly members are two Republicans, correct?

SENATOR WHELAN: Right.

SENATOR O'TOOLE: Split district -- one of the few in the state that you actually have a split representative ticket.

SENATOR WHELAN: Yes.

SENATOR O'TOOLE: Would you consider District 2 a competitive district? You have some Republicans, some Democrats.

SENATOR WHELAN: I think we're a competitive district; quite frankly, we're a Republican-leaning district when you look at the total and the history -- we're a Republican-leaning district. But I think we're a competitive district, yes.

SENATOR O'TOOLE: Competitive? Okay, thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Anyone else? (no response)

Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR WHELAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair and members, and good luck. You have a difficult job.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thanks. We'll take all the luck we can get.

Next witness is Atlantic City Councilman Mo Delgado, followed by Donna Amon, followed by Stephan Jackson -- looks like the 1st.

Councilman.

C O U N C I L M A N M O I S S E " M O " D E L G A D O: Good afternoon, everyone.

Members of the Commission, welcome to my city, the great City of Atlantic City. I am Councilman Moisse "Mo" Delgado, one of three at-large representatives of the City of Atlantic City's Council.

I'm here to speak on the lack of fairness in the current legislative map to our community of interest -- in the Latino community -- in Atlantic and Cumberland counties. I'm requesting for changes to be made to the current legislative map in order to stop cracking our community between districts in such a way that makes it impossible to elect, or even significantly influence, the election of any candidate of our choice.

Let me first explain some of the dynamics of the Latino community in our area. We are a very fast-growing community. Census data reflects a 50 percent growth since 2000 in Atlantic County, and a 53 percent growth in Cumberland County. As we all know, Atlantic City's proud of our casinos and the benefits they've provided the state and the surrounding communities. The casino industry has become the primary source of employment to many people in South Jersey, and Latinos specifically. These good people have developed strong community ties through the workplace and through the casino workers' unions -- HERE Local 54 and UAW. And I have chosen to reside throughout the area, within the corridor between Atlantic City and Vineland. That central spine -- roughly along the Black Horse Pike -- ties together several communities that have significant and, according to the last Census numbers, a rapidly growing Latino population.

The two anchors of this corridor are Atlantic City, which is 31 percent Latino; and Vineland, which is 38 percent Latino. In between lays Buena, with a 29 percent Latino population; Egg Harbor City, with a 26 percent Latino population; and Pleasantville, with a 41 percent Latino population. Also, Buena Vista and Mullica have the most longstanding

Latino populations of the lot. And those are places that are part of our community of interest as well.

Those are more longstanding anchors of the Latino community, but one of the things that we've seen in the past 10 years is that a certain group of places have become destinations, from some of our communities, that desire relocating to other areas from their home base because they can afford more expensive homes.

There are three main areas of my discussion that I would place in this category: Hamilton, Ventnor, and Egg Harbor Township. Now, let's expand a bit on Egg Harbor Township. As a strong place for the Latino community -- oh, I'm sorry-- Egg Harbor Township, in particular -- because you might not think of Egg Harbor Township as a strong place for a Latino community -- but Egg Harbor Township, according to the last Census, has over 5,600 Latinos who remain strongly tied to Latinos in other communities in the corridor that I am describing.

So now that I've mentioned a few important details about our community, let me talk about the current map. The current 1st District map suggests a 17 percent Latino population; so has the current 2nd District map. Our experience has been that these numbers have not enabled us to elect our candidates of choice in either district, even though there are other parts of the state like Camden where similar numbers have been sufficient. Why is that? It has to do with the cracking of our community -- the manner in which a community is broken apart in many smaller parts in order to weaken their intensity and, in our situation, the voting power. It is very hard to be an effective voice when some parts of a specific community are in one district, and some in another. When

Vineland, Buena, Buena Vista are in District 1, and towns like Atlantic City, Hamilton, and Pleasantville are in District 2, our community cannot stand united.

So what we ask is for, in a new map, a district stretching roughly along the Black Horse Pike corridor from Atlantic City to Vineland, which would also include Buena, Buena Vista, Egg Harbor City, Egg Harbor Township, Hamilton, Mullica, Pleasantville, and Vineland. The total population of this district is 223,570 -- which is within the legal limits. The proposed district reflects a population whereas 26 percent is Latino, 20 percent is African-American, 7 percent is Asian American, and 47 percent is non-Hispanic white, respectively. We believe that the district we are proposing gives our community a better chance to be represented in the electoral process than the current district. We believe that the proposed district is better for the African-American community as well, and would be a comfort to them, being that they have experienced similar problems in our area with electing a candidate of choice.

I would also imagine that it would provide some comfort to the Commission to be able to further provide a fair and honest playing field--

MR. PARISI: Five minutes have elapsed.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: If you could just wrap up.

COUNCILMAN DELGADO: I'm at the last few sentences, if that's okay.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Perfect; thank you.

COUNCILMAN DELGADO: Thank you, okay.

I would like you to consider in proposal a viable and honest approach towards fairness, and look at this like you would a tug-of-war

rope: Latinos in this district have been pulling and pulling for a long time in spite of only having one-third the rope. Let's move the handkerchief toward true center and afford everyone a fair chance in our electoral process.

We appreciate the opportunity to have you here. Thank you, and enjoy your time while you're here in my great town of Atlantic City. We hope to see you a lot more in less-harmful situations. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thank you. Any questions for the Councilman?

COUNCILMAN DELGADO: Yes, any questions?

ASSEMBLY SPEAKER OLIVER: I have a question.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Speaker?

ASSEMBLY SPEAKER OLIVER: Yes, I--

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Speaker Oliver -- Speaker, the other mike.

ASSEMBLY SPEAKER OLIVER: Yes, good afternoon, Councilman.

You identified yourself as a Latino.

COUNCILMAN DELGADO: Correct.

ASSEMBLY SPEAKER OLIVER: Are you-- What has been the history of Latinos being elected to serve on the Atlantic City Municipal Council?

COUNCILMAN DELGADO: Respectfully, I am the second of all time. I'm the first of my kind -- being of Puerto Rican descent -- but I am the second of all time.

ASSEMBLY SPEAKER OLIVER: Thank you.

COUNCILMAN DELGADO: Any other questions?

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Any other?

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Can I ask one?

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Assemblyman Cryan.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: And what is the Latino population in Atlantic City?

COUNCILMAN DELGADO: At this moment in time?

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Did you say 31? Did you say 31 percent?

COUNCILMAN DELGADO: Well, presently, we faced a 19 percent growth. Our total population -- Latinos -- 39,500 (*sic*); I'm sorry -- 12,044. So we're talking about 39 percent.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Thirty-nine percent -- I'm sorry.

COUNCILMAN DELGADO: Between 31 and 39 percent.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Between 31 and 39 percent? Okay.

But would you agree with me -- not to get into a debate over representation -- but I took a ride here earlier and watched some of the investment properties in Revel and the others where the State has made -- I don't want to get into the rest of it -- but clearly there's been some significant investment from the State in Atlantic City in the overall -- would you agree with that -- in the overall concept of the State?

COUNCILMAN DELGADO: To some extent, yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: To some extent. Maybe not enough to satisfy everybody, but--

COUNCILMAN DELGADO: Well, I'm aggressive. I'm a Council person. I'm always going to be predatory. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: I think that's all I want to say. Thank you for your comments. Thank you.

COUNCILMAN DELGADO: Anyone else? No? (no response)
Thank you; enjoy your stay while you're here.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thank you, Councilman.

We have Donna Amon, followed by Stephan Jackson I, and Stephan Jackson II. And so as not to be so abrupt, Mr. Parisi will, in the future, give a little 30-second wave so you know you're running out of time on your five minutes.

Ms. Amon.

D O N N A A M O N: Hi, I'm Donna Amon.

First I want to thank all the Commission members here for your time coming to Atlantic City today.

Can you hear me?

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Yes.

MS. AMON: And my only question is, if you're going to remap the districts, I believe you should look at the people who vote -- the voters who are registered right now versus the people who do vote. So I think you should look at remapping it in that way.

That's all I have to say.

Any questions? (no response)

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thank you, Ms. Amon.

MS. AMON: Thank you.

S T E P H A N J A C K S O N: First of all, I'd like to thank--

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Oh, I'm sorry. Hold on a second.

MR. JACKSON: Oh, I'm sorry. Excuse me.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Stephan Jackson, followed by Stephan Jackson II, followed by Robert Jackson.

If you get two more, you'll have five. (laughter)

MR. JACKSON: First of all, I would like to thank you all for coming, distinguished Chair and distinguished members of the panel.

But as a resident of Atlantic City, as an employee of the Atlantic County Sheriff's Office -- as the Chief of Staff -- and as an electoral candidate for the upcoming election for the County Executive position here in Atlantic County, it's extremely important to me that we have the ability to address certain issues which have become very, very real in our area.

And the first one, primarily, is that understanding that the Census figures show that persons of color are now living in large numbers in every region of New Jersey. We have to try to represent that diversity in as many legislative districts as possible, and we have to stay away from the term that just kind of popped into my head, that I would like to refer to as *electoral segregation*. Because if we look at this process from an issue of packing and of bleaching, then we are placing people of color, based on their minority group, into areas where the representation is not going to be effective.

And I believe it's up to this group, it's up to us as registered voters, to ensure that every ethnic group gets a fair shake in this. We cannot move forward in this way any further. And if the redistricting process is not done in the way that is fair for everyone, then we're not going

to have the representation that we need. And I plan to move further than just County Executive; and I want to make sure that in 10 years when my son, who sits here today before you, has the opportunity to be part of this process, that he can have the same fair opportunity that I believe and I hope that I will have.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Stephan Jackson II, followed by Robert Jackson, followed by Michael Donohue.

S T E P H A N L. J A C K S O N II: I just had a basic question: I was wondering how the redistricting will affect not only minority students, but students in general in our area? I was just wondering that.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: The Commission is eager to hear from you. But suffice it to say, I think -- and Chairman Wisniewski can chime in if he'd like -- that every student, just like every other person in the State of New Jersey, is counted under the Census -- should have been -- and will be accorded equal weight when the map is drawn. So the United States Constitution requires that the districts that we draw are roughly equal: about 220,000 people in each district. It doesn't matter what age you are. The inhabitants of the state, every inhabitant counts, and students as much as nonstudents are represented in the map.

MR. JACKSON II: Okay, all right then, thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WISNIEWSKI: I would say nothing different.

MR. JACKSON II: Okay.

ASSEMBLYMAN WISNIEWSKI: The goal of this Commission is to create 40 districts of approximately 220,000 people; and

that includes students and nonstudents, registered voters and non-registered voters, and active voters and inactive voters. It's based on the fixed number of people, including students.

MR. JACKSON II: All right, thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thank you for coming today. I appreciate it.

MR. JACKSON II: Thank you for answering.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Robert Jackson, followed by Michael Donohue, followed by Frank -- forgive me if I butcher the name -- Argote-Freyre.

F R A N K A R G O T E - F R E Y R E: Argote-Freyre. (indicating pronunciation)

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Argote-Freyre. (indicating pronunciation) Thank you.

Mr. Jackson.

R O B E R T J A C K S O N: Good afternoon, Commission.

I just appreciate the opportunity to be able to voice my opinion about the redistricting. It tends to be pulled back and forth by politics, and it's very difficult after hearing some of my predecessors that have sat here about minorities and their representation. I live in an area of our district that is pretty sparsely populated with minorities. I come from the southern end of the 1st District. But in a unique way the representation has been fairly even-handed. Both sides of the aisle tend to service their constituency pretty fair.

I've held public office, and as a small business owner I also sit on the Pinelands Commission. So it's -- the diversity that's there is really, I

think, what we seek; we seek diversity so that we're not just getting one particular slant. But when politics enters into it, one group always tries to trump the other so it's easier to get where they want to go.

I'm here to say that ours is pretty balanced. Sure, there's no perfect world; there's always room for inclusion by minorities underserved. But in the real world it's not broken everywhere. And, in this case, in my experience, I've been able to pick up the phone and literally get help from any of our legislators. And that's kind of refreshing. I think it's in an area where service to their constituency trumps their political slant.

So I'm not saying that it couldn't be worked, but because I don't have the actual numbers I don't want to advocate one way or the other. I just know that it's been a breath of fresh air to be able to pick up the phone and talk to a Republican or a Democrat and get service, and get your issue solved. I think that the common constituent, that's what they want. They don't care what party you are -- if they have a need, that it's addressed. And I would like to see things balanced enough that with the right candidate, with the right campaign, anyone could be elected. So that's something that I think people where I live shoot for: the opportunity and the fairness.

So however you do it, I hope that the number one goal is to have it balanced, have diversity, and have it so that if I choose to run for higher office, I have a chance of getting there, not that I have to change what I may look like in order to get there.

So I appreciate the opportunity, and thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thank you.

Any questions?

MR. JACKSON: If you do, I'm--

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thank you, Mr. Jackson.

MR. JACKSON: Sure.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Quick housekeeping item that I should have addressed earlier: If you have a cell phone with you -- who doesn't? -- if you could put it on vibrate or turn it off, that would be appreciated. Thank you.

The next witness is Cape May County Republican Chairman Michael Donohue, followed by Frank Argote-Freyre, followed by Paula Dunn.

M I C H A E L D O N O H U E: Thank you, Chairman, Professor Rosenthal, Chairman, honorable members of the Apportionment Commission.

As Chairman Webber indicated, I am, in the interest of full disclosure, Republican Chairman of Cape May County. And I bring to this discussion the unique perspective of someone who has run twice in the last two cycles for State Assembly in District 1 unsuccessfully. I'd like to blame that entirely on the makeup of the district, but I don't think I can. (laughter)

But I thought it was important, first of all, to come and thank you all for being here today, down here in South Jersey. We're very happy that you're here in Atlantic City. It's a great part of the state, as you all know, and we're very proud of it.

In terms of the discussion of redistricting, I have attempted in the last few days to engage some of our folks in Cape May County on the subject and, as I'm sure you've experienced, they tend to glaze over and say,

“I don’t want to do statistics.” But in that discussion one of these folks, a young man, talked about -- said something very simple, which I think was illuminating to a certain extent. “It’s kind of like parity in the NFL,” he said. And I thought a lot about that -- and although, looking at the Commission, most of you are probably Giants fans -- I’m an Eagles fan -- and I think that this has some application here, because the reason they--

MS. CRUZ-PEREZ: I’m from South Jersey, okay? (laughter)

MR. DONOHUE: All right, great; that’s right, that’s right. We’ll stick together.

Why do they pursue that? To make it more competitive. And why do they want to make it more competitive? So that the fans are engaged; so that the fans turn out. And they come to the games and they participate. And that can be overlaid I think, very effectively, on this redistricting discussion. Because when you have competitive districts, then you have the fans -- the voters -- turning out. You have them engaged. You have them on the ground, working to elect a particular candidate to office in a district where they look at the race and say, “We can win if we do the hard work,” rather than looking at the district and saying, “Well, it’s traditionally gone this way, it’s going to go that way, there’s really nothing we can do.”

We’re unique in the 1st District, in my part of it, in Cape May County, in as much you cannot give us a municipality in Delaware or somewhere out in the Delaware Bay -- you have to stop there. So the rest of the district has to sort of orbit around the top of Cape May County. And I believe there are opportunities to make this district more balanced. As I said, I have that experience, and I know that while we may have some

registration advantage in Cape May County, it hasn't always played out as a voting advantage.

But there are some other parts in the northwestern part of the district that may have served as a particular advantage for the Democrat side of the ticket, which I know we can shift that around to balance that out a little bit. I think it would make the district that much more competitive; which, again, would bring the fans back, bring the voters out into a competitive district and engage in democracy more actively than they, perhaps, do now.

So thank you for your time. Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thank you, Chairman.

Any questions?

ASSEMBLY SPEAKER OLIVER: I have one.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Speaker?

ASSEMBLY SPEAKER OLIVER: Yes, good afternoon.

And Cape May County is a wonderful county. I love the communities there.

MR. DONOHUE: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ASSEMBLY SPEAKER OLIVER: Listening to your discussion about competitiveness: If memory serves me correctly, wasn't it true that in Cape May County the Republican Party always had the Senate representative, and I think Senator Jeff Van Drew was the first Democrat elected in 100 years?

MR. DONOHUE: Yes, and I think that that-- It's a point well taken, Madam Speaker, but I think it also illustrates the effect of the map for the last 10 years, because that trend began in 2001 and has continued

to move the entire legislative delegation to the other side. And I think it illustrates the condition of the district as it is today, that perhaps that pendulum swung completely to the other side.

ASSEMBLY SPEAKER OLIVER: One hundred years?
(laughter)

MR. DONOHUE: Things happen a lot quicker these days than they used to. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: The power of the map -- right, Chairman?

MR. DONOHUE: That's right, that's right.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Any more, Madam Speaker?

ASSEMBLY SPEAKER OLIVER: No, that's it, Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thank you.

Chairman Wisniewski.

ASSEMBLYMAN WISNIEWSKI: I just-- Your testimony was that you have registration advantage in Cape May.

MR. DONOHUE: Yes, I believe so.

ASSEMBLYMAN WISNIEWSKI: And you have a Democratic Senator and two Democratic Assembly people.

MR. DONOHUE: That's right.

ASSEMBLYMAN WISNIEWSKI: And so your request is to make the district--

MR. DONOHUE: Well, if you look--

ASSEMBLYMAN WISNIEWSKI: --more Republican?
(laughter)

MR. DONOHUE: Well, if the object is to make the district more competitive, maybe that's how it turns out. But my testimony here today is to make the district more competitive. We have parts of the district that are traditionally more Republican, we have parts of the District that are traditionally more Democrat; and they all play a significant role in the election of legislators from that district. So if the district can be shifted around -- I don't know how you keep Cape May County out of it -- but to make it more competitive, I think that's the goal of this Commission.

ASSEMBLYMAN WISNIEWSKI: This is like my golf handicap, which is about 40 or something like that. (laughter) Okay, I got it. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Chairman, the 1st District consists of more than Cape May County -- there are parts of Cumberland and Atlantic County there as well.

MR. DONOHUE: Parts of Atlantic -- that's correct; absolutely.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: So it's not just the county that you represent.

MR. DONOHUE: That's right -- no. If it was just Cape May County, we wouldn't-- Right, it would still be Republican. And it wouldn't have been in just Democrat hands -- in that direction -- for the last 10 years. But yes, absolutely, there are parts of Atlantic County and Cumberland in that district -- all right?

Thank you all very much; thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thank you, Chairman.

Frank Argote-Freyre, followed by Paula Dunn, followed by Mary Slomine.

MARY M. SLOMINE: Slomine. (indicating pronunciation)

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Slomine (indicating pronunciation) -- got it right, thank you.

MR. ARGOTE-FREYRE: My name is Frank Argote-Freyre, and you did a commendable job pronouncing it, really.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: I tried.

MR. ARGOTE-FREYRE: And I'm a member and President of the Latino Action Network -- a broad, statewide coalition of Latino organizations dedicated to political empowerment, the promotion of civil rights, and the elimination of disparities in the areas of education, health, and employment.

I want to thank all the Commissioners for the opportunity to, again, testify here today. Special greetings to the newest member, Professor Rosenthal.

The Latino Action Network and many other groups asked for these hearings at the earlier round of public hearings, and you listened. My understanding is that this is the second day of hearings after the Commission declared an impasse between the parties, and we very much appreciate this opportunity.

We testified extensively at the earlier hearings about the dangers of both packing -- concentrating large numbers of people of color in a small number of districts in a way that dilutes overall political power of our communities; and cracking -- which divides communities of interest over multiple districts to the point that we have little or no influence in any district. And we continue to urge the Commission to avoid both packing and cracking.

At this point in the process, we recognize that a lot will come down to negotiations between the Commissioners, sitting in a conference room with laptop computers, moving lines around on maps, and calculating numbers. And it is that part of the process to which I wanted to address my remarks today.

I know it can be very tempting, especially sitting around a conference table with computers and maps, to make numbers king -- to say that a district that is 50 percent Latino is better than 49 percent, is better than 48 percent.

But to focus just on numbers does not do justice to our communities. You cannot see from the numbers alone which communities of interest are connected so closely that to divide them would seriously compromise our ties; and which communities might be adjacent on the map but worlds away in practice. So all of those things can make a big difference in our ability to elect a candidate of choice than a few percentages here or there.

So I'll give you a couple of quick examples: Newark and Jersey City -- they border each other on the map. And I'm sure you could draw some great on-paper districts that are 50 to 60 percent Latino by combining parts of Newark and Jersey City, or Newark and Elizabeth. But the Latino community in Newark really doesn't share that many common institutions with the Latino community in Jersey City. There are few common community groups or political institutions. And so that district that looks great on paper would really become a fight between two communities with no history of working together, praying together, or building a community together.

So that's what you shouldn't do, in our estimation. Let me give you a quick example of what you might consider doing, using my home county of Monmouth as an example. Monmouth County has seen strong growth in the Latino community since 2000 -- some of the higher rates of growth in the state. So for example, Freehold Borough's percentage of Latinos went from 28 percent to 43 percent, and Red Bank's from 17 percent to 34 percent. Freehold, Red Bank, Long Branch, Asbury Park are the four key centers of the Latino community in Monmouth County, and there are strong ties between them. These communities share a common heritage, common community institutions.

Every year the Latino residents of Monmouth County gather for a festival in downtown Freehold during Hispanic Heritage Month to celebrate the diverse communities that make up the Latino community in Monmouth. I am the Director of the Latino Coalition, in addition to my other title, an umbrella organization of Latino organizations, primarily in Monmouth County, and I can attest to those close bonds and commonality of interests between these communities.

So right now the Latino community in these communities is cracked into two districts, the 11th and the 12th. As such, there is insufficient ability in any of these districts for the community to even influence the election of a candidate of choice.

In the new map -- and I see I have to wrap up -- we ask that Freehold, Red Bank, Long Branch, and Asbury Park all be in the same district. Other towns in the district in addition to those would include Allenhurst, Colts Neck, Deal, Eatontown, Interlaken, Loch Arbour,

Neptune Township, Ocean Township, Shrewsbury Borough, Shrewsbury Township, Tinton Falls, and West Long Branch.

And as a quick aside: Also support the proposals set forth by Councilman Moisse Delgado.

So my time is up, so I'll conclude there. Thank you very much -- unless there are questions?

MR. PALATUCCI: I'll ask a question.

We had -- and thank you for your testimony -- similar testimony last night from a Hispanic councilman from Morris County -- I forget which town he was from, but -- so you're from Monmouth County, you know Monmouth County very well, the way that individual knew Morris County very well. And I assume, then, using-- And there are many criteria. And yesterday in our hearing Dr. Rosenthal laid out all of them. But the community of interest is certainly an important one.

My question is: I assume you would not limit that approach to one particular part of the state. You wouldn't limit that just to Morris County or Monmouth County; you'd use it -- for example, the City of Passaic and the surrounding Hispanic communities that may be around the City of Passaic; or Camden and the areas around there. Right? So you're not just limiting it to Monmouth County?

MR. ARGOTE-FREYRE: Of course not, no. We've, as a matter of fact, thought very carefully about the Passaic example; and time limits me, I think, to tell you what our proposal there is. But we have a proposal for that as well.

MR. PALATUCCI: You can submit it to us either online or on paper, so I'd be happy to take it from you.

MR. ARGOTE-FREYRE: We certainly will. Thank you, Commissioner.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Anyone else? (no response)

Thank you for your testimony.

MR. ARGOTE-FREYRE: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Paula Dunn, followed by Mary Slomine, followed by Solaimon Serneabad.

So Ms. Dunn.

P A U L A D U N N: Hi, my name's Paula Dunn and I reside here in Atlantic County. Which, like New Jersey--

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Ms. Dunn, excuse me. Could you speak into that microphone? It would be better. Thank you.

MS. DUNN: Oh, that's better.

My name is Paula Dunn, and I reside in Atlantic County which, like New Jersey, is very diverse in its population. First let me say to the Commission members, I know this job is difficult and I thank you for your service, for taking it on. It's a toughie, and I understand that. Because, in full disclosure, I sit on the election board, and we do redistricting and stuff like this on a much smaller level.

New Jersey is a state where it's possible for any New Jerseyan to run for public office. I would hope this Commission does not produce a map that packs any racial group into a specific district. This would severely limit the chances of many to run for public office. As evidenced over the past 10 years, culminating in the election of President Obama in 2008, voters are willing to vote for a person regardless of race. And by packing any minority into one district, it limits the ability of a minority to run in

other districts. By nature of packing it keeps minorities in one district and limits their power, rather than fairly giving everyone the chance to run for public office. Everyone deserves a fair chance, and our map should reflect that fairness.

I've also read that there is some consideration that will be given to voter turnout in drawing the map. In my opinion, this would be not only unconstitutional but patently unfair. The basis for our democracy is one man/woman, one vote. The basis for redistricting is population. By using voter turnout, an unfair advantage would be given to more affluent areas where people tend to come out to vote in large numbers. Both political parties, civic groups, etc., can and should be out registering people and getting them out to vote. That's the power of the electorate, and should not be considered in the redistricting process.

Politics aside, Commissioners, you must strike a balance that provides a map that reflects New Jersey with fairness and equity for all citizens, registered to vote or not.

Again, thank you very much for your time and all your efforts in this.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thank you, Ms. Dunn.

Mary Slomine, followed by Solaimon Serneabad, followed by Senator Jeff Van Drew.

MS. SOLOMINE: Hi, my name is Mary Slomine, and in the interest of letting you know my current career, I am the elected Democratic Municipal Chair of Margate. Margate is a small town that exists on Absecon Island; 100 years ago it used to be called Atlantic City South.

But I'm not here today to represent a party; I'm here to represent the people of Atlantic County. I have heard -- and I am not knowledgeable on this point, but I have heard -- that when redistricting occurs, members of the Commission are sometimes influenced to draw the map according to voter turnout. I happen to live in a very affluent town. Voter turnout in my town can be good, it can be great. But I don't feel that my responsibility as a citizen is limited to Margate. I live on Absecon Island. Whatever happens at the other end of Absecon Island in Atlantic City happens to all of us.

For reasons that I do not have the time to go into, voter turnout in Atlantic City can be low or it can be medium. I would only ask you to do one thing today: be fair. Don't represent your party, represent the people of the State of New Jersey. And I think if you do that you will come out with not a perfect map, not a map that the Democrats like, not a map that the Republicans like, but that the majority of the people of New Jersey can live with for 10 years.

In 10 years I will be 72. When I come back here, I would like to send another message to both parties. There are 13 people sitting here today; 10 of them are men and only three are women. I do not think that the State of New Jersey only has 20-something percent women in it. So in 10 years I'd like to see more women appointed to this Commission.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Any questions? (no response)

Thank you, Ms. Slomine.

Solaimon Serneabad, followed by Senator Jeff Van Drew, followed by Bettie Reina.

Is Solaimon here? (no response) Going once, going twice.

Senator Van Drew, followed by Bettie Reina, followed by Noriko Kowalewski.

Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR JEFF VAN DREW: Thank you.

Good afternoon, everyone, and first of all let me thank all of you for having these public meetings, for being here in South Jersey. It is something that we truly do appreciate.

I wanted to speak about my district a little bit. It is a diverse district, and I believe it truly represents a microcosm of what is the State of New Jersey, and I believe it works.

Let me speak to the diversity: It's a rural district. For those of you who know my area a little bit, you know that we have a good deal of agriculture; particularly Cumberland County, western Atlantic County, and parts of Cape May County have a large number of farms, and particularly productive farms. They are some of the most competitive, actually, on the East Coast, and they are very much involved with the Vineland farm exchange as well, which is a very interesting process which I won't go into now. But, again, it is very competitive and produces a lot of the produce that we all eat -- and I don't mean New Jersey, but along the East Coast.

It's a coastal shore district. I represent areas in Atlantic County and particularly in Cape May County, that represent the shore. The shore itself has some unique characteristics and requires some special attention, I think all of you are aware of, whether it's beach replenishment or the other issues that go along with the shore. But it is a very special area and it is

very important to the State of New Jersey. Tourism, the shore, the coast represent the third largest industry in this state.

It is a suburban district, because we have suburban areas, particularly in northern Cape May County and parts of Cumberland County. And, of course, in my Atlantic County part of the district, there are suburban and there are bedroom communities -- that individual people live and work and go back and forth to Atlantic City and work in that Atlantic City area.

It is an urban district. I enjoy very often speaking to my colleagues from other parts of the state, and they make the assumption that very often I may not know much about the urban part of the state or the urban issues. And actually, we have some of the greatest urban challenges in my district that you will find anywhere in the State of New Jersey. Vineland and Millville, for example, are very urban areas with huge economic challenges. They are inner city areas. And I'm very proud to serve them, but they truly represent what the microcosm could represent and actually we could discuss -- which would be the urban areas in New Jersey. They are in South Jersey as well.

It's an area that has senior citizens; minorities; young, active people; extremely affluent people; and, what's particularly fascinating about my district is, we have, in all candor, some of the poorest folks in the State of New Jersey. Cumberland County has the highest unemployment rate in the State of New Jersey; Cumberland County has the highest rate of teen pregnancy. And yet, at the same time in my district, I have areas like Stone Harbor and Avalon which are some of the wealthiest areas in the country.

So I think it's a district of wealthy and poor; of rural, suburban and urban. And I think it's given me a unique perspective when I serve in the Legislature, when we deal -- whether it's with agricultural issues or urban issues or suburban issues; or issues that affect people of color; or issues that affect people who are concerned with the environment, because that's what ties our district together more than anything -- is almost all of the district is dependent upon the environment.

So let me speak to the population of it -- and I know you all know this already, because I know that's an important piece of this. We happen to be one of the districts that are just about right on the money -- I think we have around 217,000; I think our variation is only about a percentage point, so we are very close to where we need to be.

And when I say it's diverse, it's also connected. There is a real continuity to this district. The people who live in Cape May County, many of them -- our number one employer is the casinos -- work in Atlantic City and the Atlantic City area. They will be working and very involved with NextGen, which is going to be the high-technology areas that are going to develop in the Atlantic County area. The people who live in Cumberland County tend to vacation and spend a great deal of time in Cape May County and, indeed, some of the names of some of the streets in Cape May County -- for example, Landis Avenue in Sea Isle City, and there are many others -- are named after very famous individuals in Cumberland County who were involved in both counties, historically, over the years.

We have seniors in Cape May County, but as I mentioned before, we have a very young constituency in Cumberland and Atlantic County. And there's a connection with all this because, again, even with

folks in Cape May -- tend to shop at the urban enterprise zones and the new developing shopping centers in Cumberland.

Let me speak to the competitiveness of the district. I know there was some discussion, "Is it competitive?" Let me tell you, anybody who has lived, or worked, or travelled through any of the elections that have gone on in the 1st Legislative District knows that it is a firestorm; that there's keen competition -- a lot of activity, a lot of discussion, a lot of debating of the issues and a lot going on. This is an extremely competitive district. Quite frankly, let me be honest with you: It is a Republican district; it's a Republican district where -- and I am going to be very candid again, because I believe our legislative team works so hard and has spent so much time -- we are able to win. I used to tell a joke that sometimes I have a lot of Republican friends, and they would close their eyes and hold their nose, but they vote for us because they knew we were working hard for them. And that's what this really represents.

It used to be more of a Democratic district. In the last Census, it even became more Republican. We had Bridgeton included in our district before. The Bridgeton area is a much more Democratic area and actually, in the time that I've served, it is now more Republican than it was previously.

MR. PARISI: Five minutes have elapsed.

SENATOR VAN DREW: I will finish up.

Just a few thoughts just to show, I think, how the district works, too. Assemblyman Matthew Milam -- he's the Chair of the Tourism Committee, a vital issue for our 1st Legislative District. Assemblyman Nelson Albano, he is the Chair of the Agricultural Committee -- vital issues

for our district. I'm the Chair of Community and Urban Affairs, and the urban issues. What I'm trying to show there is we really reach out to all the segments of our district; that they are interconnected, they do matter. It is a vibrant, dynamic, cohesive, diverse, challenging and exciting district, and it's a darned competitive one, and I sure hope you leave it that way.
(laughter)

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Any questions?

Senator.

MR. PALATUCCI: I'll ask the Senator-- Senator, one quick question. It's the first time we've met, so it's nice to meet you. I've heard so much about you. And a lot of people--

SENATOR VAN DREW: Only believe the good stuff.
(laughter)

MR. PALATUCCI: Right. One of the things I've heard is that the only Democrat who can win this district is Jeff Van Drew. And I wonder if you think that's true or not. Are you so good, are you such a great candidate, that you're the only Democrat who can win in this district? Or is it possible for somebody else -- whenever you're done -- could win this district?

SENATOR VAN DREW: It is possible for somebody else.

In all candor, once again, it is very challenging -- it's not easy to do. This is what I believe about the system that we have: Even though we have an overwhelming number of Republicans -- and ladies and gentlemen, I have towns in my district that are 12 or 13 to 1 registered Republican in my district. So it's not easy at times. And by the way--

MR. PALATUCCI: That's Vineland, right? That's Vineland?

SENATOR VAN DREW: No, it's not Vineland, actually.

MR. PALATUCCI: Oh, I'm sorry, okay.

SENATOR VAN DREW: That's in Cape May. By the way, the Mayor of Vineland is a Republican, the Mayor of Millville is a Republican. All of my mayors in all of my towns in all of my counties are Republicans other than three -- and I have 22 towns. So I have 19 Republican mayors and three Democrats. So don't let anybody ever tell you that this is not a challenging district.

And yes, other people can win -- absolutely. If you work hard enough and you connect with your voters-- What I love about this district - - and I really mean it -- folks are generally going to vote Republican, almost always they're going to vote Republican; but if you show them that you're going to do something special and you're going to work harder and you're going to do more, they'll give you a shot.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR VAN DREW: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Bettie Reina, followed by Noriko Kowalewski and Robert DiBiase.

B E T T I E J. R E I N A: This is a little embarrassing. No disrespect to Senator Van Drew, who is my Senator, but the reason I'm speaking now is I am a resident of Atlantic County. I am also a resident of one of the three towns in Atlantic County that are not in the 2nd District -- we are in the 1st District. We often feel like stepchildren. My husband and I tend to be much more involved. We are Democrats; we're involved with the

Democratic Party in Atlantic County. But we are not a part of the district that encompasses most of Atlantic County.

The only thing that I want to say is, like I said: No disrespect; I think Jeff Van Drew is a wonderful Senator. I like Nelson Albano, Matt Milam; I think they're doing a marvelous job. I just would like to see our towns returned to the County of Atlantic County.

And that's it; thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: What town is that, Ms. Reina?

MS. REINA: I'm in Buena Vista. Buena Vista, Buena, and Somers Point, which are in Atlantic County, are a part of the 1st District; and I really would like to be a part of Atlantic County.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Any other questions?

ASSEMBLYMAN WISNIEWSKI: No.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thank you.

Noriko Kowalewski, followed by Robert DiBiase, followed by Alisa Cooper.

NORIKO KOWALEWSKI: Hi. I'd like to start off today--

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Could you speak into the microphone?

MS. KOWALEWSKI: Sorry. I want to start off today by thanking everybody here for coming out, hearing our public testimony.

I just have a quick statement. This is how I feel: that the redistricting for New Jersey is a very important decision; the way the map will be divided is critical to our future here in New Jersey. For the shift in our population, redistricting is a must. The final map should have equal

representation in legislative districts based on population. I feel-- I follow the Constitution, which requires one person, one vote. I do not want to be counted with people who do not care enough to vote.

I come from the 3rd Congressional District, which has increased in population in the past 10 years. During the 50-year period of the Census, Ocean County is the fastest-growing county in our state. And just today, I hope to stress the importance of a fair map for our state, because it will affect all of us for the next 10 years -- for at least the next 10 years.

And thank you for your time and listening to what I had to say.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Any questions? (no response)

Thank you.

MS. KOWALEWSKI: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Robert DiBiase, followed by Freeholder Alisa Cooper, followed by Christina Zapf.

R O B E R T D i B I A S E: Mr. Chairman, thank you for the time; Commission, thank you for the time. I'm sure this is an arduous task, with all the *stakeholdering* going on here.

I'm going to echo some of the comments already mentioned, and follow up by a couple of points -- two quick ones.

One person, one vote. I've heard that many times here. I'm sorry I'm coming to this meeting, and not Ocean; I was tied up so I'm coming down here to make my statement. I spent the first 25 years of my life in Essex County, and the last 35 in Ocean. In working in Essex for Verizon as an area manager, I worked in the community quite often with Senator Rice. And I'm going to quote Senator Rice, in the early 2000s --

2002 or so. And he was talking before an assembly that disagreed with what was going on, and he stood up and he said, "This is not the '60s; and we do not use bricks or matchsticks anymore. We have the vote." And that resonated with me to this day, because an old Vietnam veteran, Senator Rice -- I respect him. He had a point, and I'm sure the wisdom of that statement will not fall short on this Commission. And when it comes to one vote, one person -- this is my explanation of it. The people who go out and vote are the ones who are looking for solutions in keeping their communities viable and prosperous. And those are the ones who are concerned and the ones who are at the polls. And for that reason, one vote, one person -- I think you should give a little consideration when you're doing your -- as the gentleman before said -- the laptops and lines of districts. I think you should give some consideration to that.

The second point I'm going to make is -- now I'm going to *stakeholder*. I'm from Ocean County, and during the May to September timeframe we have an influx of temporary residents. They come down and we welcome them with open arms -- believe me. But there are some difficulties with addressing some of the issues that follow them: safety issues, crowds, hospital emergencies. Our legislators in the county do not get to count those people as registered voters or voters, but they have to address the concerns of those people, being in our community during that time period. It's a considerable amount, maybe hundreds of thousands of people. I mean, just on LBI alone you have 300,000 from that time period I mentioned. And the other town communities that are along the shore, even more so -- hundreds of thousands of people.

So here's the point I'm coming to. We have incarcerated prisoners in this state; that we count them as registered voters. And yet, the people who are in Ocean County during that influx -- also temporary residents -- we do not count them. So it's something to consider here when you draw the district and the responsibility of those individual legislators.

And the last point I'm going to make -- last comment that I'll make is, this Commission has the ability and the opportunity to follow what the President said: elections have consequences. If you look at the percentage of voters in this state, you can see the change of the political climate. And elections have consequences. This Commission can be referred to, 10 years from now, saying you are the sole Commission in this state to encourage a solution to force -- well, that's a strong word, force -- but to encourage citizens who are registered to get out there and vote.

And I thank you for your time.

Who wants the first question?

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Any questions? (no response)

No one.

MR. DiBIASE: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thank you, Mr. DiBiase.

Freeholder Alisa Cooper, followed by Christina Zapf, followed by Frank DeRosa.

Freeholder.

A L I S A C O O P E R: Good afternoon. My name is Alisa Cooper, and I'm a Freeholder here in Atlantic County. And I'd like to thank each and every one of you for being here today, and coming down and taking testimony from the public in this part of our state.

For the last three years I have had the distinction of serving as the only countywide female elected official in Atlantic County. I do hope that changes.

But before that changes, political parties need to recruit and run women candidates. This is one of the reasons I switched parties from Republican to Democrat many years ago. I see more opportunity and willingness to run diverse candidates within the Democrat Party. So I do find it a bit ironic that Republicans are here today arguing that minorities will have more opportunities to win elected office statewide if we pack them into fewer districts.

If we took that same argument and said, “Women candidates would have more opportunities if we packed them into fewer districts,” I think we all know how farcical that would be.

So I get back to my original point: that to create more opportunities for minorities we have to first provide them with the opportunity to run for office. Let’s put our trust in the voters to decide if they want a minority candidate to represent them. I know there are many examples of them just doing that.

I would also add, and comment, on the idea of making competitive districts. I was born and raised in Atlantic City, and I have lived here in Atlantic County for my entire life. My mother, the late Dolores G. Cooper, was a Freeholder and also served in the New Jersey General Assembly. She was a Freeholder for Atlantic County for many years, and then went on to serve in the General Assembly.

As I said, and I emphasize: I am a Freeholder here, and have been for the last five years. You do not get reelected unless you are

responsive to your constituency. Competitive districts provide an even greater incentive for officials to be responsive. Responsive government is good government, which I think is ultimately every person's goal who is here today speaking before each and every one of you.

So with that being said, I urge each and every one of you to draw lines that spread out our great diversity and offer healthy competition for responsive government.

I want to, once again, thank each and every one of you for being here today for this presentation. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thank you.

Questions? (no response)

Thank you, Freeholder.

MS. COOPER: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Oh--

MR. PALATUCCI: Mr. Chairman; could I just say, for the record, Freeholder, that I knew your mom and she was a great person. I don't care what party you are or she was -- I knew your mom. I served with her -- I didn't serve with her in the Legislature, but I knew her -- I was working for Governor Kean at the time; she was a great, great woman. She was one of the fun people in the Legislature, and I miss her a lot.

MS. COOPER: You have no idea how much that means to me, as I sit here before all of you today. And, again, as you said, if I may say: Putting political parties aside, to hear that is just, shall we say -- it's a wonderful way to end my day. I'm a school teacher, and I've been up since 6 o'clock this morning (laughter). So to hear that at the end of my day is

just very heartwarming. Thank you for those very, very kind and most appreciated words.

MR. PALATUCCI: No problem.

MS. COOPER: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thank you.

MS. COOPER: Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Christina Zapf, followed by Frank DeRosa, followed by Keith Davis.

C H R I S T I N A Z A P F: Good afternoon.

I wish to thank the Apportionment Commission for holding this meeting.

My request is that you keep townships and cities whole, because within each city and town we have diversified communities. We may have senior villages, adult communities, the Asian community, Latino, and other ethnic groups. Within our groups we have unique issues and concerns. And also, as a whole, we have township concerns.

So my request is that you do not divide, that you keep-- That the legislative districts are not divided within a community.

Thank you so much for your time.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Questions? (no response)

Thank you, Ms. Zapf.

Frank DeRosa, followed by Keith Davis, followed by JP Bowen.

Mr. DeRosa.

F R A N K D e R O S A: Thank you for this opportunity to be part of the process.

I come from the 3rd Congressional (*sic*) District in Ocean County; I have resided in Ocean County a little under three years. And before that I did frequently visit Ocean County; and I know that Ocean County, which for many years -- it was mostly a summer place, and it is not that anymore.

And Ocean County needs representation that will reflect that. We need better representation because the population of New Jersey is drifting southward -- a lot of it settling in Ocean County, as mentioned earlier. It is the fastest-growing county in the state. And we need representation that will reflect that.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thank you, Mr. DeRosa.

Any questions?

ASSEMBLYMAN WISNIEWSKI: No.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thank you.

Is Keith Davis here, or did he have to leave?

MR. PALATUCCI: I think I saw him leave.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Okay. JP Bowen, followed by David DeWeese, followed by Roberta DeSanto.

J O N - P A U L B O W E N: Bear with me; I'm not a good public speaker.

I'd just like to thank everybody, first and foremost. I'm from Ocean County as well, and I'm going to repeat, like, a lot of what everybody has kind of said: that I believe we do need representation in South Jersey.

As both Chairmen said earlier, that it has to come down to about 220,000 in each district. I believe that the way-- Especially in the

U.S. districts, it's very proportioned (*sic*), very gerrymandered, very all-out-of context. I feel that the way it should be dispersed -- very fair and very even. And I think that the way-- It should go by population, and not by any sort of, like-- Any type of some sort of-- But, whatever; I can't think of the word, right now, it's called, but-- A quota -- that's what I mean -- like a quota system. It should be by population.

I'm all about fairness, and I think everybody should be treated fairly, and everybody should have a vote, and everybody should be represented fairly. But it comes down to population, and that's where I think, really, the map deserves to be spread -- by your population. And I feel in Ocean County and South Jersey -- deserves a lot more respect in that representation.

Other than that, I thank everyone very much, and thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thank you, Mr. Bowen.

David DeWeese, followed by Roberta DeSanto, followed by -- the envelope, please -- Frank Balles.

Mr. DeWeese.

D A V I D D e W E E S E: I'm going to pass. The County Republican Chairman, Mr. Donohue, made the points I wanted to hit, so I'm going to pass.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Okay, thank you, Mr. DeWeese.

Roberta DeSanto, followed by Frank Balles, followed by Gary Beres. I can only read the names in the way you put them on the slip, so I'm doing my best. (laughter) Sorry if I'm butchering them.

Ms. DeSanto.

R O B E R T A D e S A N T O: Hello, my name is Roberta DeSanto, and I am an Ocean County resident. And I thank you so much for holding all of these public meetings; it's so appreciated.

And I simply want to say that I believe that the Apportionment Commission should establish legislative districts in New Jersey based on active voters, rather than voter registration.

Thank you so much.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: No questions? (no response)

Sheriff, you've got to help me.

S H E R I F F F R A N K B A L L E S: Help you?

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Balles (indicating pronunciation)

SHERIFF BALLEs: Frank Balles (indicating pronunciation) -- correct.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thank you, Sheriff.

Sheriff Balles, followed by Gary Beres, followed by -- no? -- Jeff Thiel.

Sheriff.

SHERIFF BALLEs: Thank you, and welcome to our county. Thanks for coming down and holding this forum here.

I'd like to say that when you look at redistricting, look at District 2 as basically your model district. Because here in Atlantic County, in District 2, anybody -- whether they're Republican, Democrat; whether they're male, female; no matter what race they're from -- they have a fair and equal chance at winning any elected seat that they're running for.

One of the things that you may be looking at or may not be looking at is -- as far as the redistricting from elections -- whether it's how

many Republicans, how many Democrats came out during an election. If you're going to look at that, look at the off years -- don't look at the Presidential years. Because during the Presidential years, you have just an unusual amount of people who will come out. And our State seats come from the off-years -- they don't run during the Presidential years. The year I ran was a Presidential year, and it was an overwhelming amount of people who came out in this county, and nationwide, to vote for our President.

And, of course, when I was running I was told you absolutely have no shot at winning; it's a Democratic year. Well, I ran as a Republican, and I fooled everybody and won.

So like I said, in Atlantic County -- and there are municipalities in Atlantic County that are not in District 2 that do vote. And these municipalities that aren't in District 2 that are in Atlantic County, they feel as though they don't have the representation because there's only one or two-- Like, say Hamilton: they're not in District 2, and they hardly ever see or hear from their State representative, which they don't think is fair.

But, like I said, we can't have the entire Atlantic County in District 2, and when you go to remove some of the numbers from Atlantic County, think about the off-year elections and forget about looking at race. We need to look at Republican, Democrat, and make it fair for the entire district. And when you do it, you make it fair for the entire state.

And with that, I'd just like to say thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Any questions? (no response)

Thank you, Sheriff.

SHERIFF BALLE: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Gary Beres, followed by Jeff Thiel, followed by Harrison Furman.

Is it B-E-R-E-S?

G A R Y B E R E S: Yes; it's pronounced Beres (indicating pronunciation)

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Beres. (indicating pronunciation)

MR. BERES: Yes, just like the drink, I like to say. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: All right. It is Friday, after all.

Thank you, Mr. Beres.

MR. BERES: Well, good afternoon. My name is Gary Beres. I like to consider myself a resident of both Cumberland and Cape May County. I've been blessed to enjoy time at the shore through the summers, and have my children grow up and work down there; as well as live in the City of Vineland and grow up in a farming community. I farmed myself for many years and have moved on to other career paths.

In District 1-- First, let me say that one of my goals would be to see District 1, in some shape, stay similar to the way it is, only because we look at -- we as voters, I as a voter have talked to many of my friends -- we look for competitiveness within our districts. We look for opportunity. Party, for me and for many of my friends, does not drive who we vote for. Who we vote for is driven by the person and what they stand for, and what they're going to do for us at both the municipal level and the State level. I think that's extremely important and I think we've had that through the years, in the almost 30 years that I've been able to vote in the county. That's kind of the first point I'd like to make.

The second point is that having grown up farming and living in a farming community, as well as seeing the advantages and being able to take advantage of the natural resources we have in the shore communities-- It's just that there is a tie, there's a synergy, between those natural resources. Currently, I think we're blessed as a district to have some folks representing as chairmen -- those specific committees. But I think the State as a whole benefits, and our district as a whole benefits from the advantages of those-- They're one and the same. I like to think of them as natural resources, and I think we have those.

The other point is I've been involved in many different businesses throughout Cumberland and Cape May County. And as part of that, one of the things I see from the business perspective, too, is there's -- not necessarily that this is driven at the State level, where it's driven politically. But businesses in Cumberland County are very supportive of those of Cape May County and the shore communities. I know several business owners, from supplying paper products and restaurant products to those down there during the summer.

Again, I think that's a very important aspect of what it is. And, again, I'd just like to close with-- Again, I like to consider myself a resident of, kind of, the district. I have family that lives in southern Cape May County; I have family that lives in northern Cape May County; and I have a lot of family that lives in Cumberland County.

So again, thank you for coming and allowing us, as the public, to speak. I'm here as a concerned citizen and a voter, and I appreciate your time.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thank you, Mr. Beres.

Jeff Thiel, followed by Harrison Furman, followed by Dennis Muñoz.

Mr. Thiel -- going once, going twice -- sold.

Harrison Furman, followed by Dennis Muñoz, followed by Rizwan Malik.

Mr. Furman.

HARRISON FURMAN: Hello; thank you, Chairman, for letting me speak today.

A brief background for myself: I'm 18, I live in Linwood, and I attend Mainland Regional High School. I'm currently Vice President in the Political Science Club; I also currently hold the position as 12th grade rep, and am a part of the Student Council.

I've taken almost every history class at Mainland Regional High School, and one key thing I have learned: In our representative democracy, majority should win. I'm here to advocate that when you redraw the lines, you consider which -- either party, Democrats or Republicans -- should receive the most amount of total votes, should receive the majority of the seats in the Legislature.

Thank you for your time today, and I hope my testimony will be considered when you redraw the lines.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Any questions? (no response)

Thank you, Harrison.

MR. FURMAN: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Dennis Muñoz, followed by Rizwan Malik, followed by Sam Fiocchi.

C O U N C I L M A N D E N N I S M U Ñ O Z: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Dennis Muñoz. I'm a retired police officer from Atlantic City. I've been a police officer over 30 years.

I had the great opportunity of working for this city, and working in all the different communities. As a Latino officer, I didn't just serve the Latino community -- I served everybody, and really enjoyed it.

Two years ago I was elected as a City Councilman in Egg Harbor City. I didn't just become a Councilman to serve the Latino community; I wanted to serve everyone in the city. And in getting my votes, I went from house to house, door to door, and got to know everybody in Egg Harbor City. We have a very diverse city. And I think I'm doing a pretty good job as a City Councilman.

I'm against the idea of grouping individuals in groups. I don't think it's right. I think that everybody-- If we share the space equally, everyone has the opportunity to run for elected office.

And that's really all I have.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Any questions for Mr. Muñoz -- Councilman Muñoz? (no response)

Thank you very much.

C O U N C I L M A N M U Ñ O Z: All right, thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Rizwan Malik -- I think it is.

R I Z W A N M A L I K: Yes, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Sam Fiocchi, Troy Ferus.

Mr. Malik -- is it M-A-L-I-K?

MR. MALIK: Yes, sir.

Okay, my name is Rizwan Malik. I am from Atlantic City, Atlantic County.

First of all, I want to thank everybody for giving us the chance to come here to South Jersey.

My thing is-- the only thing I have to say is whatever you guys do, just do it with fairness. And that's it.

Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Sam Fiocchi.

SAMUEL L. FIOCCHI SR.: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: I'm sorry, Sam; one moment -- I'm sorry.

Troy Ferus, followed by William Gonzalez.

Thank you, Sam, for waiting.

MR. FIOCCHI: No problem.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Commission members.

My name is Sam Fiocchi; I am a Republican Cumberland County Freeholder. And in our county we have our -- we (indiscernible) part of the Legislative District 1. Democrats are 2 to 1 in registration, and we still have Republican representation.

Now, our district, as I understand it, has gone down in population. Cumberland County, actually, has gone up in population; but Cape May County has gone down. So obviously there needs to be a change in our district.

Now, because of my association -- I was in the private sector for many years; I devoted my life to the agriculture business. I wasn't in

farming, but I supported the agriculture industry, so I had many friends and people in agriculture who were farmers over the years.

Specifically, the town of Hammonton -- which is very near to our district -- the other is part of Legislative District 1, and the many friends that I made over the years certainly feel disassociated and not fairly represented. So you may want to give some consideration when you talk about redistricting.

We were hoping that redistricting would also be responsive to political climate and reflective of elections. In 2009, 52 percent of the vote was Republican, yet only 32 out of the 80 seats in the Assembly went to the Republican Party. So there certainly is disparity there.

So anyway, listen, that is all I have to say. I thank you very much for listening, and hope we can be fair and equitable.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Any questions? (no response)

Thank you.

MR. FIOCCHI: Okay, thank you, Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Troy Ferus, followed by William Gonzalez, followed by Robert Campbell.

Mr. Ferus.

T R O Y F E R U S: Good afternoon. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for your time today. I appreciate all of your efforts, and I'm sure a great deal of time out of your personal lives, to make this process a success. I have great faith in you, and I know you will do the best job that you possibly can for our district.

I want to tell you a little bit about myself. I'm 47 years old; I'm a retired New Jersey State corrections officer and a past union leader for the

Fraternal Order of Police. I now run a small consulting firm; I'm an entrepreneur in South Jersey. I live in East Vineland, which is in Cumberland County, inside the 1st Legislative District.

I'm very active in the district. I have family and friends, both in Cumberland and Atlantic and Cape May County. And I realize that looking at the numbers, seeing how the district has grown and how things have reduced in Cape May County versus the Cumberland County, and Atlantic County growth, I can see a need for adjustment; and I hope that you can find your way clear to push the lines appropriately so we have a fair and equal process and both parties can have an equal chance.

I'm sure you'll do that, and I appreciate that you've worked so hard to keep this a fair and open process. I want to thank you for that. I know it's a great deal of work, and a lot of time goes into making this happen.

As far as moving and changing things, I wanted to come here and suggest-- I'm here as a citizen today. I would like you to consider pushing things north. I kind of agree with Mr. Fiocchi a little bit: I'd like to see you push more into, say, Folsom and Hamilton area, because Atlantic is a little heavy and Cumberland is a little light, and they're just above the Vineland area. So I can see where that could help our district, and it seems like it would keep a fair balance.

And then equally, we've had growth in the most southern part of the county too, in Cumberland. If you look at, like, Downe Township or Commercial Township, or even Hopewell, you can see those numbers have actually increased. And they're the closest to Cape May now but they're not a part of the 1st Legislative District. So I'd like you to consider those

areas when you review things and, hopefully, maybe some of that will look like it would make sense and keep a fair and balanced district for us.

So I thank you for your time, and I appreciate all your efforts. And I just want to, really, just say thank you, because you did such a great job in making the fair and open process, and letting everyone have a say and at least share their views.

So thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thank you.

Any questions? (no response)

Thank you.

William Gonzalez, followed by Robert Campbell, followed by -- second call for Solaimon Serneabad.

Mr. Gonzalez.

WILLIAM GONZALEZ: Thank you very much.

I want to thank you, also, for making this process an open and fair process -- for us to be able to come here and share our views and opinions, and for you to have considered them.

I am a recently retired police officer, and former President of the PBA in Camden County. And I live in Cumberland County and have also represented the unions in Cumberland County. I am a resident of Vineland, and a Latino.

We in the district have realized the large growth of Latinos over the last 10 years. I believe that the district should expand more into Cumberland County. We should add Commercial, Downe, and Lawrence townships, which have also realized growth in population as well.

With this growth, in a Democratic county that has controlled the Freeholder Board for more than 30 years, we have recently realized three Republican candidates getting elected onto that Freeholder Board. It has been taken for granted that Latinos are primarily Democrats. Let me be clear: I am Latino, and I am a Republican candidate for freeholder in Cumberland County. Furthermore, this is not a paid political announcement. (laughter)

In concluding, as a resident of Vineland, I must say that to include us in a district that involves Atlantic City would do a great injustice to the Latino community of Cumberland County. Although there are issues that are somewhat similar in nature, we in Vineland do not have the same inner-city issues that Atlantic City has, and doing so would create a severe injustice to the residents of Cumberland County.

Do we have-- Any questions for me?

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Any questions for Mr. Gonzalez?

(no response)

No, I don't think so.

MR. GONZALEZ: Great, thank you so much.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thank you.

Robert Campbell, followed by Solaimon Serneabad, followed by Anna Little.

Mr. Campbell.

ROBERT J. CAMPBELL: Thank you.

Let me just tell you a little bit about myself very quickly. My name is Bob Campbell -- Robert J. Campbell; I live in Hamilton Township, New Jersey. I am a Mayor Emeritus; I served a couple of years on Council.

And the opening of casino gambling in 1978 -- I'm an old man. I got a kick out of Ms. Slomine saying she was 60-some years old; I was 18 years old when she was born. So it's an amazing thing to see how our county has grown over the last 50 years -- I've been here for 50 years.

I've been Chairman of the Hamilton Township Democratic Party; I'm also a County Committee man -- Chairman of the County Committee. So I'm a Democrat.

I'm a proud retiree of the United States Navy, serving 40 years of military duty. I'm a former membership chairman of the American Legion for the whole State of New Jersey, representing approximately 75,000 men and another 75,000 families. So I have experience throughout the State of New Jersey, as well as my own local town. And as I said, I've lived in Hamilton Township for the last 50 years.

The one thing I do want to say is, in the interest of diversity -- and I haven't heard this today -- I would like to say *bienvenidos*, and thank you for this hearing. It's a wonderful thing that you guys are doing -- and ladies -- and I do appreciate it very, very much. I know how much effort it is to serve in your capacities. I have served on many, many panels such as this over the past number of years, particularly in legislative matters pertaining to veterans. I'm also Chairman of the Hamilton Township Veterans Advisory Committee, a very, very active veterans' organization.

I represent a community of -- Hamilton Township, which is approximately 113-square-miles, which is the largest land mass municipality in the State of New Jersey. The freeholder districts in our community -- instead of having a freeholder district, we were divided with three freeholder districts -- Districts 3, 4, and 5 -- which separate parts of our town to

different freeholder districts. So we understand what splitting our legislative freeholder districts are, and it's sometime a burden because we have many great people who would like to run for freeholder but don't live in the right districts, so they have to run at-large if they want to run. One of our township people is a Republican -- former Democrat -- who ran for freeholder and he won at-large. So we have a diverse area in our community where you can be a Republican or a Democrat. At this point in our community, the Democrats outnumber the Republicans by about somewhere in the vicinity of 1,000 votes. And yet last year when I ran for Township Committee, I lost by 200 votes because most of our minority community and most of our community that were separated did not come out to vote. I believe the figures were 29 percent of the Democratic Party came out to vote, even though we're the majority party in the community.

So we know somewhat of what happens when you kind of split your voters off a little bit. And we're asking you -- and I'm asking you on behalf of the Democratic Party of Hamilton Township, and on behalf of many residents who are friends of mine and I represent them -- that we would prefer to keep Hamilton and that single district within the current guidelines of our legislative districts in Atlantic County -- meaning that we would like to stay in District 2. We know we have two Republican Assemblymen -- by the way, they're very good people; and our State Senator, Mr. Whelan -- you heard from him today -- he's a great Senator. So we would like to see it basically stay the same. And I agree with Mrs. Dunn on the packing situation. Please keep that in mind, and keep our legislative district, District 2, as well as you can intact.

And I think that's all I have to say. Thank you again for coming and being here today.

And are there any questions for me?

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Any questions for Mr. Campbell?

(no response)

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you much -- *muchas gracias*.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thank you, Mayor.

MS. CRUZ-PEREZ: *Gracias*.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Solaimon Serneabad, followed by Anna Little, followed by Larry Cirignano.

S O L A I M O N S E R N E A B A D: Hello and good afternoon, members of New Jersey Apportionment Commission. My name is Solaimon Serneabad, and I live in Egg Harbor Township in Atlantic County.

I am a Bangladeshi-American, and I came today to speak about my minority group and how we fit in the political spectrum in New Jersey.

New Jersey is a great state and I love it very much. I have three children who are all in the Egg Harbor Township schools, and two of them are honor roll students. They are doing very well, and I love it here. I don't ever want to leave Atlantic County of New Jersey. We love it for so many reasons, but most of all we love it because it is so diverse.

I know that this Commission is debating the issue of loading minority voters into only a few districts across the state. I know that you are talking about lots of minority groups like Latinos and African-American. We make up a larger part of our population.

But I want to tell you about life in a small minority group. In 2009 and 2010 I ran as a candidate for Egg Harbor Township Committee. I received 3,086 votes out of 9,046 votes. I worked hard meeting with neighbors, voters in Egg Harbor Township. I did not just go to Bangladeshi voters; I went to all voters and I worked. While I did not win with 3,086 votes of the voters, they told me that I had voters of varied backgrounds, race, religion, and they all voted for me.

You see, I believe that in New Jersey and America we are all given opportunities, but we have to work for them and with them. I used to work in real estate, and I was a very successful before the market crashed. I worked very hard, and now I own a jitney and drive it in Atlantic City. Only I can drive the jitney if I want to make money and feed my family.

I have to get out there and work very hard. And so it is with the election. We all have an opportunity -- candidates from every race and religion. If we work hard and are respected by the people, we can believe that one day our children will have a hope to become, one day, the American president too -- like Barack Obama. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Any questions?

Assemblyman Cryan.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: What office did you run for, sir?

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: No. I'm sorry.

MR. SERNEABAD: My home country of Bangladesh is so impressed with America -- that we would elect President Barack Obama, whose father came from Africa. I show that to our children, many of my friends, family living overseas. They call me, and anytime they have a

conversation with me they're bringing up all these things, you know? They feel so impressed about how America is great.

I show that to our children, and they are so impressed. Whether from Bangladesh or any other country they come from, one day they have a chance -- but not if we tell them you can only run in one town, or one district in the state because that town and district is where all of the minorities live. We should not put them in one box. No minority community will be able to make inroads if they are in the box only.

Thank you very much. I appreciate you giving me time. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: No questions?

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: No.

MR. SERNEABAD: Okay, thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thank you very much.

Anna Little, followed by Larry Cirignano, followed by Joanne Amodeo.

Ms. Little.

A N N A L I T T L E: Good afternoon, everyone.

MS. CRUZ-PEREZ: Good afternoon.

MS. LITTLE: My name is Anna Little; I'm a former Mayor in the Borough of Highlands up in Monmouth County. I'm also a former Monmouth County Freeholder. And most recently I was candidate for Congress. Today I sit before you as a member of the public. I have a year off, hopefully, going forward.

My purpose in speaking to you today is to present to you my orientation as to what your job is, as a Commission, and I hope that you'll respectfully receive that information from me.

We're here to talk about elections; you're redistricting for the purpose of fair elections. I hear a lot of specific emphasis being given to different broader purposes -- racial diversity, for one thing; economic interests -- whether it be farming communities or shore communities. All of these are issues that I believe strongly we can deal with through the elective process.

What we need from this Commission is a fair district in which the voters -- that's registered voters and those who turn out -- specifically those who turn out -- we need them to be able to elect a representative who can communicate with them fairly and represent their interests as members of the government. That's our purpose here.

And as a member of the public, I'm participating because that's of deep interest to me, and a deep interest to people who I was hoping that I'd be representing today; and perhaps someday in the future I will be. I think that geography is important, because you need to be able to communicate and you need to be able to travel around your district so that you know what's going on.

But the focus has always got to be on the voter. The turnout is because those are the voters who have chosen to participate in the process. The registration is because those are the voters who are eligible to participate in the process. And to the extent that voters choose not to participate in the process, I believe strongly that that is a statement to all of us as to their lack of faith in the process, in the districts, and in the service

by their elected officials. And that, again, we can work on from within the election process.

We just came off a very spirited campaign; not too many haven't heard about it. And in that campaign there was a door-to-door effort like nothing I've ever seen before. And while I would represent to you that it would be wonderful if I could take credit for that movement, I would be ashamed if I did. There is a movement afoot. The people all across the nation are awake; people in the State of New Jersey are awake, and they are looking to each and every one of you on this Commission to give them a fair district where registered voters, and especially those who participate, can obtain fair representation in government. All other agendas are for the campaigns and for the political parties. And the political parties have their structure as well. There are county committee organizations under each umbrella. And those county committee organizations can work in the same election process that you're working in today.

And I just submit to you that we not look at any one special interest; that we not try to sell any one voter short by looking at one aspect of their life -- whether it be their race, or their creed, or their economic endeavors -- but that we give them a fair district where they can communicate with a representative and where their voice can be represented in government.

Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Any questions? (no response)

Thank you, Ms. Little.

Larry Cirignano, followed by Joanne Amodeo, followed by Creed Pogue.

LARRY CIRIGNANO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My name is Larry Cirignano; I represent Catholic voters.

I'm not asking you all to start considering which parish is in which district. We don't support either Republicans or Democrats, conservatives or liberals. It's not right or left, it's right or wrong on the issues. That's basically what we follow.

I will tell you that I've worked on elections since 1982 when I was Millicent Fenwick's driver, and spent time in Dolores Cooper's kitchen. I've been through the state on many travels. Governor Tom Kean talked about his 9/11 Commission. He had a suggestion that the Republicans not sit on one side of the table and the Democrats on the other, but that you'd intersperse. And I would advise you that the politics of inclusion would add to that, and I think that you ought to do that.

My purpose today is because I am Anna Little's driver, so I'm here. And I thought I'd testify that in 1990 I got Gary Franks elected in Connecticut -- the first African-American Republican in Connecticut. I've done many other races for people who don't fill the bill; most recently, Joseph Cao in New Orleans, a district that was two-thirds Democrat, two-thirds African-American -- he was the first Vietnamese member who was a Republican in New Orleans.

I believe that on any given Tuesday, anybody can get elected with the right circumstances. And I think you do a huge disservice to voters if you start drawing districts -- as we have now -- where you can't drive from one end of the district to the other without an awful lot of problems.

Putting them altogether in one media market, in one contiguous district, is the most important thing that I think you can do for any district and any group of constituents.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Spoken like a man who drives candidates around. (laughter)

Any questions?

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: I have a question.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Assemblyman Cryan.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Thank you.

So for example: I represent the City of Elizabeth. There's been some discussion publicly about the idea of potentially putting it with a community in Hudson County, based on the contiguity of water as opposed to other-- Would you say that we would have a difficulty achieving-- For example, would you think it's reasonable that you should have to drive through another district to get to the same district, because it was only connected by water? Would that make sense to you?

MR. CIRIGNANO: No.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Okay.

MR. CIRIGNANO: And the purpose, again, is because of the market the people have -- their local newspaper, their local radio, their local churches; and contiguity of where they all would go to the same restaurants, the same walking distance, the same post office.

ASSEMBLYMAN CRYAN: Okay, thank you.

MR. CIRIGNANO: Okay.

Anyone else? (no response)

Thank you.

Joanne Amodeo, followed by Creed Pogue, followed by Linwood Donelson.

Ms. Amodeo.

J O A N N E A M O D E O: Hi, how are you?

My name-- Is this on? (referring to PA microphone)

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: It is -- you have to get a little closer.

MS. AMODEO: My name is Joanne Amodeo, and I reside in Margate, part of Atlantic County.

I'm here to state that we need a district that is reflective of the political climate in the state. A district that is competitive enough to change hands. Like in 2009, there was only one Republican seat picked up by the Assembly.

In addition to this, we need a map that is reflective and responsible to what the majority of the people want. The results of the election should reflect the number of seats for each party. If a party gets, for instance, 52 percent of the legislative vote in the state, then it should be given the same percentage of seats.

Commission, this districting process is really placed in your hands, and I am putting my trust into you that you are putting every effort into this to make sure that there are fair results at the end.

All right, thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thank you, Ms. Amodeo.

Any questions?

ASSEMBLYMAN WISNIEWSKI: Your name sounds very familiar.

MS. AMODEO: Yes, it is.

ASSEMBLYMAN WISNIEWSKI: Are you related to the Assemblyman?

MS. AMODEO: Yes, I am his sister.

ASSEMBLYMAN WISNIEWSKI: Thank you.

MS. AMODEO: All right, thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thank you. Your brother does a great job in the Assembly.

Any other questions? (no response)

Thank you.

Creed Pogue, followed by Linwood Donelson, followed by Bernard Laufga.

Mr. Pogue.

C R E E D S. P O G U E: Thank you, Assemblyman. And thank all of you for coming over to Atlantic County today.

I wanted to touch on a few things: One, going back to the 1st District, I've been-- Even though I'm not quite 45, I've been involved probably since I was old enough to climb up on the table and lick a stamp. And so in the 1st and 2nd Districts I've wound up being rather involved there. And the funny thing is, when someone says the 1st District isn't competitive, I really don't know what they're looking at. And I'm sure if you had Cumberland County Chairman Lou Magazzu here, he would be asking you to bring Bridgeton back into the district in order to strengthen

it. Lou has said that probably over the past 20 years. So that's -- different things there.

We talk a lot about race and its effect on the electorate, and yet there's some experiential data that I think is of interest. One is that the junior Senator from New Jersey happens to be Latino, who was elected in the off-year -- so he did not have a Presidential election in order to -- turnout to help him. I would also mention that the President of the United States did receive 15 electoral votes from New Jersey and he is considered African-American -- there are, of course the birthers, who don't even want to accept that -- but we would all agree that he's African-American and got the votes from New Jersey.

However, when you look at Atlantic County's freeholder districts, unfortunately 10 years ago the rest of the county was bleached in order to provide a packed district, because it's Atlantic City and Pleasantville together. Even though neither municipality then, nor today, is, in fact, over 50 percent African-American, which probably doesn't come under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act -- but that was a decision that wound up being made by a Republican judge from Essex County who was appointed to be our tie-breaker at that point.

But I would ask again that you take a look at the actual results. And after all, counties -- those of Atlantic being the prime example, because Hudson and Essex are considered safe Democrats-- We aren't here.

I live in Estelle Manor, by the way, and I know I'm probably going to get moved to another district; and I'll be happy if it's Jeff's, but I wouldn't mind being kept with Senator Whelan, but-- That's my little part for my town.

But the important part is taking a look at those characteristics. That's an example of what happens right here in the state. And I would ask that you keep that in mind.

Professor Rosenthal, you are going to, I think, have a very difficult time. Because, unlike before -- where you were able to work out an agreement -- when someone comes to you with a map with 17 districts on it -- say four of the minority party, and says the other three ought to be less competitive -- you're going to have a tough time splitting the difference. I don't know if you or Judge Doty is going to wind up with a more difficult job as we go on here -- between you and the NFL -- but that's a whole other thing.

But I would also ask the people to take a look at the *Bartlett* decision from a couple of years ago -- from North Carolina -- and its effects on voting rights, and what, in fact, is being defined as those thresholds. Because the court decided to really restrict the applicability of the Voting Rights Act, because the state had decided to try and improve minority opportunity and said, "They were doing that because of the Voting Rights Act." The Supreme Court said, "No, don't do that. Don't do that in that way. You have other constitutional obligations."

Which brings me to what I think was a very interesting map put together by Professor Murphy -- what he's calling the *Constitutional Option*. Because, after all, the New Jersey Constitution -- and these are things that are actually written in the law. There's a lot of other nice things regarding partisan balance that we talk about, and everything else that isn't in the law anywhere; but how you divide up municipalities as well as counties is. And he did come up with a map that, while it's not perfect,

does do that. And when you look at the numbers, it comes out fair -- at least to those of us who don't think one side or the other should be overly advantaged in regular years.

So I would ask very strongly that you consider that map. It certainly is, as a Democrat, my dream map. And if my time is about to be up, I'll finish up by just saying that I think that should be strongly considered because, again, there are those State constitutional requirements. Because, unfortunately, it is highly likely that if it doesn't go a particular way, we're going to have someone -- who talked about (indiscernible) compilation as his ideas on litigation -- wind up filing a lawsuit. And so, therefore, you want to have as many ducks in a row put in as possible.

So that's my humble suggestion. And thank you, Mr. Chairman and Commissioners, for your time. And if there are any other questions--

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thank you.

Any questions?

ASSEMBLYMAN WISNIEWSKI: No.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: One question.

MR. POGUE: Yes.

MS. KIM ASBURY: If I can ask, which section of the Voting Rights Act did Bartlett address?

MR. POGUE: Both 2 and 5.

MS. KIM ASBURY: For North Carolina? I'm sorry?

MR. POGUE: The case was in North Carolina. What had happened was that the North Carolina legislature had created a district providing for minority representation. Obviously, down in North Carolina

it's more African-American than our more diverse state here. And plaintiffs took that to court, and therefore the court came back to say that you can't simply do that because you think it's good public policy to create a district that does not-- That the need does not already arise from Section 2 of the VRA. And that, instead, do it because your public policy does it when you have requirements in your state constitution -- which for them is the same as it is here -- about dividing up counties. And so the court -- I think it was a 5-4, basically, when everything came out -- decided to throw that map out and start over.

So it is somewhat ironic, with all respect, that there's then this discussion about creating additional districts, when you look at the *Thornburg* decision and the whole thing of what's being required doesn't necessarily meet that threshold. And also under *Bartlett* was discussion that there are other remedies besides simply majority-minority. And, again, I think sometimes the discussion has become overly fixated -- at least from what I read on *PolitickerNJ*, and the *Star-Ledger*, and other places -- on that particular point. When, for instance, you're electing African-American legislators from districts that are only one-fifth African-American, so one would think that-- We certainly have a long ways to go; that's not the point. But the point is more from the heart than it is from the law. And we are doing a pretty good job on that.

And just as my Irish ancestors were told, "No Irish need apply," and then it became the Italians, and then moved on from there to other racial situations, it's the same thing, I think, where we are today with the Latino population and working forward on that. But certainly having a United States Senator who's very proudly, unambiguously Latino, and

having been elected in the off-year certainly, I think would say a lot about where we are and what, in fact, needs to be done legally versus -- which is your realm -- versus where we are otherwise, I think.

Is that--

MS. KIM ASBURY: It does, but I do want to point out that Senator Menendez is a U.S. Senator. We don't have anything to do with that districting -- that's Congressional districting.

MR. POGUE: Well, actually-- Well, if I may, I mean it's simply a matter of the state as a whole. And after all, in *Thornburg vs. Gingles*, the test is whether the majority unite sufficiently enough in order to prevent the candidates of a minority from being elected. And yet, the state as a whole proved that it meets that, that it-- Whether you want to say it meets that test, or is not so bad that it has to come under that -- to where, in fact, it's shown that across the electorate of the state there were enough of us who were enlightened enough in order make a decision based on the content of the character rather than the color of the skin.

And so I would again suggest that while there's been a lot of discussion about creating a bunch more majority minority districts -- because that's the only way in order to create more seats -- that, in fact, our experience shows that -- our map in Atlantic County shows that, what happens is, when a Democrat wins at-large as a freeholder, they don't carry the other four districts because of the way those districts are put together. And yet the one packed district has no competition either.

And so, again, if we're going to talk about competition in all of this, packing and competition -- the Venn diagram for that is two circles.

They do not -- you don't get that coming together when you turn around and do that.

And so I would just ask that the Commission, again, look at those experiential data that we have here from our performance as a state.

Does that--

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thank you, Mr. Pogue.

Linwood Donelson, Bernard Laufga, Shirlee Manahan.

LINWOOD DONELSON: Hello.

Once again, I'd like to thank you on behalf of the entire audience and myself for giving us the opportunity to give testimony today.

I'd like to start off by saying that I am a political science honor graduate at the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey. And we are now beginning our spring break, so I thought this would be a great way to begin spring break. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: You have to go to Daytona, man.

MR. DONELSON: I am a resident of Lower Alloways Creek Township in Salem County, which is in District 3. And I'd just like to say I'm just getting involved and, once again, I really appreciate the opportunity to speak.

Furthermore, I'd like to say that I'm not here representing any party; I'm here representing the residents of Salem County.

At the current time, the legislative map does not adequately represent Salem County in regards to economic and social demographics. It is pertinent that the 3rd District be adjusted to include the counties and municipalities that are similar in both economic and social demographics in order to ensure fair and true representation.

We need a fair and constitutional map. To state again, the current map is not fair as evident -- that Salem County has not been represented in Trenton in the last 10 years. And this is the first time in the history of New Jersey that a Salem County resident has not served in the State Legislature.

Once again, I will end my comments at that to keep it brief. And once again, thank you for giving all of us the opportunity to offer our input.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Any questions? (no response)

Thanks very much for coming.

Bernard Laufga, Shirlee Manahan, Rosemary Bernardi.

Mr. Laufga.

B E R N A R D L A U F G A: Yes.

First of all, Assemblyman Webber, would you give a message to the Governor for me? Next time he runs, he has \$1,000 from me. The only thing I want: He has to change his name to *the Mohel*. In case anybody does not know, that's a person who does selective circumcisions. And he has done a super job; he's a great-- I admire him, and I told him that in December of 2007 when he was at Bergen Community College. The only thing I want from him is to build a Devil's Island off New Jersey. He's done a good job as U.S. Attorney General.

Now, I have one question: The two gentlemen to the left of you; -- I see they are feeding you paper. Is that selective people that--

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: It's Counsel to the Republicans on the delegation, Glenn Paulsen -- he's my Counsel. Frank Parisi is the Secretary for the Apportionment Commission. Mr. Parisi is determining

the order of the witnesses today; and the only reason Mr. Paulsen gets his hands on it is because he's sitting between us. (laughter)

DR. ROSENTHAL: You expect us to believe that?

MR. LAUFGA: By the way, Assemblyman, I met you when you were at Forked River.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: I remember.

MR. LAUFGA: That was a pleasure meeting you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Good to see you again.

MR. LAUFGA: And Assemblyman Wisniewski, you remind me of a friend of mine. When we were in high school, I used to beat the hell out of him in the (indiscernible). (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN WISNIEWSKI: I'm glad we didn't go to high school together. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Does he remind you of Jon Bon Jovi? (laughter)

MR. LAUFGA: I met you in Monmouth County. You were running, I think, the first time. And I mentioned there about the issue -- what the DMV is doing to the drivers of this state; they've been issuing them points and they have no authority. The Legislature made this statute, 39:5--

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Mr. Laufga, if you can-- If you want to address your comments about apportionment, that's specifically what we're here about.

MR. LAUFGA: Okay, that's why I'm here.

I live in Ocean County. We just selected a Congressman. My grandson looked at him -- he's a giant.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: He was an Eagle, actually, but--
(laughter)

MR. LAUFGA: I know, I know. He's very, very good. And I gave him a donation.

The 8th Congressional District -- it's like the devil. You should put the spike -- that's what they say on TV; if you want to kill Count Dracula you got to put the spike or the silver bullet. The Congressmen from there has no respect for the people. I had personal dealings with him, and other people who told me-- That 8th Congressional District should be split. He walks around like he owns the district. He doesn't, like I said-- When my tenant came to me, she told me, "My grandson is sick." She called the EMS in Paterson, and they came five hours -- two hours later. There were only five blocks.

Now, when her grandson died, she went to the Mayor at that time -- the Mayor and the Assemblyman -- I'm sure you know who he is -- Pascrell, okay? She went to him; she sat in his office for two hours wanting to know, "Why did my grandson have to die?" And he comes out after two hours and said, "I have no time for you."

So I hope when you do the redistricting, put a nail in the coffin. Get rid of that Congressman (indiscernible).

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thank you, Mr. Laufga.

MR. LAUFGA: Thank you. It's nice meeting you again.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thank you.

Shirlee Manahan, Rosemary Bernardi, Jackie Cornell-Bechelli.

Ms. Manahan.

S H I R L E E M A N A H A N: Hi. I'm Shirlee; and I apologize -- I am not a public speaker. I have to rely a little on the notes that I've made here. But I did want to come here today to represent Salem County. I have never been a candidate for office; I don't ever intend to be. I'm not involved in any political campaigns. But I am currently the Deputy Registrar for the Board of Elections in Salem County. And I thought it important to come here today just to reiterate the fair and constitutional map that we really need for Salem County.

I would like to share a few names with you: Tom Pankok, Kenneth Black, Isaac Smith, Donald Stewart, Norman Featherer, John Waddington, Rusling Leap -- these are all Republicans and Democrats. These men have a common bond with one more person -- Jack Collins. These legislators were all Salem County residents who served in the Legislature and represented Salem County interests directly. From the 1700s until 2001, Salem County had representation in the Legislature. Since that time, we have not. In 10 years Salem County has not had any representation in Trenton.

And I would like to encourage you when you do draw your map that you please give consideration to Salem County, to give us a reasonable chance at a shot at the table.

I would also like to mention that I understand the districts may be based on registered voters, and not population. I would like to point out for you and this Commission to do just a little bit of math: 64,394 voters -- people. I'm sorry, I'm a little bit nervous here; 64,000 (*sic*) were the last count -- most recent, as of yesterday, registered voters in Salem County; 64,285 is the population. So the math will show you that you have 109

more voters registered to vote than are in the population for the Census. It doesn't make a lot of sense. Working for the Board of Elections, I will tell you that what happens a lot of time is you have people who have moved away and have not notified the Board of Elections; children who are registered to vote who have now gone on to college, or have moved away and got married and never notified the Board of Elections; people who have died and their families have never notified the Board of Elections. What happens is we rely upon the sample ballots being returned in order to remove a name from the registration and make it an inactive status. If the family keeps accepting that, and we don't get any mail back from that person, then that person remains on the rolls. So I would also like you to consider the fact that you've got a number of inactive voters on the list; but not only that, active voters who maybe haven't voted in 10 years because they're not here anymore, and they're still on the list.

So that's-- I would like to, really, just implore upon you that we would like to have representation in Trenton. We haven't had it in 10 years, and please consider Salem County when drawing the map, and make it fair and constitutional.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thank you.

Any questions? (no response)

Good, all right.

MS. MANAHAN: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Down to our final four, we think, unless someone signs up: Rosemary Bernardi, Jackie Cornell-Bechelli, Bert Lopez, Suzanne Walters.

R O S E M A R Y B E R N A R D I: We were just debating that we would be the last two, so-- (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Ms. Bernardi.

MS. BERNARDI: Hi, how are you?

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Good.

MS. BERNARDI: Good afternoon.

I would like to start off by thanking the members for serving on the Commission. Yes, it's another task that you guys already have in your busy lives, but it's an important one because the work product that you will produce will impact our lives for the next 10 years. So I do appreciate your time in serving.

My name is Rosemary Bernardi; I reside in Evesham Township, which is in Burlington County. I wear many hats in life: school board member, mom of two boys, consultant, community volunteer. But today, I am representing the Women's Political Caucus of New Jersey. I am on the State Board; Lisa Mizrahi Kaado is the President. The Women's Political Caucus is dedicated to increasing women's participation in the political process, increasing the number of progressive women in elected and appointed office, and creating a women's political power base to achieve equality for all women.

Every 10 years when the new Census data becomes available, there's great debate over representation to make sure that every New Jersey resident is represented, and to recognize those communities that have grown in population with fair representation.

We're here today to make sure that our voices are heard, and then when the new map is drawn all New Jerseyans will be represented.

We understand that there's existing case law addressing the issues of minority representation, but we feel that women deserve fair representation too.

I shared with you that I live in Burlington County, and the reason I bring it up is that there's an old farmhouse that sits in a couple of acres in Mount Laurel that is the birthplace and home of one of our most-famous New Jerseyans -- suffragist Alice Paul. It was just 90 years ago that she worked tirelessly at getting the 19th Amendment ratified in which women had the right to vote; but yet, it was just last year that New Jersey-elected women were still experiencing some firsts: We had our first Lieutenant Governor as a woman; the first woman Senate Majority Leader; and the first African-American Assembly Speaker.

Do not assume that those accomplishments mean that we, as women, are done striving for equal representation -- there's more work to be done. If we look at the stats of the current elected officials today -- I know you're not doing the Congressional right now, but -- we have 15 seats right now and none of them are held by a woman. In the State Legislature and the State Senate, we have a total of 40 senators, but yet we only have 10 women who are representing. Out of those 10, 7 of them are Democrats -- 3 of them are African-American, 1 Latina, and 3 Caucasian. From the 7, we have the 3 Republicans who are all Caucasian.

What's interesting to note in the State Senate -- which I didn't know until I did this research -- is that there's four districts out of those 10 that the women Senators -- Senators Turner, Ruiz, Gill, and Weinberg -- also serve with an Assemblyperson who is also a woman, which I thought was interesting.

We have, in the State Assembly -- which is supposed to be the people's house -- in the people's house we have, total members, 80, but total women we only have 24 -- that's 30 percent. But yet if you look at the New Jersey population, women make up over 50 percent of the population. Out of those 24 representatives that are women, 7 are Republicans -- they are all Caucasians. Out of the 16 Democrats that represent the people, we have 5 African-American; 3 Latina; and 8 Caucasians. What's interesting to note, within the people's House, in the State Assembly, we have two districts -- Poe and Evans, and Voss and Wagner -- that we have two female representatives.

So what I wanted to say was with the existing stats -- you know, we have the percentage of women in elected office -- it's 28 percent; but yet the population of women in New Jersey is over 50 percent.

The Women's Political Caucus is paying attention, close attention. We are concerned that we are losing ground with regard to the number of women in the State Legislature, and we see this as a two-pronged approach: First, we're concerned that incumbent women, who have overcome significant obstacles, do not end up drawn out of the picture. As the maps are presented to the Commission, we need you to test them out. Test them out to see how the current incumbents would fare with respect to political party, gender, and ethnicity. I don't know if you've seen some of your maps, but we will lose representation.

Secondly, we're looking at the Commission with an eye for creating opportunities for women. We also need to be mindful that it's not only in the general election, but the replacement-appointment process that women are at risk. The past four replacement appointments to the New

Jersey Assembly all have been males; with the last two appointments, the males have replaced female Assembly members.

As the districts are drawn across county lines--

MR. PARISI: Five minutes have elapsed.

MS. BERNARDI: Can I just finish up with--

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: If you don't have much.

MS. BERNARDI: Not that much; I'm sorry.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Please do.

MS. BERNARDI: As the districts are drawn across county lines, this adds an additional challenge navigating through the political process, as county committee member elections might not be on the same cycle; they might not be navigating on the same years. So as the map is drawn we ask you to test it out: test it out with the current incumbents, test it out with the political parties on both sides to see who falls out and if it really is viable.

In conclusion, I just want to say the goal of redistricting is to rebalance those districts to maintain the one person, one vote proportion and satisfy the Federal Voting Rights. But at the end result, we should not leave behind the underrepresented group: women.

Be mindful of the words that our most famous New Jersey woman voter, Alice Paul, said, "There will never be a New World Order until women are a part of it."

Thank you, and thank you for letting me go over time.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Any questions? (no response)

Thank you.

Jackie Cornell-Bechelli, Bert Lopez, Suzanne Walters; and then our final witness, as we believe -- Len, is it Dagit?

LEN DAGIT: (speaking off-mike) Correct.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thank you.

Ms. Bechelli.

JACKIE CORNELL-BECHELLI: Hi, good afternoon everyone.

Thank you for giving me the time to speak today. My name is Jackie Cornell-Bechelli, and I'm the Political and Legislative Director with New Jersey Citizen Action. We're the state's largest independent citizen watchdog organization, and we represent over 60,000 families and over 100 affiliated organizations that work on landlord-tenant issues, environmental issues, civic rights, faith-based groups, housing groups, and neighborhood organizations all across New Jersey.

For all of our entire 28 year history we have been engaged in the work of improving working families' lives and seniors' lives, and doing issue advocacy and civic engagement campaigns to ensure that the government is responding to the needs of these ordinary citizens in New Jersey, and not just those with money and power. And that's what we're here to do today -- to talk about those folks.

We'd like to commend you all; the Commission has done a really great job of doing multiple public hearings crisscrossing the state. I've been following you and I've been putting lots of miles on my car, so I know you're really trying to spread it out. And I think it's particularly important that, Professor Rosenthal, you are here, because you have a really big job to do as the bipartisan, tie-breaking member. So we're excited that you're

going to be here. You were at the one the other day, and you'll be at the future one, so we were happy to see that that has been met -- that's something we talked about earlier at one of the earlier hearings.

We're looking to you, Professor, to represent all of us, not just one political party. You have an independent, nonpartisan role, and you'll represent the democratic principles -- little *d* democratic principles embedded in our Constitution's requirements -- making sure that this is a powerful one person, one vote and that those constitutional things are upheld.

We'll continue to call for public hearings where the voters have the opportunity to comment on actual maps, and we're hoping to see more maps come out where we can actually make written testimony and give more feedback on those. I think the public wants to see that; I know that we're looking forward to seeing those things.

I'm just trying to go quickly, and I'll provide this written as well. I want to stay in my time.

We're urging you to be open and transparent about your deliberations, and I think that that will bring a higher level of confidence to the majority of residents who are going to be impacted by this work and the changes that will happen for the next 10 years, as this. We're concerned that -- that transparency is helpful for those you who can't make it to these hearings, who work, who have childcare needs. So we want to make sure that they are given access to the information.

So we recognize that the public hearings are not required by law, and that you've taken a really positive step in doing them. You have

the website where it has the basic information, meeting notices, the transcripts. But there is more that we're hoping that you can do.

Today we're in a really interesting place in technology. I think 10 years ago you couldn't even do one iota of the stuff that we're able to do now. So we'd like you to be able to look at the technology we currently have, the communication tools we have, to further educate residents throughout the state about redistricting, what it does, how the decision-making process happens. And we're also hoping that you can provide us the software on the site, that's already there, that allows members of the public to draw their own maps -- in other states this software has been made available to them -- so that they can utilize that and then present those maps to you, the Commission, to make it more transparent.

We're also here to comment on one aspect of the process that we're finding particularly troubling this year. For more than a decade we've worked to really make sure that we're limiting the influence of special interest money in politics, and we support public financing of elections and public financing of the redistricting process. And this year each side has been given approximately \$500,000 to support the -- public funding to support this work, whether it's getting here, your travel. I'm not sure what that all encompasses, but that's what you all have to get this work done. And that should be enough -- those funds should be enough. The press has been reporting on a new group, the Center for a Better New Jersey, a Republican organization whose mission appears to be to influence this process with money. And this is according to the *Star-Ledger*, and I'll quote directly: "The Republicans describe the Center as a think tank for drawing new district maps and giving interest groups a resource to draw their own."

So we're concerned about what this group is doing and how we know what's happening with it.

We recognize that redistricting is a lot about politics, but we can't remember a time before this year where private money is being raised to try and influence the outcome of this process.

The Commission is already too much about Democrats and Republicans jockeying to pick their own voters and to pick sides. While this may or may not be the way of our current political landscape, we shouldn't tolerate attempts to unduly influence an already politicized and insular process by having electeds from any party raise unlimited or undisclosed amounts of money--

MR. PARISI: Five minute shave elapsed.

MS. CORNELL-BECHELLI: Okay, wrapping up.

--by allowing some special interest groups, because of their access to money and resources, to draw maps but not allowing to others who are lacking access. And we're hurting the very democratic principles and outcomes we're trying to preserve in this process with all this transparency.

So again, I want to thank you for the things you have been able to do, and move forward with having more openness and transparency. But I raise those other issues.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thank you, Ms. Bechelli.

Any questions? (no response)

Thank you.

MS. CORNELL-BECHELLI: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Bert Lopez, followed by Suzanne Walters, followed by Len Dagit, followed by Michael Mulligan.

A D A L B E R T O “B E R T” L O P E Z: Well, good afternoon -- good evening. My name is Bert Lopez -- Adalberto Lopez, but you can call me Bert -- and I am the co-founder of the Hispanic Alliance of Atlantic County; and a former School Board member here in Atlantic City, as well as a former President of the School Board. And I host a local TV show called *Latino Motion with Bert Lopez*, here in the area, on NBC40.

I'm going to make this very quick, because I just want to be succinct in terms of what I think are the key, particularly within the Latino community, and I think for many communities. And that is that you keep this process fair. I agree with the young lady who just spoke about keeping the politics out of it as much as possible. We know this is a political process to a large extent. We want you to think about embracing the diversity -- not to dilute the minority vote by packing in certain areas.

We also think that it's important that you look at the population as a whole. We think that, particularly when you look at minority participation, Latino participation, you have seen the trend of increasing participation -- very proud to see the numbers raise, particularly in the Latino community. I think that you need to take the whole population into account and not just those who are personally voting at this point in time.

So those are the main key points -- about the packing, about making sure that you take the whole population into account.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WISNIEWSKI: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Any questions? (no response)

Thank you, Mr. Lopez.

Suzanne Walters, followed by Len Dagit, followed by Michael Mulligan.

MAYOR SUZANNE WALTERS: I thank you, and I thank you for coming down to our part of the state. I'm the Mayor of Stone Harbor, which is even further south than here.

I will make this brief, because several of the points have already been made while I was sitting here. But I want to reiterate something that the Deputy Registrar from Salem County said. In Stone Harbor we have, on our voting records, 900-plus registered voters. As of the last Census, we are at 800. So we obviously have a lot of people on the rolls who have moved out of state. I know every time we have an election cycle we go through it, and we find more and more people who have made Florida their permanent residences. I guess they register down there; I'm sure they have to. But they're not taken off our rolls

So what I would like for you to do is, when you get to doing the redistricting, to make sure you take into account the voters -- not the actual people who are on the rolls. And I know there's a way to do that. I think that you lessen the value of the voters vote if you're taking into account everybody who's on those rolls.

So thank you. That's--

ASSEMBLYMAN WISNIEWSKI: Thank you.

MS. CRUZ-PEREZ: Thank you, Mayor.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Thank you, Mayor.

Len Dagit, followed by Michael Mulligan.

MR. DAGIT: Good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to speak, and thanks for taking the time to come down here.

I have the privilege of being from Egg Harbor Township, right here in Atlantic County. And if you check the Census results you'll see that our little town has actually exploded in population -- we're a part of the growth district for the Pinelands Protection Act.

In the last 10 years our population has grown by some 25 percent; and coincidentally, during that same period, Atlantic City's population has diminished to the point where now we're the largest town in Atlantic County.

The reason I thought it important to speak out was that we've seen this dramatic shift in population, and we see it in our election results. I feel that the State election results are the most important. It's ironic that, as we're sitting here, a few blocks away we're looking for the results of a trial that involves voter fraud, mishandling of ballots -- we've had a history of these kinds of events. And I've known them from firsthand knowledge, and luckily the results have only turned a few elections that I know.

But I think it's important that as you look at redistricting, that you really look at the State results -- that that's where the neighborhoods are, that's where the votes need to be protected. And, quite frankly, when you have a town like mine that's seen this explosion in growth, we haven't enjoyed an explosion in funding from the State level. Our population really needs the opportunity to speak out so that we are compensated proportionally for the growth that's been forced upon us.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Any questions for Mr. Dagit? (no response)

Thank you.

MR. DAGIT: Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: Michael Mulligan.

Going once, going twice-- He was our last speaker.

We see nothing else from the Commission, so we'll adjourn.

The Commission reconvenes for a public hearing in the City of Passaic at 2:00 p.m. on March 16. City Hall?

MR. PARISI: City Hall.

ASSEMBLYMAN WEBBER: City Hall.

Thank you.

(MEETING CONCLUDED)