

PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS
REDISTRICTING
PUBLIC HEARING

BEFORE: JANET HOWELL, CHAIRWOMAN
MARK COLE, CO-CHAIR

PLACE: COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
GENERAL ASSEMBLY BUILDING
HOUSE ROOM C
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23218

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1 SENATOR HOWELL: Good morning, everyone. I'm
2 Senator Janet Howell, and I represent the Senate
3 Privileges and Elections Committee, and with me is
4 Delegate Mark Cole, who chairs the House Privileges and
5 Elections Committee. I want to thank you all for coming
6 today and participating in our public hearing.

7 Last winter and fall, both the House and Senate
8 Privileges and Elections Committees held public hearings
9 across the state to hear from you about the redistricting
10 process that is now before us. In addition, eight public
11 hearings were held last week, this being the eighth and
12 final.

13 During these hearings, we will be in a listening
14 mode. We want to know what you are thinking. We welcome
15 public comments, and they have been and will continue to
16 be considered. In addition to these hearings, we will be
17 reading the comments that are being posted on the
18 redistricting website at the Division of Legislative
19 Services. These hearings are an opportunity for us to
20 hear from the public and receive your input.

21 We are under considerable time constraints.
22 Because of elections this year, unlike most states, which
23 won't have assembly elections until 2012, the
24 redistricting time table is short. It's only been one
25 month since Virginia received corrected census numbers.

1 Looking forward, because we are a Voting Rights Act state,
2 we must send our plans to the Department of Justice, which
3 has 60 days to review and preclear them. We must also
4 follow State and Federal laws for the timing of our
5 primary and general elections. This has resulted in a
6 very compressed time schedule.

7 This week, during our redistricting special
8 session, bills will be introduced by legislatures, and
9 those bills will go through the normal legislative
10 process. The dramatic shifts in Virginia's population
11 required changes in district lines. Some districts were
12 grossly over-populated. Others were significantly under
13 populated. Some regents will gain representation. Other
14 regents will lose representation. This is due to the One
15 Person/One Vote Federal and State requirements.

16 This past Tuesday afternoon, Senate democrats
17 presented a proposed plan to the General Assembly's
18 Division of Legislative Services. We have already made
19 numerous changes to that plan, and, based on comments
20 we've received, we expect we will make further
21 modifications. This plan can be found on the Division of
22 Legislative Services website.

23 We believe our proposed plan fully complies with
24 all applicable Federal and State legal requirements,
25 including the One Person/One Vote Requirement of the

1 Federal and State Constitutions, the Voting Rights Act,
2 and, as I said, the Virginia Constitution.

3 And now, Delegate Cole.

4 DELEGATE COLE: Thank you. I want to welcome
5 everyone here for this public hearing. And, again, as the
6 Senator said, this is our opportunity to hear from you,
7 hear from the public on the redistricting plans that have
8 been put forward. So there won't be a whole lot of
9 comments or anything from the committee. And, again, I
10 just look forward to hearing from everyone.

11 SENATOR HOWELL: Just for everyone's information,
12 we have a court reporter who is taking down all the
13 comments, and they will be posted on the website. Also,
14 we would ask that each person speak for no more than three
15 minutes. Now we begin, but I don't have the list. Thank
16 you. Kirk Jones.

17 MR. JONES: Madam Chair and Chairman Cole,
18 Members of the Joint Committee, my name is Kirk Jones.
19 I'm president of the Central Virginia chapter of the
20 Randolph Institute. I appear before you this morning to
21 encourage you to not only maintain the majority of the
22 voting districts that we have in the state, but try your
23 best to create others.

24 Based on the census from 2010, we can see the
25 drastic changes in the population of the state. We have

1 an increased minority population, not only Africa
2 Americans, but also Hispanics in our state. These
3 citizens deserve representation. They deserve to be given
4 a chance to vote for representatives of their choice.
5 This is my request to you today. Thank you.

6 DELEGATE COLE: Andrew Rivera.

7 MR. RIVERA: Thank you for the privilege of
8 talking to this distinguished body. My name is Andrew
9 Rivera. I am an attorney, and a resident of Alexandria,
10 Virginia. I also happen to be of Puerto Rican birth and
11 persuasion, and I'm here to talk about the Latino
12 community here in Virginia. The 2010 census data shows
13 that Latinos are ten percent of the Virginia population
14 now, one out of every twelve residents, yet we have yet to
15 elect a Latino to this distinguished body. And it is
16 important that, as this distinguished body reviews the
17 district lines, we know that there's yet to be an
18 opportunity to draw a majority Latino district in the
19 state, despite the best effort of the bipartisan
20 commission, and of the college competition.

21 However, we do maintain some strong polarities
22 with a voting-age population within at least twenty
23 districts of the delegates and about ten in the Senate. I
24 would also urge that we concentrate, but not dilute, the
25 Latino community in the districts. I would also urge that

1 we re-exam the assembly plan, as written.

2 In the 21 districts that we have at least ten
3 percent voting age population of Latinos, nine are
4 represented by republicans. And, of those nine districts,
5 the polarity of Latinos in those districts are reduced
6 except for one, that of Delegate Marshall, who goes from
7 ten percent Latino population, to a twenty percent
8 population in his district.

9 And those are my comments at this time. Thank
10 you very much.

11 DELEGATE COLE: Thank you. Juan Marcos Vilar.

12 MR. VILAR: Good morning. Thank you, Senator
13 Howell and Delegate Cole. My name is Juan Marcos Vilar,
14 and I live in Alexandria, Virginia. I've lived in the
15 State of Virginia for nine years now. I would like to
16 re-emphasize what the previous two speakers have talked
17 about today.

18 There's something that just stands out vividly
19 from the census figures, and that is the growth of the
20 diversity in this state. I think that the plan that you
21 currently have could add two additional African American
22 seats, if you were to spread the population around a
23 little bit better and add some more representation on that
24 line.

25 And, again, I'm concerned with the fact that so

1 many districts are being diluted of Latino population,
2 whereas the concentration of the population would give us
3 a more solid voice, even though we may not achieve to have
4 a majority Hispanic district at this time.

5 Thank you very much for your time. Those are my
6 comments.

7 DELEGATE COLE: Thank you. Sherry Blanton.

8 MS. BLANTON: Good morning. Thank you for having
9 me. I know with the pretty nice weather, it's a shame to
10 have to be inside, but it's spring, now, finally. My name
11 is Sherry Blanton. I live in Herndon, Virginia, and, like
12 the others, I just want to address some of the history of
13 Virginia.

14 DELEGATE COLE: Could you move your microphone
15 down a bit, please? Thank you.

16 MS. BLANTON: Sorry. Historically districts in
17 Virginia have been gerrymandered to decrease the votes of
18 African Americans. With the growth of the immigrant
19 population over the past decade, the Virginia legislature
20 is even less representative of our state's diversity.

21 Every Virginian has the right to a fair political
22 district. Every ten years you have the opportunity to
23 right these past wrongs. I hope you will act wisely this
24 year to draw political boundaries that will create fair
25 political districts.

1 Thank you.

2 DELEGATE COLE: Thank you. Alex Vargas.

3 MR. VARGAS: Thank you, general. I would like to
4 speak to you about the majority, as well. Especially
5 being a northern Virginia resident, born and raised, we do
6 see diversity growing, but the voice of -- being able to
7 speak to the public, going door to door, they don't feel
8 like there is representation there. They don't feel like
9 there is a purpose for them to vote, because they don't
10 see the change that is happening in their communities.

11 A lot of times, people in those communities don't
12 have the outreach to their youth. They don't have the
13 opportunity to finding further enhancements on how to
14 improve their youth. The first generation families here,
15 especially the children, are falling into other kinds of
16 incidents with gang involvement or drug use, things like
17 that. We do need to do a little bit more outreach
18 programs within our northern Virginia to help the youth
19 that we have there. Thank you very much.

20 DELEGATE COLE: Thank you. Bob Matthias.

21 MR. MATTHIAS: Senators, Delegates, Bob Matthias
22 from the City of Virginia Beach. City Council last week
23 adopted a letter that you have in front of you. We also
24 emailed it to you earlier, or last week, and some of you
25 heard presentation by Council Member Glenn Davis at your

1 public hearing last Thursday. I'm not going to read the
2 whole letter. I'll just hit some of the high points.

3 Virginia Beach is currently represented by two
4 senators who represent all of Virginia Beach, plus three
5 senators that represent smaller portions of the City.

6 We're very concerned that one of the plans put forth for
7 Senate representation would only have one senator as sole
8 representative of Virginia Beach.

9 We strongly believe that the city should be
10 represented by two senators who represent only the City of
11 Virginia Beach, plus other Senators who represent smaller
12 portions of the population. We respectfully request that
13 any redistricting plan that goes forward would, to the
14 extent possible, address our concerns.

15 One other concern, and I know this is a very
16 difficult process, but we also are concerned that the 14th
17 district, Senator Quayle, stretches all the way up into
18 Virginia Beach. I know committee assignments will change,
19 but under the current plan, Senator Quayle would be the
20 only senator representing the City of Virginia Beach on
21 the Senate Finance Committee.

22 We tried to be a community of interest, and I
23 think the only community of interest we could find was
24 that we all would take 460 to go to the Virginia Diner, as
25 far as the 14th District.

1 Again, that's the concern, above and beyond what
2 the Council expressed in their letter. Thank you very
3 much, again. I know this is a very difficult task.

4 DELEGATE COLE: Thank you. Tom Van Auken.

5 MR. VAN AUKEN: Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Madam
6 Chairman, members of the Committee. Thank you for taking
7 your time to hear our concerns. My name is Thomas Van
8 Auken. I've been a resident of Bon Air in Chesterfield
9 County since 1972, and I have survived three previous
10 redistrictings. I'm particularly concerned with the
11 Senate redistricting this year.

12 I have two major concerns regarding the Howell
13 plan, which is obviously the only one we need to pay
14 attention to. The first thing is community of interest
15 and jurisdictional integrity. This plan doesn't seem to
16 show any concern for our jurisdictional boundaries or for
17 our community of interest. The districts in this plan
18 cross county and city lines as if they weren't even
19 there. It throws suburban and rural areas together with
20 no apparent concern for the interest of the people in
21 these districts. And, finally, it even splits precincts.
22 I guess the only reason it doesn't split census tracts is
23 no one has yet figured out how to do that.

24 Chesterfield County's population justifies
25 somewhat over one and a half Senate seats, but

1 Chesterfield gets divided up among four Senate districts.
2 Two of these seats are tied to large rural areas, which
3 suburban Chesterfield has little in common with. Two are
4 tied to urban and suburban areas north of the James River,
5 areas that have long looked down on Chesterfield as "the
6 southwest pasture."

7 What this does, in effect, is to weaken the voice
8 of Chesterfield in the Senate of Virginia, since anyone
9 holding one of these seats has to pay attention to the
10 interests of the other parts of the district, as well the
11 part that lies in Chesterfield.

12 Bluntly, we in Chesterfield are a little bit
13 tired of being used as filler to complete legislative
14 districts of some other jurisdiction, or to tie two blocks
15 of population together. Surely you can treat us a little
16 better than you have. And did you really have to run a
17 new senatorial district, eight, into Chesterfield?

18 Secondly, the second major concern is the
19 population imbalance between districts. The Howell plan,
20 the current one, allows a population deviation of plus or
21 minus two percent between districts. The maximum
22 difference between district populations is almost eight
23 thousand people. That's a lot of people.

24 The proposed House plan has district deviations
25 of only plus or minus one percent, even though they're

1 working with smaller districts, which are harder to make
2 equal. It's simply not fair to allow some districts to be
3 significantly smaller than others. I guess some voters
4 have louder voices than others. Surely you can do better
5 than plus or minus two percent.

6 Finally, let me get back to the matter of
7 splitting precincts. Times are tight. In Chesterfield
8 County, we have some pretty tight county budgets out
9 there. Every time you spit a precinct in Chesterfield,
10 it costs the tax payers in Chesterfield \$25,000 to start
11 up a new precinct. Ouch. I'm paying for that, not you.
12 How about trying to minimize the number of precincts you
13 split up? That would be helpful.

14 Thank you very much for taking the time to listen
15 to me.

16 DELEGATE COLE: Thank you. Angela Kelly-Wiecek.

17 MS. WIECEK: Wiecek.

18 DELEGATE COLE: I'm sorry.

19 MS. WIECEK: That's okay. Nobody gets it right.
20 Thank you. My name is Angela Kelly-Wiecek. I'm a
21 resident of Hanover County, and a proud constituent in the
22 fourth senatorial district, and it is to the senatorial
23 redistricting plan that I come to speak to you today.

24 In Hanover we have been fortunate to always be
25 represented by one senator. One senator. We are one

1 hundred thousand citizens. We would form one half of any
2 senatorial district you plan to put us in. Unfortunately,
3 the Howell plan splits Hanover into three disparate
4 senatorial districts.

5 Now, I'm not here to comment on the particulars
6 of those senatorial districts, but we have a very specific
7 community in Hanover. We're primarily rural, interspersed
8 with certain suburban pockets, and for the little country
9 town of Ashland, with its quaint shops and allure to be
10 then paired with the urban concerns of downtown Richmond
11 and Varina doesn't seem to create a community of
12 interest. At least, not in terms of anybody I have talked
13 to.

14 Additionally, the western portion of our county,
15 with the quiet and rural farming communities of Montpelier
16 and Rockville to be combined then into the 12th district
17 with the mega-hyper suburban development of Short Pump
18 equally doesn't seem to make any sense.

19 So what you have in Hanover is a community of
20 people who attend rotary clubs and Sunday school, soccer
21 fields and roller hockey leagues. We all get together and
22 have discussions, much like neighbors and friends do.
23 Unfortunately, under this plan, we will be split as a
24 community; split, and have no equal senatorial
25 representation. It does not make any sense for the voice

1 of Hanover to be diluted and made an afterthought in three
2 different Senate districts, rather than having our
3 singular voice, as we have always enjoyed.

4 I really believe this is an egregious miscarriage
5 of just representation, and I urge you, urge you in every
6 sense, to go back to the drawing board. Look again at
7 this plan, what you are doing to the Hanover citizens.
8 Hanover citizens deserve better. The Commonwealth
9 deserves better. So, please go back, look again, and
10 allow Hanover to be represented by one senator.

11 Thank you.

12 DELEGATE COLE: Thank you. Larry Haake.

13 MR. HAAKE: Good morning, Senator Howell,
14 Delegate Cole, Members of the Committee. I'm Larry Haake,
15 the General Registrar of Chesterfield County. I'm also
16 the president of the Voter Registrars Association of
17 Virginia.

18 First off, I want to, on behalf of the
19 Registrars, to thank you for your quick work on this
20 matter. Senator Howell quite accurately portrayed the
21 short window that we all have. And, of course, I come
22 from the world that has to implement what you ultimately
23 decide. And we're ready. So we're anxious for you to
24 make your decision.

25 Secondly, I wanted to talk about implementation,

1 in terms of split precincts. You heard Mr. Van Auken
2 mention the cost to open a new precinct, and I don't think
3 it's limited to Chesterfield County. It's \$25,000. And
4 I'm looking at the current House Plan, and the two
5 dominant plans in the Senate. The cost to localities
6 across the Commonwealth to implement the plans as they are
7 would range from 6.2 million to 6.7 million, just to
8 correct the split precincts.

9 And what we try to do is eliminate a split
10 precinct, because split precincts provide another level of
11 overhead that's difficult. It increases voter confusion,
12 to the point that it can even slow down voting on election
13 day. So the best remedy for a split precinct is to
14 eliminate it. And that's where that 6.2 million to 6.7
15 million right now exists. I don't think the localities
16 are ready for that.

17 So I would ask you, in your deliberations, to
18 minimize split precincts as much as you can. I recognize
19 the difficulty of it. By minimizing them, we eliminate
20 voter confusion. We keep things moving well on election
21 day, and the whole system works better.

22 Thank you for your consideration.

23 DELEGATE COLE: I'm probably going to get this
24 name wrong, too. Phaedra Jackson?

25 MS. JACKSON: That was actually very correct.

1 Chairpersons and Members of this Committee, my name is
2 Phaedra Jackson. I'm a resident here in Richmond, and I'm
3 here on behalf of the Virginia New Majority. I'm here to
4 encourage the legislature to draw maps that truly reflect
5 the population of Virginia.

6 The current political district lines have been
7 drawn to force Virginia's communities to accept
8 powerlessness. We now have the opportunity to correct
9 centuries of political exclusion through this
10 redistricting process. We can all agree that the criteria
11 like compactness, contiguity, and the keeping together of
12 communities of interest are crucial in this process, but
13 we must also fight for competitiveness. To have a fully
14 functional electorate, we must engage residents of the
15 Commonwealth with political lines that reflect the
16 population.

17 Virginia's communities of color have contributed
18 heavily throughout history to making our state what it is
19 today. Despite this, communities of color have persevered
20 through decades of exclusion from the state's law-making
21 institutions. I urge you to draw fair and competitive
22 maps. To that effect, Virginia New Majority would
23 respectfully like to submit maps that allow for two
24 African American districts that make up parts of rural
25 Virginia.

1 DELEGATE COLE: Just give them to the secretary
2 there. Thank you very much. Robin Lind.

3 MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Robin Lind
4 for the Virginia Electoral Board Association. Speaking on
5 behalf of the association, we would like to thank you all
6 for the very difficult work that you have done in
7 assembling all these districts. I would say that we are
8 somewhat stupefied by the ability to achieve the less than
9 one percent difference in your plan for the House
10 District. But we also have to second the concerns of
11 Larry Haake.

12 It is a substantial financial burden on members
13 of the Association, the 134 counties and cities, and we
14 were surprised at how many precincts were split. I
15 understand from one of the members of the House that the
16 Department of Justice told you that precinct lines are
17 arbitrary and that you should not regard them any more
18 than others.

19 And, now, stepping back from that, and
20 reintroducing myself as Secretary of the Goochland County
21 Electoral Board, I can give you a specific example in
22 Goochland County, where we have one precinct that has a
23 quarter of our border voters in it, approaching 4,000. We
24 are required to split it, so we will be creating a new
25 precinct there.

1 Under the plan for the House, between the 56th
2 and the 55th districts, one of our supervisor's districts,
3 precincts, has been split without regard to the
4 supervisor's line. We would like to very much move that
5 split, take the very same number of people, so there is no
6 change, and move it to the new precinct that we are
7 creating in the east. We will be submitting a map to the
8 Community with that proposal. And I believe that both
9 Delegate Janis and Delegate Ware would be along with that
10 proposal.

11 DELEGATE COLE: Delegate Jones.

12 DELEGATE JONES: Sir, before you sit down, if you
13 don't mind. Just so you know, since I have the House
14 Bill, we have already received at previous public hearings
15 that we've held across the Commonwealth. And we've
16 already accommodated a hand full of requests. So if you
17 could just provide it to us in writing, which I'm sure you
18 will or you have, and we'll take care of that. And the
19 admission of the substitute that we'll have before the
20 House tomorrow.

21 MR. LIND: Thank you very much. I expected to
22 meet with Delegate Ware this morning before you went into
23 session to clear it with him, and I will then submit a
24 proposal to you for the amendment to the bill.

25 DELEGATE JONES: And, as you all know, the

1 Electoral Boards tend to draw precinct lines to begin
2 with. We have a large variation from ten years ago to
3 now, so we have eight or nine thousand people, and some
4 have eleven hundred. So we realize that you're going to
5 be making cuts to those precincts. In years past, we
6 would come back in subsequent years and then we can maybe
7 make some tweaks when you do your supervisor or your next
8 district lines.

9 MR. LIND: I appreciate that very much.

10 MR. JONES: Thank you.

11 DELEGATE COLE: All right. Eddy Aliff.

12 MR. ALIFF: Eddy Aliff, director of the Virginia
13 Center of Independent Baptists. I appreciate especially
14 what I've heard from Chesterfield. I just returned from
15 two churches this weekend in the Lone Oak area, and their
16 concern was their votes being diluted, losing
17 representation there.

18 Personally, I'm from Hanover. I'm concerned
19 about the split, as well, as an individual in those
20 areas. I appreciate the difficulties that you have, but I
21 would prefer, as much as anything, nonpartisan maps to be
22 drawn, with considerations of what these other gentlemen
23 have said, the cost factors of those involved in the
24 electoral process.

25 We appreciate, again, communities of interest

1 being maintained just as much as possible. Our folks live
2 in varying communities of interest, and they're not
3 limited to one specific area. They go to one particular
4 church, but they still want their voice to be heard within
5 their communities of interest. Thank you.

6 DELEGATE COLE: Thank you. The next one is Mayor
7 Bryan Moore or Vice Mayor Horace Webb.

8 MR. MOORE: I am Bryan Moore. Vice Mayor Webb is
9 not here.

10 Madam Chair, good morning, distinguished
11 Legislators. Again, I am Brian Moore of the City of
12 Petersburg, I am our newly-elected mayor, as of 2011. We
13 are proudly represented by Rosalyn Dance in the House.
14 She's a wonderful lady.

15 What I would like to ask you today, as a part of
16 the 63rd district, we are currently a minority/majority
17 district. With more than 80 percent of our community
18 being African American, we would support and propose that
19 any plan that you have or end up passing ensure that we
20 remain intact as a community.

21 As our community, even though we have a strong
22 voting strength of at least 55 percent, our statistics
23 show that, with the voting percentages of 40 to 42
24 percent, it is important that we maintain the minority
25 districts.

1 I understand the importance of your task.
2 Tomorrow night City Council will be doing our districts.
3 We will begin that process. And we'll be working toward
4 completing that on the 19th. So, again, we would ask that
5 you support the supporting of the majority/minority
6 districts, and Petersburg say thank you today.

7 DELEGATE COLE: Thank you very much. Next, is
8 there a representative of the George Mason Redistricting
9 Team that would like to speak?

10 MR. HUTCHIN: Hi. I'm Gabriel Hutchin with the
11 George Mason Redistricting Team. Unfortunately, our
12 students wanted to testify, but they've just been called
13 out by Delegate Morrissey before he goes into caucus.
14 Could we possibly bump them down the list a few slots so
15 they can come back in?

16 DELEGATE COLE: All right. Steven C. Van
17 Voorhees.

18 MR. VAN VOORHEES: It's that Dutch name with
19 double vowels and double capitals. I'm a citizen of the
20 City of Richmond, and I'm a little amazed that I'm here
21 talking to you today.

22 Forty-some years ago, I taught high school
23 history and U.S. Government, and when we got to this
24 subject, and we talked about gerrymandering, it became a
25 joke. And it was wrong. Gerrymandering was wrong, and

1 the students thought it was a joke. They thought it was
2 all in history, and not in the current situation. That
3 was forty-some years ago. Most of those people are now in
4 their forties and fifties. Some of them are getting close
5 to sixty, my former students.

6 I'm hoping that you will just follow some
7 principles, some of which had been touched on by all the
8 speakers ahead of me, that you bear in mind cohesive,
9 continuous communities of interest, easily recognizable by
10 the voters of those areas, the people who actually vote.

11 I appreciate that your job is not a good one.
12 It's a hard one, and you've been working very, very hard
13 with each other across party lines, to reach some
14 agreement, but I urge you to make sense to voters, and not
15 create districts that are gerrymandered and basically
16 facilitate cherry picking by incumbents. I would like you
17 to make us proud of this General Assembly. I'm proud to
18 be a Virginian today, and I'm just hoping that you will
19 remember your history and use these principles in your
20 work.

21 One more thing. Some of you may have heard the
22 iceberg theory. Icebergs are visible from the surface as
23 only a fraction, some people say around ten percent, and
24 there's another ninety percent below the surface. So you
25 take all the speakers you've heard, in all eight sessions,

1 and you multiple that by ten times, and that's at least
2 the measure of the concern that people have for this. Of
3 course, a hundred percent of the people are affected by
4 your work.

5 Thank you for your best efforts.

6 DELEGATE COLE: All right. Thank you very much.
7 Is it Carl Wright? He stepped outside. All right. We'll
8 pass that by temporarily. Todd Vander Pol.

9 MR. VANDER POL: Good morning. I'm Tom Vander
10 Pol from Hanover County, and I want to thank you all for
11 your efforts. You have challenging positions. I
12 understand that.

13 I, too, was thinking back on the gerrymandering,
14 and, to me, that's from another age of political
15 discussions, smoke-filled rooms, powerful individuals
16 having their way with districts, and I really didn't
17 expect to see it. But when I look at northern Virginia,
18 Tidewater and Central Virginia, it seems silly. It seems
19 outrageous.

20 I'm not an elected official. I don't represent
21 the constituency, but I'm a small businessman in Hanover
22 County, a father of four, and for the last 21 years I've
23 seen how Hanover County works very well. The individuals
24 have bought in to a common Board of Supervisors, a common
25 Sheriff's Department. The school system does quite well,

1 and public utilities. In the past, ten years ago, we had
2 a single delegate and a single senator. So we were able
3 to very easily contact them to make our needs known, and
4 that has worked well.

5 I would like to mention, I see the five percent
6 allowance in the district, and you have attempted to go to
7 either one percent or two percent. To me, that's a very,
8 very small or unimportant difference. I would say if you
9 can get within five percent, that you would much rather
10 get a community of interest that has shared values and
11 common interest in the political sector, rather than focus
12 so on keeping the population where it's at.

13 The only other thing that I would like to comment
14 on is that I'm saddened by the individuals who come up
15 here advocating on the basis of race. My great-great-
16 grandfather left Holland and took the train as far as it
17 went in South Dakota and homesteaded. We are Americans,
18 and I think that it's sad that we continue to do that.
19 Because I can categorically show you that those
20 individuals or those groups that get the most government
21 help are the least, the individuals that take advantage of
22 the American citizens, or, excuse me, the American
23 experience, are the least advantage to that group. That's
24 just a fact. So for those individuals that are advocating
25 for those districts, I'd say you're doing a disservice to

1 those individuals.

2 Thank you very much.

3 DELEGATE COLE: Thank you. Next is Jim Smyers;
4 is that correct?

5 MR. SMYERS: That's correct. Thank you very
6 much. I also am from Hanover County. But I had to take
7 the day off of work today, because this plan of the Senate
8 Redistricting was released after the close of business on
9 Tuesday. And, here we are on Monday, and this is the last
10 opportunity to publicly comment on this plan, which I find
11 to be -- and I'm going to use the word that Charles
12 Schumer had to get from his caucus, but this plan is
13 extremist. It's dividing my county into thirds.

14 We were always historically well-served with a
15 single senator to whom we could raise our concerns and
16 issues and promote our common goals. So I don't see that
17 this plan is really promoting the idea of community of
18 interest when Ashland, which is the center of the
19 universe, is all of a sudden delegated to be a remote star
20 of a distant eastern Richmond galaxy.

21 So, basically, I'm just reiterating what the rest
22 of my Hanovarians are saying. Please don't split us into
23 thirds. We're one senatorial district.

24 DELEGATE COLE: Thank you. Arthur Burton.

25 MR. BURTON: Good morning. My name is Arthur

1 Burton. I am the second vice chair of the Richmond
2 Crusade for Voters, and I'm here on behalf of our
3 president, and our membership, Sylvia Woods, to just say
4 to this body that we appreciate all the work that you do,
5 and that we want you to be aware that the Richmond Crusade
6 for Voters is both vigilant and involved in this process.

7 It is our hope that you will continue to honor
8 the Voting Rights Act and its provisions to ensure that
9 there is equity and justice for all citizens in the City
10 of Richmond, regardless of race, creed or color; and that,
11 if you have the opportunity, that you will retain the
12 current districts as they exist; and that, if you have the
13 opportunity, that you would take a further step towards
14 justice, to create a district that allows for more, a
15 greater voice for all of the citizens. We will be
16 watching for both stacking and packing, as well the
17 unnecessary dilution of voting districts.

18 Again, on behalf of our president, Sylvia Woods,
19 I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak to
20 you today, and continue to hope that God will bless you in
21 your important work.

22 Thank you.

23 SPEAKER 1: Thank you. Venus Marshall.

24 MS. MARSHALL: Good morning. I am so privileged
25 and glad to be here this morning to be able to speak

1 before you this morning on behalf of District 21, and I'm
2 a resident of Virginia Beach, 25 years in the making. I'm
3 here with the Virginia Beach African American Political
4 Action Council, and I'm coming here to you all today to
5 address you about the obvious situation of redistricting.
6 I know it's a tremendous challenge, and it presents just
7 many, many opportunities to create a fair and equal
8 representation in government.

9 As this Commonwealth State of Virginia
10 steadfastly forges ahead with the process of remapping
11 this state, please be mindful that blessed are the leaders
12 that seek the best for those they serve, for all of the
13 communities that they serve.

14 According to the census, we in Virginia Beach
15 represent 19.4 percent of the population, and we are in
16 agreement with creating a majority/minority district, so
17 that we are being fairly represented. And joining other
18 districts with a sizable minority population will help put
19 Virginia's plans for redistricting in a greater compliance
20 with Section II of the Voting Rights Act, which prohibits
21 discrimination in voting in an election.

22 I won't be before you long. I want to say in
23 closing, as this State, two days from now, on April 6th,
24 stands to reaffirm it's commitment to our nation's motto,
25 in God we trust, I want you all to remember and not forget

1 that the Commonwealth of Virginia means the common well
2 being of all its citizens, that all are treated fairly and
3 equally, and with a just system for redistricting this
4 State.

5 Please know that we are taking the commitment to
6 not only honor "In God we trust," but also taking that
7 commitment to honor the people that have trusted you to
8 make these decisions.

9 And the final words I want to say now is a
10 scripture: "For the Lord our God is our shield and our
11 sun. He gives us grace and glory. The Lord will withhold
12 no good thing from those who do what is right." And
13 that's Psalm 84:11.

14 Thank you, and God bless you.

15 DELEGATE COLE: Thank you very much. Reverend
16 Lawrence Pollard.

17 REV. POLLARD: General panel members of the
18 Committee. I'm Lawrence Pollard, past president of the
19 Chesterfield NAACP. I'm standing here to support the
20 City's third district. We're hoping that you will keep us
21 with at least 55 percent of democratic voting in the
22 district, so we may maintain our minority status.

23 Thank you.

24 DELEGATE COLE: Thank you. Going back to the
25 people that we missed. Carl Wright.

1 MR. WRIGHT: Good morning, Mr. Chairman,
2 members. Thank you all for the work that you all do,
3 particularly our Hampton Roads delegation. Thank you all
4 for all the work that you all do.

5 My name is Carl Wright. I reside in Virginia
6 Beach, Virginia. I come up here because I don't have
7 representation in Virginia Beach. My children don't have
8 representation, peer representation in the City of
9 Virginia Beach. I came up here because it's time for all
10 of Virginia Beach citizens to have representation.

11 Now, I know some folks have already made their
12 minds up, and really, they really don't have an interest
13 in what other folk's concerns of representation is. But
14 I'm here to tell you that times have changed.
15 Partisanship only works when it works for the people, all
16 of the people. I understand that a lot of folks believe
17 power, power, power is what makes this world run. But,
18 no, the people is what makes this world run.

19 In the City of Virginia Beach, the precedents
20 have been set for the state level from the top down, that
21 a certain segment of the community has no -- obviously, to
22 me, it says they don't have any value because they don't
23 have a voice. I'm here to say that we have a voice. We
24 will be heard, and we will continuously come and speak to
25 our leadership to let them know that we're here.

1 In the City of Virginia Beach -- if you want a
2 yard stick for gerrymandering, come to our City. I mean,
3 you'll get a class in it. It's been gerrymandered,
4 gerrymandered, re-gerrymandered, and gerrymandered again.
5 I'm asking you all, this time, for the children's sake.
6 This is a ten-year process. It goes ten years.

7 I appreciate the work that you're doing. But
8 it's so frustrating when you talk to folks and it falls on
9 deaf ears. And we have some nice folks. They're real
10 nice. You just can't get them to do anything for you when
11 you need them to do it. And I understand the position
12 that they're in, but I'm asking you all today, when you
13 look at Virginia Beach, please consider all of the
14 citizens with a fair, fair and true representation when
15 you draw these districts up. That's all I ask. And
16 that's for all of the citizens.

17 And thank you, again, for all the hard work that
18 you do. And I hope that I didn't come across as
19 disrespectful in a manner, because I do respect you all.
20 But I want you to understand that we have a passion and a
21 strong drive to do what's right in our city for all of our
22 citizens.

23 Thank you.

24 DELEGATE COLE: Thank you very much. Now is
25 there someone from that George Mason Redistricting Panel

1 available?

2 MR. O'BOYLE: Esteemed Senators and Delegates,
3 thank you for allowing us to speak with you today
4 regarding redistricting the Commonwealth. My name is
5 Nicholas O'Boyle, a junior at George Mason University, and
6 from Danville, Virginia originally. And I'm a member of
7 the winning House Delegates Map at a recent redirecting
8 competition that took place about a week ago.

9 I'm here with my other teammates, Billy Leucht
10 and Dominick Liberatore, to ask you to adopt our map,
11 presented in a bill to be introduced later today by
12 Delegate Morrisey. We feel that our map has more
13 attractive features than the one proposed in House Bill
14 5001, in respect to competitiveness, contiguity and
15 compactness.

16 MR. LEUCHT: In regards to competitiveness, our
17 map has over thirty percent competitive districts. This
18 feature better allows the voter to choose their
19 representation with greater ease. The contiguity factor
20 of our map is unmatched. We have districts that are
21 representative of the geographical areas, with having them
22 lined up and down the State.

23 MR. LIBERATORE: With respective compactness, our
24 district minimized the amount of split counties to 161,
25 versus the roughly 300 presented in HB 5001. We also did

1 not split precincts, except when necessary due to
2 population in the more urban areas.

3 MR. O'BOYLE: In conclusion, we welcome the
4 continued conversation on the redistricting process in
5 this great Commonwealth. All of these concerns voiced at
6 this hearing are addressed in our map, including the
7 reduced splits of Albemarle and Henrico Counties. We urge
8 you to scrutinize all of the maps that have been
9 presented, and choose the one that is most representative
10 of the citizens of Virginia.

11 Thank you very much.

12 DELEGATE COLE: Thank you. All right. That's
13 the end of the sign-up list. Is there anyone else who
14 would like to speak before the committee? If so, come
15 forward and identify yourself.

16 MR. BARNETTE: My name is Robert Barnette. I
17 live in Hanover County. I'm here as the president of the
18 Hanover branch of the NAACP. We are in support of
19 increased minority representation in Hanover County. Many
20 of our neighborhoods, African American neighborhoods in
21 Hanover were split ten years ago. So the Howell plan
22 offers a lot of ingenuity in helping us increase that
23 minority representation.

24 We also are in support of continued oversight by
25 the Justice Department. And, so, we in Hanover are very

1 eager to work with the senatorial version of the
2 redistricting plan.

3 Thank you.

4 DELEGATE COLE: Okay. Thank you.

5 MS. BOONE: Good morning. My name is Sarah
6 Boone, and I'm a board member of the Montgomery County
7 Chamber of Commerce. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and
8 distinguished elected officials. On behalf of the
9 Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce, we would like to
10 express our appreciation for the Governor and everyone who
11 is involved in this redistricting.

12 As the second most populated MSA in Southeastern
13 Virginia, Montgomery County serves as an economic,
14 commercial, educational, recreational and cultural hub for
15 many surrounding communities. Because of our location and
16 the resources we have, Montgomery County has a long
17 history working with its neighbors on projects of regional
18 significance.

19 For example, Virginia Tech is a land-grant
20 university, where outreach, research and instruction, not
21 only support the various rural areas, but is an economic
22 engine for our county and the Commonwealth. The opening
23 of the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine and
24 Research Institute is a great example of how we partner
25 and support our surrounding communities and industries.

1 This example is among many.

2 With its history of regional collaboration, we
3 support redistricting plans that will further enhance our
4 ties with neighboring communities and strengthen our
5 collective voice, in both the halls of Congress and the
6 Virginia General Assembly.

7 The Chamber also believes that robust and
8 substantial discussion is the backbone of sound public
9 policy. Competitive electoral districts ensure that
10 citizens can engage candidates in the marketplace of
11 ideas. Reasonable steps should be taken to protect the
12 fundamental tenants of our democratic system.

13 We believe that our elected officials can rise to
14 this challenge, and the many challenges that will result
15 from it. In fact, we think that this is one of those
16 defining moments in an elected official's career, where
17 doing the right thing can bring greater results than the
18 effort that is required.

19 Montgomery County is presently divided by two
20 delegates and two Senators. The House District proposal
21 divides us up in three ways, mathematically, and you can
22 see in the proposed district in the packet that I
23 distributed. If you focus on Blacksburg and
24 Christiansburg and the immediate surrounding areas, that
25 can be one delegate district.

1 The next larger community of interest is the New
2 River Valley and Roanoke Valley. If you combine the New
3 River Valley, being Montgomery County, Giles, Polaski and
4 Floyd, and part of Roanoke County, that can be one Senate
5 district, while the remaining part of Roanoke County,
6 Roanoke City and Salem City can be another Senate
7 district.

8 Moving on to the Congressional districts, if you
9 take the New River Valley all the way up to Lynchburg,
10 including Roanoke County and the surrounding counties,
11 that can be one congressional district, while another
12 congressional district can be from far southwest through
13 Southside. That is all in the packet.

14 We want to thank you for this forum, and our
15 elected officials, again, for the opportunity to share our
16 prospective.

17 DELEGATE COLE: All right. Thank you. Next.

18 MR. McCOY: Good morning. My name is L.J. McCoy,
19 president of the Chesterfield NAACP. I think you did a
20 great job on the work that you have done. I think the
21 individuals that had information on other redistricting
22 maps were fine, also.

23 But right here in Chesterfield County, I begin to
24 see a problem, especially with the 27th district, as far
25 as the map has been drawn. It seems as though an

1 individual that would take the opportunity to begin a
2 campaign to run has been selectively drawn out of their
3 particular district, in order that they won't be able to
4 run, and I'm terribly disturbed about that. Where the
5 line was, where the individual would be --

6 DELEGATE COLE: Excuse me. Can you tell me --
7 the 27th district, there's a House 27th and a Senate 27th.

8 SPEAKER 2: I'm sorry. The House 27th.

9 DELEGATE COLE: House. Okay. Thank you.

10 MR. BARNETTE: Was selectively drawn out of that
11 particular district. And I think that's one issue, a big
12 issue, that I'm beginning to become concerned about.

13 Thank you very much. Have a nice day.

14 DELEGATE COLE: Thank you. Next.

15 MR. BEYER: I'm John Beyer from Virginia21. I'm
16 also a student at Piedmont Community College.

17 Chair people, Members of the Committee, thank you
18 very much for allowing me a time to speak. Also, thank
19 you for the hard work you have already put into creating
20 fair and balanced districts that best represent us.

21 I'd like to talk a bit about people. I've heard
22 a lot of speeches so far today about populations,
23 percentages, precincts, partisan, nonpartisan. I would
24 like to step back for a second and focus on the people.

25 When we look at making districts, I want us to

1 look at districts that create the best way to represent
2 the people of Virginia. As students, we're constantly
3 concerned about not being represented, and I think that
4 extends to the greater population of Virginia.

5 Creating districts that represent communities,
6 rather than create partisan politics, using bipartisan to
7 look at the best way to ensure the best future for
8 Virginia, is what's going to ensure the best future for our
9 state. I would encourage you to spend the time to look at
10 the best way, not to ensure the right percentages or the
11 right populations in our districts, but the best way to
12 represent the people of Virginia, both local and state-
13 wide.

14 Thank you very much.

15 DELEGATE COLE: Thank you.

16 MR. FORREST: I'm Sam Forrest, and we're part of
17 the same group. How about everybody stand up that has on
18 a snake outfit. They are rebelling against this district
19 that looks like a snake. Thank you.

20 I live about ten minutes from here at VCU. Bobby
21 Scott is my representative, and he lives in Newport News.
22 Our district looks like a centipede, not like a snake, and
23 that's the only thing we have in common. So that's my
24 major complaint.

25 I have another complaint. These are the people

1 that represent me: Jennifer McCallum, Donald McEachin,
2 Bobby Scott, Senators Webb and Warner, Mayor Jones in
3 Richmond, President Obama. And seldom to never do any of
4 them vote for me, the way I want. And that's my other
5 complaint.

6 DELEGATE JONES: We can't do anything about that.

7 MR. FORREST: You can do something. I want you
8 all to -- it's not that difficult to run a good
9 government. I want you to step up to the plate, put your
10 interests aside and treat us right. It's overdue.

11 Thank you.

12 DELEGATE COLE: All right. Thank you very much.
13 Senator Martin.

14 SENATOR MARTIN: Mr. Chairman, our responsibility
15 is to draw the lines, and we sometimes get the opportunity
16 to speak to colleagues about how they ought to vote, but
17 we can't dictate it to them.

18 DELEGATE COLE: Thank you.

19 MS. FINCH: I'm Nancy Finch. I'm president of
20 the Richmond First Club. We're members of the
21 redistricting coalition, and we have been working with the
22 coalition for some time. They have been working for
23 several years, as you know.

24 A couple of things. One, maps are submitted,
25 lines have been drawn, and we have lots of folks here this

1 morning with big problems with the maps and with the
2 lines. So I hope that things are not in concrete. I hope
3 that the people here will be heard. They certainly
4 brought up some legitimate concerns about, particularly
5 about splitting districts.

6 The other thing. In the press we've read a
7 couple of times that the plans from the students and from
8 the governor's commission just came in too late. They
9 couldn't help you all. Well, it was my understanding that
10 everybody received the census figures, and they were
11 waiting for the census figures in mid-February. So I'm
12 wondering now how their plans were too late, but other
13 people's plans were not too late.

14 And, third, in 2006, a group of senators and
15 delegates submitted Senate Joint Resolution Number 84, and
16 this is part of what it said. The senators were Senator
17 Williams, Senator Martin Williams, Senators Hanger, Potts,
18 Quayle, Stolle. The delegates were Delegates Callahan,
19 Morgan and Parrish. I'm sure those are familiar names to
20 all of you. Maybe some of you are here.

21 One of the comments in this resolution said,
22 whereas the best redistricting process followed by the
23 General Assembly in 1991 and 2001 reflects new
24 developments -- everybody is saying the same thing this
25 year -- and problems now inherent in the process,

1 including the use of sophisticated technology, more
2 frequent division of localities -- which is still one of
3 the concerns this year -- among two or more districts,
4 less attention to compactness and contiguity of districts,
5 a more intense reliance on political data, increased
6 protection for incumbents, a severe reduction in the
7 number of competitive contests for State Legislative and
8 Congressional seats -- and this, to me, is the most
9 important -- a consequent decline in voter participation.

10 This is what has interested Richmond First Club
11 and the coalition in working so hard on this effort.
12 Voters are not turning out like they should. Some years
13 ago I conducted a poll in the district that I lived in.
14 Like 15 percent knew who their delegate was, of the
15 voters.

16 We hope that this is going to change after this
17 redistricting effort, that people will vote, they will
18 know who their delegates are. And this resolution goes on
19 to give a very, very low number of people turning out to
20 vote. We're for whatever strengthens fair democracy, and
21 I'm sure you are, too.

22 DELEGATE COLE: Thank you very much. Does anyone
23 else wish to speak? All right. One more.

24 MR. UKROP: I'm Jim Ukrop, and I'm here to
25 represent my children and my grandchildren. And I think

1 you all know our Virginia history. We are the birthplace
2 of America. The leaders of this country were from right
3 here in Virginia. And I think this is a real opportunity
4 for us to take a leadership position in our nation.

5 What would the news be like? We are in a divided
6 country today. No one can agree on anything. But
7 wouldn't it be a wonderful thing for the nation to read
8 about the Virginia legislature stepped forward and did the
9 right thing. You know, you are the leaders in this
10 state. It's up to you, and I hope you do the right thing.

11 DELEGATE COLE: All right. Thank you. If no one
12 else wishes to speak, I do have an announcement. There
13 will be a House Privileges and Election Meeting this
14 afternoon, probably at 3:00 or 4:00. We'll announce the
15 time on floor. And -- is this room available? It's
16 across the hall in the other House room.

17 Do you wish to speak to the Committee?

18 DELEGATE TYLER: Yes, sir. Thank you,
19 Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee. I'm Delegate
20 Rosalyn Tyler. One thing that I would like the Committee
21 to take into consideration as you look at the
22 redistricting lines, is -- also, as you look at the
23 population for minority districts, I would also like you
24 to look at the voting population in minority districts, as
25 well.

1 Because even though you might draw minority
2 districts that may be 55 percent or more, but we need to
3 actually look at the voting numbers in each district. And
4 I would just like to recommend that to the committee,
5 because, as a minority legislator representing the
6 district, it's not always included. And I guess I'm in
7 great concern, because my district includes five prison
8 populations. The population is there, but my voter
9 population is not. So I ask you just to take that into
10 consideration.

11 DELEGATE COLE: All right. Thank you very much.
12 If no one else wishes to speak, Senator Howell, do you
13 have any announcements?

14 SENATOR HOWELL: I would just like to say that
15 Senate P. and E. is meeting tomorrow at 10:00, and we,
16 like I said originally, we have made numerous changes
17 already, and I'm sure we will be making more before
18 tomorrow afternoon.

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20 At this time the hearing was adjourned.

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CERTIFICATE OF COURT REPORTER

I, Kellie Milner, hereby certify that I was the court reporter in the Privileges and Elections Hearing for the General Assembly on the 4th day of April, 2011, at the time of the hearing herein.

I further certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the incidents of the hearing herein, to the best of my ability.

Given under my hand this 20th day of March, 2011.

Kellie Milner, Court Reporter