

3rd HEARING
HOUSE OF DELEGATES
P&E REDISTRICTING SUBCOMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
OCTOBER 5, 2010

Panel Members

Delegate Mark Cole, Chairman - 88th District
Delegate Dave Albo - 42nd District
Delegate J. H. Miller - 50th District
Delegate Roslyn Dance - 63rd District

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 CHAIRMAN COLE: Let me call this public
3 hearing to order.

4 I want to welcome everyone. It's my
5 pleasure tonight to welcome you to the third
6 hearing of the House of Delegates Redistricting
7 Subcommittee.

8 I know we have a few other elected
9 officials in the audience and I'll recognize those
10 that I'm aware of.

11 We have my colleagues in the House of
12 Delegates, Delegate Scott, Delegate Evan and
13 Delegate Heran. Also we have the Vice Mayor of
14 the town of Vienna, Vice Mayor Cole, no relation.

15 (Laughter)

16 I apologize if I missed anybody else.

17 This is the third of six opportunities
18 the subcommittee will have this year to gather
19 input from experts, advocacy groups, and most
20 importantly the people of Virginia on the every 10
21 year process of drawing new boundaries for the
22 state legislative and congressional districts.

1 The General Assembly and Governor, as
2 officials who submit to the voters at elections,
3 and therefore are directly accountable to the
4 public, are responsible for drawing legislative
5 boundaries.

6 That mandate is clearly spelled out in
7 the Constitution of Virginia. This time tested
8 and inclusive process ensures that every Virginian
9 has a voice in redistricting since every Virginian
10 is represented in the General Assembly by a
11 delegate and a state senator.

12 After ever decennial census by the
13 Federal Government the Virginia General Assembly
14 and Governor, like every other state, must draw
15 lines for U.S. House, State Senate of Virginia and
16 Virginia House of Delegates districts.

17 Likewise, many localities also must
18 draw lines for county board, city counsel and
19 school board districts. That much everyone
20 already knows from our civics classes. So why are
21 we here, where are we in the current redistricting
22 process?

1 The key task of the 2010 Census, the
2 April 1st enumeration is now complete. However the
3 U.S. Census Bureau continues it's work towards
4 releasing statewide total population counts for
5 Virginia and the other states by December 31st of
6 this year.

7 Then the data used for actually drawing
8 lines, the so called public law 94-171 data comes
9 later, most likely in February or March of next
10 year.

11 Speaker Howell and I decided to
12 schedule and convene these public hearings to
13 encourage greater civic awareness and facilitate
14 more active participation by the public in
15 Virginia's latest redistricting process.

16 At these public hearings this
17 subcommittee wants to gather input from the public
18 on what principles the General Assembly and
19 Governor should consider in using the detailed
20 data, once it becomes available next year, to
21 redraw district lines.

22 Of course the redistricting is an

1 endeavor presenting many challenges. It can also
2 be a contentious process. In fact, litigation
3 over districts drawn in 2001, after the last
4 federal census, continued through most of the last
5 decade in some states. But in Virginia not a
6 single court case challenging the current House of
7 Delegates, State Senate or Congressional maps
8 successfully passed legal muster.

9 Nevertheless, a decision produced by
10 all that litigation, whether in Virginia or across
11 the nation, as well as the complicated body of law
12 and the many other players involved in
13 redistricting, make it vital that my colleagues
14 and I learn what is most important to Virginians
15 before lines are redrawn and legislation is
16 ultimately passed.

17 The General Assembly, the Governor, the
18 Attorney General, the U.S. Justice Department and
19 perhaps state and federal judges will all have an
20 opportunity to impact this process.

21 But again, before we get involved in
22 the work of drawing lines or seeking legal

1 opinions or whatever else, the Speaker and I,
2 along with our House colleagues, want to hear from
3 you about your priorities and suggestions for
4 redistricting.

5 As we get underway I believe it is
6 incumbent on me to articulate, and I hope my House
7 colleagues will agree with my touchstones on this
8 very important public policy issue.

9 The redistricting process must be fair.
10 It must include opportunity for input from all,
11 and serious deliberation and a fair outcome.

12 The redistricting process must create
13 districts that as nearly as possible are equal in
14 population giving the effect of the constitutional
15 one person/one vote principle.

16 The final maps must comply with local
17 law, with the U.S. Constitution, the Virginia
18 Constitution, the Federal Voting Rights Act and
19 court decisions applying them.

20 Within those critical constraints I
21 look forward to learning from everyone giving
22 testimony here tonight and at subsequent hearings.

1 Beyond those constraints no decisions
2 have been made. We are here to hear from you
3 about what you believe is important in
4 redistricting. We have not prejudged the outcome.
5 We have not made any decisions. We have no
6 answers to questions about what districts will
7 look like or how plans will be drafted. We want to
8 hear from you about what we, as your elected
9 representatives, should consider.

10 Now, here are some logistical but
11 important requests to ensure a smooth and
12 efficient process for public input as possible.
13 Staff from the Division of Legislative Services
14 has prepared a two page hand out answering many
15 questions about redistricting. And it's back on
16 the table at the door back there. If you haven't
17 picked one up I would encourage you to do so.

18 That handout is available and includes
19 the website where additional information can be
20 found, both now and as the redistricting process
21 unfolds.

22 In order to respect the time of

1 everyone who has come tonight to provide input, we
2 will rely on that handout to answer many questions
3 regarding the specific process.

4 My colleagues and I will refrain from
5 our sometimes long winded commentary other than my
6 opening comments.

7 (Laughter)

8 We won't engage in arguments with each
9 other or with any of you. We're not here to
10 answer a lot of questions. We want to maximize
11 participation by citizens who are here.

12 Our objective tonight is to hear from
13 you. I would ask that each of you who speak,
14 please try to keep your remarks brief, four
15 minutes tops, and try to be to the point, as a
16 courtesy to others, and please try not to repeat
17 what has already been said by others so that we
18 may accommodate as many speakers as possible
19 tonight.

20 Like in other legislative hearings,
21 staff will be the keeper of the clock. I also
22 invite everyone to submit any written comments for

1 the subcommittee by giving a hard copy to our
2 clerk that is here tonight, or statements may be
3 emailed, faxed or sent via regular mail to Scott
4 Maddrea, Deputy Clerk for Committee Operations at
5 the Virginia House of Delegates. He's right there
6 at the back of the room.

7 His contact information if available at
8 the table near the entrance along with a complete
9 list of all the public hearings that this
10 subcommittee will be holding this fall.

11 Finally, be sure when you make your
12 remarks, come to the podium and identify yourself
13 before you make your marks. Also, if you submit
14 materials make sure that the source of the
15 materials is identified on the materials.

16 We are recording the processes tonight,
17 so it would be really helpful if you speak
18 clearly, give your name before you make comments.

19 We have another one of my colleagues
20 showed up, Delegate Filler-Corn. Delegate Filler-
21 Corn, welcome. All right, I'll start going down
22 the list. And forgive me if I butcher your name

1 when I call it out.

2 Tania Hossain. Is she here tonight?

3 Okay. Would you like to address the committee?

4 MS. HOSSAIN: Yes, Sir.

5 CHAIRMAN COLE: Please come to the
6 podium and identify yourself.

7 MS. HOSSAIN: Good evening. Greetings
8 members of the House Redistricting Subcommittee.

9 My name is Tania Hossain and I serve as
10 the president of the Fairfax County Federation of
11 Citizens Association.

12 In it's 70th year the Federation is the
13 oldest association for the counties, homeowners,
14 civic and community organizations. We work
15 together in a nonpartisan manner and advocate on
16 issues that impact all Fairfax County residents.

17 To that end, on behalf of the
18 Federation, it is my honor and privilege to inform
19 you that the Federation supports the nonpartisan
20 Iowa model as Virginia's 2011 redistricting
21 process.

22 We're well aware that in most states,

1 as in Virginia, the state legislature draws the
2 Congressional and State legislative district
3 lines. And since, in it's final form, a
4 redistricting plan is a bill, it can have many
5 sources of origination and face many political
6 challenges.

7 Like many bills that have gone through
8 the General Assembly, most of them have entailed
9 some sort of a party political process. The
10 redistricting process in Virginia has undergone
11 it's share of political processes as well.

12 We have duly noted that the House and
13 Senate Committees on Privileges and Elections have
14 adopted many elements of the Iowa model and
15 resolution one that was adopted on April 3, 2001.

16 However, the entire process still
17 resides and is driven by the General Assembly and
18 thus subject to partisan politics.

19 According to the division of
20 legislative services, Drawing the Line 2011
21 Report, there have been measures taken to
22 introduce, to modify the General Assembly's role

1 to establish either an independent redistricting
2 commission by a Constitutional Amendment or an
3 advisory redistricting commission by a statute or
4 a study, or to study the redistricting process.

5 Since 2001 more than 40 constitutional
6 amendments were offered to turn redistricting work
7 over to an independent commission. 30 bills were
8 introduced to create an advisory redistricting
9 commission and over a dozen resolutions were
10 proposed to study the redistricting process. All
11 attempts have failed.

12 If the Iowa model were to be adopted,
13 Virginia redistricting process would be under
14 purview of a non-partisan commission. The
15 commission would take into account only the
16 following four factors in determining
17 redistricting eligibility of a district.
18 Obviously I wouldn't know this, population,
19 continuity, compactness and existing boundaries of
20 governmental units.

21 And, perhaps the most important
22 ramification of the adoption of the Iowa model

1 would be that it would be prohibitive for the
2 commission to engage in political gerrymandering
3 because they would have, they would not have
4 access to the information necessary to engage in
5 such practices.

6 Just that one very aspect would make
7 the Iowa model one to emulate and one which would
8 strengthen Virginia's redistricting process by
9 simply taking it out of the political process.

10 We understand what a difficult task you
11 have ahead of you and we thank you for all your
12 work on making Virginia redistricting a non-
13 partisan process.

14 On behalf of the Federation, I wish you
15 all the best in your deliberation and thank you
16 for this opportunity to share our thoughts.

17 CHAIRMAN COLE: Thank you for your
18 input.

19 I'm going to suspend just briefly, I
20 neglected to introduce the panel. And thank you
21 for your inputs.

22 I'm Delegate Mark Cole. I represent

1 the 88th district which includes parts of Stafford,
2 Spotsylvania and Fauquier counties. I'm chairman
3 of the Privileges and Elections Committee which is
4 the committee that any redistricting legislation
5 will have to go through. And I'll ask each of my
6 colleagues to introduce themselves.

7 MS. DANCE: Good evening. My name is
8 Roslyn Dance. I'm Delegate for the 63rd District
9 representing the county of Dinwiddie, parts of
10 Chesterfield County and the city of Petersburg.

11 MR. MILLER: Delegate Jackson Miller
12 from the 50th House district. I represent the city
13 of Manassas Park, the city of Manassas and parts
14 of Prince William County.

15 MR. ALBO: I'm Dave Albo, 42nd district,
16 which is basically west Springfield, Lorton,
17 Fairfax Station.

18 CHAIRMAN COLE: Thank you. And now
19 we'll get back to the hearing.

20 Vice Mayor Cole, come forward please.

21 MS. COLE: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Good
22 evening Mr. Chairman, members of the committee.

1 I'm Laurie Geneviro Cole, a council
2 member from the town of Vienna and currently
3 serving as Vice Mayor of the town. Mayor Jane
4 Seaman could not be here tonight. She and several
5 of our council members are at the annual Virginia
6 Municipal League Conference in Hampton Roads. I
7 am speaking tonight on behalf of the Mayor and the
8 entire town council.

9 After that rather lengthy prolog, the
10 message I bring from the town of Vienna is quite
11 simple, please keep us whole.

12 We are currently entirely within the
13 boundaries of the 35th House district and the 34th
14 Senate district. We believe it is in the best
15 interest of our citizens and the town as a whole
16 that we continue to be represented by a single
17 Senator and a single Delegate.

18 Therefore we respectfully request that
19 as lines need to be redrawn across the map the
20 town of Vienna be allowed to remain undivided in
21 it's state representation.

22 And thank you for giving citizens

1 across the Commonwealth the opportunity to address
2 you directly at this series of public hearings.

3 We appreciate your commitment to an open and
4 bipartisan process for determining our future
5 representation.

6 And on a personal note I would like to
7 let you know that truly the eyes of the nation are
8 upon you. My son attends Pamona College in
9 Claremont, California. He couldn't bring himself
10 to attend one of those beautiful instate schools
11 with that lovely instate tuition.

12 (Laughter)

13 And he informed me that his political
14 science class is following the redistricting
15 process in Virginia.

16 I'm very grateful to have had this
17 opportunity to participate in your important work.
18 Thank you very much.

19 CHAIRMAN COLE: Thank you for your
20 input.

21 We just had another delegate come in,
22 Delegate Vivian Watts, welcome. All right.

1 Olga Hernandez.

2 MS. HERANDEZ: Good evening, Chairman
3 Cole and members of the House Privileges and
4 Election Committees and attending guests.

5 My name is Olga Hernandez. I am
6 president of the League of Women Voters in
7 Virginia. Kudos to you for scheduling hearings at
8 various locations across the state early in the
9 process. We are great supporters of transparency
10 in government and thus we hope they are being
11 taped and broadcast or at least posted on the web
12 so those that can not attend physically can
13 participate.

14 By hearing citizen's input about the
15 fairness of the redistricting process prior to the
16 lines being drawn we hope will encourage you to
17 consider what you hear at these hearings before a
18 final plan is voted on.

19 As many of you recall I have often
20 testified before you at subcommittee and full
21 committee hearings in the early mornings in
22 Richmond to the need of a process being more

1 equitable.

2 The League believes that voters should
3 chose their representatives and not the other way
4 around. Thus the practice of incumbent protection
5 should be done at the ballot box and not by
6 drawing boundaries that are so safe that it favors
7 one party or the other.

8 Commitment to the rules of the State
9 Constitution of continued boundaries, compactness
10 of the district and representation in proportion
11 to the population need to be adhered to and I'm
12 sure you will do that. Considerations of
13 community of interest need to be carefully
14 observed.

15 Make no mistake, we are aware that both
16 parties have been guilty of partisan protection in
17 the past. That is why we think there is a better
18 way to serve the citizens of the Commonwealth and
19 get more effective governments.

20 The League of Women Voters has a long
21 history of fighting against attacks on the basic
22 constitutional rights to fair and equal

1 representation guaranteed to all citizens by the
2 Constitution.

3 The League has worked vigorously in the
4 Commonwealth and across the county to secure
5 representative redistricting plans in their states
6 after each census, and are seeking reforms to
7 assure that redistricting process is non-partisan,
8 equitable and open.

9 These are core rights of citizens for a
10 free and democratic nation.

11 We understand that the current sharing
12 of political power in the General Assembly
13 provides the best opportunity for enactment of
14 redistricting reforms that we have had in recent
15 decades, or may have in the future. But it
16 troubles us to hear the rumors that a backroom
17 deal and agreement has been reached between the
18 chambers to accept each others plans thus
19 protecting incumbents and perpetrating more
20 polarization of our government.

21 During the campaign the Governor voiced
22 support for a more equitable process, but he has

1 not yet fulfilled his pledge so far.

2 The current system in Virginia only
3 encourages partisan gerrymandering which creates
4 seats so politically skewed that the opposition
5 has little chance of unseating the incumbent.

6 This subverts the democratic system
7 because it allows politicians to choose their
8 voters rather than vice versa. It limits the
9 vetting of new people with new ideas and solutions
10 to public policy issues.

11 Partisan gerrymandering has severely
12 reduced the number of competitive seats in
13 Virginia.

14 In 2007 Virginia Senate races,
15 incumbents in 17 of the 40 races had no opposition
16 and only nine races were deemed competitive. In
17 the 100 House of Delegate races, 57 incumbents had
18 no opposition and only 12 races were competitive.

19 In 2009 legislative elections, 32 of
20 the 100 members of the General Assembly faced no
21 opposition and only 12 races again were
22 competitive.

1 Votes feel that their representatives
2 of the opposing party have no reason to listen to
3 them as constituents. Prior year statistics are
4 no better.

5 The lack of contested and competitive
6 districts has contributed to a decrease in voter
7 turnout in Virginia. The voter turnout for
8 statewide and House of Delegate elections in '97
9 was 49.5 percent. In 2001 it was 46 percent. In
10 2005 only 45 percent of Virginia's registered
11 voters participated in statewide and House of
12 Delegate elections, continuing a pattern of slow
13 decline.

14 The turnout in the 2003 House of
15 Delegate elections, when there was no statewide
16 races, was 31 percent. Only a third of the
17 eligible voters.

18 The 52.7 percent turnout in 2006,
19 heavily contested U.S. Senatorial election was a
20 marked contrast to the 39 percent turnout in 2002
21 when an incumbent U.S. Senator was contested by
22 only two little known candidates. Voter turnout

1 in 2009, general -- in the 2009 general election
2 showed a similar trend.

3 In contrast to the 74.5 percent turnout
4 the 2008 presidential election, the 2009 Virginia
5 legislative election was only 40.4 percent which
6 was an improvement to the 30.2 percent turnout in
7 2007, the lowest reported by the State Board of
8 Elections going back to 1976.

9 One of the most significant effects of
10 partisan gerrymandering in Virginia, as elsewhere
11 in the country, is the contribution to the
12 increasing polarization in the legislative bodies.
13 As quoted in our study, Does Your Vote Count, with
14 little reason to fear voters represented this
15 increasingly cater to whole empires and donors
16 rather than the political center.

17 Bipartisan compromise around moderate
18 policies has taken a back seat to party loyalty
19 resulting in historic levels of polarization.

20 This is certainly true of the Virginia
21 General Assembly in recent years. The
22 gerrymandered districts established in the 2001

1 redistricting had resulted in the election of
2 candidates who are unwilling to compromise on
3 legislation, the budget, and especially important
4 for this region, transportation issues and
5 funding.

6 We are encouraged, very much so, that
7 you are listening early before we get the
8 revealing census numbers. We ask that you work
9 with the Senate in good faith and in a transparent
10 way as you work through the process.

11 Input should be taken via the web and
12 maps should be posted so the public can see and
13 participate in the process. More hearings should
14 be scheduled once the legislation is drafted and
15 the maps are proposed.

16 Virginia is a cradle of democracy in
17 the United States. Let's again be a beacon of
18 good governments and show the nation that by
19 having a better system we can and will have a
20 better government for and by the people when they
21 truly have a voice. Thank you very much for
22 listening and for your time.

1 CHAIRMAN COLE: Barbara Kory Kenbohm.

2 MS. KENBOHM: I have no comment. I
3 thought I was signing a sign in --

4 (Laughter)

5 CHAIRMAN COLE: All right. I hope I
6 didn't butcher your name too much. Okay.

7 Roy Baldwin.

8 MR. BALDWIN: Good evening Sir, members
9 of the committee. My name is Roy Baldwin. I am a
10 resident of the town of Vienna and the 35th House
11 district and the 34th Senate district. I would
12 first of all just like to echo what Counselwoman
13 Cole stated a moment ago, that it is, I'm sure the
14 further desire of all residents of the town of
15 Vienna to have one district, both in the House and
16 in the Senate.

17 And I also thank you for giving us the
18 opportunity to tell you what we think is important
19 in this process.

20 I think this is going to be the single
21 most important task that the General Assembly does
22 in this coming year, possibly in the coming

1 decade.

2 What I believe is most important boils
3 down to three main things. First of all, draw
4 these lines without regard to voting patterns or
5 locations of incumbents, just simply don't
6 consider them. That can only be done, number two,
7 by bipartisan commission. This was as I
8 understand it a campaign promise of the Governor
9 and it is time now certainly for him to come
10 through with this. And certainly many members of
11 the General Assembly also made promises to this
12 effect.

13 And just so we make sense, I think it's
14 a little late, unfortunately, for a non-partisan
15 commission to be part of our Constitution, but
16 certainly you can begin the process by showing how
17 this can be done in a bipartisan manner.

18 Most important I think is to make sure
19 as much as possible that all the people in each
20 district that you draw have a community of
21 interest. This means public hearings after the
22 data has become known, but before the lines are

1 drawn and hearings and work, the real work that is
2 done in meetings like this, in settings like this,
3 so the people, while they may not be able to
4 participate in the actual work sessions, will at
5 least be able to see and to monitor what is being
6 done.

7 We have tools now that simply were not
8 available 10 years ago, on the internet, that
9 everyone can be made a part of this process if not
10 directly, at least to see that their work is being
11 done. Thank you very much.

12 CHAIRMAN COLE: Thank you for your
13 input. Edward Wyse.

14 MR. WYSE: I also thought I was signing
15 an attendance thing.

16 (Laughter)

17 CHAIRMAN COLE: Delegate Watts do you
18 want to --

19 MS. WATTS: Yes. Welcome, especially
20 Mark and Roslyn, to our corner of the
21 Commonwealth.

22 I'm going to start on that basis by

1 just giving you a quick anecdote. When I decided
2 to come back in and throw my hat in for the House
3 of Delegates, a Washington Post reporter paid a
4 visit, and to do the obligatory 10 minute
5 interview for maybe a couple of paragraphs in the
6 Washington Post. And as she was getting her
7 recorder going I made the comment in 1995, well,
8 you know, I've always figured that I will have
9 made it if I am mentioned in the obituary column
10 of the Washington Post. To which the young woman
11 told me in great detail, for over five minutes, as
12 I tried to say wait, I'm just kidding, about the
13 criteria for whether or not you got mentioned in
14 the obituary section or not.

15 (Laughter.)

16 I mention that because as I travel
17 elsewhere in the Commonwealth it's not unusual for
18 me to see a member of the House or Senate on local
19 TV, local news coverage even. It's just not true
20 up here.

21 The reason why I started with that
22 anecdote is that my deep concern is voters being

1 able to hold us accountable.

2 Now I say that with all sincerity.

3 Some of you may or may not remember Warren
4 Stanbow, when I first got in the first time, who
5 says to me after a year or so, Lynn, you know, you
6 would make a pretty good delegate if we could just
7 get that League of Women Voters stuff out of you.

8 (Laughter)

9 But again, that concern of
10 accountability, I decided to come tonight to read
11 a paragraph that I have frequently used since
12 2001.

13 In the 2001 redistricting, 20 percent
14 of Fairfax residents lost their House of Delegate
15 representative to another district.

16 Fairfax, you know, is on the edge of
17 the Virginia boundaries and we only needed to
18 shift 60,000 people due to population growth.
19 Obviously you couldn't hit it right on the button,
20 but instead, 200,000 were moved. That's
21 approximately, that was 20 percent of our
22 population, had a new member of the House of

1 Delegates, that they were supposed to figure out
2 who represented them.

3 In my own house, 39th House district, I
4 only needed an additional 3,000 due to population
5 shifts. Instead I got 30,000 new residents as
6 27,000 were taken away from me. 40 percent of my
7 district changed as a result of redistricting.

8 We can't be held accountable if voters
9 don't even know who we are.

10 Please, as we approach this
11 redistricting cycle, please keep that in mind and
12 only do the kind of shifts that are necessary for
13 community of interest, population growth, one man/
14 one vote, and of course the minority
15 representation as laid out in the Voting Rights
16 Act. Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN COLE: Thank you. Virginia
18 Field.

19 MS. FIELD: I thought I was signing in
20 too.

21 (Laughter)

22 CHAIRMAN COLE: That's okay. Kim Brace.

1 MR. BRACE: I too thought I was signing
2 in.

3 (Laughter)

4 CHAIRMAN COLE: Let's see, Dennis and
5 Nancy Hooch.

6 MR. HOOCH: Dennis Hooch, I live in the
7 town of Herndon with my wife Nancy. I knew what I
8 was signing.

9 First of all, I want to thank you for
10 what you're doing and tell you that I recognize
11 the complexity of it and have full confidence that
12 at the end of the day we're going to get a
13 redistricting plan that makes sense for all
14 Virginians.

15 The town of Vienna was amply
16 represented a while back and expressed their
17 desires to make sure that they stay a cohesive
18 unit with a single Representative and a single
19 Senator.

20 The town of Herndon has three precincts
21 currently, 25,000 population, and it's very
22 important to towns that we end up with a single

1 Delegate and a single Senator so that we have, we
2 maintain that identity.

3 Towns in the Commonwealth go through a
4 lot of effort to make sure that they are included
5 in bills that are passed by the legislature,
6 they're not forgotten about amongst the counties
7 and the cities. And that's because people move to
8 towns and pay that extra tax so they have an
9 identity, so they know who their representatives
10 are and they know who to go to. They know whose
11 chain to pull. And we don't want to lose that
12 very special special relationship between those
13 that live in towns and the Commonwealth as a whole
14 and our representation.

15 So, be sensitive please to towns.
16 Thank you, Sir.

17 CHAIRMAN COLE: Thank you very much.
18 Kentan Kuo. I apologize if I mispronounced that.

19 MR. KUO: First of all I'd like to thank
20 the committee for coming out to George Mason
21 University. I'm a student here, so welcome back,
22 I suppose. I am going to keep this brief.

1 I have only two points.

2 The first is that in the last 10 years
3 we have had many advances in technology and the
4 internet. During the 2001 redistricting process
5 there was a website in which there was a mapping
6 system available with the proposed redistricting
7 bills and there were also Ka Po downloads.

8 If you were, if you wanted to go more
9 in depth than what the Java map, I believe it was
10 coded in Java, what the maps allowed you to do,
11 you would have to download shak files and run them
12 into a special program. That required a bit of
13 special knowledge.

14 But, over the last 10 years we've had
15 the advent of Google Map and the advent of a lot
16 of other ways to display this mapping information.
17 So I would urge the committee to take the
18 redistricting data and find a way that is easily
19 useable by average residents, because right now we
20 have far more people online who are involved in
21 politics who sit through these redistricting
22 processes, and we can have a far more transparent

1 process if we take this mapping data, if we take
2 the boundaries that are proposed, not just after
3 they're voted on, as they're proposed and put them
4 online as soon as possible and using hopefully
5 some, a better mapping engine that would allow
6 people to not only see the redistricting maps, but
7 one of the flaws in the 2001 website was that you
8 could not compare necessarily the district plans
9 on one screen.

10 So, I would propose that the committee
11 find a way to take these districts and develop a
12 mapping application such that we can see what the
13 35th house district will look like under one plan,
14 what the 35th house district will look like under
15 another plan, perhaps on one screen.

16 So, with a lot, with the advent of
17 technology I would urge the committee to put up a
18 lot more open data and have the data more
19 accessible to the average voter.

20 Second, I would like to quickly
21 reiterate my support for some kind of independent
22 redistricting commission. Obviously campaign

1 promises made and people that are currently in the
2 General Assembly, we have currently a split house,
3 split Senate, split General Assembly, and it would
4 be incumbent upon the Delegates to recognize that
5 we select you, you do not select us. And we would
6 hope that you would be able to take this principle
7 into account when developing a way of
8 redistricting.

9 We hope that in the 2021 redistricting
10 process there's both geographic continuity and a
11 certain level of partisan competition so that we
12 increase the number of competitive seats as long
13 as we have geographic continuity of districts.
14 Thank you very much.

15 CHAIRMAN COLE: All right. Thank you
16 for your input. Chris West?

17 MS. WEST: I thought I was signing in as
18 well.

19 (Laughter)

20 CHAIRMAN COLE: And Melissa Jackson. No
21 Melissa Jackson? Okay, that's the end of the list
22 of those that signed up. Do you have some more?

1 All right. Ms. Chavez.

2 MS. CHAVEZ: Good evening. My name is
3 Keisy Chavez and I live in Fairfax right on the
4 boundaries with Burke. And I work also here in
5 Fairfax. I have, I lived here since 1993 so I
6 have seen the growth in the area and especially
7 the Latino community, and I wanted to ask you to
8 have a consideration to have the Latino community
9 to keep, not to be diluted, and also to have in
10 mind that our community is growing and diversity
11 is also a big part of this town, especially this
12 area.

13 CHAIRMAN COLE: All right. Thank you
14 very much. Jamie Arezaga-Soto. I apologize if I
15 butchered that.

16 MR. ARIZAGA-SOTO: Good evening Delegate
17 Cole, Virginia Delegates. My name is Jaime
18 Arizaga-Soto. I am an Arlington resident. I am
19 an attorney working with the federal government
20 and I also served some time on the United States
21 Army National Guard. I am here in my personal
22 capacity just to emphasize to you the growth and

1 the importance of the Latino community throughout
2 the Commonwealth.

3 Today the U.S. census have -- the
4 numbers show that the Latino community throughout
5 the U.S. is the largest minority in the United
6 States. In the Commonwealth we are everywhere,
7 but we concentrate our numbers percentage wise,
8 not only in northern Virginia, but in Richmond,
9 Hampton Roads area, and believe it or not even in
10 Galax.

11 So, the purpose of my visit to the
12 committee is to make sure that as you look to
13 redistricting that you do not dilute the power of
14 our community.

15 There are some districts here in
16 northern Virginia where our community has a
17 significant percentage of the voters today. And
18 although a Latino member has not been elected from
19 those districts, there have been Latino
20 candidates. And from talking with them I can
21 indicate that they feel comfortable participating
22 in the political process and running for those

1 districts.

2 So, the bottom line is, as you look at
3 the next map, make sure you don't split us up or
4 dilute our real political power in the
5 Commonwealth that we have as numbers. So, just
6 when you do your numbers, keep that in mind.

7 We're the largest minority. We are
8 contributing members and we want to make sure that
9 we are contributing members to the political
10 system too. Thank you so much.

11 CHAIRMAN COLE: All right. Thank you
12 for your input. All right. Is there anybody else
13 that may wish to address this subcommittee that
14 did not sign up. If so, please come forward and
15 state your name. You jumped up first, and you're
16 next.

17 MR. SIMON: Thank you again. My name is
18 Marcus Simon and I'm an attorney in the McLean
19 area. I am a member of the 53rd legislative
20 district. I came mostly to listen and at the risk
21 of being repetitive, I don't want to be
22 repetitive, you said please don't repeat each

1 other. I want to associate myself with the
2 comments of Delegate Watts and Olga Hernandez.
3 They made most of the points that I would have
4 made myself.

5 I guess the one additional comment that
6 I would have is that I am also very troubled by
7 some of the reports I've read in the newspaper,
8 you know, of a backroom deal. And bipartisan, I
9 think a lot of us, we've heard a lot of support
10 for a bipartisan solution. Bipartisan doesn't
11 mean, well, we get one house and you get the
12 other. I don't think that's what the folks in
13 this room expect as a bipartisan solution.

14 That kind of deal making and backroom
15 dealing I think affects the legitimacy of the
16 institution. I mean, it sounds kind of dramatic
17 to say, but in a representative democracy it's
18 really important that everybody feel like their
19 vote counts. And if the system is rigged, if
20 there's a perception that the system has been
21 rigged and the outcome has already been decided,
22 and it doesn't really matter what happens, we've

1 got these same seats over here and these over
2 here. Then everything that the General Assembly
3 does, the legitimacy of all of it, is called into
4 question if people don't feel like their vote
5 counts.

6 So, I thank you all again for the
7 opportunity to speak.

8 CHAIRMAN COLE: All right, thank you.
9 Please step forward and identify yourself.

10 MS. NGUYEN: Hi, my name is Jan Nguyen
11 and I'm with the Voice of Vietnamese Americans, I
12 am representing Vietnamese Americans in the
13 Commonwealth. And I thank you for the chance, for
14 the opportunity, because I actually did not plan
15 to, I just happened to raise my hand because I
16 notice that there are not any Asian Americans,
17 AAPI representation here. And to come to the
18 point I could reiterate here, there is a
19 principle, committee of interest, and also one
20 man/one vote. And Fairfax is proud to be a very
21 diverse city, so is the Commonwealth of Virginia.
22 I propose that we have representations of each

1 community somehow to help to work with you to
2 collaborate with the meetings so that we can work
3 along with you and somehow connect the meeting
4 with the committee of interest so that the Latino
5 Americans, the Asian Americans and African
6 American, or different communities, can be
7 represented the way it should be.

8 And, essentially we're hoping that
9 other principles would then be honored like the no
10 dilution of vote, no use of compactness to change
11 the boundaries of the votes. And no
12 gerrymandering of the principles are being
13 explained to the people and the people can follow
14 that with the transparency like Mr. Miller has
15 suggested.

16 I also ask, if we may somehow have the
17 access to the software that you use to map the
18 redistricting, the maps, maybe it's just so the
19 community can understand what is being done and
20 for the economy. Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN COLE: Okay. Thank you very
22 much. Anybody else? Yes, Ma'am.

1 MS. CABRAL: My name is Kristin Cabral
2 and I'm a Fairfax county voter. I seek a fair
3 bipartisan redistricting process with a bipartisan
4 commission drawing the lines. It is my
5 understanding that Governor McDonnell made that a
6 campaign promise and I expect him to keep it.
7 Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN COLE: All right, thank you.
9 We have another delegate that came in, Delegate
10 Keen. I just want to recognize you, I recognized
11 most of the others. Would anybody else like to
12 address the subcommittee?

13 MR. McDONALD: Hello, I'm Professor
14 McDonald. I'm a professor here at George Mason
15 University. So welcome to all of you. I am very
16 glad that you're here holding these public
17 meetings. I believe it's a very important part of
18 the redistricting process.

19 I am one of the leading experts on
20 redistricting in the country. I've been involved
21 in redistricting as a consultant for litigants in
22 five states.

1 And so I come to you speaking about a
2 project that I'm involved in right now, which is
3 what some of the people requested, mapping
4 software available to the public.

5 We are making the mapping software
6 available to the public, accessible through their
7 web browsers. There's a data component to that,
8 there's a software component, there's a public
9 outreach component, there's a public education
10 component. And I'd really like to talk to you
11 about the data component because I want to make
12 sure that we're all on the same page.

13 I would request that you make your
14 redistricting data base available to the public so
15 that the same information that you're looking at
16 when you're doing the redistricting and the
17 election results, registration data, any data that
18 you're using for your purposes to evaluate the
19 partisan consequences of the redistricting plan,
20 we also have that data available.

21 We have a parallel data collection
22 project to merge election data in Virginia, 2010

1 census geography. So we will produce our own
2 database. But I don't want to have really a
3 debate over data because I don't think that's a
4 very productive debate about what criteria matter
5 and how they interact with different outcomes,
6 redistricting outcomes. So, I will impress upon
7 you a transparent process that has data plans,
8 points of public access to provide feedback, will
9 be very important and I hope that you will respect
10 that.

11 CHAIRMAN COLE: Okay. Thank you. Would
12 anybody else like to address the subcommittee
13 before we adjourn?

14 All right. Well I just want to thank
15 everyone for coming out tonight. We'll certainly
16 take your comments to heart. Thank you.

17 *****