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

I want to welcome everyone. It’s my pleasure tonight to welcome you to the third hearing of the House of Delegates Redistricting Subcommittee.

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

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

(Laughter)

I apologize if I missed anybody else.

This is the third of six opportunities the subcommittee will have this year to gather input from experts, advocacy groups, and most importantly the people of Virginia on the every 10 year process of drawing new boundaries for the state legislative and congressional districts.
The General Assembly and Governor, as officials who submit to the voters at elections, and therefore are directly accountable to the public, are responsible for drawing legislative boundaries.

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

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

Likewise, many localities also must draw lines for county board, city counsel and school board districts. That much everyone already knows from our civics classes. So why are we here, where are we in the current redistricting process?
The key task of the 2010 Census, the April 1st enumeration is now complete. However the U.S. Census Bureau continues it’s work towards releasing statewide total population counts for Virginia and the other states by December 31st of this year.

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

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

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

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

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

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

But again, before we get involved in the work of drawing lines or seeking legal
opinions or whatever else, the Speaker and I, along with our House colleagues, want to hear from you about your priorities and suggestions for redistricting.

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

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

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

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

Within those critical constraints I look forward to learning from everyone giving testimony here tonight and at subsequent hearings.
Beyond those constraints no decisions have been made. We are here to hear from you about what you believe is important in redistricting. We have not prejudged the outcome. We have not made any decisions. We have no answers to questions about what districts will look like or how plans will be drafted. We want to hear from you about what we, as your elected representatives, should consider.

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

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

In order to respect the time of
everyone who has come tonight to provide input, we will rely on that handout to answer many questions regarding the specific process.

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

(Laughter)

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

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

Like in other legislative hearings, staff will be the keeper of the clock. I also invite everyone to submit any written comments for
the subcommittee by giving a hard copy to our
clerk that is here tonight, or statements may be
emailed, faxed or sent via regular mail to Scott
Maddrea, Deputy Clerk for Committee Operations at
the Virginia House of Delegates. He’s right there
at the back of the room.

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

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

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

We have another one of my colleagues
showed up, Delegate Filler-Corn. Delegate Filler-
Corn, welcome. All right, I’ll start going down
the list. And forgive me if I butcher your name
when I call it out.

Tania Hossain. Is she here tonight?

Okay. Would you like to address the committee?

MS. HOSSAIN: Yes, Sir.

CHAIRMAN COLE: Please come to the

podium and identify yourself.

MS. HOSSAIN: Good evening. Greetings

members of the House Redistricting Subcommittee.

My name is Tania Hossain and I serve as

the president of the Fairfax County Federation of

Citizens Association.

In it’s 70th year the Federation is the

oldest association for the counties, homeowners,
civic and community organizations. We work
together in a nonpartisan manner and advocate on
issues that impact all Fairfax County residents.

To that end, on behalf of the

Federation, it is my honor and privilege to inform
you that the Federation supports the nonpartisan
Iowa model as Virginia’s 2011 redistricting
process.

We’re well aware that in most states,
as in Virginia, the state legislature draws the Congressional and State legislative district lines. And since, in its final form, a redistricting plan is a bill, it can have many sources of origination and face many political challenges.

Like many bills that have gone through the General Assembly, most of them have entailed some sort of a party political process. The redistricting process in Virginia has undergone its share of political processes as well.

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

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

According to the division of legislative services, Drawing the Line 2011 Report, there have been measures taken to introduce, to modify the General Assembly’s role
to establish either an independent redistricting
commission by a Constitutional Amendment or an
advisory redistricting commission by a statute or
a study, or to study the redistricting process.

Since 2001 more than 40 constitutional
amendments were offered to turn redistricting work
over to an independent commission. 30 bills were
introduced to create an advisory redistricting
commission and over a dozen resolutions were
proposed to study the redistricting process. All
tries have failed.

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

And, perhaps the most important
ramification of the adoption of the Iowa model
would be that it would be prohibitive for the commission to engage in political gerrymandering because they would have, they would not have access to the information necessary to engage in such practices.

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

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

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

CHAIRMAN COLE: Thank you for your input.

I’m going to suspend just briefly, I neglected to introduce the panel. And thank you for your inputs.

I’m Delegate Mark Cole. I represent
the 88th district which includes parts of Stafford, Spotsylvania and Fauquier counties. I’m chairman of the Privileges and Elections Committee which is the committee that any redistricting legislation will have to go through. And I’ll ask each of my colleagues to introduce themselves.

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

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

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

CHAIRMAN COLE: Thank you. And now we’ll get back to the hearing.

Vice Mayor Cole, come forward please.

MS. COLE: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Good evening Mr. Chairman, members of the committee.
I’m Laurie Genevro Cole, a council member from the town of Vienna and currently serving as Vice Mayor of the town. Mayor Jane Seaman could not be here tonight. She and several of our council members are at the annual Virginia Municipal League Conference in Hampton Roads. I am speaking tonight on behalf of the Mayor and the entire town council.

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

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

Therefore we respectfully request that as lines need to be redrawn across the map the town of Vienna be allowed to remain undivided in its state representation.

And thank you for giving citizens
across the Commonwealth the opportunity to address you directly at this series of public hearings. We appreciate your commitment to an open and bipartisan process for determining our future representation.

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

(Laughter)

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

I’m very grateful to have had this opportunity to participate in your important work. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN COLE: Thank you for your input.

We just had another delegate come in, Delegate Vivian Watts, welcome. All right.
Olga Hernadez.

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

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

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

As many of you recall I have often testified before you at subcommittee and full committee hearings in the early mornings in Richmond to the need of a process being more
The League believes that voters should choose their representatives and not the other way around. Thus the practice of incumbent protection should be done at the ballot box and not by drawing boundaries that are so safe that it favors one party or the other.

Commitment to the rules of the State Constitution of continued boundaries, compactness of the district and representation in proportion to the population need to be adhered to and I’m sure you will do that. Considerations of community of interest need to be carefully observed.

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

The League of Women Voters has a long history of fighting against attacks on the basic constitutional rights to fair and equal
representation guaranteed to all citizens by the Constitution.

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

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

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

During the campaign the Governor voiced support for a more equitable process, but he has
not yet fulfilled his pledge so far.

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

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

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

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

In 2009 legislative elections, 32 of the 100 members of the General Assembly faced no opposition and only 12 races again were competitive.
Votes feel that their representatives of the opposing party have no reason to listen to them as constituents. Prior year statistics are no better.

The lack of contested and competitive districts has contributed to a decrease in voter turnout in Virginia. The voter turnout for statewide and House of Delegate elections in ‘97 was 49.5 percent. In 2001 it was 46 percent. In 2005 only 45 percent of Virginia’s registered voters participated in statewide and House of Delegate elections, continuing a pattern of slow decline.

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

The 52.7 percent turnout in 2006, heavily contested U.S. Senatorial election was a marked contrast to the 39 percent turnout in 2002 when an incumbent U.S. Senator was contested by only two little known candidates. Voter turnout
in 2009, general -- in the 2009 general election showed a similar trend.

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

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

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

This is certainly true of the Virginia General Assembly in recent years. The gerrymandered districts established in the 2001
redistricting had resulted in the election of candidates who are unwilling to compromise on legislation, the budget, and especially important for this region, transportation issues and funding.

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

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

Virginia is a cradle of democracy in the United States. Let’s again be a beacon of good governments and show the nation that by having a better system we can and will have a better government for and by the people when they truly have a voice. Thank you very much for listening and for your time.
CHAIRMAN COLE: Barbara Kory Kenbohm.

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

(Laughter)

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

Roy Baldwin.

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

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

I think this is going to be the single most important task that the General Assembly does in this coming year, possibly in the coming
What I believe is most important boils down to three main things. First of all, draw these lines without regard to voting patterns or locations of incumbents, just simply don’t consider them. That can only be done, number two, by bipartisan commission. This was as I understand it a campaign promise of the Governor and it is time now certainly for him to come through with this. And certainly many members of the General Assembly also made promises to this effect.

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

Most important I think is to make sure as much as possible that all the people in each district that you draw have a community of interest. This means public hearings after the data has become known, but before the lines are
drawn and hearings and work, the real work that is
done in meetings like this, in settings like this,
so the people, while they may not be able to
participate in the actual work sessions, will at
least be able to see and to monitor what is being
done.

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

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

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

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN COLE: Delegate Watts do you
want to --

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

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

(Laughter.)

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

The reason why I started with that
anecdote is that my deep concern is voters being
able to hold us accountable.

Now I say that with all sincerity.

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

(Laughter)

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

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

Fairfax, you know, is on the edge of the Virginia boundaries and we only needed to shift 60,000 people due to population growth. Obviously you couldn’t hit it right on the button, but instead, 200,000 were moved. That’s approximately, that was 20 percent of our population, had a new member of the House of
Delegates, that they were supposed to figure out who represented them.

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

We can’t be held accountable if voters don’t even know who we are.

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

CHAIRMAN COLE: Thank you. Virginia Field.

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

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN COLE: That’s okay. Kim Brace.
MR. BRACE: I too thought I was signing

in.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN COLE: Let’s see, Dennis and

Nancy Hooch.

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

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

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

The town of Herndon has three precincts
currently, 25,000 population, and it’s very
important to towns that we end up with a single
Delegate and a single Senator so that we have, we maintain that identity.

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

   So, be sensitive please to towns.

Thank you, Sir.

CHAIRMAN COLE: Thank you very much.

Kentan Kuo. I apologize if I mispronounced that.

MR. KUO: First of all I’d like to thank the committee for coming out to George Mason University. I’m a student here, so welcome back, I suppose. I am going to keep this brief.
I have only two points.

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

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

But, over the last 10 years we’ve had the advent of Google Map and the advent of a lot of other ways to display this mapping information. So I would urge the committee to take the redistricting data and find a way that is easily useable by average residents, because right now we have far more people online who are involved in politics who sit through these redistricting processes, and we can have a far more transparent
process if we take this mapping data, if we take the boundaries that are proposed, not just after they’re voted on, as they’re proposed and put them online as soon as possible and using hopefully some, a better mapping engine that would allow people to not only see the redistricting maps, but one of the flaws in the 2001 website was that you could not compare necessarily the district plans on one screen.

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

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

Second, I would like to quickly reiterate my support for some kind of independent redistricting commission. Obviously campaign
promises made and people that are currently in the General Assembly, we have currently a split house, split Senate, split General Assembly, and it would be incumbent upon the Delegates to recognize that we select you, you do not select us. And we would hope that you would be able to take this principle into account when developing a way of redistricting.

We hope that in the 2021 redistricting process there’s both geographic continuity and a certain level of partisan competition so that we increase the number of competitive seats as long as we have geographic continuity of districts.

Thank you very much.

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

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

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN COLE: And Melissa Jackson. No Melissa Jackson? Okay, that’s the end of the list of those that signed up. Do you have some more?
All right. Ms. Chavez.

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

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

MR. ARIZAGA-SOTO: Good evening Delegate Cole, Virginia Delegates. My name is Jaime Arizaga-Soto. I am an Arlington resident. I am an attorney working with the federal government and I also served some time on the United States Army National Guard. I am here in my personal capacity just to emphasize to you the growth and
the importance of the Latino community throughout
the Commonwealth.

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

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

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

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

We’re the largest minority. We are contributing members and we want to make sure that we are contributing members to the political system too. Thank you so much.

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

MR. SIMON: Thank you again. My name is Marcus Simon and I’m an attorney in the McLean area. I am a member of the 53rd legislative district. I came mostly to listen and at the risk of being repetitive, I don’t want to be repetitive, you said please don’t repeat each
other. I want to associate myself with the comments of Delegate Watts and Olga Hernadez. They made most of the points that I would have made myself.

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

That kind of deal making and backroom dealing I think affects the legitimacy of the institution. I mean, it sounds kind of dramatic to say, but in a representative democracy it’s really important that everybody feel like their vote counts. And if the system is rigged, if there’s a perception that the system has been rigged and the outcome has already been decided, and it doesn’t really matter what happens, we’ve
got these same seats over here and these over here. Then everything that the General Assembly does, the legitimacy of all of it, is called into question if people don’t feel like their vote counts.

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

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

MS. NGUYEN: Hi, my name is Jan Nguyen and I’m with the Voice of Vietnamese Americans, I am representing Vietnamese Americans in the Commonwealth. And I thank you for the chance, for the opportunity, because I actually did not plan to, I just happened to raise my hand because I notice that there are not any Asian Americans, AAPI representation here. And to come to the point I could reiterate here, there is a principle, committee of interest, and also one man/one vote. And Fairfax is proud to be a very diverse city, so is the Commonwealth of Virginia. I propose that we have representations of each
community somehow to help to work with you to
collaborate with the meetings so that we can work
along with you and somehow connect the meeting
with the committee of interest so that the Latino
Americans, the Asian Americans and African
American, or different communities, can be
represented the way it should be.

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

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

CHAIRMAN COLE: Okay. Thank you very
much. Anybody else? Yes, Ma’am.
MS. CABRAL: My name is Kristin Cabral and I’m a Fairfax county voter. I seek a fair bipartisan redistricting process with a bipartisan commission drawing the lines. It is my understanding that Governor McDonnell made that a campaign promise and I expect him to keep it.

Thank you.

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

MR. MCDONALD: Hello, I’m Professor McDonald. I’m a professor here at George Mason University. So welcome to all of you. I am very glad that you’re here holding these public meetings. I believe it’s a very important part of the redistricting process.

I am one of the leading experts on redistricting in the country. I’ve been involved in redistricting as a consultant for litigants in five states.
And so I come to you speaking about a project that I’m involved in right now, which is what some of the people requested, mapping software available to the public.

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

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

We have a parallel data collection project to merge election data in Virginia, 2010
census geography. So we will produce our own database. But I don’t want to have really a debate over data because I don’t think that’s a very productive debate about what criteria matter and how they interact with different outcomes, redistricting outcomes. So, I will impress upon you a transparent process that has data plans, points of public access to provide feedback, will be very important and I hope that you will respect that.

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

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

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