

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE  
PUBLIC HEARING IN RE: REDISTRICTING

General Assembly Building  
9th Floor  
Richmond, Virginia

December 17, 2010  
11:00 a.m.

CAPITOL REPORTING, INC.  
P.O. Box 959  
Mechanicsville, Virginia 23111  
Tel. No. (804) 788-4917

1 APPEARANCES:

2

3 COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

4 Mark L. Cole - Chairman

5 Rosalyn R. Dance

6 Johnny S. Joannou

7 S. Chris Jones

8 A.T. Howell

9 J. H. Miller

10 David B. Albo

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

S P E A K E R S :

Lisa Guthrie	6
Anne Sterling	9
Carl wright	12

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

DELEGATE COLE: The subcommittee will  
come to order.

I'd like to welcome everyone to the  
meeting of the House Redistricting Subcommittee. This  
is the opportunity for us to hear from the public on  
the once every 10 year process of redrawing district  
lines. Every 10 years we have to redraw district lines  
based upon the results of the federal or the national  
census, and next session that's what we'll do.

I'd just like to talk a little bit about  
the process. We do not expect to have the detailed  
data that we need from the Census Bureau until probably  
sometime in February or March, so we do not expect to  
be able to take up redistricting next session, and I  
think that's been how it's been done in the past is  
that a special session will be called after we get the  
detailed data in to actually deal with redistricting.

And again this is just an opportunity for  
the committee to hear from the public. There are  
currently no plans, there's no bill before us to  
comment on. We just want to hear from the public on  
their priorities for the redistricting process and how  
we should proceed, and so we are not going to give a  
lot of long winded speeches or anything like that today

1 and we are not going to be answering any specific

2 questions regarding, you know, plans or anything like  
3 that, because as I said, there are currently no plans,  
4 there is no redistricting plan, and there won't be  
5 until we get the detailed data from the Census Bureau.

6 So with that I know I have some people  
7 who are signed up to speak, and I'll just go down the  
8 list, and again I'd like to welcome everyone here.

9 First I want to give the members of the  
10 subcommittee a chance to introduce themselves. We'll  
11 start down with Dave down at the end there, move this  
12 way.

13 DELEGATE ALBO: Dave Albo, member of the  
14 Virginia House of Delegates. I represent the southern  
15 tip of Fairfax County.

16 DELEGATE HOWELL: Algie Howell, member of  
17 the House of Delegates 90th District. I represent part  
18 of Chesapeake, part of Norfolk, and part of Virginia  
19 Beach.

20 DELEGATE DANCE: Roslyn Dance, Delegate  
21 from the 63rd District, and that's the City of  
22 Petersburg, the County of Dinwiddie, and parts of  
23 Chesterfield County, Ettrick, and partial Matoaca.

24 DELEGATE MILLER: Jackson Miller, 50th  
25 House District, Manassas, Manassas Park, and part of

CAPITOL REPORTING, INC.

6

1 Prince William County.

2 DELEGATE JONES: Chris Jones, 76th  
3 District, part of Chesapeake and part of Suffolk.

4 DELEGATE JOANNOU: Johnny Joannou, House  
5 of Delegates, member of the 79th District representing  
6 parts of Norfolk, Chesapeake, Suffolk, and Portsmouth.

7 DELEGATE COLE: Okay, and I'm Mark Cole.  
8 I represent the 88th District which includes portions  
9 of Stafford, Spotsylvania, and Fauquier Counties.

10 I would also like to announce that at  
11 1:00 o'clock today there will be a meeting of the Joint  
12 Reapportionment Subcommittee which is made up of House  
13 and Senate members at 1:00 o'clock today in the 6th  
14 floor Speakers Conference Room. That will more or less  
15 be just an organizational meeting and also to consider  
16 some technical issues. It's not a public hearing per  
17 se but the public of course is welcome to attend.

18 All right, now we'll get down on our  
19 list, go down our list of speakers that have signed up  
20 to speak. Lisa Guthrie.

21 MS. GUTHRIE: Good morning, Chairman  
22 Cole, members of the subcommittee. I thank you for the  
23 opportunity to speak to you today about redistricting.

24 My name is Lisa Guthrie. I'm the  
25 executive director of the Virginia League of

CAPITOL REPORTING, INC.

7

1 Conservation Voters, and our organization has been an  
2 active member of the Virginia Redistricting Coalition

3 that supports a better way of drawing the apportionment  
4 lines. Formed in 2009, this coalition brought together  
5 faith, business, conservation, and civic organizations  
6 to promote redistricting reform.

7 All the country will be watching Virginia  
8 this year because of our fall elections that closely  
9 follow the new census figures. We'd like to be viewed  
10 as a shining example of fairness, transparency, and  
11 public engagement.

12 In order to make progress on top concerns  
13 like water quality, land conservation, and energy, we  
14 must entrust the voters with more decision making in  
15 determining their representatives. Allowing  
16 representatives to determine whom they represent  
17 inverts the very purpose of democratic voting. Real  
18 electoral decisions should take place in general  
19 elections, not in primaries where as few as 1 percent  
20 of eligible voters decide who wins.

21 As redistricting moves forward,  
22 Virginians deserve the following: Fairly drawn  
23 district lines to create more competitive elections  
24 which have 51 percent higher voter turnout. Virginia  
25 needs competitive elections to remain at the forefront

CAPITOL REPORTING, INC.

8

1 of the nation. Districts that reflect our communities.  
2 District boundaries should be compact and contiguous

3 keeping communities of interests together. Exclusion  
4 of incumbent protection as a goal of the process. Only  
5 17 of the 140 seats in 2007 saw competitive elections.  
6 Compliance with all federal laws about population and  
7 minority rights while adhering to common sense  
8 geographic boundaries. Ample opportunities to offer  
9 ideas and concerns from citizens.

10                   with the advent of powerful mapping  
11 technology, legislators can now use computers to either  
12 draw safer districts or choose to make the Commonwealth  
13 more equitable. If college students can use these  
14 tools to advance ideas, we encourage you to open the  
15 process in the interests of fairness and  
16 accountability. You may have heard about the  
17 university competition that will be coordinated by  
18 Dr. Quinton Kidd of Christopher Newport University.

19                   You have some tough decisions to make in  
20 the months ahead. Let's try to go beyond the status  
21 quo and build for more voter participation in these  
22 next 10 years. Thank you.

23                   DELEGATE COLE: Thank you.

24                   Anne Sterling.

25                   MS. STERLING: Good morning, Delegate

CAPITOL REPORTING, INC.

9

1 Cole, members of this subcommittee. I am Anne Sterling  
2 and I represent, as many of you know, the League of  
3 women voters of Virginia.

4                   For the last 3 years the League has made  
5 fair and equitable redistricting the very top priority  
6 for us, and some people raised an eyebrow 3 years ago  
7 thinking it was a little premature, but we don't  
8 believe that was the case.

9                   Because we believe real inroads have been  
10 made in the last several years, and getting the public  
11 to understand the ways in which redistricting actually  
12 affects them and their powers at the ballot box, we  
13 have done several things that we are very pleased  
14 about. First of all I must commend the work of the  
15 redistricting coalition put together by a group of very  
16 able people from various sectors as Lisa Guthrie just  
17 explained to you. It was a very powerful coalition and  
18 has come up with what I think is a highly innovative  
19 answer to giving all of you some reference to sort of  
20 compare the maps you are coming up with here in the  
21 legislature with just something else. For a long time  
22 the maps that come out of this building have been the  
23 only game in town. There's really nothing to compare  
24 to, and that makes it a little difficult both for you  
25 and the public.

CAPITOL REPORTING, INC.

10

1                   With this new contest, university teams  
2 working with their professors in all of the major  
3 universities around Virginia, we are going to be

4 producing some brand new maps that may contain some  
5 very innovative ideas that I think no one would blame  
6 you for shall we say borrowing from? I won't use the  
7 word stealing, but I think stealing is allowed too.  
8 These students are going to come up with some things  
9 that you hadn't even had an inkling of that just didn't  
10 enter your heads because none of us is omniscient, so I  
11 urge you to take a look, especially at the map that  
12 wins the competition, and maybe a couple of the  
13 alternatives as well. These students are going to be  
14 working their hearts out as teams and trying to win the  
15 thousand dollar prize, so please, we ask you to take a  
16 look and be informed by what our students are coming up  
17 with.

18                   Secondly, the League has shown the movie  
19 Gerrymandering in various venues around Virginia, and I  
20 hope that you will take the opportunity to attend one  
21 of the performances. If you don't get an opportunity,  
22 please get in touch with the League of Women Voters.  
23 You can talk to me or president Olga Hernandez and we  
24 will get you a copy to take home and put in your own  
25 DVD -- is it a DVD player you use for these things?

CAPITOL REPORTING, INC.

11

1 Take it home and see it in your own den. We'd be glad  
2 to do that gratis. Just get in touch with us.

3                   The last point I'd like to make is that  
4 we hope so much that you will continue what you have

5 begun this fall which is a real effort to reach out to  
6 the public. Last session at the end of the session I  
7 remember Delegate Chris Jones went, on the morning that  
8 we lost on our bipartisan redistricting bill, do you  
9 remember? It was 7:00 o'clock in the morning, and you  
10 knew that the members of the League and the Coalition  
11 were going to be disappointed, but Delegate Jones, you  
12 looked over at us and you said listen, one thing we  
13 will really try to do is work with you on transparency  
14 this year, and so far you all have kept your word. And  
15 Delegate Cole, and all of you, we'd like to thank you  
16 for the effort you have made to reach out to the  
17 public. There may not be lots of Virginians in the  
18 room this morning but I assure you there are people who  
19 care a great deal about this topic, and we just ask  
20 that as this process goes on that you do your very best  
21 to make meetings known as far ahead as you can, to  
22 present things at each stage that it's possible to get  
23 the word out to the public, and in short to let us  
24 help -- we promise not to stand and look over your  
25 shoulder -- but we would really like to at least be

CAPITOL REPORTING, INC.

12

1 kept informed and we'd like to be able to have  
2 opportunities to come and talk with each of you as the  
3 process goes on. I'm assuming that the session will be  
4 in April. Do you know yet if that's the case?

5 DELEGATE COLE: No date has been set.

6 MS. STERLING: No date, but we hope to be  
7 there, but at all the processes and stages in between,  
8 and we thank you so much.

9 DELEGATE COLE: Thank you very much.

10 All right, Carl Wright.

11 MS. WRIGHT: Good morning. Mr. Chairman  
12 Cole, committee members, my name is Carl Wright. I  
13 reside at 1144 Mondrian Loop, Virginia Beach, Virginia.

14 I drove up this morning even though folks  
15 say it was going to be tough getting up there to  
16 Richmond today because it's snowing and it's bad  
17 weather and everybody was fearful of the conditions.  
18 But this is a very important matter to myself, my  
19 family, and the community in the City of Virginia  
20 Beach.

21 The last 10 years in Virginia Beach has  
22 been very difficult, particularly for the minority  
23 community. This redistricting game that has been  
24 played, the partisanship has hurt citizens and  
25 constituents. We have been neglected, overlooked, and

CAPITOL REPORTING, INC.

13

1 underserved. We have upward a half a million people in  
2 the City of Virginia Beach. 40 percent, upward  
3 40 percent are minorities. Look at the stats. Yet in  
4 a city the size of Virginia Beach, we don't have a  
5 minority majority district drawn. The games have been

6 played. we don't have representation. what happens on  
7 the state level affects us on the local level. We are  
8 a 60 year going on a hundred year old city, and it's  
9 difficult for us to even get a local representative on  
10 city council because of the games that's been played  
11 with the redistricting.

12 I'm here today to ask you let's not play  
13 games with the lives of the constituents anymore. 10  
14 years is a long time. I come here because I have, I  
15 know, I'm standing here for those who come behind me.  
16 These young folks that will be one day voters in the  
17 City of Virginia Beach deserve an opportunity not to be  
18 played games with, and I'm not here to badger anybody  
19 or to beat anybody over the head. I'm just asking you,  
20 consider fairness. I understand some folks have  
21 already made their minds up. I have talked, you know,  
22 I'm a civil minded folk, I get out there and I talk to  
23 folks. Some folks have already made their minds up,  
24 but when you make your mind up, consider the effect,  
25 the impact that it has on individual lives.

CAPITOL REPORTING, INC.

14

1 I understand people talking about the  
2 maps and the contests, and all that's fine, but when  
3 you are dealing with every day lives, we have to  
4 struggle in the City of Virginia Beach. we had a  
5 situation where we had a comparison, we had to compete

6 with our children. It was the difference between a  
7 recreation center and a dog shelter. It was an issue  
8 for either we get the dog shelter, and the dog shelter  
9 had a whole lot of support. We were comparing children  
10 to the dog shelter. Now when we went before the city  
11 council, I'm trying to figure out where is the  
12 rationale here? We have got kids that's dying in the  
13 street every day. We have got things that's happening  
14 in our communities where seniors are afraid to come out  
15 of their homes because the kids have nowhere to go,  
16 nothing to do, but there were people that were more  
17 concerned, and they had the poor because of the games  
18 that were played with this redistricting, and this  
19 redistricting affects the lower localities and the way  
20 that things are done. I'm saying we have enough folks  
21 in the City of Virginia Beach to have a minority  
22 majority district. We have had it for years. There's  
23 no need to take a district and flip it over in another  
24 city just so that you can say well, we have done, we  
25 have met the guidelines with the Justice Department.

CAPITOL REPORTING, INC.

15

1 That's not right. And I see some of my folks here, but  
2 I'm saying 10 years is a long time. The kids now are  
3 15 years old, they'll be 25 years old before they get a  
4 chance to stand up here and do what I'm doing, and it's  
5 not right. So the folks have made their mind up, all  
6 our good folks, all our Christian folks, our folks want

7 to do the right thing, when you go home, if you don't  
8 like what I'm saying, look out the window and look at  
9 the children. Think about how it will impact their  
10 lives after we move on.

11 I can tell you it has been a frustrating,  
12 frustrating 10 years in the City of Virginia Beach. We  
13 have fought, like I may catch, get someone on city  
14 council and the games are played, but by the grace of  
15 God the community comes together. We continue to pray,  
16 move on, and just like I told them today, I wouldn't  
17 care if it was snow on the ground out there or on the  
18 streets, if I had to come up here by horse and buggy, I  
19 was going to come up here.

20 Now I know, now let me tell you why I'm  
21 here. A lot of folks in certain communities did not  
22 get the information when it was held in Norfolk.  
23 Nobody came, made it a point to come to them. It  
24 wasn't to their benefit to say look, you all better get  
25 down there if you are concerned about that

CAPITOL REPORTING, INC.

16

1 redistricting. You had better pack that theatre there,  
2 and I spoke to one of the folks, I said well, how was  
3 the information put out? well, we got it, it was in  
4 the newspaper. I don't know, I don't know how you got  
5 it but it was there. I said well, let me tell you  
6 something, that's what happens when games are played,

7 because when it's to your benefit, you going to make  
8 sure you got to hold a sign up standing in the middle  
9 of the highway and say listen, you all better get to  
10 that redistricting because it's going to impact your  
11 life and your family life, you need to be there if it's  
12 going to benefit this individual, these individuals  
13 that take advantage of the way it's drawn now, they are  
14 going to be up there. We didn't get it, so I had to  
15 come up here myself, some of my other community folks  
16 drive all the way up here from Virginia Beach to  
17 address this issue. And sirs, ma'am, we are going to  
18 continue to address it in the City of Virginia Beach  
19 because it's not right. It's not right. And we will  
20 be calling, we are going to send e-mails, we will send  
21 cakes, cookies, candy, whatever it takes to get it done  
22 because it's that important to us for our children and  
23 our grandchildren not to have to stand here and deal  
24 with what we are having to deal with today.

25 So I'm just saying to you, for those of

CAPITOL REPORTING, INC.

17

1 you who have made your mind up that we are going to  
2 play this partisanship game with these districts and  
3 make sure that everyone has a safe seat, when you do  
4 that, think about the impact that it will have on those  
5 folks, young folks, grandchildren that will be coming  
6 behind you. Thank you.

7 DELEGATE COLE: All right, thank you very

8 much. That's all that signed up to speak. would  
9 anybody else like to address this here? would anybody  
10 else like to address the subcommittee?

11                   Seeing none, I'd just like to make some  
12 closing comments. The General Assembly is responsible  
13 for or tasked by the state law and the Virginia  
14 Constitution in developing the districts of doing  
15 redistricting for the state legislature, that's the  
16 House of Delegates and the state Senate and also for  
17 the U.S. Congress. Your local governing bodies, the  
18 city councils and boards of supervisors, they are  
19 responsible for doing the districts for the local  
20 government, and I would encourage everyone here to get  
21 a hold of your local representatives and let them know  
22 your thoughts on the redistricting that they will be  
23 doing, and also I'd encourage everyone to get in touch  
24 with their legislators, the delegates and senators, and  
25 provide them with inputs on how you think the

CAPITOL REPORTING, INC.

18

1 redistricting process should be done, because every  
2 Virginian is represented by a delegate and a state  
3 senator.

4                   All right, if there's no other comments,  
5 this subcommittee will close. Thank you very much.

6

7

8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

---Conclusion---

CAPITOL REPORTING, INC.

19

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8

CERTIFICATE OF COURT REPORTER

I, Lynn Aligood, hereby certify that I was the Court Reporter for the public hearing conducted by the House Privileges and Elections Redistricting Committee.

9 I further certify that the foregoing transcript  
10 is a true and accurate record of the hearing to  
11 the best of my ability.

12 Given under my hand this 27th day of December  
13 2010.

14

15

16

17

---

Lynn Aligood, Court Reporter

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

CAPITOL REPORTING, INC.

□