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MICRC

05/18/21 6:00 pm Public Hearing

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>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Good evening. As the Vice Chair of the Commission, I call this meeting of the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission to order at 6:01 p.m.

This Zoom webinar is also being live streamed on YouTube, www.YouTube.com/Michigan or MICHSOSoffice/videos.

For anyone in the public watching who would prefer to watch via a different platform than they are currently using, please visit our social media at redistricting Michigan to find the link for viewing on YouTube.

Our live stream today includes closed captioning. Closed captioning, ASL interpretation, Spanish and Arabic translation services will be provided for effective participation in this meeting. E-mail us at redistricting@Michigan.gov for additional viewing options for details on accessing language translation services for this meeting.

People with disabilities needing other specific accommodations should also contact redistricting@Michigan.gov.

This meeting is being recorded and will be available at www.Michigan.gov/micrc for viewing at a later date.

This meeting is also being transcribed and those transcriptions will be made available and posted on Michigan.gov/micrc along with written public comment submissions.

There is also a public comment portal that may be accessed by visiting Michigan.gov/micrc. This portal can be utilized to post maps and comments which can be viewed by the public.

Members of the media who may have questions before, during or after the meeting should direct those questions to Edward Woods, III, our Communications and Director for the Commission at WoodsE3@Michigan.Gov or 517-331-6309.

For the purposes of the public watching and the public record, I will turn to Department of State staff to take note of the Commissioners present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Good evening, Commissioners. Please say present when I call your name. If you are attending the meeting remotely, please announce your physical location and state your physical location by stating the county, city, township or village and the state from which you are attending the meeting remotely
Commissioner Clark.

COMMISSIONER CLARK: Present. Attending remotely from Rochester Hills, Michigan.

- >> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Commissioner Curry?
- >> COMMISSIONER CURRY: Present.
- >> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Commissioner Eid?
- >> COMMISSIONER EID: Present.
- >> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Commissioner Kellom?
- >> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Commissioner Lange?
- >> COMMISSIONER LANGE: Present; attending remotely from

Reed City, Michigan.

- >> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Steven Lett?
- >> COMMISSIONER LETT: present.
- >> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Commissioner Orton?
- >> COMMISSIONER ORTON: Present.
- >> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: MC Rothhorn?
- >> COMMISSIONER ROTHORN: Present.
- >> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Commissioner Szetela?
- >> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Present.
- >> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Commissioner Vallette?
- >> COMMISSIONER VALLETTE: Present.
- >> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Commissioner Wagner?
- >> COMMISSIONER WAGNER: Present; attending remotely from

Charlotte County, Michigan.

- >> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Commissioner Weiss?
- >> COMMISSIONER WEISS: Present.
- >> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Commissioner Witjes?
- >> COMMISSIONER WITJES: Present.
- >> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: 12 Commissioners are present we have a quorum.
- >> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you. I will now turn it over to Mr. Lett so that he

can give us an introduction.

>> COMMISSIONER LETT: Thank you, Madam Chair. Hello. My name is Steven Lett and I would like to welcome you to the MICRC public hearing in Marquette, Michigan. We are happy that you are here. And hope that you will learn about Michigan's new redistricting process and how you can engage throughout this process to ensure that your voice is heard.

In looking at the agenda, please note that the vast majority of our time this evening is spent listening to you. We are eager to hear from your ideas either in person or remotely about drawing Michigan's Congressional, house and Senate districts. In addition to hearing about the District lines we will also want to hear your ideas about communities of interest.

In 2018 more than 61% of the Michigan voters intentionally and deliberately passed proposal two a ballot initiative for voters not legislatures to take responsibility for map fairness and public feedback in the redistricting process and created the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission. The MICRC.

For the first time in Michigan's history the MICRC will lead the redistricting process to draw fair and independent maps.

Comprised of 13 randomly selected Michigan residents that includes four who affiliate as democrats, five who affiliate as independents, and four who affiliate as republicans through a lottery run by the Michigan Department of State. The MICRC has the exclusive authority in this new redistricting process for Michigan's Congressional, house and Senate districts. As fellow residents the MICRC understands your expectations to draw maps in an open and transparent manner that meets the constitutional mandates. Our mission and vision exemplifies our resolve not just for today but for future generations as well. In your interaction with the MICRC and its staff you should witness the core values of integrity, respect, transparency and being purposeful. Once again, we are glad that you are here. And we look forward to hearing from you.

As a kind of a new part I'm going to ask each Commissioner to identify themselves and where they are from. They have already said they are here so we know that much. And we will also ask that of the virtual people at the end. So if we will start down here with Juanita if you would turn your mic on and tell us who you are and where you are from.

>> COMMISSIONER CURRY: I'm Juanita Curry and I'm remotely from Detroit, Michigan.

>> COMMISSIONER LETT: She is not remote. She is here.

>> COMMISSIONER CURRY: I mean, I'm from Detroit, excuse me.

>> COMMISSIONER WITJES: My name is Dustin Witjes. I am from Ypsilanti, Michigan.

>> COMMISSIONER ROTHORN: Good evening. My name is MC. I'm from Lansing, Michigan.

>> COMMISSIONER VALLETTE: I'm Janice Vallette. I'm from Highland, Michigan.

>> COMMISSIONER ORTON: I'm Cynthia Orton from Battle Creek, Michigan.

>> COMMISSIONER WEISS: Good evening. My name is Richard H. Weiss and I'm from Saginaw Michigan.

>> COMMISSIONER LETT: Once again, I'm Steven Lett. And I am from Interlochen, Michigan.

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Good evening. My name is Rebecca Szetela and I am from Wayne County, Michigan.

>> COMMISSIONER EID: Good evening and thank you all for coming. I'm Anthony Eid and I am from Orchard Lake, Michigan.

>> COMMISSIONER LETT: Just so you all don't feel left out, Doug?

>> COMMISSIONER CLARK: I'm Douglas Clark and I'm from Rochester Hills, Michigan.

>> COMMISSIONER LETT: Rhonda.

>> COMMISSIONER LANGE: Rhonda Lange from Reed City, Michigan.

>> COMMISSIONER LETT: And Erin.

>> COMMISSIONER WAGNER: I'm Erin Wagner and I'm from Charlotte, Michigan.

>> COMMISSIONER LETT: Those are the Commissioners and who they are and where they are from. And the one that is missing this evening for a reason that she could not be here, it's unavoidable, it's Brittini Kellom and she is from the Detroit area. With that I will turn it over to our Executive Director, Sue Hammersmith.

>> MS. SUANN HAMMERSMITH: Good evening, everyone. We are really glad you are here this evening to share with the Commission. I want to talk a little bit about the public hearing. So before the Commissioners can draw a single line, they are required by the Constitution to hold at least ten public hearings. Our Commissioners are overachievers. They are on the road for 16 public hearings to listen to the residents of Michigan.

Thank you. We really want to listen to the people here in Michigan. We want to hear from you and gather your input. There are three purposes according to the Constitution for the public hearings.

First of all, to inform the public about the redistricting process.

Second, to share the purpose and responsibilities of the Commission.

And, third, and most importantly, to solicit information from the public about potential redistricting plans.

So what is redistricting? Every ten years the lines are redrawn for the 13 Michigan Congressional, 38 Michigan Senate and 110 Michigan house seats. So the job of this Commission is to redraw those lines in a fair process and that will be the redistricting process.

The Commission's purpose and responsibilities include exercising their constitutional powers granted solely to them to redistrict Michigan, operating in an impartial and transparent manner that reinforces public confidence in the integrity of the redistricting process. Conducting statewide public outreach and inviting meaningful public participation. Adopting the three maps that were mentioned for each type of District while complying while the U.S. and Michigan Congressional mandates and ensuring integrity, public availability and accountability for data, public comments and Commission information all the while assuring compliance with the redistricting criteria.

There are seven criteria in the Constitution. They are in rank order.

So first we must meet Federal law and that includes equal population and adhering to the Voting Rights Act. The districts must be geographically contiguous. They must touch each other single line. Communities of interest are taken into consideration so we

want to hear about the groups with which you affiliate and who it's important for you to vote with.

The fourth and fifth criteria are in regards to politics. There cannot be a disproportionate advantage given to any political party. And the Commission is not allowed to favor or disfavor an incumbent elected official or a candidate.

The sixth criteria is reflecting city, county and township boundaries.

And, lastly, the districts must be reasonably compact. So it's a pretty tall order. But the Commissioners work hard and they are up to the task.

So why are we here? To hear directly from you about your ideas to redistrict Michigan's Congressional House and Senate seats and to listen and to hear about your community of interest.

And why should you care? This is a historic process. This is the very first time the lines have been drawn by citizens just like you. This is an open and transparent process with opportunity for statewide participation and we invite communities of interest to share their voices for how they can best be represented.

So, again, thank you for being here. Thank you for sharing with the Commission.

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Excuse me, I will turn it over to our General Counsel Julianne Pastula.

>> MS. JULIANNE PASTULA: Thank you so much, Madam Chair, and the community for welcoming us to your beautiful area. The public comment guidelines I would like to share with you including in person and remote public comments. So people can participate not only in this room but over the telephone or virtually over the Internet. Our public comments this evening will run two minutes for both in person and remote equal time.

There is a timer and the front of the room a countdown timer and you will hear when that timer expires. There will be an audible alarm that I will use on my phone. I will have the sound here for you.

[Alarm rings]

The in-person public comments will take place first, followed by our remote public comments. And, again, we encourage everyone providing public comment this evening to please visit our website at www.Michigan.gov/MICRC and log your public comment into our public comment portal for the benefit of not only the Commission but the public at large. Thank you so much.

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you, Julianne. We will now begin the public comment portion of the meeting.

Individuals who signed up and indicated they would like to provide in-person commentary will be able to do so.

I will take numbers 1-4 to step up to the microphone. You have two minutes to address the Commission. Please conclude your remarks when you hear the timer.

First in line to provide public comment will be number one. Go ahead number one.

>> Hello. My name is James Galliant, from the Marquette County Suicide Prevention Coalition and my community of interest is the entire State of Michigan because I am concerned with the rules of procedure. The way that this Commission is the decision making process and the Robert's Rules of Order, which is proved to be imbalanced.

And now it is my personal opinion on the facts, which is the published minutes and the public transcripts, that this Commission has appeared to have omitted the Secretary of State's preceding of rules of procedure that were established by the Secretary of State at the first meeting when she presided over the meeting. She established the rules that said there would two public comments at every meeting. And that they would 90 seconds each, and then she proceeded to do that.

By unanimous consent, hearing no objections, it was then ruled these are the rules, before you approved your Bylaws. So this is the precedence of the rules of procedure. And they were included in your current Bylaws and your current rules of procedure.

So I would ask you for have a public hearing and have a special meeting, public hearing concerning bylaws Robert's Rules of Order. There has been slanderous statements submitted to the record concerning Robert's Rules of Order. That is not how it works. Robert's Rules of Order look like this.

It's my understanding that this Commission does not own a copy of the Robert's Rules of Order in the rule book, so how can you ensure you are following the rules if you don't have a copy of the rule book?

The Suicide Prevention Commission of Marquette County would like to donate a copy for future generations of the book to this Commission. I would still recommend that the Secretary of State get a subscription from the Robert's Rules Foundation and then everybody would be able to get that online, on their tablets, and you will have it beside you.

And but the problem happened when it was 90 seconds, that is the rule. That was and that time is October 1st. October 17th you made a decision outside, it was not majority vote, at a public meeting. October 1st it was 90 seconds. All the sudden the public noticed. It's not in the minutes. It's in the public notice.

October 17th all the sudden it's two minutes and nobody voted on that. Nobody voted on that, that is a violation of the Open Meetings Act. And I would ask if you would get a more bigger, better report on Thursday. I would expect you to address this at your Thursday business meeting this week. Thank you very much.

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for your comments. Number two, you can submit your comment to the Commission.

>> Thank you. I wanted to thank the Commissioners that went on WNMU TV13 Sunday to address the questions. There is a lot of Q and A between Andrew and the Commissioners. You very much answered the questions very, very good.

But one of the reasons why I wanted to show up here because we have been waiting for years to see this happen face-to-face. So we are very, very happy to see that you

are going to be taking all of our input and the redistricting, where I was going to address my concerns and thoughts. I have a friend here, Gene, that just came back from vacation. And he is loaded with very, very top information. So I will let him do that part of the talk that I was going to present.

There are several other questions, but talking to different people they had the same thought and concern. So I wanted also to give them a chance. Of my time here is I just wanted to thank everybody that is involved with this redistricting. And I know a lot of times that you are going to have people that are for you and against you. But, you know, as far as politics we're used to that.

But anyway one of the things I want you to do is listen carefully. And you will get some very, very excellent input with thoughts and concerns from everybody. So, with that, I'm going to clear the floor with ten seconds left. Thank you, everybody.

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number three, you are now invited to address the Commission.

>> Thank you to all of you here tonight. I really appreciate the opportunity to address everyone. I am a lifelong Yooper up until the last two years. I did move to Lansing, Michigan; but I felt the opportunity here tonight to address all of you in Marquette, which is where I lived for the last three years. And also, I was born and raised here. This is too good to pass up and I really appreciate the opportunity to be here with all of you tonight.

I would like to address a couple things. And really important is the House District, the 109th House District. I believe the most appropriate measure for you to take would be to keep Baraga, Marquette and Alger County as one unit. And the reason for that is for a lot of different reasons.

I've worked with labor. I've worked with different economic interests. And in terms of our economic impact in that, those counties as a whole, would be the Northern Lake Superior shoreline, which shares many economic conditions together. Shipping. We ship heavy minerals like iron ore. We have tourism and healthcare interests.

We also have the Tilda Mine, Ishpeming and the Negaunee mining towns. All these economic interests as a whole, it makes sense to keep us compact and to have one representative speaking for one interest in those areas.

Secondly, we have community connections. We have M95. And we have M94, which connect Alger, Marquette and Baraga. From the east to the west these connections via transportation, north and south are not as easily reached and aren't as direct.

So we also have the L'Anse Indian Reservation, which is primarily based in Baraga County. To the west it has a small portion within Chocolay Township.

These are just a few of many reasons why it makes sense to keep these counties together when it comes to districting the house seats of the 109th District. Thank you.

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number four, you may address the Commission.

>> Thank you very much. My name is Josh. Glad I could take your time. And thanks for coming up here in person. It's nice to see everybody.

This is going to be something new for me, but I just want to say to all of you that I'm here to speak on behalf of Marquette County. I've been in the UP for 30 years now, been in Marquette County for ten.

I think the best thing for our area is to keep Marquette, Baraga and Alger County together. Like Katie said, we share the Lake Superior shoreline along with tourism that comes to the area, mining, and just everything.

We are compact and together here. So that's the biggest reason for me. And I'm not going to take all the time tonight, so thank you very much.

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. I would like to remind everybody who is commenting tonight to please also go to the public comment tool and share your comments in writing including any specific area of the map about which you are speaking. The tool is available at Michigan.gov/MICRC.

I now invite numbers five through eight to approach the microphone. And, number five, if you are ready, you can go ahead and begin.

>> Thank you for serving and thank you for being here. And welcome to the UP and especially Marquette County.

My name is Gene Champaign. I live in the small village of Big Bay, which is about 30 miles northwest of Marquette. That is in Powell Township, that's in Marquette County.

And two minutes is not enough. I would like to see it go to five, although I'm sure you have heavily more populated meetings. Anyhow I will not get through everything I need to say. I will submit more in comments or possibly when everyone is done, I will come back to this.

But my reason for being here is I live in Marquette County. And since 2002 the people of Powell Township have voted with the 110th District, which is the western UP. So since that time our house representatives have come from Bessemer, Calumet, Hancock and South Range and Atlantic Mine. Which if you are familiar with the UP, it's a three to four hour drive from them to us and us to them. We never see them. It doesn't matter if they are republican or democrat, good or bad, we are not fairly represented with that situation.

Powell Township and Ishpeming Township are the two townships in Marquette County that vote with the 110th. Baraga County is the closest county, only six miles of Powell Township touches Baraga County. And that is in the upper northwest corner where no one lives.

The whole population of Powell, which is a large township, is on the east end and Big Bay and Lake Superior. Powell Township shares the only paved road into and out of our township with Marquette Township in the City of Marquette. And 70 miles of paved

road to get to Baraga County, that's on the eastern outskirts of the 110th District. We must pass through seven other county townships in the cities of Marquette, Negaunee and Ishpeming.

It is 96 miles to L'Anse, the closest large town. And the County Seat in Baraga County has a population of 2000.

Our State House representatives already mentioned it. Mentioned that.

High school students of Powell Township attend school in either Marquette or Negaunee. If they live in Negaunee, but Marquette school is a school of choice.

Time is up. I was having so much fun. I will try and get back with this. And I will submit maps and written comments later, two minutes.

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you very much. Number five, you may address the Commission. I'm sorry, number six, sorry.

>> I don't think so. Hi. My name is Carla. I live in Powell Township. First of all, thank you, thank you, thank you for being here. We worked hard to get the Citizens Redistricting Commission passed, so thank you, thank you, thank you.

I want to talk about my community of interest, which is right here, right now. I know Gene started on it. But we live in Big Bay. It's one road between Big Bay and Marquette. Everything we do is in Marquette. Our doctors, our banks, our shopping, everything is in Marquette. We should be voting with them. That is our community of interest.

So when you look at the maps for the 109th District, please keep that in mind. Look at where we are and see that we really...this is our community of interest right here. Thank you.

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number seven, you may now address the Commission.

>> Hi. My name is Mary Ellen. I too am from Powell Township, a thing going on here.

Powell Township is the largest township and the largest county in Michigan. We have 118 residents. It's our land mass that is big and we are cutoff from the rest of the county and representation.

As precinct Chair of our voting District for the past three years in Powell, except for the last election, it's hard to explain when voters come in and say, well, my candidate isn't on the list. And I go, no, we are not in the 109th. We are in the 110th.

And it is an ongoing issue of, as Carla had said, with our road in town and our public Township slogan is: At the end of the road where adventure begins. And it truly is. It is the only paved road into the Powell community.

There are about, between 300-400 voters in the community. And we are seriously underrepresented in Marquette County because of our Districting.

So I ask you to take a look at it. Thank you for being here. And I thank you for the opportunity of you guys coming up from down state to the better part of the state.

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for your comments to the Commission. Number eight, you may now address the Commission.

>> My name is Gail Marginini. Can you hear me?

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Yes.

>> Thank you for coming. I'm glad we have a representation that is fair. There is a certain amount of people from different political parties. It sounds like you formed the Commission wisely.

I'm a former resource specialist for Special Ed from California. I've lived in Marquette, Michigan for 11 years. My husband was born here. We have come back. We have all retired.

I feel that the fair thing to do is like what they have been talking about with the different counties is to consider the population and the fact that they are in rural areas, that in order to get to voting they have to come into our areas, okay? I think our founding fathers wanted it that way.

You take a Detroit area, you've got probably all kinds of districts there. Here we have 109th and we are working hard together to stay together. And I really mean that, even in a political way. We are trying to see that the laws are fair and just for everyone here. Okay and I'm talking specifically for 11 years.

I served on a committee like you in California. I would have served had I been not realized that no one here is represented from the UP. And I don't know how you feel out here, but I don't feel that this Commission should continue working without somebody from the UP. And I would like to advise that somebody step forward. And if no one will step forward, then I will. I heard about this. I just thought with having a grandchild born last year and my oldest daughter getting married that I couldn't do it.

But in order to make it fair, I think we need to base it partly on population and not just on industry.

I would hope that you would consider dividing the lines along county lines and keeping the UP together as it is today. Okay, thank you.

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number nine, number ten, number 11 and number 12, you can step forward. And, number nine, if you are ready, you can go ahead and address the Commission.

>> Hello. I'm Wendy Irish. I'm in Munising, which is in beautiful Alger County and welcome to the Upper Peninsula. It's nice to see you face-to-face. I've been following your Zoom meetings. And one thing I have to say I work very hard on getting prop two passed and I love the way it's playing out. The meetings have such an egalitarian democratic feel to them, which I really like.

My comment has to do with public commenting. I have gone to the public comment portal and they only ask for comments. But I have a question. I've e-mailed this question and I haven't gotten a response.

I attend your three hour-meetings almost every week. But there are still questions I have that I need to have answered. And maybe I'm not seeing where those answers are.

My particular question has to do with where does Secretary Benson's request for relief stand or how can I find that out?

And then also whether or not that's granted, what is the timeline for us being able to have these districts in place for the next election? I don't know where to find answers to those questions without going back and listening to your three-hour meetings again. So if you could figure out a way, please to answer people's questions. Thank you.

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for your comments. Do we have number ten? Okay, number 11, you can go ahead if you are ready.

>> Thank you. I'm Jane Ryan and I've lived here 50 years coming from the East Lansing, Lansing Area. My husband and I always said it was the second best decision we ever made in our lives. We've loved the upper peninsula. First, of course, was getting together.

But I picked up on what one of the other women said. We are very disappointed that nobody was selected from the Upper Peninsula. I've been involved with the League of Women Voters and the group. The leadership there has done a wonderful job of educating people in the UP about this process and encouraging people to apply.

And I heard one rationalization that because of our small population it wouldn't have been proportional. On the other hand, we are unique and we do get left off the maps sometimes if we don't have somebody down there, thinking about the Upper Peninsula in a friendly way.

So I hope a few of you will take us on as somebody, as an area, as a region that you care about. And we also have a significantly diverse population in terms of Native Americans and others who are students. And that would be another reason I would hope there would be somebody there particularly relating to some of the issues that concern them about being well represented in our governmental process.

We admire the work that you've done and that you're doing and that you came up here. But we really, really hope that you will keep the Upper Peninsula in your hearts and minds and maybe come back and visit and spend some money. As a tourist area, we have suffered, although we are very aware we are not the only ones doing that. But we are so proud of the things we offer even in the winter. The winter sports and offerings are wonderful also. Thank you again.

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for your comments. Number 12, you can proceed.

>> Yeah, Bert Bason and I am from Baraga County. And I've got three things I'd like to say.

First off, I agree 100%. We should have someone from the UP if at all possible. We are unique in the Upper Peninsula. It is a different place.

It's called a Citizens Redistricting Committee. And you're taking comments from anybody that shows up or anybody that goes on. There's nothing to stop anybody from making comments here.

So my friends down in Florida could comment. California could comment. It's all optional who you are. So I think there ought to be some way of making sure that the people that count, that you guys count are Michigan residents, that has to occur.

The other thing, in the UP, with COVID, we've had an explosion of real estate sales. People are moving here. People are coming here like they haven't come in a long, long time. And I just wonder in this setting of the map how you can account for that.

I mean, the demographics are changing quickly. So that's another thing to consider.

And then I hear the 109, 110 debate. And I can understand that debate and what they are talking about. But right now the 109 is about 7,000 more people than the 110. So I think Baraga County should be kept separate. There may be some juggling that goes on the map. I have not looked at the map closely. But there may be some juggling to keep these districts similar in size. So that's all. Thank you.

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for your comments to the Commission. I'd again like to remind everybody to please use our public comment tool and share your comments in writing, including specific areas on maps of which you are speaking. The tool is available at Michigan.gov/MICRC.

I would now like to welcome numbers 13, 14, 15 and 16 up to the microphone. And, number 13, when you arrive, you are free to go ahead and start speaking.

>> Hello. Hi. My name is John Broms. I'm from here in the City of Marquette. I will make a very brief comment just saying I think we are all going to be looking forward to the process where the voters can choose a representative rather than the representatives choosing their voters. So I hope that will be something that will go forward and people have, you know, better representation in the future.

That's all I have. It's very brief. Thanks.

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 14.

>> Hello. My name is Kristina and I'm from Houghton County. I'm coming before the Commission. I want to thank you guys for taking on this challenge. It's a big challenge. You are not going to make everybody happy, but hopefully you will make most people happy in this big endeavor that you have.

I have been a Yooper, born and bred in the Keweenaw Peninsula my entire life until two years ago when I had a job opportunity I couldn't resist. So I live down state and I also live in the UP. And I travel the entire State of Michigan and I set up a lot of different events in the Michigan House, Senate and Congressional districts.

And I'm asking that their lines be drawn, more compact lines. You have a very large charge in front of you to look at. And keeping the communities fair and close together is a very big thing. I think when you are down state in some of the areas and you are working on an event and some people in the same street are in the same District but

you got to drive, you know, six miles over to catch the rest of the people in your District, that's very disheartening to be able to do and to be able to keep people together in their areas and communities of interest.

And the UP, communities of interest, a lot of people are Lake Superior Shoreline and the Michigan shoreline and the Wisconsin border are areas of community interest.

I think you have a very tall order ahead of you guys. And being fair and making our representatives go out and actually talk to people in their districts and learn their people and what their people need is very beneficial and important. And that is something that these new lines can definitely put in place and help people be represented again, not just by party. Thank you.

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 15, you can step forward and address the Commission when you are ready.

>> So I'm Lucy Wilcox and I live in Powell Township. And I moved there six years ago to live with my husband who has been affiliated with that area since he was born. So I'm a mongrel. I came late to this. And I want to thank y'all.

I grew up in a big and lived big, big cities, big places. And what I know is you did do a random poll to find all of you. And everybody who had their name in the hat, you know, had the same chance. And I'm okay with that as long as you understand that I lived in Marquette for like 13 years. And I moved to Powell Township to live with my husband. I'm so excited to go and vote for Sara Cambensy. It was just so wonderful. I got there. No. No. I had to vote in this other District? With this man who had not been present in our area like people told me for like forever.

So, please, Powell Township belongs to in Marquette County. That's where, as people here have pointed out, that's, you know, we have to go home to Marquette or we go to Marquette, then we get to come home. But we really do not belong with the western UP, hundreds of miles away, with a representative who I don't know that anybody has seen him. But maybe they have. That's all.

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 16, you may go ahead when you are ready.

>> So my name is Ruth Zeel and I actually live in Chocolay Township, so a part of Marquette County. And I became aware of the issues with Powell Township and Ishpeming Township, not being able to vote with the 109th when I was canvassing for proposal two.

I look at community as where you live, where your children go to school, where you shop, where you go and see your physicians, where your friends are. And there is no reason in the world why Ishpeming Township and Powell Township should not be voting with 109th. And I would really like you to try and make that happen.

Most of the residents, no, I can't say that. Many of the people I talk to think they are in the 109th, living in those districts. And realizing that they are not. They spent their time

looking at candidates for the 109th only to discover they can't vote for any of them, so please rectify that. Thank you.

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for your comments to the Commission. I would now have number 17, 18, 19 and 20 please approach the microphone. And, number 17, you can begin speaking when you are ready.

>> Hi. My name is Casa Macki. And I'm a fifth generation Marquette resident. My family and my ancestors were pioneers of both Marquette, Chocoley and Powell Township.

I'm also a trained sociologist so I like to think I have like my finger on the pulse of the culture of the UP.

As many people have said, the idea of Powell Township and Ishpeming Township being part of another District is crazy. A lot has been said about Powell, so I will talk about Ishpeming Township and Ishpeming. And not only do these people share a culture and a community and go to the same schools, they all work at the same place, pretty much. They all work in the mining industry. I mean, I don't know what the exact percentage of it is, but I worked at the mines myself. And I can tell you just about every person I was in the lunchroom with was from Ishpeming or Ishpeming Township.

I'd like to also reiterate the points about the east, west highways in the UP and how the communities of interest form along east, west lines. So the Lake Superior Shoreline is like kind of one community. The Wisconsin border is kind of one community. And the Lake Michigan border is kind of one community. And that is the way people travel and shop and go to the doctors and such.

There are school districts between Marquette, Alger. There are school districts in the Republic Michigamme that cross the Baraga, Marquette border. And as was already mentioned the Native American community that is in both Baraga and Chocoley Townships. So I would also advocate for Baraga, Marquette and Alger to be one block as much as possible within the population constraints. That way we have more in common on the Lake Superior Shoreline with Baraga than we do with Schoolcraft at the moment. But, as everybody said, the Powell Township, Ishpeming Township thing was clearly gerrymandered and needs to be corrected.

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for your comments to the Commission. Number 18, you may know approach the microphone and speak when you are ready.

>> My name is Scott Manala and I was born and raised in Ishpeming. So I and I also do work at the Tilden Mine and I talk with other people from there.

And I support that we do put the 109 in West Ishpeming, which is Ishpeming Township. It's crazy that you traveled from Ishpeming, traveled three miles and go from one District to another District, back into the other District. So, yes, I do support the fair Districting. Thank you.

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 19, you can go ahead and begin speaking.

>> Hello. My name is Ryan Stern. I live in Marquette County. I would like to thank all of you for making your way up to the UP and hearing all of the UP residents. This is a big thing for us. And I urge the Commission to fulfill its duties in good faith to meet the ultimate goal of determining fair districting for the state legislature and U.S. Congressional districts.

Free and fair elections are the cornerstone of a healthy democracy. And redistricting all of Michigan accurately to best represent its constituents, communities will allow our great state to truly represent the will of its people. Thank you.

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for your comments to the Commission. Number 20.

>> James Bower, Ishpeming, Michigan. I'm originally from Ann Arbor.

Hi. One of the things about this Commission is to end the gerrymandering. One of the fine benefits we have of that gerrymandering is the emergency manager's law. I didn't like it then. I voted to repeal it. And the republicans shoved it right through again. I want my vote to count. Thank you.

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission.

Again, I'd like to remind everybody to please go to the public comment tool and share your comments in writing, including any specific areas on the map which you are speaking. The tool is available at Michigan.gov/MICRC.

I just wanted to see if number ten is available now or they might have left. But I just want to give them another chance to speak if they are interested. And then I would also call numbers 21 and 22 and may approach the microphone and speak when you are ready.

>> My name is Bob Myers. I don't have a comment actually or a -- any recommendation about what you should do. The thing that I'm concerned about is what you mean by communities of interest.

Now, when we've been talking here, it seems as if that depends on the...where you live, and things like that. But I can see down state that we have to worry about drawing lines in Detroit, other populated areas, that the idea of community of interest could be a real serious concern because what constitutes it, community of interest? Have you discussed what this means? Is it possible to give a definition?

There have been others Commissions in other states like California that have nonpartisan committee drawing District lines. They also have to cope with what you mean by community of interest. And if you are not clear about what this could mean, I can imagine that there would be lawsuits that would challenge the lines that are drawn, especially if you use community of interest as one of the areas that you're using to make the lines.

So my only comment is, I hope that you have a clear idea of what you mean by community of interest. We don't want this to be like modern art. I know what art is. I just can't tell you. Well, we don't want community of interest to be that way.

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission.

Number 22, you can approach the microphone. Come over to this one so she can wipe it off for you.

>> Good evening and thanks for coming to the UP. My name is Carol Moore. I'm a retiree of the Marquette Area Public schools and I'm here representing the MEA. I'm also a currently a real estate broker in the City of Marquette. I have lived here for about 52 years, although I did live away for a little bit.

I would like to consider -- I would like for you to consider making the District lines by way of counties. If you did the counties, you would have -- the complaints I've heard with Big Bay and Ishpeming, you would alleviate all that by putting Marquette County together.

We are unique up here in the UP. And we like to -- we like people to realize that and to take -- and to consider that when they are doing District lines like this one.

I would also like to say that I think you are using the 2020 census, which was done during a pandemic, and it's already obsolete. And the reason that it's obsolete, as a real estate broker, I can tell you that people are moving into the area at a record pace. And the reason is, they can live and work where they want to today because they have learned that during the pandemic. By way of doing technology, they can live wherever they want and still work for the same company.

So I'd like you to keep that in mind as you are redrawing your District lines. Thank you very much.

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Again, I know you guys are probably sick of hearing me say that, but I want to remind everybody to go to the public comment tool and share your comments in writing including any specific areas of the map of which you are speaking. The tool is available at Michigan.gov/MICRC.

So we have been going about an hour now, so I'm going to suggest that we take about a 15-minute break so everybody can get up and stretch our legs. And we will see where we are at then. So the current time is 6:53. Let's come back at we will say 7:10. Thank you very much, everyone.

[Recess until 7:10]

If you can return, we are ready to restart. All right. We are going to restart. It's 7:13. And I believe we have one more person who is planning on making a public comment, number 23, so you can go ahead and step up to the mic and make your comments to the Commission.

>> Good evening. I'm Jim, Ishpeming Township Supervisor. I agree with everybody from Powell Township, that everybody in Marquette County should be in one District.

It makes it very difficult. I'm also the president of the Marquette County Township Association. So when we try to have a meeting and try to get ahold of our state representatives to try to get ahold of two different ones to be there at the same time

makes it very difficult. So usually you end up with one at a time, and stuff like that. So it would make it everything easier in our district if all of Marquette County was in one District. Thank you.

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. We have completely, gone through the list of everybody who is interested in-public comment. So at this point we will move on to remote public comment.

Individuals who have signed up and indicated that they would like to provide live public commentary to the Commission will now be allowed to do so. I will call your name and our staff will unmute you. If you are on a computer, you will be prompted by the Zoom app to unmute your microphone and speak.

If you are on the phone, a voice will say that the host would like you to speak and prompt you to press star six to unmute.

I will call on you by your name or the last four digits of your phone number. Also please note if you experience technical or audio issues or we do not hear from you for three to five seconds, we will move on to the next person in line and then return to you when you are done speaking. If your audio still does not work, you can e-mail Redistricting@Michigan.gov and we will help you troubleshoot so you can participate during the next public comment period at a later hearing or meeting.

I believe we have one person in line to provide public comment today, and that is Victoria V. So if you would allow a moment for the staff to unmute you.

>> Hi. Thank you. I'm going to pass. I've already had my statements made by some other individuals, and I just support their statements. Thank you.

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. All right. At this point I would entertain a motion to have a recess in the proceedings. I move we recess until 7:45 for the record.

>> I second.

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Commissioner Cynthia Orton motions to recess until 7:45. And who seconded? Dustin Witjes seconded. All in favor please raise your hand to so indicate. And the people who are remote please raise your hand as well so we can see. All in favor of holding a recess until 7:45? All opposed same sign.

The motion carries. We are now in recess until 7:45. Thank you very much.

>> Comments tonight, they were wonderful comments especially about the Big Bay and Ishpeming Township. I did just a little bit of research before coming here. But, unfortunately, not as much as I would like to, so I feel a need to make some comment that I hope is not superfluous or repetitious.

But I do agree with the people from Ishpeming and Ishpeming Township, Powell Township about the minutes that I saw before I came here today.

The one thing I did take a little bit of time to do is to read everybody's biography online. And I'm afraid it did not give me a whole lot of information. And that is probably the biggest reason why I'm here tonight.

I'm a retired civil engineer. I was a county engineer for Marquette County for many years, plus an environmental specialist. So I have a lot of background in mapping, math, statistics and use, planning and development.

What I didn't see in any of the resumes was any kind of experience along that line nor any GIS mapping or anything. So I assume that you're going to have to be hiring out a lot of the analysis of the entire state.

And so because most people spoke to the regional areas, I do need to address about the state as a whole.

I guess I should preface in saying that I know what a thankless job it is. And I know that's what you've taken on. So I want to thank you so much for that because even with my experience I cannot even imagine what you are going through to try to analyze everything.

It seems to me that I don't know if you have plans to contract out work on gathering all the information you need and analyzing it. You know, I would imagine you need specialists in GIS, information systems, et cetera. And so I guess is that my time up?

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Yes. You can finish your comments.

>> I guess the main thing is that I'm looking to see something that is really transparent, but also scientific and analytical. And so that, you know, you guys are a bipartisan and nonpartisan group. And so I would hope that you correctly assess who you have doing all this work to make sure that they are equally bipartisan and independent, et cetera. Because we need to see representation in Lansing that accurately, fairly and balanced proportionate to how people vote so that you don't have an access of republicans or an access of democrats according to our population. Thank you.

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 25, please go ahead.

>> Thank you. My name is Kevin K. I also live in Marquette. I've lived up here since the 1995. I used to work at the National Weather Service Office out there in Negaunee Township, et al. I retired in 2017. I believe four years. May 25th is my retirement date.

I want to thank the Commission. Actually I really want to thank the people in Michigan who decided to move into the independent redistricting of voting, deciding how the voting districts are going to be mapped out and all.

I think that is key to the future of our democracy in this country to make sure that neither republicans nor democrats are the ones that are drawing up the voting District boundaries and all.

We have to make sure that some of these really weird looking districts I've seen around the country in places and all, the voting districts how they have been drawn, just so they can maximize the number of one party or another that gets elected into office.

We need to make sure that that does not happen in Michigan. I really think that the state has moved in the right direction with that constitutional amendment to make the

process of drawing these voting boundaries, the voting District boundaries a bipartisan issue and all.

So I really appreciate the work that you all are doing here to making sure that the voting boundaries are drawn so that neither party is automatically benefitted by those redrawing of the boundaries and all. I really appreciate that and all. And I think it's, again, vital to the success of our democracy that we move in this direction in this state.

So that's really all I had to say and all. And I thank you for all your good work on that and thank you very much.

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. We will now turn to MC Rothhorn who has a presentation for us this evening.

>> COMMISSIONER ROTHORN: Thanks. I really want to reflect back. We feel welcome. Thank you. It's really a real pleasure to be with you all. And thanks for sticking around tonight. I'm going to try to...I think I'm in the center there.

Yep, okay, great.

So this is a presentation, more or less that helps to understand more about the Citizens Redistricting Commission and why we are doing what we are doing. And like you said the foundational democracy democratic work we are doing.

So I serve as a member as you all know. And the...yeah, we are, like I said, really grateful you are all treating us the way. Yeah, we feel really warmly received.

So 2018, that's when many of you, you mentioned how you worked for this proposal that was passed with about 61% of the vote. And it was on the ballot as proposal two. Voters not legislatures or, yeah, voters and not politicians take responsibility for nonpartisan redistricting and created this MICRC.

We are 13 randomly selected. Unfortunately, we can't, you know, just select from the UP. It's we randomly selected from democrats and randomly selected from republicans and randomly selected independents. So that was the division. And so we have 13 of us. And are going to be drawing three maps as has been said.

So these public hearings, right, are designed to be the transparent and fair process that will create these maps. So the process is what we are doing today. And so these impartial maps we are required to solicit the input that you all have given.

And, yeah, we've got, let's see, I think we've got these three purposes behind these public hearings. The Constitution gives us the criteria that we are going to be using. And you all have heard that tonight already. But we do want to inform, right, all of you and we hope that you will actually help others hear more about our public hearings.

This is not the end of what we would like to hear from the UP. This is just the one time we are here in the UP, but that doesn't mean we want you to stop commenting or sharing with your neighbors and friends, frankly, and relatives in the UP. We would like to hear and continue to hear more because we all want you to go out from here and share more about this redistricting process. And we want the purpose and responsibilities of the Commission, we would like you to share that. We want to draw

these three maps, that is our purpose, and want to do it in a fair and transparent manner.

And then, finally, we hope that you will also help us direct people to the public comment tool. So that we can get that information in a direct, from their mouths and frankly from their fingers on the keyboard, right?

So we kicked this off, our public hearings. And I think we have affectionately referred to it as our listening campaign. We kicked it off in the birthplace of the Republican party in Jackson, Michigan. Did y'all know that? As the birthplace.

We were there May 11th, then we went to Kalamazoo and we were in a hockey rink. We had a jumbotron in front of us.

And now we are here in Marquette.

Oops, did I skip one? Yes. Okay.

So what I want you to see here it says we are going to be back in Marquette. This is just the first round. We will have the end of this public hearing session. We will finish around June. And then between July and August we are going to be trying to draft these maps. And we will be back in Marquette sometime after we get all the information collated and sorted and synthesized, frankly, so we can create these draft maps. And we will be back up in Marquette to present to you the three maps. Again, drafts that you can comment on. And that's why it says first and second in Northern Michigan University.

We only have May 18th because we don't know yet exactly when we will be here again. We just know we are going to be in Marquette. And, yeah, who knows, I don't know if I told you, but I think it's going to be colder when we are back here.

So then Thursday this week we will be in Gaylord, heading down to the northern tip, tip of Northern Michigan.

And then we are going to be in Midland. Then we are in Lansing. And that's again where that first and second comes in. Right, we are going to be there twice.

We will be in Flint, on, you know twice. We will be in Dearborn. We are in Novi twice. We are going to be in Pontiac. We are going to be in Detroit twice. And even a third time, right? We've got to locations there. But we will be at the TCF Center twice.

And then we will be in Port Huron and Warren. And then following the last two dates, the last of June and the first of July we will be in Muskegon, Grand Rapids, on the west coast.

So this criteria, we did have a presentation earlier and we did talk about this criteria. Does anybody remember this criteria or even remember if you worked on this? Any ideas on like why this criteria is so important and why we are going over and over and over it? Any thoughts on that? Go ahead Gene.

>> [Off mic]

>> COMMISSIONER ROTHORN: Well said, yeah. It gives us a ranked order and what we have to prescribe. And I think it feels like it's a really good container for us

because many of us, we have our life experience; but like you all we are citizens. We have just as much qualifications I suppose as you all.

And we have a professional staff. And I think this is getting to the idea of statistical and a data driven approach. But we really will be ultimately using this criteria, right, and a lot of statistics and data and demographics and population, frankly, not to mention the rules. But these rules are the criteria. This is the, you know, the first piece is the equal population.

As you all suggested, right, it's going to be challenging to just draw it along county lines. Right, and get equal population. But we heard you and we are going to do our darnedest,

Yeah. In addition to that equal population criteria, we need to comply with the Voting Rights Act, which is, you know, I suppose a technical, very technical specialty that some of us right are just getting used to, some of us are just learning about. But we do have a candidate, excuse me, not a candidate but we have a staff and a professional staff who will help us with that, consultant.

So then we have the geographic contiguous communities of interest. I think many of you spoke very eloquently today about communities of interest and what it means. And we have to I think reflect on that as a Commission and try to understand it better ourselves. But we appreciate what you all give us and help us, yeah, take into consideration. But we have that as the third criteria and frankly the first state criteria.

And we have four and five have to do with the political flavor of the Commission. And the criteria that we can't actually have any disadvantage or advantage to any political party or incumbent or elected office.

So then six and seven reflecting the consideration of county, city and township boundaries. I hope you feel reflected there, that is part of our criteria.

And then, finally, reasonably compact, which is also something I've heard today. I think we all heard in some of the public comments.

So, in short, that is the -- those are the communities, excuse me, those are the criteria. And the ways to engage I think I mentioned earlier that we would like you all, this isn't the last time we will be in Marquette. It is...when we come back, we will have draft maps. So we hope that between now and when we come back that you all will engage with many of the other folks you have in your communities and families and just get the word out that we want this input and we want, yeah, these are the ways to engage on the screen there.

And I think that concludes my brief presentation. Thanks for listening.

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you very much, MC. I would like to now turn to Sue Hammersmith to provide acknowledgments.

>> MS. SUANN HAMMERSMITH: Again, we want to thank everybody for making public comment. Thank the volunteers who came out tonight to help. We appreciate your involvement and your sharing your time with us this evening.

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And for anyone who wants to make additional public comments, we certainly invite you to do so either at an upcoming meeting, in an upcoming public hearing, or on the website. We are looking for your input. And we appreciate all the people who have spoken this evening.

And we are very happy to be here and to take that input into consideration. So thank you again for being here. And have a good evening.

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you very much, Sue. At this point we have concluded our business and our public comment. I would now entertain a motion to adjourn these proceedings.

>> COMMISSIONER WITJES: So moved.

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Motioned by Commissioner Witjes.

>> COMMISSIONER LETT: Second.

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: And seconded by Commissioner Lett. All in favor please raise your hand to indicate.

All opposed same sign.

The motion carries. The meeting is adjourned at 8:02:00 p.m. Thank you very much, excuse me, to everyone who provided comments.

Excuse me. And thank you for attending.

>> COMMISSIONER ROTHORN: Meet you at Sunset point.