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MICRC

03/05/21 1300 Meeting

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>> Steve: Good afternoon. As Chair of the Commission, I call this meeting of the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission to order. This Zoom Commission meeting is being live streamed to YouTube. 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 MI to find the link for viewing on other platforms. Our live stream today included closed captioning we have ASL available for the meeting if you would like easier viewing for the ASL interpreter on your screen please e-mail us at redistricting@Michigan.gov and we will provide you with additional viewing options. Similarly if you would like access to translation services during the meeting, please e-mail us at redistricting@Michigan.gov for details on how to access language translation services available for this meeting. Translation services are available for both Spanish and Arabic. Please e-mail us and we will provide you with a unique link and call-in information.

This meeting is being recorded and will be available at redistricting Michigan.org for viewing at a later date.

This meeting is also being transcribed and those transcriptions will be made available and posted on redistricting Michigan.org along with the written public comment submissions.

Members of the media who may have questions before, during or after the meeting should direct those questions to the communications and outreach director Edward Woods the third at Woods E3@Michigan.gov.

For purposes of the public record and for members of the public watching I will now request the Department of State staff to take note of the members of the Commission present.

Sally, would you please take the roll?

>> Sally: Yes, good afternoon, Commissioners.

When I say your name, please unmute yourself and indicate the city or county that you are attending the meeting remotely from Doug Clark.

>> Doug: Present and I'm remotely attending the meeting from Rochester Hills, Michigan.

>> Sally: Juanita Curry.

>> Juanita: Present and I am remotely living in Detroit, Michigan.

>> Sally: Anthony Eid.

>> Anthony: Present, remotely attending from Detroit, Michigan.

- >> Sally: Brittini Kellom.
- >> Brittini: Present attending from Wayne County.
- >> Sally: Rhonda Lange.
- >> Rhonda: Present attending from Reed City.
- >> Sally: Steve Lett.
- >> Steve: Present and I'm attending from Lee county, Florida.
- >> Sally: Cynthia Orton.
- >> Cynthia: Present, attending from Battle Creek, Michigan.
- >> Sally: And MC Rothhorn.
- >> MS: Present, attending remotely from Lansing, Michigan.
- >> Sally: Rebecca Szetela.
- >> Present, attending remotely from Wayne County, Michigan.
- >> Sally: Janice Vallette.
- >> Janice: Present, attending from Highland Michigan.
- >> Sally: Erin Wagner.
- >> Erin: Present, attending remotely from Charlotte, Michigan.
- >> Sally: Richard Weiss.
- >> Richard: Present, attending remotely from Saginaw, Michigan.
- >> Sally: Dustin Witjes.
- >> Dustin: Present, attending remotely from Ann Arbor, Michigan.
- >> Sally: All Commissioners are present.
- >> Steve: Thank you, Sally.

Commissioners, we now will look at the adoption of the agenda.

Are there any additions, deletions or corrections?

And I would note that under 6C we may not need to have that but we will leave that until we get to it.

Having said that are there any other additions or comments?

If not, I would entertain a motion to adopt the agenda as presented.

>> So moved.

>> Steve: Second, Erin. So Dustin moves. Erin second. All in favor raise your hand.

[ Hands raised ]

It is adopted.

At this point we have our usual spot of public comment and correspondence and remarks.

We have I believe 16, the last count that I was given 16 public comments.

I don't know that everybody who signed up is here.

However, that will be what we will be doing next.

Before I do that, however, there was one e-mail I want to address.

The person who asked us to read that into today's meeting. We will not be doing that.

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We certainly can make it available and will make it available online and obviously we read it.

As we read every one that comes in.

So just for future reference, and no slight to the writer, the author of that, but we do not read public comment into the record.

But they are part of the record.

For those of you who have not joined us previously, I have a few comments on how we conduct our public comment portion of these virtual meetings.

Because this is a virtual meeting members of the public have to sign up in advance in order to address the Commission.

If you sign up you will have two minutes to speak to us.

And since we have 16, please hold your comments to two minutes.

For each member of the public who will be addressing the Commission, the Department of State staff will unmute the person who will be speaking for a period not to exceed two minutes. And there will be a notification at two minutes that your time is up.

Members of the public who have signed up to speak will be called on in the order in which they signed up.

Please remember that once you are called to speak, you will have no more than two minutes to complete your remarks.

Public comment sign up links are posted on redistricting Michigan social media pages, on Facebook and Twitter.

At redistricting MI.

And you can e-mail our office at [redistricting@Michigan.gov](mailto:redistricting@Michigan.gov).

If you would like to submit thoughts or comments to the Commission, you can do that by e-mail at [redistricting@Michigan.gov](mailto:redistricting@Michigan.gov) and they will be provided to the Commission and they are provided to the Commission. And we do look at them.

Having said that, Sally, Director of Special Projects, for the Michigan Department of State will assist us in the public comment procedure.

Sally.

>> Sally: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Individuals who have signed up and indicated they would like to provide live public comment to the Commission will now be allowed to do so.

Just a few technical notes on that front for anyone participating in public comment with the Commission today.

After I call your name, your screen will change and you will rejoin the meeting as a presenter.

Then you will need to turn on your sound and video before you make live comments.

I don't believe anyone is using a phone for a microphone today, but if you are you will need to join into this meeting separately, dialing in separately.

You should have received instructions for that in the e-mail we sent you.

And please note that if we unmute you and you have audio issues or we don't hear from you from about 3-5 seconds, we will move on to the next person in line and return to you after they are done speaking. So don't worry. You will have a chance to figure out your audio issues and we will try to come back.

And if your audio still doesn't work, you can e-mail the Commission, [redistricting@Michigan.gov](mailto:redistricting@Michigan.gov) and we will help trouble shoot for the next public comment you might like to attend.

So first in line to provide public comment -- I'm sorry, I should note before I say that, that I will have a timer in my hand. And I will let you know, member of the public, if your two minutes is up.

You should also hear the ring on the timer.

So first in line to provide public comment is Tim Greimal. And please allow a moment for our staff to unmute you.

>> Mr. Greimal: Can everyone hear me?

>> Yes.

>> Mr. Greimal: Well, good afternoon, everyone. I appreciate the opportunity to speak with all of you today.

And I wanted to speak just very briefly about both procedural concerns and interests about the holding of hearings as well as some of the bigger picture and broader substantive issues that ultimately the Commission will have to look at as it redraws the lines.

And my name has been mentioned. It's Tim Greimal. I'm a resident of Pontiac. And it's very important as you hold public hearings around the state that you make sure that everyone is fairly represented.

And it's critically important, in my view, that the number of hearings and the distribution of hearings be based on population.

Certainly, rural communities deserve to have convenient hearings and plenty of hearings.

But as hearings are added in rural areas, it's important that hearings also be added in proportion to population in urban and suburban areas.

And it's important central cities, especially those with economically disadvantaged populations and a high number of residents of color, be given appropriate number of hearings.

That's true of a number of cities around the state, including right here in Pontiac.

And the reason why that is so important is that it's important that all of the appropriate criteria in drawing the district lines are appropriately taken into account, that residents have an opportunity to speak on those issues, particularly those who are most affected by issues such as communities of interest, making sure that voters of color, people of color are adequately represented in all districts.

And I just want to encourage you to be mindful of those considerations, among others, as you draw the lines. But as a preliminary step, make sure that when it comes to public hearings, that those communities are adequately and fairly represented. So.

>> Sally: Thank you.

>> Mr. Greimal: Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

>> Sally: Thank you very much.

Next in line is Joe Spaulding. Please allow a moment for our staff to unmute you.

>> Mr. Spaulding: Hi. Can you all hear me?

Awesome.

This is Joe Spaulding. I'm calling from down just down the road from I believe Janice on Riley Street in Holland, Michigan. I wanted to say a few things about data and then also about the public hearings that are coming up.

First, it was a very difficult choice. I saw the whole hearing yesterday.

Those pictures are always fascinating. I remember my first data pitch. And that was a very interesting situation. And kind of blew my mind. And I think the public would do themselves a good service if they go back and watch the meeting from yesterday.

I do have a few concerns about that, that are going to be concerns no matter who the vendor is, but also specifically with this vendor. I'm concerned about AI mapping. I'm concerned about mapping out the entirety of the process.

Because they might not be able to sell all the data, but if they try to sell a model based on the data, and hopefully there are folks that can translate this a little better, but if they sell a model based on the data, they can essentially tell a political party a whole bunch of useful information about the Commission's selection process in ten years.

So, again, we want to be thinking about on the data side we are thinking about stuff that can live for decades in this process, the next duration of the process.

So that is just something I wanted to help keep in mind.

And also the law, when it was written, I wasn't there for most of that; but I kind of wish I was now that I know what I do now about data.

And I do know that there is a lot of transparency written into the law. So if the attorney could take a look at that and make sure that in terms of the contract the data transparency is excruciatingly clear for the for the vendor, that would be super important.

Then also I wanted to say that data sometimes doesn't tell everything. And that is actually why we are here, taking public comment. And it's never going to solve equity on its own. That is always going to happen from listening to communities of interest.

On that point, I want to just note that the west side is underrepresented on this Commission. That is due to chance mostly.

Public input is super important there especially from the very rapidly growing Latino community of which I'm a member. That is one of my main interests on this issue from day one.

>> Sally: Thank you.

>> Mr. Spaulding. For back in May of 2017, thank you.

>> Sally: Thank you very much. Your allotted time has ended and thank you for addressing the Commission.

Next in line is Nancy Wang. Please allow a moment for our staff to unmute you.

>> Ms. Wang: Hi.

Can you hear me?

>> Steve: Yes.

>> Ms. Wang: Okay, great.

Hi and good afternoon and thanks so much for this opportunity. I'm Nancy Wang, executive director of voters not politicians, and I'm representing the grass root that crafted the redistricting the former amendment.

And I'm speaking just to highlight a few things that are in a letter that we submitted to the Commission today. We understand that you will be voting on a resolution to authorize Ms. Pastula to petition the Court for an extended period of time due to census delay. And we are respectfully proposing that the Commission ask the Court for a limited extension of the deadline to -- for final approval from currently it's November 1st, 2021 as you know until December 20th of '21.

We believe this leaves ample time for the Commission to draft maps using the 2020 census data.

And to hold at least five hearings for public feedback before it selects the maps it will be voting on. And it preserves the 45-day public comment period before the Commission makes its final decision.

And this reasonable limited extension importantly will serve the dual purposes of making sure our maps are accurate and drawn using the 2020 census data.

While it's ensuring that the will of the people is met and having the maps drawn as soon as possible and in time for the -- for their use in the August 2022 primary.

We also make some comments with respect to the public hearings.

We heartily applaud the Commission for planning to do as many as 2.5 times the constitutionally required number of town halls in this beginning phase.

We think that, you know, it demonstrates what we have been seeing all along, that you are strongly committed to making sure your decisions are grounded in public input.

And then we do request that you consider some amendments before voting, including adding an extra hearing in Kalamazoo or Battle Creek.

As well as in Northern Oakland like in Pontiac as the gentleman who spoke first.

>> Sally: Thank you.

>> Ms. Wang: Thank you so much, Sally.

>> Sally: Thank you. Your time has ended and thank you for addressing the Commission.

Next in line is Vaughn Glenn. Please allow a moment for our staff to unmute you.

>> Mr. Vaughn: Hi. Good afternoon can you hear me?

>> Steve: Yes.

>> Sally: We can hear you and we can't see you, but go right ahead.

>> Mr. Vaughn: I'm sorry.

Hi. Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Vaughn Glenn. And I live in Robbing Hills, Michigan.

The reason I wanted to join this meeting today is to discuss my concern about the lack of meetings that is in urban and suburban areas.

Most of the population is in these areas yet we don't have representation.

I would like to say that we add more meetings in the suburban and urban areas before you consider the vote to approve the -- for the Commission approve the list of hearings.

So the main reason I'm calling is to ask that we have more meetings in urban and suburban communities. Thank you.

>> Sally: Thank you for addressing the Commission.

Sorry, it took me a moment to unmute myself.

Next in line is Tommara Grice. And please allow a moment for our staff to unmute you.

>> Ms. Grice: Yes. Hello. My name is Tommara Grice.

And I would like to bring to you all's attention is that Detroit is one of the largest cities in Michigan. And that is in terms of people as well as land mass. And the only hearing that is scheduled in our area is on the edge of our city. This is an accessibility issue to hundreds of thousands of residents in the city.

And we would like to have a public hearing in the 13th Congressional Districts that are available, you know, to have multiple hearings available, but the 13th District has none. And that's not fair.

The location of the public hearings should be based on population. And half of the Michigan's population lives in Metro Detroit and so we need to be sure that Metro Detroit has public hearings available in Detroit.

Right now there is nothing in Metro Detroit.

If there are going to be more rural hearings, I believe there also should be more hearings in our Metro area.

Thank you.

>> Sally: Thank you for addressing the Commission.

Next in line to provide public comment is Connie Mitchell.

Please allow a moment for our staff to unmute you.

>> Ms. Mitchell: Good afternoon.

I would like to make two points concerning the redistricting Commission.

First of all, the first time I tuned in to watch the Commission at work, I was very dismayed by the fact that I only saw one person of color.

I went as far as to look at the population breakdown in the State of Michigan and people of color, or we call them Black and indigenous people of color, make up 20% of the state.

However, when you look at this group, it does not seem representative of the State's population when it comes to people of color.

The second thing that I would like to say is when I listened to you about your meetings around the state, you did indeed leave out areas that are not large cities. I'm in Inkster. Inkster is outside, 25 miles from Detroit, 33 miles from Ann Arbor, which leaves us at a disadvantage for even attending a redistricting Commission meeting.

I would like to make sure that you attend to the diversity and that you attend to transparency and that you attend to making sure that all citizens have equal access to your move around meetings.

Those are my concerns.

I don't know how much more could be done about the diversity of the group that you have set that up, but there should have been something in the criteria that would have addressed that. And that is a failing of the department that established the redistricting Commission.

Thank you.

>> Sally: Thank you for providing public comment to the Commission.

Next in line is Abigail Clark.

Please allow a moment for our staff to unmute you.

>> Ms. Clark: Sorry that was really slow converting over.

Hi.

My name is Abbie Clark. I'm a voting from Lansing.

And I was also going to comment on the revised public hearing list.

I thought it was really nice in the revision of the list to add more meetings to make the hearings more accessible to people in the Northern and more rural areas of the state.

Because I think access to these hearings is really important.

But like a lot of people have said, it really does need to be based on population.

Now, the balance is way off because way more people live in the southern half of the lower peninsula, and especially in Southeast Michigan even lost a hearing in the revised list.

So I would just ask I think it's wonderful that the four hearings were added up north, but I really think we need to add four more in the southern half of the lower peninsula.

Especially because so much of the line drawing is going to be really tough is going to be in the denser Metro areas.



So hearing from those communities of interest, that line drawing work and those places is going to be very complex. So hearing a lot from people in our high population centers is really going to be important to informing the work that the Commission has to do.

Thank you very much for the opportunity.

>> Sally: Thank you for addressing the Commission.

Next in line to provide public comment is Tameka Ramsey. Please allow a moment for our staff to unmute you.

>> Ms. Ramsey: Thank you my name is Tameka Ramsey. I'm from Pontiac, Michigan. I'm also the codirector of Michigan Voices.

I see there are very little meetings taking place in Northern Oakland County. I would just like to echo what I've heard from many of the speakers. Is that we need to focus on what the primary communities of interest are. And then where population sits.

I believe that everybody deserves a voice, but I also believe that the people who will be directly impacted should have more say in some of these meetings that are occurring across the state.

Thank you.

>> Sally: Thank you for providing comment to the Commission.

Next in line is Judy Daubenmier. I hope I pronounced your name correctly. Please allow a moment for our staff to unmute you.

>> Ms. Daubenmier: My name is Judy Daubenmier. I'm from Brighton, Michigan. And I want to thank the Commission for this opportunity to speak today.

I too am concerned about the number and locations of the proposed public hearings that you are considering today.

It is, I understand from your last discussion, that there was a desire to make it easier for people in the more sparsely populated areas to drive to locations.

But I think you have overlooked the possibility that many people in Southeast Michigan will find it difficult to attend a meeting.

There is only one meeting per some of the Congressional districts; whereas, the first Congressional district has five dates to choose from.

That means the people in Southeast Michigan are going to be packed in to just a few hearings.

And the time to wait for your turn to speak is going to be very, very long. Many people will just give up and go home and you will never hear from them, if they are able to make it on the one date that is allocated for their area.

So since Southeast Michigan has half of the population of the state, I would think that they should have half the hearing dates as well.

So that you get to hear from a wide variety of people and not just hear from a small segment in Northern Michigan.

So, again, I'd like to see more hearings in Southeast Michigan, at least four more, so that you can hear from some of those communities of interest that are going to be greatly affected by the line drawing.

Again, thank you for this opportunity to speak and for the work that you are doing.  
Bye.

>> Sally: Thank you for addressing the Commission.

Next in line is Carl Baxter.

Please allow a moment for the staff to unmute you.

Looks like there is a slight lag with this one.

Carl, are you with us?

All right. I'm getting a message he is coming over.

Sounds like this one is just a delayed.

Carl, are you with us?

Carl, if you could please unmute yourself and turn on your video.

We will move on to the next person, Carl.

And come back to you.

Next up is Dennis Black. Please allow a moment for our staff to unmute you.

Oh, there we have Carl, Carl, can you hear us?

>> Mr. Baxter: Yes, I can hear you. Can you hear me?

>> Sally: Go ahead.

>> Mr. Baxter: Thank you very much and I'm not sure what happened there.

I want to thank this body for allowing me an opportunity to speak and for the work that you are undertaking.

As has been said previously, being a lifelong Detroit, it's important that my community, but not only my community but communities in my Congressional district, have an opportunity to weigh in on the things that are going to occur with the work that you are going to be doing.

As has been said before, having, wanting one meeting that constituents like myself can attend to in the 13th Congressional District is a little disheartening; whereas, I am all for voices being heard and my rural neighbors in Northern Michigan. Also it's important not only my neighbors here in Southeastern Michigan be heard. And it's an opportunity for our young people to, you know, if not engage themselves in this process by speaking, but also learning how this process can help them out as they become voters in Michigan.

So I hope this body considers adding meetings, that would help hear those voices and allow those young people to witness democracy happen during that time before they actually become voters.

So, once again, thank you very much for this opportunity. And I appreciate the work that this body is undertaking.

>> Sally: Thank you. Next in line is Toson Knight. And I hope I pronounced your name correctly.

Please allow a moment for our staff to unmute you.

Apologies, it seems like we are experiencing some Zoom delays.

Mr. Knight, if you could, Mr. Knight.

>> Mr. Knight: Hello.

>> Sally: Can you hear us?

>> Mr. Knight: I can hear you now. Sorry about that.

>> Sally: Go ahead and feel free to turn on your video. You have to minutes.

>> Mr. Knight: Okay. I don't want to take much of your time. And I want to say what many others have said, we believe there should definitely be more hearings in the Detroit area, specifically the 13th Congressional District where there is none to be held. So I would just ask that you all please just consider that ask as, you know, redistricting, the entire reason we did this is so everyone will have a voice and we definitely want to have people that are underrepresented a voice in this process.

Thank you. Have a wonderful day.

>> Sally: Thank you for providing your thoughts to the Commission.

Next in line is Nicole Small. And please allow a moment for our staff to unmute you.

>> Ms. Small: Hi.

Can you hear me?

>> Sally: Yes, please feel free to turn on your video and address the Commission.

>> Ms. Small: Thank you.

The whole purpose of this process is to make sure you are inclusive of voters, that is why I called.

Voters not politicians. So one would think that you would concentrate at least a good portion of the hearings where you have the most densely populated voter.

For me, I don't understand whoever created this list, what they were thinking.

But I'm asking that this board seriously consider making it more balanced and accessible to the areas in Southeastern Michigan and Metro Detroit where you have a larger portion of voters.

It is really critical that we continue the momentum we built in 2020 to keep voters engaged. And what I see is an opportunity or an effort to exclude a lot of the voting population of which just came out in 2020.

So, again, we need more hearings in the Metro Detroit area.

>> Sally: Thank you for providing your comments to the Commission.

Next in line is Jennifer Goosen. Please allow a moment for our staff to unmute you.

>> Ms. Goosen: Good afternoon. It's a pleasure to address the Commission this afternoon. And I want to thank you for your service to the people of Michigan and to the protection of our democratic process where in all power the vested in the people.

I'm here to add my support to the other members of the public who expressed concern about the currently proposed locations for Commission meetings.

Southeast Michigan is home to nearly 60% of households in Michigan.

And only a quarter of the meetings are scheduled to be there.

That sounds all too familiar, unfortunately. As is now well-known our current Congressional districts were gerrymandered to pack Black and Latino Michiganders in the 13th and 14th districts, both of which are located in Southeast Michigan. Disenfranchising the many communities in this region is in violation of the spirit of the amendment as it was passed as a requirement that the process must respect the provisions of the Voting Rights Acts as written in the amendment itself. So arguably it also violates the letter of the amendment.

Luckily this problem is easily correctable. And I trust that the Commission will direct its plans accordingly.

Thank you.

>> Sally: Thank you for addressing the Commission.

Next in line is Erik Shelley. Please allow a moment for our staff to unmute you.

Please unmute yourself, Mr. Shelley.

You have two minutes.

>> Mr. Shelley: Good afternoon. Yes, my name is Erik Shelley. I'm a resident of Redford. I ran for Congress in the 11th District in 2008.

Not so much because I was expecting to win but simply because I hoping to meet with my representative who had been avoiding me for the previous year.

When I ran for Congress, I decided to investigate my district and found something I call McCotters polyp, which is a little bubble in the bottom of the district that ran across the street, I think it was Cherry Hill Road, into a trailer park, picked up the trailers in the back of the park and left the ones in the front alone and then went back to Cherry Hill and ran down the road.

This is the microscopic level, the granular level that districts are drawing. And this is where the game is actually played in redistricting.

As I've learned since then, the way that gerrymandering works is that a heat sink is created where all of the votes of one party are jammed into one spot and all of the opponents are kind of picked off. And we find this sort of thing happening much more in the southeast district where the game is actually played as opposed to the Upper Peninsula, which is actually all one district. And there is no way to redistrict that. That is never going to change.

Asking how they want their district changed is kind of pointless. The game is played where the most people are and the most people are in the southeastern portion of Michigan.

And also, I'd like to point out I believe you skipped over Dennis Black. Thank you for your time.

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>> Sally: Thank you for much for providing comment to the Commission.

And next in line is Nick O'Keefe. And please allow a moment for our staff to unmute you.

>> Mr. O'Keefe: Hello. I would also like to lift up that Dennis Black has still not been able to speak yet. But I would just like to -- I was rolling through the list of potential meetings, and this is where y'all are having meetings.

It's Alpena, population of 10,000.

Sue Saint Marie, population of 13,000. Gaylord, population of 3600. Cadillac, population of 10,000. Benton Harbor, population of 10,000. That is five meetings with a total population of 37,000; whereas, Detroit gets one meeting for 700,000.

And this is where we continue to misstep when we try to look at equality.

We try and make things equal across the board. And cities like Detroit, the Blackest city in America, continue to be neglected and left out of the situation.

Why does Gaylord get a meeting? I'm not saying they should not have one, but I'm saying look at this equally. Let's look at this one and make sure that these meetings that they attend, can you imagine a meeting, one meeting in Detroit? The people of Gaylord, every single one of them will be heard and will be way over their two minutes and y'all won't even care. Whereas Detroit people are going to drop off immediately because they are going to be waiting for hours.

This is not just.

And it's at the TCF Center, which is downtown, a half hour from a lot of Detroiters, if they have a car.

These need to be spread out. There need to be more of them. You all really need to consider the needs of Detroiters who have not been heard in the past and need a voice in this process, in this state, and what we do because that is our hub.

That is the backbone of Michigan.

And I would like to lift up once again Dennis Black was still not heard. And thank you for letting me speak.

>> Sally: Thank you for addressing the Commission.

I'd like to Commissioners and the public to know that Mr. Dennis Black did leave the meeting virtually.

So we are unable to call on him as with any person who signs up for public comment who is not in the virtual space.

Next in line is Dr. Wanda Goodnough. I hope I pronounced your name correctly.

Please allow our staff a moment to unmute you.

>> Ms. Goodnough: Well, good afternoon. This is the first meeting I'm attending. And I really don't have a question, but I just find it interesting that we are having such problems. Let me see if I can get it to go.

Is it going to work?

There we go.

I just don't understand what the problem is about having a meeting for everyone so that everybody can be informed about what's going on worldwide.

That's my question.

This is my first meeting. And all I'm hearing is that people need to know what's going on. And they need to have a fair space to have their time to speak.

Thank you very much.

>> Sally: Thank you for addressing the Commission.

Next in line is Layla Nasher. Please allow a moment for our staff to unmute you.

Please unmute yourself.

>> Ms. Nasher: Okay, can we all hear and see me now?

>> Sally: Yes. You have two minutes.

>> Ms. Nasher: Thank you so much. Hello, my name is Layla Nasher. And I'm a student organizer and a resident in the 13th Congressional District. And I also wanted to raise a concern regarding the number of hearings scheduled both in my district and in the City of Detroit.

We all know Detroit is Michigan's largest city in terms of people and land area.

And the only hearing scheduled is on one end of the city.

And we all know that this provides a huge accessibility issue for the hundreds of thousands of Detroiters and needs to be changed.

By not providing equal access to these hearings you are diminishing the voices and concerns of by POC residents which makes up a majority of Detroit's population. And this makes absolutely no sense to me. I'm very disproportioned that in 2021 we are still pushing for the recognition of Black and Brown voices. Half of Michigan's population lives in Metro Detroit. But right now there are more hearings outside of Metro Detroit. And this may be intentional or it might not be. But one thing is clear and that is that this is extremely bias and harmful to the Black and Brown communities that will be most impacted by redistricting.

Thank you.

>> Sally: Thank you for addressing the Commission.

Next in line is Tom Higgins.

Please allow a moment for our staff to unmute you.

>> Mr. Higgins: Okay, I hope you can hear me.

>> Sally: Yes.

>> Mr. Higgins: Thank you for this opportunity and thank you for the work that the Commission is doing at redistricting, I believe is a critical aspect of our democracy.

The questions or the points have been made many times already, so I won't overstate it.

But the under representation is a concern.

And I guess I have a question for the Commission.

Will this concern or question be addressed during today's meeting?

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>> Thank you.

>> Steve: Stay tuned. You will find out.

That concludes our public comment for today.

>> Steve: Thank you, Sally, for helping us. And thank -- I would like to thank all of the people who spoke to us today.

Rest assured that we have heard you and that this is a subject that we continue to review and look at.

If you have been watching our meetings you know that we are on our second set of potential meetings.

And my -- I'm pretty sure that is not going to be the final.

So we continue to work on it.

And we hear your concerns.

And we will see where we end up.

Okay, new business, census and Bureau of elections.

Who has that?

>> Julianne: Let me unmute myself, Mr. Chair.

That would be me.

Good afternoon.

The Commission remains focused on meeting its constitutional responsibilities in a transparent and fair redistricting process.

And continues to make progress towards those goals.

However, additional delays of redistricting data from the United States Census Bureau will impact the Commission's future work.

The Commission has requested legal options to address the now twice delayed results of census data that is critical for the completion of its redistricting activities.

The current anticipated release date of census data is September 30th of 2020.

This represents a six-month delay from the deadlines set forth if Federal Law for receipt of redistricting data, which is currently set at March 31st.

This creates an unavoidable conflict in timing of the redistricting process as well as the downstream election processes for state, county and local elections officials.

This afternoon I would like to accomplish four things.

First, to identify the critical timing issue.

Second, present how it effects the MICRC and Michigan's elections.

Third, outline my recommendation to the Commission.

And, lastly, respond to the Commission's questions and receive direction from the Commission.

First, the critical timing issue.

The Subsection 7 of the Constitution explicitly

States the MICRC must adopt redistricting plans by November 1 of 2021.

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The key timing trigger that is in conflict with the delayed receipt of data is contained in Subsection 14.

Subsection 14 provides that prior to a vote to adopt any plan that the MICRC is required to provide public notice of each plan that will be voted on and provide a minimum of 45 days for public comment on those proposed plans.

This would require the proposed plans be published and available for public comment on or before Friday, September 17th, which is 45 days prior to the deadline of November 1st.

So how does the delayed receipt of data affect the Commission?

The inherent conflict between the latest possible date for publication and public comment, which is on or before September 17th, and the anticipated receipt of census data by the states on September 30th.

There is also a time lapse between the receipt of census data to the states and the state's processing of that data for redistricting use.

There is also a time delay there, which brings us back to the November 1st deadline date.

This date is critical to the MICRC because it must adopt plans by that date per the Constitution.

November 1st is also critical to the Michigan Department of State and the Michigan Bureau of Elections. So at this time I would like to welcome the Director of the Michigan Bureau of elections, Mr. Jonathan Brater to provide an overview how the work -- how the work of his department cannot begin until the redistricting maps are adopted and effected. Mr. Brater.

>> Mr. Brater: Well, thank you very much.

This is Jonathan Brater. I'm unable to start my video.

So I don't know. There we go.

Good afternoon to all of you.

My name is Jonathan Brater and I'm the Director of Michigan Bureau of Elections. First, I want to just thank all of you for your service to the State of Michigan.

It's a real honor to be able to speak with you this afternoon and tell you a little bit about how the work we do follows the work you do in getting us ready for the 2022 election.

So I do have some slides and I'm going to try to share with you.

And to hopefully get this up so you can see it.

Okay. Hopefully everyone is seeing my screen.

>> Yes.

>> Mr. Brater: Okay. Great, so the Michigan Bureau of Elections is part of the Michigan Department of State.

And our role is to support the Secretary of State in her capacity as Michigan's Chief Election Officer.



And in doing that we administer elections in support of Michigan's 1520 city and township clerks along with our 83 county clerks who run our elections.

Elections are run at the local level in Michigan.

So the city and township clerks primarily run elections, but the county clerks also have important roles in elections as well including importantly printing of ballots and also programming the voting machines that actually count those ballots.

Where we -- as relevant to what you are all doing is that we maintain the state database, which is the qualified voter file which I will talk about in a bit, that is used to do a lot of election functions but including making sure people get the right ballots. So what I'm going to talk about today is the work we do when you're done drawing the maps so that all of those maps that you have drawn and all of the districts that have cut across the state are properly reflected in the ballot that each and every Michigander gets when they go to vote in elections in 2022.

So basically, we need to turn those maps into ballots.

So, you know, the basic flow, what you see here is that you know after you complete drawing the maps, we start a process which does take several months at minimum in which we use the qualified voter file to take the districts you have drawn, put them in that qualified voter file and figure out, okay, where is everybody moved, where do all the registered voters need to go and what ballot should they be getting. So this involves, of course, the Congressional Districts, the State House Districts and the State Senate Districts that you are going to draw, but it includes other districts like County Commission and other local districts that you don't draw but will be changed as well and incorporated to make sure that everyone gets the right ballot.

So here is kind of an overview, kind of working back from election day on November 8, 2022 of all the things that will sort of happen going back to you drawing the lines.

So, of course, you know, the general election is not until November, but the maps you draw will impact the state primary election, which is in August.

And then Michigan elections really do operate over an extended period of time going back even before the August 2nd primary. So even though election day for the primary is on August 2nd people start voting a lot earlier than that.

So every Michigander under the state Constitution have the right if they applied to receive their absentee ballot 40 days before the election.

If you are military or overseas voter you actually get 45 days. So that is June 18th. To allow for that, we need to print ballots significantly earlier than that. So we start printing ballots about 60 days before the August primary, so that takes us to June 3, 2022.

And then, of course, you have to figure out who the candidates are for the ballots in the August primary. And so the deadline under State Law by which candidates who want to run on -- in a primary for Congress or for State House or for State Senate to do that is actually April 19th.

And so in that six-week period of time that is when we are looking at the signatures on the petitions that they filed to make sure they have enough signatures, to make sure that the people who signed those petitions actually live in the district, which is why we need to know where everyone is earlier than that.

And then so prior to that April 19th period, that is when we are trying to make sure that every registered voter gets in the right district.

We really need to have everyone in the right Congressional District in the right State House District and the right State Senate District by April 19th.

Because we, along with local clerks in some cases, are going to be looking at that list of voters to determine did the person who signed this petition to support this candidate who is running for office in a district, does that person actually live in that district or do they not?

So that will work backward and then to the time when the final maps are actually created.

And I'll just say on this point that typically, I'll come back to this later, but typically this process, for the reasons I'm going to explain, has taken about six months.

There is a lot that goes into updating our voter file within new districts and then actually looking at every registered voters' records and getting them in the right place.

And then getting that down to the local level.

It does typically take about six months.

So obviously, you know, the timing here is a major factor.

We are, of course, going to explore and streamline as much as we can the process. But we have to do it without sacrificing quality because we have to make sure that everybody gets the right ballot on election day.

And as the slide notes, there is about 5,000 different combinations of candidates and local proposals that are on the different ballots all across the state. So first there is a combination of, you know, you may be voting for this Congress, person running for Congress and State Rep and State Senator but also voting for a variety of other things, local offices, schools, County Commission, and so when you look at all those different combinations there is about 5,000 different combinations. And so we have to make sure that each and every person that goes to vote gets the right combination. And we need to check and check again. So there is a lot that goes into this process.

So what we use to do this is the qualified voter file.

This is a database that the Bureau of Elections maintains.

But local officials use it as well to conduct a variety of different election functions. So we maintain it.

But it's directly used by local and county clerks for voter registration, for figuring out what needs to go on the ballot, and a bunch of other purposes that I'm not going to get in to.

So one thing it has, of course, as the qualified voter file is a list of all the qualified and registered voters in the State of Michigan, that is almost 8 million. But, importantly, for each voter, it does not just have their name, it has a bunch of other information including all the districts that voter lives in. So if you look at someone's record on qualified voter file, it will tell you what Congressional district they are in, what state houses that they are in, what precinct they are in, and various other things. And by looking at the intersection of all of those points basically, we use that computer program, or more specifically the local officials do, to determine where that voter goes to vote and what is on their ballot. And that is really what we are going to be updating for the entire state after you do your work.

So the way that we do that is using the street index.

The street index is basically a list of all the registered voters' addresses in the entire state.

So it's not necessarily eight million addresses because we have multiple people who live at the same address.

But it's the addresses for the almost eight million registered voters that we have.

And so when we talk about taking the districts that you draw and putting them in the list and updating it, the first thing we have to do is we have to just take those district lines that are redrawn and we have to put those lines into the qualified voter file system so our system knows, okay, this line, you know, was over in this city and now it's over in that city. That is step one.

The second step, which takes a lot longer, is we have to look through the entire index of addresses, that is the street index.

The entire list of where everyone lives. And if anyone -- if any districts have changed for any person, we have to move them. We have to update the registration, so it reflects that.

So for some people it may not change at all. But for most people it is going to change at least in some way. So we may have to update their state house district. We might have to update their state Senate district.

Or more often we will actually have to update other things, which you don't draw but are affected by you, like what precinct they are in.

Because the municipal clerks, the local clerks will look at these districts when they are drawing their precincts, which are smaller, and so we have to go down to that level and actually update everybody's information for the election.

Now, there is a couple different ways we can do this.

It's not necessarily the case that we have to go into each of the eight million records, fortunately, and move them one by one.

There are some things that we can already do to streamline this.

One of this is what we call a global move.

And that is basically where we use a computer program to take all of the addresses that fit in a certain category and just move them in batch.

So, for example, everyone in the Upper Peninsula right now lives in the first Congressional district.

If in your maps they all live in the second Congressional district. We can just use the computer program to automatically move everyone in that, you know, section of the state from Congressional district one to Congressional district two.

We can also do that in a smaller scale.

So, for example, you know, right now East Lansing is in the 69th house district state house district. If they get moved under the new maps into the 70th house district, we can use a computer program to say, okay, everyone in East Lansing we change you from 69 to 70.

Now, that is a lot faster than going one by one. It still does take a lot of time because of the little geographic boundaries in Michigan. But it's, you know, a much more streamlined process than going one by one.

So that is what we try to do as much as possible. We try to do global or sort of semi-global moves where we can take big chunks of registrations and update them altogether.

But what takes a really long time after that is, we do have to do address by address adjustments. It's particularly the case with the smaller districts and the people who live along the edge of a district.

That's where sort of big batch moves don't work as well. And sort of if you think about it as a puzzle, you know, if you kind of live where the puzzle pieces fit together, it's much more likely that those bigger moves that we do are not going to work.

And we are going to have to actually go into your record, your individual voter registration record and make sure you are in the right places. So that is particularly common if a district cuts through jurisdictional lines, but it can happen in a lot of cases.

The other thing that we have to do, which is not, you know, which is not your responsibility but it's affected by what you do is the precinct changes.

So cities and townships will draw their precinct boundaries typically after the districts are set. And the main reason they do that is because they want to try to have the voting precincts have as much as possible everyone in that precinct getting the same ballot.

They try to avoid what they call a precinct split where you may be in the same voting precinct, but some people in that precinct are voting for, you know, one state representative and another is voting for another state representative.

So we have to put all those changes in after we put in the district changes.

And then the other thing that has to happen is that after we make the changes at the state level, the clerks also have to review this.

Especially the smaller districts, like the precincts, to make sure they are right.

And so there is a lot of back and forth in that process.

Both with the address by address adjustments.

With us checking our work and double checking our work. And then with the clerks checking it, that takes an extended period of time because we have to make sure we get this right.

We want to make sure as much as possible that every single person that goes to vote gets exactly the right candidates on their ballot and is voting in the right place.

So, again, while we will try to streamline this as much as we can, we cannot sacrifice the accuracy and the quality of the process.

So here is just kind of an overview basically just kind of a review what I talked about, about what this timeline looks for us. So this is where the date of the final maps is, of course, important. But typically the process of doing all those steps that I briefly ran through does take about six months.

So there is a lot of back and forth.

And, again, we've got to get that pretty much all in by April 19th.

We don't necessarily have to have all the precincts in, but we do need to know what districts everybody lives in by April 19th because that is when we start looking at, and the local officials start looking at, the candidates' petitions with signatures on them to make sure this person who signed the petition actually lives in their district.

And then that leads again to the processes that I talked about at the beginning where ballots get printed, voters have to have their ballots if they have applied for them either by June 18th or by June 23rd, depending if they are military or overseas, or not. And that all leads to the August 2nd primary election.

So, again, this is the process that we undertake to take the districts and the maps that are drawn and translate those all into 5,000 different types of ballots for almost eight million registered voters for both our August primary and then our November general election in 2022.

So there is going to be challenges of the timeline no matter what.

I know that, you know, in addition to what we are doing, I know that the Secretary of State is committed to, you know, trying to find as much time as possible for all parties involved.

But, certainly, you know, this is the timeline that historically it has taken and what we are looking at Bureau of Elections along with our local officials after the Commission completes the process of drawing the districts.

So thank you again and thank you for all the work you are doing.

>> Julianne: Thank you, Mr. Brater, for sharing your time and your expertise and particularly how the delayed census data will impact the Secretary of State and the Bureau of Elections' operations as well.

Next, I'd like to outline my recommendation to the Commission.

Based on the unavoidable impact of delayed census data, my recommendation is that the MICRC take proactive steps to address these critical timing issues by requesting

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extension from the Michigan Supreme Court from the current November 1st deadline to fulfill its duties while preserving all the other requirements set forth in the Constitution.

I also recommend that the Commission move forward in seeking that relief with co-plaintiffs with the Secretary of State with the two-prong interest in this being, one, the Secretary to the Commission. And, secondly, independently as the state elections officer.

So there are ways to seek proactive relief under the Michigan Constitution. The Michigan Supreme Court has original jurisdiction under Subsection 19 of the Constitution, as well as the Michigan Court Rules 7.303B6 which is discretionary as provided by Constitutional Law.

Excuse me, please.

The Constitution allows people to go before the Court and ask questions. In contrast the U.S. Supreme Court would not allow this to happen. But in Michigan what would this relief look like?

So I recommend filing an in re action, which is Latin for in the matter of. And it refers to a case without an opposing party. So we would not be suing anyone. It would be the MICRC and the Secretary of State jointly asking the Supreme Court for relief identifying the issue, again, the timing issue on the creation of maps and the redistricting work of the Commission. And then the important work also in the election arena that the Secretary needs to engage in after those maps are adopted and effective.

The Michigan Supreme Court is the only entity that can provide this relief to the Commission particularly.

At this time it does not make sense to the State of Ohio, has sued the Census Bureau for release of the data. But really what we are seeking is relief of the November 1st deadline.

So that would not be the preferred course of action or my recommended course of action.

So given the unavoidable impact of the census delay, as well as the critical nature of the adopted plans and their use in elections beginning with the 2022 election cycle, I would recommend, again, that the MICRC proactively seek this relief in tandem with the Secretary of State in bringing us the strongest path forward to get that relief.

If the MICRC elects to move forward today, that would just be the step. The first step would be authorizing the drafting of the pleadings. In the very near future I would be coming back to the Commission for seeking authorization on what those amended dates that the Commission would like. So those options would be brought forward to the Commission in the very near future, but for separate action.

To close my comments I would like to reiterate to our stakeholders, which are all of the residents of the State of Michigan, that the present work of the MICRC can and will

continue uninterrupted while we address the census delay issues in the manner in which the Commission determines.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

>> Steve: Thank you. And question for you, Julianne, you are proposal an in re action, which is kind of a question to the Court, and we want to do something. Why wouldn't we file a mandamus action asking the Court to order something done?

>> Julianne: So the mandamus action, in California they sought mandamus by requiring their Secretary of State to accept maps past the deadline, and that is the way the Supreme Court structured their relief.

In here, I believe it's better rather than trying to compel action that we ask the Court for relief jointly. And we can address the deadlines that are meaningful to both the Secretary's Office and the Commissions work without creating any of that -- not friction, but without presenting it as a conflict, that we are joined, asking and seeking for preemptive relief, Mr. Chair, is the word I'm trying to say.

>> Steve: So, in other words, to put it another way, we are asking permission and we don't want to have an adverse, adversarial relationship with the Secretary of State or the Bureau of Elections or anybody else.

>> Julianne: Correct. And, going further, if the Commission elects, as you have the discretion to do as your counsel, I take direction from the Commission on the options that are offered to you. And what I will say is that if the Commission does not take proactive steps to address the census issue, which is unavoidable, this is September 17th and September 30th, there is no way that this can be resolved in any other way.

If the Commission does not act, we open ourselves up to a mandamus action filed by a third-party trying to compel us to do our work. So I anticipate that this question would appear before the Court in some fashion. And I would recommend that the Commission act as the only entity in the State of Michigan that has this responsibility and who is first impacted by this delayed census data that we act proactively and with the Secretary of State to seek relief.

>> Steve: Would rather be first than reactive. Thank you. Brittini, can you help us with the discussion?

>> Brittini: Absolutely.

I laugh because I knew Doug was going to comment.

Doug, I would love to hear what you have to say.

>> Doug: Yeah, I mean, I fully agree with Julianne.

>> Brittini: Uh-huh.

>> Doug: You know, if we don't take action, we are going to become victims basically. And it's going to get dictated to us. So I think it's prudent for us to take the action. And I also think it's prudent for us to have ownership of the documentation, or whatever we send over to the Supreme Court.

The reason being that if we have ownership of the document or the pleading, or whatever the legal term is, we get to draft the terms that we think are in our favor, at least going to the Supreme Court.

If we let the Secretary of State do the draft, and we piggyback off of that, and we may not get all the criteria that we are looking for into that document.

So I think it's prudent for us to take ownership of it. And I hate to put more work on you, Julianne, but have Julianne actually do that work as we move forward. I think that would be in our best interest as well.

I've learned over the years when I've been involved with legal disputes and contractual discussions with and negotiations that ownership of the documentation is key.

And Julianne and I have had a discussion on this and she can probably comment more on it. But I think it would be prudent for us to do that and move forward in that direction. So I yield back, Brittini.

>> Brittini: Thank you, Doug.

Julianne, would you like to squeeze in quickly and then Dustin?

>> Julianne: I appreciate that, Vice Chair. Quickly for the benefit of the members of the public, what Doug was referring to, that I discussed with him, was if the Commission decides not to act at this time and the Secretary of State's office, again, they have an independent interest as the Chief Elections Officer, if they filed a petition for relief with the Michigan Supreme Court, we could then intervene or join into that and seek relief. But, again, it would be at a later time.

So in this what I'm offering is that we, again, move forward and take the lead on this critical issue. Thank you.

>> Brittini: You're welcome. Dustin.

>> Dustin: So I just have a question again because I'm not a lawyer or pretend to be. But you mentioned Ohio sued the Census Bureau for release of the data.

If we ask the Supreme Court for relief as opposed to like asking them for an order to do something, couldn't they come back and say, sure, but you're going to have to sue the census Bureau for the data first and see how that goes?

Again, I don't know. It just popped into my head. Could that be something?

>> Julianne: That is an excellent question. And, again, the relief I'm proposing is just one course of action.

So the course that I'm proposing brings the Commission direct relief from the date that, that is the critical timing issue, that backdates the 45 days to the September 17th.

Certainly, there could be an action that we could join in against the Census Bureau. But what Ohio did is they sued the Census Bureau to compel the release of the data by March 31st, which is the current deadline date. Congress has not extended that date.



So when we talk about the redistricting dating coming July 30th and then the Census Bureau said now it's September 30th, and really that expectation is that is a conservative date, that that is a target that can be met.

But I would also like to state or it could not be met.

We really don't have that information.

So, in my mind, for us to expend resources and time to compel the Census Bureau to give us something arguably we wouldn't want right now anyway, the only thing worse than no data is data that has not been properly vetted.

So, again, I think it's a great question, Dustin. And just because the Commission would be considering or taking an action now does not preclude us from taking future action in a different form.

My goal, again, is that relief from that November 1st deadline, which is critical to the secretary's work.

Again, the November 1st deadline is critical to the Commission because it's in the Constitution as the deadline.

But the reason November 1st was picked is because it aligns with the elections law and the elections work. Thank you.

>> Dustin: So then, follow-up question, is -- the Supreme Court can -- I was under the assumption that the only way you could amend or change something that was in the Constitution would be an act through the Michigan Congress.

The Supreme Court can actually say, okay, fine, we will just cut this out this time and be okay with it?

>> Julianne: So the Constitution can get amended by a voter initiative like proposal 18-2 for the Commission. And, unfortunately, that timing doesn't allow.

So some of the statutory deadlines that the Secretary of State has in elections law, theoretically the legislature could modify those dates. But they are not able to modify the November 1st date for us.

We have to seek relief from the Supreme Court.

>> Justin: Okay. Thank you.

>> Brittini: Thank you. Dustin and Julianne / I have Anthony and then Richard.

>> Anthony: Thank you, Brittini.

So first I want to say I am completely in support of taking this action.

I think a proactive approach is much better than a reactive approach.

And getting this date changed, you know, to a later date is going to, you know, produce the best results for our Commission.

There is an interesting dichotomy here because on one hand we obviously want the census data as soon as possible.

But on the other hand we also want the census data to be accurate to where people live so that we can make maps that are truly representative of those people.

Now, through no fault of this Commission, what the census is saying is that it's going to take more time for them to have an accurate, you know, data pool of where everybody is.

When this law was created in 2018, I don't think anyone could have predicted a global pandemic to happen and also the administrative issues that the Census Bureau has talked about and their reasoning for why they have to delay the data. You know, I don't think anyone could have predicted any of that to happen.

So I think it's quite a reasonable ask to get the date pushed a little bit.  
So I definitely agree with this course of action.

But I would also suggest that we might want to take a second concurrent course of action as a Commission.

I say as well as doing this, how about we also try to advocate a little bit?

We have the ability to write the Census Bureau.

We have the ability to write the people in the U.S. Senate that control the Federal Bureau. And let's let them know how we feel and that we need, you know, accurate data to come and, you know, maybe let them know we are taking this action and why we are taking this action.

I think doing both of those methods could probably produce the best results.

>> Brittini: Thank you, Anthony. Richard?

>> Richard: Julianne, I like your idea greatly.

I also like Doug's and I like Anthony's.

I just kind of maybe one question. Let's say we do this and we get our relief and we get a date or something, what would happen if per chance they now say, well, a date is going to be later than September?

Then what?

>> Julianne: Brittini, I'm going to jump in if that is okay.

>> Brittini: That is what I was anticipating.

>> Julianne: I did not want to overstep at all.

And, Richard, that is also an excellent question. And I want to be clear, too, what we are asking the Court to do, and this get back to Dustin's question so I want to make sure I'm clear, is the Supreme Court cannot change the November 1st date in the Constitution.

What the Supreme Court can say is oh, my goodness this legal impossibility of getting the data September 30th or, as your question, Richard, a later date, how can the Commission meet its constitutional duties so in the 2030 Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission it will be a November first date and we will all send good wishes to the future Commission that they get their data on or before March 31st as ours should be delivered.

But for the delays.

So what I would recommend is that when we ask for the question for relief that we include language or any additional days of Federal delay.

So that way it would incorporate if we are given a set number of days that that date would move in conjunction with whatever the date is from September 30th that we actually get the data.

Because, again, the data has to be -- has to be processed before the Commission gets it.

The Commission does its work.

The maps have to be -- sit for the date, until they are effective, and then the Secretary has their responsibilities and rules.

So that would be my answer to that question, Richard, is we would have one ask and look for guidance one time.

>> Richard: Thank you.

>> Brittini: Thank you, Richard. And thank you, Julianne again. And, Cynthia.

>> Cynthia: Thanks for asking that question, Richard.

That was what I was wondering as well.

And very good explanation, Julianne.

I think that this is our best course of action and I appreciate your hard work.

>> Brittini: Thank you, Cynthia. MC.

>> MC: I was going to move the resolution that we, yeah, take this course of action.

>> Brittini: You read my mind, yep, because I trust Julianne. I'm listening to my fellow Commissioners. And I think it's very smart to be ahead than behind.

I have seconds and thirds and all sorts of in agreement. So MC made the motion. And, Julianne, go ahead.

>> Julianne: I just wanted to say briefly thank you for those comments.

I've been thinking about this as an option since I interviewed, since maybe even before I interviewed, so I really appreciate the comments.

>> Brittini: It seems like it. And thank you for being astute and being very forward thinking. I appreciate that.

>> Steve: Okay. We have a motion and a second to adopt the resolution that Julianne has put forward regarding filing an in re action with the Michigan Supreme Court.

>> Brittini: Who second?

>> Dustin: I will second it.

>> Brittini: Dustin, second, okay.

>> Steve: And is there any further discussion?

Hearing none, all in favor of the resolution raise your hand.

[ Hands raised ]

Passes unanimously. Thank you, Julianne, for the good work on that. And we will look forward to reading your excellent pleadings.

Okay, unfinished business, proposed market research contract.

Edward.

>> Edward: Mr. Chair, are you okay if we take a five-minute recess?

>> Steve: I'm certainly okay with that.

Let's take ten.

>> Edward: Thank you.

>> Steve: Be back at 2:30.

[ Recess ]

We are waiting on Cynthia.

Cynthia is now back.

Okay, all right, Anthony.

>> Anthony: Yes, Mr. Chair, given the shortened meeting time allotment that we have today, I'd like to motion to amend the agenda would that be appropriate to do at this time?

>> Steve: Sure.

We talked about doing that at the front end.

What is your motion?

>> Anthony: Yes. I'm very thankful that we had so many people speak to us because the public comment is vital to the work of this Commission.

But it did take a little bit of time.

I would like to motion to flip-flop A and B on unfinished business just to be sure that we speak about the proposed public meeting schedule before our time is up.

>> Dustin: I second that motion.

>> Steve: Rhonda?

>> Rhonda: I hear what Anthony is saying, but I honestly think that discussion might be a little bit longer. And I know last week we put off Edward's for the marketing, and it's something that he kind of needs to know about. And I honestly believe when it comes to discussing meetings it's probably going to take more than 30 minutes in all honesty.

That is just my feeling.

>> Steve: Sure. Dustin.

>> Dustin: I think we have an obligation to address the people that actually commented today. And if it goes a little bit longer, it goes a little bit longer, that is my opinion on the matter.

>> Brittni: I would have to agree. I think we could quickly talk about give Edward an answer so he doesn't have delay. And I think it's imperative that we address the other line item today.

>> Steve: Who made the motion?

Juanita. And who seconded the motion?

Dustin. All right. Is there any further discussion?

All right. Then the motion is that we take up Item 6B first and then 6A.

If you will adopt that motion, raise your hand.

[ Hands raised ]

And if you would not adopt the motion, raise your hand.

[ Hands raised ]

12345. I don't believe it passes, so go ahead.

>> Juanita: Can I ask a question?

>> Steve: You sure can.

>> Juanita: Okay. You are talking about, okay, I'm still a little -- I'm in agreement of giving Mr. Woods his answer and then we can do whatever we have to do after that, if you all want to amend the meeting.

Because I realize how important that is.

>> Steve: Okay. Edward 6A proposed market research contract.

>> Edward: Thank you so much and thank you, Mr. Chair, and members of the Commission.

Nod your head and let me know if you can see the proposal on the screen.

Everybody can see it, great, and then I will go to this is with regards to the market research.

Just as a reminder, last week we had Mike Brady, the Chief Legal Officer for the Department of State, to share a little bit about the procurement and what we did, so just wanted to highlight that in terms of how we are making sure competitive pricing.

For our communications plan, when you are doing a communications plan, the research, the market research drive to creation and development of the communications plan, what we are trying to achieve is a clear and consistent public message on how to engage Michigan residents and redistricting process, our target age is 18 of age and older.

When and how you will reach them will come from the research.

What message you will aim to get across will also come through the research. And what is the best communications channel to reach our target audience will also come to the research.

Mind you, the market research will include rural suburban areas and rural areas, the complete State of Michigan.

The deliverables as we talked about last week, through a representative sample the contractor would develop and execute a survey to measure perceptions of awareness, transparency and engagement of Michigan residents and the redistricting process.

We provided a statement of work.

We utilized and piggybacked and reached out to all four contractors who on the list. We received two proposals and the recommendations to the commission, Mr. Chair, is to accept Brogan & Partners for market research \$26,000. It's a 600 representative

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sample telephone, cell phone survey that provides a margin of error of plus or minus 4% with a 95% level of confidence.

This proposal is a thousand dollars less than the proposals submitted by the other contractor, that was only going to do online survey, which we were concerned about, because we wanted to make sure that we didn't have any issues with digital divide. And so by having the phone survey, that takes care of that issue. So the recommendation from staff is to accept this market research from Brogan & Partners for \$26,000.

>> Steve: Does anybody have any questions for Edward?

Rhonda.

>> Rhonda: Not so much a question but a concern.

When we are talking about 600 telephone surveys and \$26,000, that seems like a lot to me.

And I'm thinking in terms of take myself for instance, if I get a phone call and I don't know who it's from I usually don't answer it.

If it's a telemarketer, I usually block the number.

So my concern is, is that truly something that we need for the cost? I guess would be my question.

>> Edward: Well, in order to -- Commissioner Lange, in order to get the proper marketing communications and marketing plan to identify what is needed, we have to hear from the people.

And if people -- unfortunately, I understand you are concerned about not picking up, they will call somebody else until they get someone to make sure we have the representative sample.

>> Brittini: Dustin or Doug.

>> Doug: Go ahead.

>> Dustin: From a mathematical standpoint, 600 phone calls is not going to be enough to get a representative calculation, a representative sample of the State of Michigan,

Personally, because who knows where those 600 calls are going to go. Granted I can say those are going to be targeted, but if you target them it's not a random sampling anymore. And for 26,000 I feel like that is or 26,000 I feel like that is very expensive for that. And it doesn't really -- it may not be as random as you think it may be.

Because every one of them could potentially go to the UP, for example if it's statistically randomized and it could happen. Or everything could be in the lower peninsula and everything could be in Midland.

Based again with the statistician mindset, I don't know. I don't see it necessary, unfortunately.

And, again, it's me. And I do think that the public should have a voice, but that is what our meetings are for. And I'm sure people will know what we are doing and how to get in contact with us.

I would be much more or more inclined to put up billboards and say hey, this is how you can reach us if you have any questions because people drive and read those things. So, but again, that is just me.

>> Edward: To be clear with you, Commissioner Witjes, it's a stratified random survey of the 14 Congressional districts in the state so you do have a true representative sample as relates to the methodology.

It's not just whosoever will.

>> Dustin: I missed the stratified part, I'm sorry.

>> Edward: So I just want to make sure, maybe I did not say that, so let me be clear, because we want to make sure if it's a rural area, suburban area or urban area that it truly represents the State of Michigan.

>> Steve: Rebecca?

>> Brittini: Go ahead, Rebecca, but let's not forget Doug, too.

>> Sorry, Doug, did you want to go first.

>> Doug: Go ahead.

>> Rebecca: So, Edward, can you explain how this will assist you in the marketing plan?

I think that might help the Commissioners understand the need for it.

So how will this data from your survey help you to build your marketing plan?

>> Edward: It will help us build the marketing plan in terms of identifying key messages. We want to have a clear and consistent message, so it does not matter what education background, where you live. We need to make sure we have clear messages as relates to redistricting.

I think the second thing is we need to identify communication channels. If people don't have a website and are not engaged in social media, what is the best way to reach them? Should we mail something to them? Should we establish robo calls? I mean there is just different things that we can do based upon identifying the best way to reach them. But I would not know how to do that unless I have the research.

I can't assume one size fits all.

I can't assume everyone is on the Internet.

I can't assume everyone watches television or listens to a particular radio station. I am trying to be efficient in terms of how we spend our paid media in terms of identifying the resources. I should say the way people access information.

>> Brittini: Thank you, Edward. So What I hear is audience analysis and kind of understand who we are dealing with basically.

I saw Cynthia, I saw Juanita and Doug.

>> Doug: I don't understand what we are marketing. Can you explain that?

>> Edward: I'm calling it really a communications plan. All we are trying to communicate is how to engage and participate in the redistricting process so that no one is left behind and everyone understands it.

>> Doug: Is there other alternatives for doing rather than spending 26,000?

For example, when I gave the presentation to the Berkeley City Council the other night, One of their questions was how do we get involved to make sure all the people in the Berkeley area understand this and are aware of it?

And I got the impression that they are going to take steps to do that for their community. So rather than spend \$26,000, are there other alternatives, Edward?

>> Edward: Well, assuming everyone has the same resource as Berkeley in terms of doing that. And knowing that we are trying to reach every corner of Michigan, whether it's rural, suburban or urban, I can't afford to make the assumption, and would not suggest the Commission makes the assumption that every municipal Government is going to the same thing as they are doing. And, therefore, I cannot also assume with regards to digital divide, it's not just in rural areas. It's also in urban and suburban areas and have one plan that accounts for gaps in communication. The market research brings the integrity to it as a representative sample versus me just making assumption.

>> Doug: Have you used this company before, Edward?

>> Edward: No. I have not used this company before.

>> Doug: I yield back.

>> Edward: I'm confident in their methodology and their approach and as they submitted it.

>> Doug: I yield back.

>> Brittini: Thank you, Doug. Thank you, Edward as well. And Juanita and then Cynthia if you still have questions.

>> Juanita: Yes. My question to Mr. Woods is: From listening to all the comments today and from knowing different people that I know, and I don't know people, I know some average kind of person to be honest. But nobody knows anything in Detroit hardly about the redistricting.

And I know that it's not being broadcast. Everyone say what are you working on and say what is that?

I'm talking to people with degrees.

They don't even know what it is.

So I'm for getting information out.

I noticed that the people in Romulus and people, we had three people that said Detroit is so behind and knowing what is going on. And I don't know why it is. And I even question our mayor, is he saying anything or what? I don't know, but nobody is talking about it in our state, in Detroit, Michigan, in our city. But I know that they are talking about it almost everywhere else, so I'm concerned and --



>> Brittini: Thank you, Juanita. And thank you, Cynthia.

>> Cynthia: So my question is: This is, this \$26,000 is just for information gathering and then the marketing plan would be a whole another cost, right?

>> Edward: Right. The communication plan we develop would be based off the market research, that is correct.

But we are -- with regards to that, that is absolutely correct.

>> Cynthia: Okay, so I wonder if we could maybe make use of as far as reaching out and finding out the things that this market research would find out, I wonder if we could use Commissioners, you know, we can do some work, and also, we've had a lot of people volunteer by e-mail, you know, sending comments, saying I would love to volunteer and help. We can use volunteers and maybe we can use students, interns. I know even some of the people that we interviewed as candidates for some of your positions said that they would be willing to help even though they didn't get the job. So I'm just wondering if there is a way that we could gather that information that we need without spending \$26,000.

>> Edwards: Well, I guess of the process is really what it is. So what I think, Commissioner Orton, and I understand the concern about finances, it would be easier for us to do the communications plan in house than it would be to do the market research, if that is what in terms of people are looking for a cost savings. But in terms of how we could do that, we would need the market research in order to make that happen. And that how we can cut our cost if we did the communications plan in house, if that is a concern.

>> Brittini: Thank you, Edward. Sue, Dustin and then Rebecca.

>> Sue: I think there is benefit to having a professional company do the research. The other real issue there is they will develop the questions and they will be much more timely. So unless you want to put off public hearings maybe another month for volunteers and Commissioners to go out and gather information and develop a survey, that would take a significant amount of time.

So we've put Edward a week behind since we didn't get to his item last month, last week.

He is trying to move things forward. And there are a lot of things that need to be done to get to the public hearings point.

So I think in the interest of timeliness this is a good investment for both time and money, my two cents worth.

>> Brittini: Great two cents. And I happen to agree so make it four cents. Dustin and Rebecca.

>> Dustin: I yield back.

>> Brittini: Okay, Rebecca.

>> Rebecca: I was asking Sue this earlier and I did not get a chance to connect to her with it, but I just sort of feel part of the problem here is I don't see that we have a

firm budget for Edward for marketing. And that creates some logistical difficulties for him because, you know, he needs to have the discussion to do what we hired him to do and to know what he has to spend and know what he doesn't have to spend. And this rolls into hearings, too. I mean, we are talking, we are bouncing between 10-30 hearings, but we don't have a budget for him on what he can spend. So I think this maybe something we need to consider down the road is giving him a budget so that he can then say, okay, this is \$26,000 but I have a \$3 million budget and I think it's worth it and it's going to save me X amount of time and give him the discretion to do that. So I think this is sort of revealing a bigger issue we have here which we need to give him a budget to work with.

>> Brittini: Yeah, I would agree, Rebecca.

Doug, and then Sue.

>> Doug: Yeah. I would like to put forward a motion that we vote on providing a \$26,000 to Edward.

>> Dustin: I will second that.

>> Steve: We don't need a third, MC, but we will note it.

Is there any further discussion?

Hearing none, all in favor of the \$26,000 for market research raise your hand.

[ Hands raised ]

All opposed the same sign.

It passes.

Proposed public hearings.

Obviously, we have heard and read significant comment on our proposed public hearings or lack thereof.

Or misplaced hearings as some people would say.

So, Edward, do you want to speak to us to start this off with what we've got and then we will go into discussion?

I'm not ignoring you, Richard; but I thought I would give Edward a chance first.

>> Edward: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I was organizing my presentation.

During the break we had a chance to talk. And we want to look at our proposed hearings, but we also wanted to take into consideration some of the comments, so I will go through this presentation quickly and then share a recommendation.

As you already know in the Constitution, before Commissioners can draft any plan, the Commission shall hold at least ten public hearings throughout the state.

You know, the purpose is to inform the public about the process, the purpose and responsibilities of the Commission, as well as solicit information from the public about potential plans.

As you know, our public hearing Commission conducts the hearings in a manner that invites wide public participation of the State. The Commission shall use technology to

provide contemptuous public observation and meaningful public and participation in the redistricting process during all meetings and hearings.

Just so we have some -- oh, I took that off a little bit too early. Hold on. Let me put that back on the screen.

The public hearing process, just so you have an idea what is going on, we are trying to do a marketing and promotional. And thank you for the market research with regards to that. We want to develop an MICRC brand.

And one of the things that I really wanted to share with you today is a logo. And I'll share that after we get done with this discussion that we can use to identify the Commission.

We've already started, as you know, in March our outreach to local and county Governments. And thank you for each and every one of you that signed up and participating. We started doing presentations to local groups. We want to ramp that up in earnest in April. And then the idea is to create and execute the marketing and promotional plan.

And all of this is done to drive people to our public hearings. From a logistic standpoint we have to look at site. In terms site we have to look at sanitization because of COVID-19. We also have to look at parking.

You know, there is a sense amongst us that we believe that people should not have to pay for parking in order to come to the meetings.

We have to look at audio visual in terms of audio visual in terms of needs. The length of the public hearing.

At what time should we start it?

Should it be at 8:00 a.m. or 10:00 a.m. and go to 8:00 p.m. so we can accommodate people who work first, second, and third shifts?

What is the will of the Commission in terms of doing that?

Another thing is cost.

We have to pay for traveling in terms of mileage, Lodging, food. And then also working with volunteers who can assist us in staffing these public hearings.

So this is just a summary of just the process just to get a public hearing going so that we can get the maximum participation as possible as outlined in our -- in the Constitution.

The public hearing recommendations are based on pulling input from the Commission, reevaluation of access to urban, suburban, and rural areas. Maximize access to communities of interest.

Obviously, the impact of COVID-19 with the larger facilities, for example, at Northern Michigan University, the facilities seats a thousand people theatre style, that means chairs only. But if and in the impact of COVID-19 they can only get 130 people in if we were to select that facility to ensure we are meeting the COVID-19 requirements.

A review of public comments, looking at cost estimates. Our cost estimates on the low end that I've received so far for technology is \$10,000. And on the high end it's \$20,000. So looking at seeing how we can get those costs under control.

And then the other thing that we have talked about before and that has picked up some steam and want to encourage us to consider this is to collaborate with local Governments and/or community organizations to host town hall forums.

In other words, we can host a town hall forum with two or three or four Commissioners anywhere across the state and make those open to the public so that we can inform them about the redistricting process.

Once again, these will be called town hall forums. They would not be considered the same thing as our weekly meetings or as our public hearings, but it would give an opportunity for us to engage a broad spectrum of people here in the State of Michigan.

Having said that, we want to modify the presentation that we gave. If you look at the sites that we provided before, we had 18 sites for public hearing. We have proposed Alpena, Traverse City, Sioux Saint Marie as a new site, Marquette first and second. And you have to understand when we look at public hearings, we were not looking at individual cities but trying to find places within the region so that we could get people to come to the public hearings.

Benton Charter Township, Muskegon, Grand Rapids, Cadillac. Ferris State was not available when we reached out to them as relates to the public hearings, so just wanted to share that with you.

Jackson, Lansing, Midland, Flint is what we proposed as well. And then we also have Detroit. We moved one out of Southfield. The Southfield Pavilion is closed. It's shut down. They are not sure when they will be opened back up, so this one would be here in Detroit.

We have another one in Dearborn and one in Novi.

One in Detroit again is what we talked about. And Warren and Port Huron. And then we are proposing to have the second public hearing in Gaylord only.

And so with this proposal that we did, it was 18 public hearings the first round. And for the second round it was eight public hearings.

So, in light of the testimony that we received, and listening to what we heard today, the other -- phone rings in background -- the other proposal for the Commission's consideration would be just to do 14 public hearings. Doing one in each Congressional district and then also talking about doing town halls in conjunction with cities and other areas across the state, so that we could have a fair and open and transparent presentation so that each one could hear it in their Congressional districts. And then we could go out and do it as mini cities and locations as possible with regards to the town hall forums.

So I just wanted to provide you two opportunities.

One would be the proposal that you have and that you reviewed with the change of Southfield due to the facility possibly not being open. And then the second would be having one in each Congressional district and either one we can use the town hall forums.

>> Steve: Okay, just one half a second.

We are scheduled to stop at 3:00.

We can go to 3:30.

That is our drop dead time.

Just so you know.

Brittini.

>> Brittini: Yes, MC, sorry, I got tongue tied. Share your thoughts.

>> MC: Edward, I'm trying to imagine what the different criteria might be for a town hall, like we still have to -- we would still have to sort of do COVID-19 practices, right, and still televise it and it would be an open meeting. So help me understand what why we might benefit from doing town halls. Is it just because there is fewer Commissioners present potentially? Is that the idea?

>> Edward: It would not be considered a meeting because it would not have a quorum, but it would be an informational meeting where we can go out anywhere across the state, and ask Julianne to make sure I'm saying that correctly, but it would not be a formal meeting like the public hearing and like the weekly meetings of the Commission.

>> MC: So we would save on costs potentially.

>> Edward: We could save on cost is correct.

>> MC: Okay. And we would be reaching the people so we would save on costs primarily. But and if I understood correctly, right, that would be additional 18 because the town halls would be in each Congressional district. I said 18. That is wrong. There is 14 Congressional districts currently.

>> Edward: Correct.

>> MC: We would have an additional 14 town halls in addition to what we've already got here; is that correct?

>> Edward: Well, we would do town halls based on who requested them and set them up just like we do with the local Government meetings. So once, you know, so once we have the public hearings, we could do the town halls anywhere and everywhere who requests them.

>> MC: Thank you.

>> Edward: I think that would address some concerns that we heard today where people wanted forums. We could do a forum anywhere and everywhere. We would just have to get it scheduled. And it would also be in partnership, you know, with that municipality and, you know, community organizations where we could get that information.

Having said that, we would direct everyone to our public comment tool in terms of submitting maps and things along those lines so that the Commissioners would have all of that in one spot when you go to your deliberations as relates to drawing the maps.

>> Brittini: Thank you, Edward. And MC, Dustin, Doug, and then Rebecca, and then Anthony.

>> Dustin: Just a question.

So mine is along the lines with like some of the logistics for it.

Audio visual companies and so on and so forth are relatively pricey, that would be one way we can potentially get the cost down. Why could we not use Michigan Department of State resources for everything?

We had a public meeting in Lansing once and they set up all the cameras and all the microphones for us. Why would we have to have audio and video from an outside company if we have the resources within our Department of State to use?

I would see that being cheaper and that would be a way to keep costs down especially if we are going to be adding so many more potential meetings and then forums and hearings throughout the State.

>> Edward: Well, the Michigan Department of State, obviously, Sally can speak for herself, but when we do public hearings this is the responsibility of the Commission. And when we go out and travel, one. I think the second thing that we need to consider is that the Department of State is still taking the cost of translation. They are still picking up the cost of sign language interpreter, all of those costs are being taken care of by the Michigan Department of State.

But when it comes to the public hearings and where we are going, the site selection process, this is more like an event plan that was placed, you know, in my job description with regards to do.

These are the costs of the Commission.

And I'm very happy with all the support that we are getting from the Michigan Department of State, just so I'm clear.

In terms of what they are doing and how they are doing these meetings.

But this is really a Commission cost.

Because it's part of our outreach.

And in terms of trying to get the costs down, one of the things, Commissioner Witjes, is that in working with these facilities some of them do have requirements that you have to use their AV,

Audio visual team. Or if you don't there is additional cost with regards to not using their preferred provider. And so we do not have all the costs in just yet.

And it does not mean we can't look at other locations.

But this is just some suggested locations for the consideration of the Commission and also providing me with an opportunity to estimate costs, so that people would have an understanding in terms of how much it would cost to have these particular meetings.

>> Dustin: Thank you.

>> Brittini: Okay. Doug and Rebecca, Anthony, and then Rhonda.

>> Doug: Yeah, this is directed towards Julianne, this question. If we have these town hall meetings and we have three or four Commissioners at it, my understanding is we have to follow the Open Meetings Act.

I mean, we had committees with three people and we have to follow the Open Meetings Act and I don't see the difference between those.

>> Julianne: Right. And, to clarify, Doug, the way the town hall forums would be structured is we would be pursuant to the Open Meetings Act and would be noticed.

They would be noticed to the public for a certain, set period of time.

They would be open to the general public to attend.

The distinction, and Mr. Woods got in to this quite eloquently, I would say, is that the Commission would -- it would not be a quorum of the Commission.

So the Commission would not be voting on matters. They would be informational purposes giving information to the public, receiving information from the public.

Public comments.

And, again, he indicated directing people to the public comment tool. So they would conform to the Open Meetings Act.

>> Doug: Okay. And my second question, more of a comment, as I listened to the public at the beginning of this meeting, everything was -- everything that they brought up was addressed on geography and where the meetings were going to be held, you know, not whether they were Open Meetings Act or this or that. But people were interested in Battle Creek and they were interested in Kalamazoo. They were interested in Pontiac. Places we don't even have on the map.

I think that's one of the big concerns that we have to discuss and take a look at those locations again.

But today may not be the day for that, so I yield.

>> Brittini: Thank you, Doug.

Rebecca and then Anthony.

>> Rebecca: Yeah. I really like the concept that a number of people who have written in have proposed, which is we use the 14 Congressional districts as the basis for our meetings.

I really think that makes a lot of sense.

A lot of -- we received abundant comments, and then as well as people coming in and speaking here today. And, you know, we have real people saying what about the rural areas. We have urban people saying what about the urban areas. But I think that that's fair to say, okay, each district is about 700,000 people, so we will have a minimum of one meeting in each district and make those our 14 meetings. And then focus on town halls to sort of fill in the gaps of where we are not reaching. So maybe if we decide not to have a meeting in Pontiac and instead place it in Southfield, then maybe we can have

a town hall in Pontiac where it's smaller and less expensive. So that is sort of my suggestion. I think that makes a lot of sense. And I think it sort of eliminates the perception of unfairness we are seeing and a lot of the comments where people feel like, well, you are favoring rural or you are favoring urban or you are doing neater, so that is sort of my thoughts on the matter.

>> Brittini: Thank you, Rebecca.

I tend to agree with the suggestions as well as -- I lost my train of thought. It does not matter. Anthony, it will come back.

>> Anthony: Thanks, Brittini. I actually tend to disagree pretty vehemently having one meeting in each district because of the fact that these districts are currently gerrymandered.

I mean the districts, they are really not in existence anymore. We are changing the districts right now. So what is currently the 13th or 14th district is no longer the 13th or 14th district.

My opinion is that we find a way to do this so our meetings are based on where the public is while still giving an opportunity for areas that have less people to speak.

It's important for people to know just because we had a public hearing in a place that has a lower population, it does not necessarily mean they are going to, you know, get their own district, or something like that. You know, we have to follow the rules that say, you know, each district has to have the same number of people. That's the number one thing in the rules that we have to follow in the Constitution.

So, but even with that, it's important that we get representation from people in lower populations.

However, what I heard today was people in population centers saying, hey, you know, there are not enough meetings where the actual people are.

Another example about why going at it in districts, you know, might not be advisable is, well, currently Pontiac and Detroit are in the same district even though they are a 45-Minute Drive from each other with different demographics and different income, different everything. I'm very familiar with both areas. And Detroit and Pontiac I would not consider them -- I would not consider them the same by any means.

So I would go at it looking and finding a way to have meetings where the population centers are while still getting people in less densely populated areas the ability to participate.

So really, I mean, I know I'm talking for a while, sorry, I actually like Edward's original plan.

I just wish we could add some more meetings in more densely populated areas to it because then we kind of have all of our bases covered.

We are talking Southeast Michigan. Those are places like Pontiac, Novi, Farmington Hills, Oak Park, Royal Oak. You know, places in Southeast Michigan where the actual people are.



>> Brittini: Thank you, Anthony, for your thoughts.

I have Rhonda and then Doug.

>> Rhonda: Okay. I have a couple questions because I literally had pages of stuff that I was going to talk to you guys about because you know me, I always prepare ahead. But, with that being said, I'm leaning towards the 14 districts, the Congressional districts.

But as far as the town hall goes, before I would be swayed one way or another, I want to know is there a minimum amount of Commissioners that need to be at a town hall, one, in order to have a town hall? Can it be one Commissioner?

Can it be two Commissioners?

Is there a minimum amount that needs to be there is my first question.

>> Edward: The town hall forums can be done with Commission or staff. But the preference would be to have at least one Commissioner available, but no more than six.

>> Rhonda: Okay, so one commissioner could do one, so potentially if there were multiple town halls that people wanted, we could disburse all over.

And then my second question would be: If we had a particular area, we were interested in doing one with, two, that I guess is the word, I'm sorry, would we be able to reach out to you like on this updated map, I picked Sioux Saint Marie, you know, I recommended that because of public comment we received about the Native American population and doing my research with Chippewa County, Mackinac County, and Schoolcraft County all having significant amount of Native Americans living there.

I'm asking: Is it something where we could ask you to communicate with a county head or something to make them happen in certain areas rather than them just reaching out to us? If there were particular areas, we were interested in going and doing these town halls, could you make that happen?

>> Edward: If you had a recommendation, we would be more than happy to reach out, sure.

>> Rhonda: Okay.

>> Brittini: I'm here. I was solving the restart issue.

I'll take Doug and then MC and Richard and Sue. Unless, Sue, you want to squeeze in now.

>> Sue: Just really quickly. Edward has already reached out to Michigan Association of United Ways, Council of Michigan foundations, and other groups that are statewide to find partners in local communities.

So we have things like that in place where we can ask those groups to host a meeting in their communities.

>> Brittini: Thank you, Sue.

Doug, go ahead.

>> Doug: I want to put things in a little different perspective.

When we talk about our meetings, and let's say when we talk about them in Congressional, the 14th Congressional districts, we tend to talk always in Congressional districts.

But that's only one-third of our deliverables.

We have got state districts for the legislature.

We have state districts for the Senate.

And their populations are smaller.

And, of course, distributed throughout the state as well.

So having -- let's take up north, for example, having one meeting for that Congressional district is very, very difficult from travel perspective for the rural people. And it may exclude comments from a lot of the state legislative districts and the state senate districts. So I think we have to keep that in perspective as we begin to talk about the meetings.

I yield.

>> MC: Looks like Brittini may have left us.

>> Steve: MC, go ahead.

>> MC: What I heard in the public comment was that we should add meetings. And I don't think any of us are against having more meetings, but I think we are recognizing the cost. And a significant cost and significant logistics, right, for Edward and for the people and staff who will be managing this, right? Because and we have already wrestled with the idea of what happens with emergencies and emergency funding. We know putting on events is tricky. So I guess I'm just suggesting somehow that we do have to come up with this.

I know we don't have much time, you know, in our meeting today. We know this is urgent, but we do have -- we don't have time and of course we have time.

Like we should be deliberate. And I think we are deliberating very well. And I don't think this is an easy fix, right, and it's not easy.

So I think I just want -- I'd really like to thank you for bringing that perspective in, Doug. I really appreciate that and, gosh, I cannot imagine doing 69 meetings. Anyway I'm done.

>> Brittini: Thank you, MC Erin, I see your hand. Go ahead.

>> Erin: I guess this question is for Edward. And, Edward, what I heard you say was, I think, is that you considered these places specifically because you could get a meeting place that we could accommodate everybody. And is that why we are meeting someplace rather than Southfield, for instance?

How difficult is that going to be if we add meetings for you to come up with a place in whatever area that is?

>> Edward: There is no difficulty at all.

You know, I'm just trying to do what the Commission desires.

I'm trying to make sure I'm being clear and transparent about the cost.

And, also, some of the other opportunities to reach some of the things that Commissioners have shared, you know, individually with me, what you have talked about in the meetings.

And so and one of the things you know knowing that we have COVID, and not knowing what guidelines are going to be in place, you know, I don't know how many people are actually coming to the meetings.

You know, when they suggested with you or being selected and they were doing outreach to identify Commissioners, I was told there was only 40 people that, you know, normally showed up on average.

I think we are going to get more than 40 people.

But I don't know how much more.

I mean, I think there is an interest.

I mean, obviously, if we are communicating correctly and we are drawing interest, we should expect to see some large crowds.

Having said that, I picked -- I selected, I should say, suggested large venues knowing that we had COVID-19 guidelines, so that we could get the most amount of people possible.

I also suggested times to make sure that people, when working with the facilities, to make sure that people who are -- whether they work first, second or third shift could be able to come.

So, therefore, you know, we would maybe start at 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m. and end at 8:00 at night. Obviously, having breaks and, you know, having meal breaks as well as regular breaks. But then with that, knowing that we had to sanitize the location, you know, because of COVID and just cost.

I mean, there is a whole lot of stuff that just goes into these types of things that cost money with regards to that.

And so that is where the town hall forums, you know, came back.

We have talked about it, putting that in there.

Listening to the comments that we receive today with regards to that in terms of ensuring equal population when it comes to these public hearings, so that, you know, no one is left behind and being fair. But also using those town halls as a mechanism.

So when it came to identifying the locations, I was looking for the biggest venue, knowing about COVID-19, so that we could accommodate as many people as possible.

>> Brittini: Cynthia, Juanita and Julianne I think maybe has something quick.

>> Julianne: I was just going to add to what Edward was saying. The goal of the town hall forums is to conform with the constitutional requirements, particularly Subsection 11. But also this conversation is making me think we could encourage the public to call their state representatives and ensure that the Commission has the budget to hold these additional meetings. And then if we could get that advocacy, grass roots advocacy towards the Government, then hopefully it would support our budget ask.

>> Brittini: I'm in favor of that because I do think after I was thinking about it previously, but after not just reading, but it's something about interacting with our public comment.

And I think we would be doing a disservice to not think more closely, especially as a native Detroit, how to get more people or more meetings right into the community. TCF is huge. But like they said, and like I know personally, the stand and a mic to speak is also huge and disheartening.

I saw Cynthia's hand. I saw Juanita's hand and Richard's hand.

>> Cynthia: Richard had his hand up before. You can go first if you want.

>> Richard: Just quickly I will do it. Since I've read every public comment that has been sent to us, it seems like they all want a lot of meetings. And I guess that makes a lot of sense.

My question would be then: Why the individuals in these towns, villages do not go to their president, or whatever, and ask them to provide, as a public service, maybe a venue, following all the safety precautions and everything, with no charge or maybe a minimal charge to get as many meetings as we could because of the cost.

I don't know if that makes any sense.

But it seems like it would help out and then we could stay within a budget. And some of the maybe bigger meetings you would have to pay for a bigger venue, fine. But maybe we could do something like that.

Thank you.

>> Cynthia: That is a good idea, Richard.

>> Brittini: I think that is a good idea, but I don't know how accessible it is for all of those places; but, yeah.

>> Edward: Well, right now I can tell you that the average cost to host a meeting is 15 to \$20,000, that would include the actual venue and the AV.

That does not account for Commission travel.

It does not count for lodging.

And it does not count for food. So that is just basically the average.

That cost is for the cost of the facility and the AV to actually run the program on our end, what we are responsible for.

>> Steve: We have ten minutes left, people.

>> Brittini: Cynthia had something to say.

>> Cynthia: So I like Julianne's idea, if people would help us by advocating for maybe us to get more money.

It would be great if we could have tons of meetings everywhere, but it seems like it's not going to be feasible because we have limited budget.

But I really think that this town hall idea is a great idea. And I think we could put the public meetings wherever we can.

In a fair way, but then fill in with these town hall meetings.

And I really like how Anthony reminded everyone. I think it's important because we understand it, but maybe not all the public understands that just because we are going to certain cities or certain towns doesn't mean they are the only ones we are listening to. There is other ways to tell us how you feel.

>> Brittini: Janice. Thank you, Cynthia.

>> Janice: I like the ideas of the town hall.

Actually one of the communities I spoke at mentioned having something there. And they actually e-mailed me later, saying they would be willing to have some kind of meeting to let us talk at and let their community know.

So I like the town hall forums.

>> Brittini: Thank you, Janice.

Anyone else?

Steve.

>> Steve: All the comments are really good. And clearly the people that spoke today and the e-mails we have been receiving are asking for more. And, certainly, Detroit made it very clear they want more.

>> Uh-huh.

>> Steve: And rightly so.

They have 7 -- whatever the population, 700,000 is. But using the using the town halls maybe more, number one, it's a good idea.

Number two, we ought to do it. And, number three, it's probably going to be a little more problematic unless we get the state opened back up where we can have in-person meetings at these town halls.

Or else we are -- because the ones that I did were all Zoom.

They did not have people there.

They did not even have the Commissioners or City Council or anybody else there.

So that will be one thing that we will run in to.

So those are all excellent ideas.

And the other thing to keep in mind, you know, when we do this redistricting, districts, you know, the UP and Northern Michigan ain't going to change.

They got X number of people up there. And it's going to be the same district almost with very little change.

And so that plays into, okay, if we do one meeting in a district, that's not fair to them.

Because they cover all the area.

They have the biggest chunk of area. And Rhonda very astutely showed that to us the last time.

And so town halls in my mind anyway up in that area would be perfect.

And that is my area.

And I'd be more than happy to travel Northern Michigan this summer.

So those are just some of the problems of doing what we would want to do.

And I think we can overcome those.

And we have six minutes left now.

>> Brittini: All right. Doug and MC, can you do a two-minute?

>> Doug: Real quick. Mine is a question to Edward. Edward, do you have enough help to make all this happen or do you need us to, you know, work with you to get interns or temporary help or whatever?

>> Edward: Well, fortunately, we have a couple things going with regards to both Michigan State University of Michigan with regards to some help with that. So we can kind of try to, you know, work that out.

I mean, I'm hearing the commissioner's concern about funds. And so we -- that is why we pulled back the big marketing contract to begin with because if you looked at the media report, we are getting some earned media. And so we are trying to find ways to cut our costs. And so probably working with some interns along those lines, that would be helpful.

But let me get back to you with regards to that because you know right now, we are coordinated 70 presentations for the local Government.

And we are coordinating a lot of speaking engagements. So it's just administrative support is part of our strategic plan that we will talk about next week and seeing how we can do all that together.

So what you are saying is true. We do need some support, but we have a plan. And, Sue, I hope I did not say anything.

>> Doug: I'm interested in hearing the plan. Thank you.

>> Steve: Let me make a suggestion. MC you got something.

>> MC: I was going to move to adjourn.

>> Steve: We are not there yet. Appreciate it.

Let me make a suggestion how to move forward.

We have the revised proposed schedule.

We've had some good discussion today on what we need to continue to do.

I would ask that we would charge Edward with going back to drawing board.

We've got some things here. Clearly Detroit is asking for more meetings.

How would it look if we are going to do more full board meetings along with the town forum, town hall-type meetings, and what that would look like and bring that to us next week?

Is that something that you can do, Edward?

>> Edward: Sure. I want to make sure I'm hearing you correctly, Mr. Chair. Provide is a suggestion for the public hearings and then also the town hall forums for presentation to the Commission next week; is that correct?

>> Steve: Right. And keeping in mind that Detroit is wanting more meetings and rightly so.

Okay. One more and then we got to go.

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We are down to the brass tacks, Cynthia.

>> Cynthia: I'm wondering do we want to wait until next Thursday or do we want to try to add another meeting before then so we don't have to put it off sorry for so long? Just a question.

>> Sue: Sally can weigh in here, but there are a lot of aspects that go into putting these meetings together, including getting the translators and the closed caption and all that. And it's really hard to get one of those in a couple business days handled. So as long as Edward is okay with finalizing.

>> Edward: I was going to say thanks, Sue.

There is no rush.

We can wait until next Thursday with regards to that on my end. There is no immediate need for that.

>> Steve: Okay, we will do that then.

And MC has already made a motion to adjourn and need a second.

>> Brittini: I will second.

>> Steve: Brittini second. All in favor raise your hand.

[ Hands raised ]

See everyone next Thursday, right?

[ Meeting concludes at 3:28 p.m. ]