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MICRC

06/03/21 6:28 pm Committee Meeting/6:00 pm Public Hearing

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>> CHAIR KELLOM: As Chair of the Commission, I call this meeting of the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission to order at 6:28 p.m.

This meeting is being live streamed on you tube at www.YouTube.com/michsosfooffice/videos.

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

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

People with disabilities or needing other specific accommodations should also contact Redistricting at Michigan.gov.

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

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

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

Members of the media who may have questions before, during or after the meeting should direct those questions to Edward Woods III, Communications and Outreach Director for the Commission at WoodsE3@Michigan.gov.

For the purpose of the public watching and the public record, I will turn to department state Staff to take note of the Commissioners present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Good evening, Commissioners. please say present when I call your name. If you are attending the meeting remotely, please announce during roll call that you are attending the meeting remotely. And unless your absence is due to military duty, announce your physical location by stating the county, city, Township or village and the state from which you are attending the meeting remotely.
Douglas Clark.

>> COMMISSIONER CLARK: Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Juanita Curry.

>> COMMISSIONER CURRY: Present.

- >> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Anthony Eid?
- >> COMMISSIONER EID: Present.
- >> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Brittini Kellom?
- >> CHAIR KELLOM: Present.
- >> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Rhonda Lange?
- >> COMMISSIONER LANGE: Present; attending remotely from Reed City, Michigan.
- >> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Steve Lett?
- >> COMMISSIONER LETT: Present.
- >> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Cynthia Orton?
- >> COMMISSIONER ORTON: Present.
- >> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: MC Rothhorn?
- >> COMMISSIONER ROTHORN: Present.
- >> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Rebecca Szetela?
- >> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Present.
- >> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Janis Vallette.
- >> COMMISSIONER VALLETTE: Present.
- >> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Erin Wagner?
- >> COMMISSIONER WAGNER: Erin Wagner, Present; attending remotely from Charlotte, Michigan.
- >> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Richard Weiss?
- >> COMMISSIONER WEISS: Present.
- >> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Dustin Witjes?
- >> COMMISSIONER WITJES: Present.
- >> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: All Commissioners are present.
- >> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you, Sarah.

If there is no objection, I will have Commissioner Eid, our Host Commissioner and provide a presentation full of welcomes and introductions.

Hearing no objection, please proceed, Commissioner Eid.

>> COMMISSIONER EID: Hello. Welcome, everybody. My name is Commissioner Eid and welcome to the MICRC public hearing in Dearborn, Michigan.

We are happy you're here to learn about Michigan's new redistricting process and how you can engage throughout this process to ensure that your voice is heard.

In looking at the agenda today, please note that the vast majority of our time this evening is spent listening to each and every one of you. We are eager to hear your ideas either in person or remotely about drawing Michigan's Congressional, House and Senate Districts.

In addition to hearing about District lines, we also want to hear your ideas about your communities of interest.

At this time I would like my fellow colleagues to introduce themselves and share where they live in Michigan, the Great Lakes State.

We've already heard from our two Commissioners, Commissioner Lange and Commissioner Wagner, joining us virtually. So how about we start on my right, stage, left with MC?

>> COMMISSIONER ROTHORN: Good evening, y'all. MC Rothorn. I live in Lansing, Michigan.

>> COMMISSIONER ORTON: Good evening. I'm Commissioner Cynthia Orton. And I live in Battle Creek, Michigan. It's great to see you all tonight.

>> COMMISSIONER CLARK: Good evening and thank you everyone for coming. My name is Douglas Clark and I'm from Rochester Hills, Michigan.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Hi and welcome everyone to our hearing my name is Brittini Kellom and I live in Detroit, Michigan.

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Good evening, everyone. My name is Rebecca Szetela. I currently reside in Canton, Michigan; but born and raised for the 33 years of my life in Dearborn, Michigan. So I'm very happy to be back here tonight. Thank you.

>> COMMISSIONER WEISS: Good evening. Thank you for showing up tonight. My name is Richard H. Weiss. I'm from Saginaw. I live in Saginaw Township.

>> COMMISSIONER WITJES: Good evening. My name is Dustin Witjes. I am from Ypsilanti Michigan or Howell, Michigan, depending on which day of the week it is.

>> COMMISSIONER LETT: Good evening and welcome to our meeting. We look forward to hearing from you. My name is Steve Lett and I'm from Interlochen, Michigan, up by Traverse City.

>> COMMISSIONER VALLETTE: Welcome everyone. My name is Janis Vallette and I'm from Highland, Michigan.

>> COMMISSIONER CURRY: Hello everyone. My name is Juanita Curry. And I am from Detroit Michigan. Pleased to see you all.

>> COMMISSIONER EID: Thank you, Commissioners. I've got a little bit of a history lesson for you all today. In 2018 more than 61% of Michigan voters intentionally and deliberately passed proposal two, a ballot initiative for voters and not legislatures to take responsibility for map fairness and public feedback in the redistricting process.

This proposal created the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission. For the first time in Michigan's history, the MICRC will lead the redistricting process to draw fair and independent maps.

This Commission in front of you is comprised of 13 randomly selected Michigan residents that includes four who affiliate as democrats, four who affiliate as republicans, and five who do not affiliate with either party, also known as independents.

They were selected through a lottery run by the Michigan Department of State. The MICRC has exclusive authority in this new redistricting process for Michigan's U.S. Congressional, State House and State Senate Districts.

As fellow residents, the MICRC understands your expectation to draw maps in an open and transparent manner that meets constitutional mandates. Our mission and vision exemplifies our resolve not just today but for future generations as well.

In your interactions with us today, and with our staff, you should witness our core values of integrity, respect, transparency and being purposeful.

Once again, we are glad you are here and we look forward to hearing what y'all have to say.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you so much, Commissioner Eid.

Now, if there aren't any objections, we will move on to our presentation provided by Commissioner Szetela, our Vice Chair.

And, hearing no objections, I will hand the floor over to Vice Chair Szetela who is going to share a little bit about our public hearings.

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Good evening, everyone. Again, Commissioner Szetela. Before the Commissioners are allowed to draw any maps, we are required to solicit public input before drawing any redistricting plan for the Michigan House, Michigan Senate and Congressional districts.

We are required to hold a minimum of ten public hearings. We are actually a bit of over achievers so we are actually having 16. This meeting tonight is number 8 out of our 16 meetings, so we are about halfway through the tour of the State of Michigan.

The purpose for the public hearing is to inform the public about the redistricting process, to share the purposes and the responsibilities of the Commission. And, most importantly, to solicit information from the public about potential redistricting plans.

So what is redistricting? Every ten years following the U.S. Census, District lines for the U.S. Congressional, State House, State Senate districts must be redrawn to accurately reflect populations.

The process of drawing the District line is known as redistricting. In Michigan there are District lines that need to be drawn for the 2022 election cycle.

The responsibilities and purpose of the Commission is that the MICRC is the sole entity responsible for drawing District lines. We operate in an impartial and a transparent manner that instills integrity in the process.

MICRC public outreach represents fairness, awareness, transparency and engagement that seeks to obtain at least 10,000 distinct public comments in the redistricting process.

The MICRC must adopt maps for Michigan's 13 Congressional, 38 Senate and 110 House Districts. Districts should be drawn to meet applicable Federal and State laws including the Voting Rights Act.

So let's talk for a second about what our redistricting criteria are. We have a ranked order under the Constitution in terms of what we need to consider with drawing our maps. Number one is that there is equal population in compliance with the Voting Rights Act.

The districts need to be geographically contiguous. And what we mean by that is we can't have little islands off on their own that are part of a District that is not connected to it.

Communities of interest have to be considered. And I will touch on that in a second, what that means.

Four and five relate to politics. We cannot give a disproportionate advantage to any political party. We also can't favor or disfavor any candidate or currently elected official.

We also have to reflect consideration of community, City, Township and County boundaries. And then we also have to try to keep the districts reasonably compact.

So what are communities of interest? Communities of interest may include, but cannot be limited to, populations that share historical or cultural characteristics or economic interests. They do not include relationships with political parties or political candidates.

So what is it that we are looking for you this evening? We want to know what name you would give to your community that you're identifying for us.

What common bond creates the community of interest?

What is the geographical area covered by your community?

What Government policies are important to your community?

We also would like to know how keeping your community intact will enhance the quality of your representation in Congress and in the Michigan legislature.

And lastly, we want to know are there nearby areas that strengthen or potentially weaken your community of interest?

So why is the MICRC here? We are here to hear directly from you about your ideas to redistrict Michigan's Congressional, House and Senate districts. And we are here to listen and learn about your community of interest.

Why should you care? For the first time ever Michigan residents actually have a say in the redistricting process. Openness, transparency and public engagement represent the principles of this new redistricting process.

And the third criteria in the redistricting process is communities of interest, is also new. And it gives you a voice to help prevent gerrymandering.

All right. I will now pass this back to the Chair Brittini Kellom.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you, Commissioner Szetela.

Without objection, at this time our General Counsel will provide a presentation that talks about our public comment guidelines.

And, hearing no objection, I will give the floor to our General Counsel, Julianne Pastula.

>> MS. JULIANNE PASTULA: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. For the public comment guidelines this evening, I would like to share with you that in-person public comment will take place first followed by remote public comments.

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The time limit for each public comment speaker is two minutes. There will be a timer on the screen. And please conclude your remarks when you hear the audible timer and the timer on the screen reaches zero.

If any person disrupts the orderly progress of the meeting or refuses to comply with applicable MICRC guidelines and rules, the Chairperson may rule that person out of order and/or order their removal from this meeting.

A reminder to please provide public comment and/or submit proposed maps in our public comment portal, which is available at www.Michigan.gov/MICRC.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you, General Counsel.

At this time we will move to our in-person public comment.

Without objection, we will start the public comment portion of our meeting.

And, hearing no objections, we will now proceed with public comment.

A few reminders. Individuals who have signed up and indicated that they would like to provide in-person public commentary to the Commission will now be allowed to do so. You will step to the nearest microphone when I call your number. And will -- sometimes I do it a little differently. But I'll let -- in this case I will just have you step to the microphone that is closest to you.

You will have two minutes to address the Commission. Please conclude your remarks when your two minutes has ended and you hear the timer. We really try not to cut folks off because we want to hear what you say. We need to hear your thoughts and your perspectives about your communities. But we also have to honor our time and your time most importantly.

Please go to the public comment tool and share your comments in writing, including any specific area of the map that you speak about this evening. The public comment tool is at www.Michigan.gov/MICRC.

Again, please visit our public comment tool at www.Michigan.gov/MICRC. And utilize this tool if you signed up for public comment and you find that there was something more that you want to say, if you are sitting here and you didn't know you want to speak but there is a thought that comes to you, we really encourage you all to utilize that.

I'll call numbers one through four up to the mic. Oh, I do see the left mic now. So I will have odd numbers if you can, if it's feasible to you, one and three will come to my left. And then two and four even numbers will come to this mic. We want to make it as easy as possible though. You can't, okay.

We will keep the plan the same. Keep the plan the same. The first mic you can touch, is your mic for your time for public comment.

>> Good evening. I wished that we would have had an overview on the guidelines before we decided to speak.

But my name is Rick Gusser. I spent, grew up in Lincoln Park, 20 years in Dearborn and now I'm in Wyandotte. The thing I heard from most of the Wyandotte people, they want to stay with the integrity of the Down River Area.

All right. I'm here to represent Chuck Browning, Region 1A UAW. I was a Ford employee. I've been retired for 26 years. I also represent the retirees from Ford, GM and Chrysler, 54,275 brothers and sisters. I also run the scholarship fund for the UAW.

I've got here 50 years. You people are 50 years late. This should have been done a long time ago. When you put the democrats and other republicans in charge of something, they are going to take it to their advantage, which they have, and it's a natural thing.

So, as I say, the gentleman up there that said 61%, 61% of the people in this state want this changed. Seven of the last 10 elections, the democrats got more votes. We do not control the House or the Senate, either one.

Tear up this current plan. Start all over. Don't try to rig it on street by street. Tear the whole thing up and start over.

Again, I want to say thank you. And by watching your meeting prior to this, good luck. You guys are going to be in for some long hours. But I do appreciate what you are doing and thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you so much, Rick, for taking the time to address the Commissioner this evening.

Two, when you are at the mic and ready, you can address the Commission.

>> My name is Ann Clark. I'm a 40-year resident of Dearborn and Wayne County. My areas of interest is like the Michigan Avenue Route 12, which I walk to the main shopping, ethnic shopping corridor. It runs through a diverse community of Dearborn, Dearborn Heights, Garden City, Inkster, Westland.

Dearborn is especially diverse because it holds the largest Arab population in the U.S., which a lot of people don't know.

The City of Dearborn Recreation and Performing Arts Center, as you are in, has pool and business facilities, which my family utilizes. I purchased an annual membership at the Henry Ford because I have nine grandchildren. I like to -- love to go to the museum, the village and other activities.

Edward Hines park is a 19-mile continuous park which connects Dearborn to Northville. It is used by residents of Dearborn, Dearborn Heights, Garden City Inkster, Westland, and other communities. Residents enjoy the picnic areas, walking trail, soccer field and the annual tree lighting festival along the Edward Hines Drive. This road reprises area residents with shortcuts and a very pretty road to drive on.

Currently Wayne County districts look like an elongated puzzle. Three of the four districts go into three other counties, which is up to 40 miles from one end to the other. Three fourths of the one District is in another county. Since other counties do not have

similar interests, it would be helpful to keep our districts within the boundary of Wayne County.

Also, residents tend to frequent small radius surrounding their neighborhoods and would like to have the districts more in blocks rather than elongated. These are the communities of interest that I feel should be grouped together. I want to thank the Commission for your time and work in this process.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: And we appreciate you taking the time to share with us this evening. Three.

>> Hello. My name is Heather and I live in the city of Trenton in Wayne County. Thank you for serving on this committee.

I'm here today because I recognize the importance of Congressional Districts that actually represent the majority of the people that live in them. This board has the opportunity to map districts. They represent citizens with similar values and lifestyles.

My family participates in a home school partnership in a neighboring community. This organization has families of diverse backgrounds that come together to enrich the educational experiences of our children.

Our reasons for home education vary, though we generally agree that the states offerings are not meeting our needs and have different values than those of our families.

I've noticed the majority of our families choose to live in ways that align with Monroe County. We seek time outdoors, attempt to grow or hunt or own food, participate in faith communities, and look for ways to actively serve the less fortunate.

Our professional -- our professions include sales, engineers, auto assembly, truck drivers, bakers, artists, teachers, and many more. But we come together in how we educate our children. We choose where we live for a purpose. Sharing our lives with people of different backgrounds and the same values.

Please consider the right of citizens to elect persons that represent local values and understand local issues. Not being overwhelmed by more densely populated and geographically smaller portions of a District.

Thank you for your time.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Heather, thank you for your public comment. Four.

>> Hi. Hi. Name is Pauline Monty. I'm from Trenton, Michigan in Wayne County. The 12th Congressional District that represents us is aligned with Washtenaw County. They have three colleges there and we are blue collar workers. They always vote for the academia, but I feel their values are different than the Down River in Wayne County. We are more aligned with the lower Wayne County, the cities below Detroit, going all the way to Monroe county.

If you look at the average age of the people in Washtenaw, they average 25-year-old college students who have not had to work for a living like we have as blue collar workers. We have families to support, children in school, and they have part-time jobs. And their education worries about not about real life issues like we do.

Ecorse, Melvindale, Lincoln Park should be included with Lower Wayne County. We were at one time aligned with Detroit and we were not heard at that time either.

Lower Wayne County, Trenton Michigan, needs to be heard. As an example, our Senate District goes into Detroit and comes straight down like a snake, down to the bottom. And nobody sees those people until they need to be reelected.

It's time for us to have local people in our area that represent us instead of these people that are split up like that. They have to go with Washtenaw County, go with Detroit.

We just want to be Down River is our area. I'm from Trenton, Michigan. And I just want -- I'm just glad that you guys are going to try and listen to us. Have a good day. Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you so much for too taking the time to share your comments and to share your perspective about your community.

Five, six, seven and eight. Again, even though I might have called your number, don't feel compelled to stand the whole time if you do not want to. So, five, good evening. When you are ready you can address the Commissioner.

>> Good evening. My name is Kim Janesky. I'm a representative from UAW Local 931 and UAW Region 1A. I live in the City of Wyandotte, which is a part of the Down River Area of our state.

I've worked for 28 years in product development for Ford Motor Company earning union negotiated wages. Along with my husband, who is a small business owner, my husband owns a trophy shop in Allen Park, Michigan, which technically makes me his trophy wife. We raised our children and those wages and benefits.

They attended public schools, our son is 25 and already owns his own home in Wyandotte. He works for Delta Airlines in a good paying position. Our daughter is a senior at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

Although they were bought for with union wages, Ford Motor Company employs 48,000 people, that is 48,000 families, aunts, uncles, children in the southeastern part of the state. We are tired of our -- the money that we make and the wages, all of it, our taxes on our wages go to our elected representatives who make decisions with those -- that money that affects us.

As union workers we are weary of having our income, our workplace safety and our pensions under attack from representatives from gerrymandered districts that care nothing for the citizens who are the backbone of this state.

The citizens of Michigan overwhelmingly voted to trash can the entire current gerrymandered Districts in our state and give us legislatures and representatives that reflect our opinions and our lives and keep our families safe.

We thank you. All we are asking is you be fair and equitable and follow the guidelines of the Constitution of the State of Michigan. Thank you for your time.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Kim, thank you so much for sharing. Six.

>> Good afternoon. Thank you so much for being out here and down here with us. We really like to pride ourselves being Down River and we are very strong.

My name is Dora Rodriguez. I'm a resident of Trenton, Michigan. I'm also a UAW member, and I work at the Ford Flatrock Plant, the home of the Mustang, which we are very proud of our Mustang.

First off, I want to start by saying one of the biggest worries that I've always had in regards to representation throughout this state, not just my community, is fair representation and collective bargaining rights and health and safety in our communities and our schools, for our firefighters, for our auto workers, for our police.

And also, it's been apparent that we had some issues during COVID in regards to not having the proper PPE to supply our hospitals, our firefighters, our city workers who our city workers we can never, ever leave out because they are also the first line of defense in every community across this country.

I ask that when you are looking at every single area, that you keep those very important issues on your mind. This is not about segregating back to just being in a rural area or just what persons of color want to be in. This is about bringing together people. This is about stopping all the nonsense and coming together and living together. This is what this is about.

This is what 61% of Michigan voters voted for. We want a fresh, clean start and that is why you are up there today. Please keep that in mind. Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you so much, Dora, for taking time to share with the Commission this evening. Seven.

>> Hello. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak today. I appreciate the time and effort of all of the committee members.

My name is Leslie. I'm a lifelong resident of Taylor. Taylor is the largest of the 21 cities and townships in the Southeast Michigan area. South of Detroit along the river, known as Down River. We are a community made up of first, second, third, maybe even fourth generation blue collar manufacturing and trade workers and industries who support them.

A lot of our families moved from the Southern United States into the growing suburban area when the auto industry was booming. Some of us came from either further south, across the United States corridor, to join our families and make a better life for ourselves. Others came from across the pond, from Europe, Asia, Africa. We are a diverse group.

Most of us have high school diplomas. Some of us have taken a few college courses or maybe even have college degrees. We are saving up for our children's degrees. Many of us own our homes. Others are renting with hopes to buy. Whether by blood or fate, we are family oriented, often our households are multi-generation. Many of us are in the sandwich generation, taking care of our children and our parents.

After all, the median age Down River is around 40. I like to say we are salt of the earth people. We work hard and we care for our families and neighbors. We make up the largest portion of the Michigan 12th Congressional District. However, Down River communities, Ecorse Melvindale, River Rouge and Romulus are not part of the Michigan Down River community. Instead the remainder of the 12 are made up by Dearborn, Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor.

I'm pointing out these differences to highlight the importance of keeping communities together.

Ecorse, Melvindale, River Rouge and Romulus are Down River communities and should be in the same Congressional District. Thank you for your time.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you, Leslie, for taking time to address the Commission. Eight.

>> Hello. My name is Audry Banks. And I appreciate all you for taking out the time because everyone's schedules are so conflicting and busy. I appreciate you all for being here and listening to us.

And, again, my name is Audry Banks. I live in Taylor. I'm a UAW member and we need to have fair districts and throw out the old maps and start off with fair districts from scratch because the state legislature is not responsive to the needs of regular people.

Most people want to have a higher minimum wage. And at the state legislature they took it off the ballot and lowered the minimum wage, so we just want you to take this into consideration, the people, how we feel about this.

And, again, I just want to take my little magic and say thank God for showing up and being there for us.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you, Ms. Banks, for taking the time to come out. Nine, 10, 11 and 12. Don't ever feel in a rush to reach the mic. We don't start the timing until you get there. Hello. Good evening. You can start when you are ready.

>> My name is Jamil Martin, 48-year resident of Wayne County. And I just want to thank you all.

This is a monumental occasion. My background is I have a bachelor's degree in urban studies and political science from Morehouse College. And the issue of maps and gerrymandering and how it affects Government and policy has always been an interest of mine.

So I want the Commission to throw out these old, gerrymandered maps and feel empowered to really use the 7, 8 points of the constitutional checkpoints in their weighted order as far as making sure that the Voting Rights Act is adhered to and various other points that are brought up through the Constitution.

So I just look forward to you all standing up to the challenge, resisting any special interests or any partisanship and really give Michigan a non-gerrymandered map that will reflect the will and the positivity of the people. Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you, Jamil. We appreciate your encouragement. Ten.

>> Hello, hello. Thank you so much for being here. We appreciate you listening to us because we definitely need our voices to be heard.

My name is Montana Tillman. I live in Taylor, Michigan. I'm a UAW member representing Region 1A and Local 3,000. I live in Taylor. When it's time to redistrict, it affects us in more than one way.

We have been voting in one Section for so long, that when it was time to go vote there were so many people that was miss directed, which, meaning, you went to one spot and that's not what where we are supposed to go. So there were a lot of people who were not able to vote because they couldn't go from here to all the way over there to try and make a difference.

The other issue was when it came to redistricting, we have to also consider our children. When it comes to education, when you redistrict, it changes the districts with the children, with the schools. They have been closing schools, overloading some. We need more help and more assistance when it comes to that.

So I really hope that you really consider redoing the whole thing and trying to make it fair. We shouldn't have representatives that are there that is going to represent the people.

Not have people from one area that don't though anything about what is going on in their cities and their states. We need help. We need it right. We need to redo the whole thing. It's just time for change and it's now.

You guys are here to make that difference. And that's what we really pray that you do. Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you, Montana, for taking the time to address the Commissioner this evening. 11.

>> Thank you. Thank you very much for serving, too. I know it's going to be really tough. My name is Kevin McNamara. I'm the supervisor of Van Buren Township. And I'm here representing officially the city of Belleville, Sumpter Township, and Van Buren Township. We are a Tri-Community. We have always called ourselves that. We represent the 48111 zip code. So if you wanted a name 48111 zip code.

We have resolutions that all three Governments voted on. Council in Belleville, Van Buren and Sumpter. And we have over 150 years of history. We have so much history in our community. That Van Buren bought a museum and the three communities got together to get a director for the museum. And we have genealogy searches. We all paid for it together.

We have working groups that are trying to work out how our water and sewer departments can work together, how our public services can work out together. We currently share dispatch. We share police and fire response.

We had a fire last night.

We had both Sumpter and Belleville and Canton's fire department there. We have a library that encompasses all three of our areas and it's voted on by all three of our areas.

We also have an, excuse me, we also have a lot of services in our community. Services in our community are not named after Belleville, Van Buren. We have one school system, Van Buren School System. But they don't call it that. They call it the Bellevue Area School System. It's the Belleville Area Chamber of Commerce officially. It's the Belleville Area Council of the Arts. It's the Belleville Area Rotary. It's the Belleville Area Museum. The Belleville Area District Library. It's the Belleville Area Independent, which is our newspaper.

We have the same median income within \$1,000. We represent 45,000 people. We would be a six foot wide by 12 foot long square, rectangle, whatever. We would like it if you would keep us together this year. Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Kevin, thank you for educating us about your community. 12.

>> Good evening, citizens and Commissioners. My name is Matt Tracer, retired guy from Allen Park. I'm going to skip all the flowery, warm and fuzzy stuff and get right to what I think is the foundational problem.

The last election I could get numbers for was 2018. And statewide in that election, 52% of the vote was cast by democrats.

However, the results of that election only provided the democrats with 47% representation. I'm not a mathematician, but it seems to me that each democratic vote received 95% representation where each Republican vote had about 105% representation.

Now, this upside down number is heinous in itself, but it's exponentially worsened when the upside down number causes the minority party to control the majority in our legislatures.

I would like to know, I don't know if I'm allowed to ask a question, but is every person on this Commission committed to making sure that if 50% or 52% of the vote is by one party, no matter which party, that they receive 52% of the representation? Thanks, everybody.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you so much for taking the time to provide commentary to the Commission. 13.

And 14, 15, 16 you can be getting ready in your mind, but 13.

>> Good evening, everyone. My name is Donna Miller. And I too live in Taylor, Michigan.

I'm so glad to see so many Taylor residents here.

Taylor is boarded by Dearborn, Brownstown Township, Allen Park, South Gate, Westland, Romulus and Huron Township. I want to thank the Commission for your time and hard work.

It is my opinion the modest turn out is because the Michigan voter trusts their votes will be honored. They trust the Commission will draw fair and impartial maps with the aid of public comment.

Keep communities of interest in mind and remember to include people of color, like myself, who represent only 19% of people of color in Taylor. Protection without isolation. We are a part of the community that we live in.

I voted for this Commission. And I trust you will continue to reflect a free election, decision made, without voter suppression; keep the voters like myself. And I thank you for your time.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you so much for spending time to address the Commission. 14.

>> Hello. My name is Dewalt Mood. I am a Dearborn Heights resident. And I'd like to take this opportunity to speak on behalf of the lack of representation and access my community and the municipality face.

My City of Dearborn Heights is a friendly neighbor to Dearborn. And although our population is nearly 60,000, almost large enough to have a State Representative of its own, it's currently divided. One State Representative District is split between three municipalities where Dearborn Heights is a minority. And the other is split between five where Dearborn Heights is still the minority. That means that we have little to no representation in Lansing and the power of our voice is substantially diminished.

As you might not know, cities like Dearborn, Dearborn Heights and Hamtramck are homes to the largest Arab American populations. But the census data that you review will not include them. If you don't know, you will soon hear that the Arab American community has fought long and hard to get representation on the census.

In what seems like an instance, that decade-long fight was struck down on a whim. Now Federal protections, grants and research are held back for the reincarnation of this Commission. That is ten years.

I bring this up to the Commission to shed light on the waves of impact this has on language accessibility.

The 1965 Federal Voting Rights Act, one of the most significant landmarks of this democracy and our nation's history, protects and provides non-English speaking communities with translated voter materials. It ensures that all citizens can participate in the democratic process.

But because of lack of representation on the census, there is a huge gap in language accessibility. And these rights don't apply to the Arabic speaking populations, that limits the access to our rights and representations as citizens. This makes the Arab American community a community of interest.

We have to recognize that there comes an artificial gap to access. And I ask this Commission to seriously consider the egregious impact of dividing this community any further. Thank you for your time.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you. We appreciate you sharing a concern from your community. 15.

15. Okay 16.

>> Good evening, Commissioners. My name is Shirley Handerson. I live in Inkster. I'm a lifelong resident of Inkster for over 70 years. And I just want -- when you do the redistricting of our area that you consider Inkster. We are a population of people that need help. All right, because every city around us is growing except for Inkster. And we really need, when you redistrict, that you think about that and do it fair. And make sure that we are included and we get the representation that we need in our city so we can move it forward. Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Shirley, thank you for providing public comment to the Commission. 17.

>> Good evening, Commissioners. My name is Carol Ali. I live in Dearborn, Michigan in Wayne County. I'm 66 years old and lived in Dearborn for 64 years. I went to Lowery Elementary School and I graduated from Fordson High School. I love our Dearborn City Services. Our police and our fire departments are the best. I'm so grateful for all their work.

I currently live in the Ninth Michigan House District. The Ninth District is made up of a large part of Northwest Detroit and a tiny piece of the Northeast corner of Dearborn. This arrangement is not acceptable to me.

My community of interest is my church, my friends and my family and the University of Michigan Dearborn from, which I graduated.

I have nothing in common with Northwest Detroit. I believe that all of Dearborn should be kept together as one District.

Our Arabic community here in East Dearborn has much more in common than West Dearborn, the south end of Dearborn where my husband grew up, and even South Dearborn Heights. My church is in Dearborn Heights. My friends all live in West Dearborn and Dearborn Heights. And my family and I all love the U of M Dearborn natural area. We have spent many long, lovely hours walking on the trails there.

And this is why I believe the District lines should be redrawn so that all of Dearborn is kept together as one Congressional District. Thank you very much for your time.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Carol, thank you for taking the time to address the Commission. 18.

>> Hello. I'm Jasmine. I was born and raised in Dearborn and I still live here when I'm not attending college.

First, I'd like to thank you all for your work today and for the opportunity to speak. So our current maps, are as many other people have noted, gerrymandered. And I think that's very shameful.

As many others have said, it's not democratic when the election results do not accurately reflect the will of the voters.

It erodes every citizen's faith in democracy and political systems. And I think it creates instability and distrust.

I ask that the Commissioners, when you're drawing the maps, draw them fairly so they accurately represent the wishes and needs of our communities. I think I speak for everyone attending the meeting when I say that or I hope I speak for people attending this meeting when I say that.

I feel a lot of hope that, you know, the outcome of this Commission can lead to a more just and equitable system in our state. You know, one step at a time. You know, yeah, that is all I have to say. Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you very much, Jasmine, for taking the times to share your comments with the Commission. We appreciate that. 19.

>> Hello. My name is Mustafa. I'm a lifelong resident of City of Dearborn. I'm an engineer at Ford Motor Company and Dearborn City Council candidate.

The work you are doing here today is critical for the future of our democracy, so thank you for your time.

Dearborn is one of the largest concentrations of Arab Americans outside of the Middle East. And they deserve proper representation at the State and Federal level.

The U.S. Census does not take into account the ethnicity of Arab Americans living in the City. They are immigrants, native citizens, and long-time contributors to the unique cultural fabric of our town with unique perspectives.

I'm here to ask the Commission to bring the City back together in our State House District, particularly the Northeast end of Dearborn which historically has been home to a large concentration of Arab Americans and other Dearbornites who are part of the Dearborn community.

I'm here to ask that the Commission to reconsider the lines of our Senate District as well, which have been drawn in a manner disenfranchising our community by splitting the water communities of Dearborn and Dearborn Heights. It makes sense to incorporate our cities together to allow for a more wholistic representation of both of our cities.

I trust and hope you will continue to accept our input and I look forward to the solutions that your committee proposes. Thank you for your time.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you, Mustafa. We appreciate you. 20.

>> Good evening. My name is Joe Connors. I'm a 40-year resident of Grosse Ile, which is an island in the Detroit River. And it's part of the Down River community.

Down River consists of 18 communities with a population of 350,000 people. And in the past redistricting efforts, it's been sliced and diced to make Congressional districts, which include cities like Ann Arbor, Dearborn, and Detroit part of our District and they are totally different communities from Down River.

Down River is a, as was said earlier, is an industrial area; hardworking, blue collared people. And those three communities I mentioned are totally different from us. And it would be nice if we are considered a community of interest.

I don't think we have ever been considered that before. And the other thing I would like to ask you to consider is respect municipalities and their lines and townships that they are not divided. And if we do not have enough people for our own Congressional District, I think, as one person mentioned earlier, we might have more isn't common with Northern Monroe County than Washtenaw or Detroit or Dearborn. Thank you so much.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Joe, thank you for taking time to address the Commission. As a reminder, and, 21, you can approach the mic. As a reminder please utilize our public comment tool. Folks really worked hard to get that out to you all so we can hear more of your thoughts, your writings, and any sort of perspective that you might be sharing that, is speaking specifically to the community in which you are interested this or the community in which you live.

21, Good evening. You have our ears.

>> Good evening. My name is [indiscernible]. I'm the publisher of the Arab American news based in Dearborn, Michigan. I've never actually spoke for two minutes, but I'm going to try.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: You can do it.

>> I'm familiar -- I'm very familiar with the gerrymandering because I came from countries --- most of us Arab Americans came from countries there where laws are drawn and Districts are drawn by the power.

So I'm very happy to see that we have an Independent Redistricting Commission that will look at the interests of the people. Starting from there I would like to say to you it doesn't make sense. One of our previous speakers talked about three precincts in Dearborn that are put in District Nine, in the House District Nine. That doesn't make sense.

It just does not make sense. These people do not have adequate representation. Dearborn should be altogether when it comes to House.

Now, when it comes to the Senate, we have absolutely no representation as a community. We are a very vibrant community, but yet we do not have representation. Why we are asking for representation of Arab Americans. I am totally against segregation. We do not want to be separated from our brothers and sisters in Detroit and other surrounding cities, but we have a special need.

We come from countries that are war torn countries and our kids they come traumatized. Our schools are different. We are the third largest district in Michigan, in Dearborn, the school district. And they need special needs. And we need adequate representation in Lansing in order to meet these needs.

Again, against segregation but for adequate representation. I wanted to thank you for listening. We submitted a plan and a map to your Commission. We hope that you take

a look at it. And, like I said, two minutes is two little for me to talk, so I'm going to end it right here.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you so much. You can visit our public comment tool to continue to write and past your two minutes. And if you, not just you, but if anyone submits maps or writings to us, we do take the time to review each one. So do not feel that it is in vain because it's not. 22, 22.

You pass. Well, hello, 22. We are glad you are here.

23.

For purposes of the public record, more professionally, 22 has declined her turn. We are moving on to 23, 23.

Say that again. I couldn't hear you. Okay. We will reset it. That is the timer for me to be quiet. Okay 23.

>> I'm 23. Hi. Actually my number just dropped off, but I'm Charles Young. I'm a resident of Redford Township. And I am also a homeowner in addition to a small business owner. And I'm here for assistance or clarification as a small businessperson. I'm under ten employees. Actually it's just me.

And the trouble that I'm having, and I'm quite sure a lot of my other business colleagues are having with the SBA, it's frustrating. So it's like pulling teeth.

I share a zip code with Detroit, 48239. I'm being told that I'm not in a low-income area. Parts of Redford are, parts of Detroit are.

And, again, any assistance that can be given, it would be greatly appreciated.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you so much, Charles. We appreciate you taking the time to share your public comment with the Commission. 24.

>> Hello. Thank you. I appreciate your time. My name is Kathy Martin and I work for Dearborn Public Schools and I'm a part of the Dearborn Federation of Teachers, Local DFT681.

I would like to thank the committee for your time this evening. And I'm here to advocate for Dearborn, Ecorse, and Melvindale being grouped into one house district because of the unique history and challenges that these three share. They deserve representation that will champion for the relief and the support that these cities and their residents need.

As a special educator in Dearborn, I have seen the challenges of immigrant and refugee families and the difficulty they face when a child requires special services to ensure success. I've seen time and time again how legislation is created without taking these needs into consideration.

In fact, recent legislation, such as the read by third grade law, have racist and oppressive undertones. Schools are doing the best they can yet laws that harm students are keeping their hands tied in some regards.

How far is it that a child escaping the trauma of a war torn country is held to the same standards as a child who was born and raised here with little to no hardships. It's necessary that representatives for districts similar to Dearborn understand the struggles of the residents to help curb or prevent punitive laws from passing.

Thank you for your time.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you for taking the time to share about the educational community. At this time we are going to take a five-minute recess.

So we will return at 7:32.

[Recess at 7:32 p.m.]

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Beloved Dearborn attendees, it is 7:33. We really appreciate you all sticking through our small break. Please hopefully you will stick around to the end, if you can't we understand.

All right. I call this meeting of the Michigan Independent Redistricting Citizens Commission back to order at 7:34 p.m.

Will Michigan Department of State staff, Sarah Reinhardt, please call the order.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Absolutely, Madam Chair. Commissioners, please say present when I call your name. If you are attending the meeting remotely, please announce during roll call that you are attending the meeting remotely. And unless your absence is due to military duty, announce your physical location by stating the county, city, Township or village and the state from which you are attending the meeting remotely. Douglas Clark.

>> COMMISSIONER CLARK: Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Juanita Curry.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Anthony Eid?

>> COMMISSIONER EID: Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Brittini Kellom?

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Rhonda Lange?

>> COMMISSIONER LANGE: Present; attending remotely from Reed City, Michigan.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Steve Lett?

>> COMMISSIONER LETT: Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Cynthia Orton?

>> COMMISSIONER ORTON: Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: MC Rothhorn?

>> COMMISSIONER ROTHORN: Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Rebecca Szetela?

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>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA: Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Janis Vallette?

>> COMMISSIONER VALLETTE: Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Erin

Wagner?

>> COMMISSIONER WAGNER: Erin Wagner, present; attending remotely from Charlotte, Michigan.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Richard Weiss?

>> COMMISSIONER WEISS: Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Dustin Witjes?

>> COMMISSIONER WITJES: Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: All Commissioners are present.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you so much we will continue with our in-person public comment. As a quick reminder, you will step to the nearest microphone and you will have two minutes to address the Commission.

Please conclude your remarks when your two minutes has ended and you hear the timer. If you continue to talk much past that time, I will give you a reminder. So please don't get offended. I'm saying it in advance trying to honor time. Again, please, everyone visit our public comment tool to share your comments in writing including any specific area in the map in which you are speaking about. The public comment tool is available at www.Michigan.gov/MICRC.

Our next number for in-person public comment is Number 25.

>> Hello.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Hello.

>> My name is Lama. And I'm a resident of Dearborn Heights. As other people have noted, the Arab American community is an intentional erased community from the United States Census. And so we are not reflected in any of the census statistics in the past and for the next ten years. Please do not erase us well in your redistricting efforts.

I want to also talk about a separate topic that has not been brought up today. I want to urge you to consider how redistricting impacts our neighbors and friends and family members who are living in Michigan's prisons and jails. While most people may think of those who are incarcerated as far away from our communities, they still reside in correctional facilities across the state. And they have children and families across the state.

They also have voting rights after they are released. More than 95% of people in our facilities will be released to their home communities. Because of our mostly racist criminal justice system, their home communities are predominately poor, Black and Brown communities. So while people who are incarcerated and those who are formerly incarcerated are often erased when we think about voting in districts, I urge you all to consider them and their lives and their voting rights as well as where our prisons and

jails are located and the communities to which these people return as you embark on your redistricting efforts. Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Lama, thank you so much for coming out to share your comments with the Commission. 26.

>> Good evening. Thank you for coming to every corner of the state as far as possible to hear from the people. My name is Al Lemo. I've lived in Dearborn as a homeowner for the last nearly 44 years now. In that time I've never had a Congressional representative to my liking and probably never will. The same is largely true of the state legislative representatives as well.

I live in a District that in which I, my community of interest is a large minority, but a minority just the same. And I'd like it to remain so for quite some time. We have been consigned to political oblivion.

I'd like you to bear in mind that fact when you redraw the districts and give us more competitive districts, so that when I go to vote it's not a meaningless exercise. It's not irrelevant.

I think that is largely what I have to say. I realize I could be shooting myself in the foot in one sense. And also it would be posing some practical difficulties in meeting a certain objective such as having compact districts. But on the other hand, we should not have a Congressman for life. And this Commission was sold to the people as voters choosing their representatives, if I recall correctly, rather than having politicians choosing their voters.

The current system of doing things makes a mockery of that. And I would like you to change that. Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Al, appreciate you taking the time to address the Commission. 27.

>> Good evening. My name is Moniksy. I'm on staff at the American Federation of Teachers here in Michigan. I'm a resident of Dearborn, a former public school teacher, and a proud member of AFT Local T-31, the Detroit Federation of Teachers. I'm here today to advocate for Dearborn, Ecorse and Melvindale being grouped into one House district because of the unique history and challenges that the cities and the students share.

As an educator in communities that serve underrepresented Black, indigenous and young people of color, I've seen the impact misaligned representation has on the access to students and marginalized communities have to a culturally and community responsive education.

As we return to buildings and we imagine transformative learning for young people, educators and school communities need bold representation and advocacy for policies, funding and resources that center the lived experiences of our communities as they continue to work tirelessly to provide educational opportunities that include differentiated

supports and wraparound services, all which address the many needs of our diverse Black and Brown student populations.

Students and families in Dearborn, Ecorse and Melvindale deserve representation and decision making that comes from a deep understanding of their communities, their rich histories, and the challenges they face in order to truly provide them with an equitable education and life beyond.

Our communities deserve representation that will champion for the relief and support these cities and its residents; needs. Thank you for your consideration.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you so much for taking time to address the Commission. 28.

>> Hi. My name is Joseph and I teach high school at Fordson, which is in Dearborn. I'm a member of the DFT, the Dearborn Federation of Teachers 681 Local. And I'm here just to reiterate some of the points that other people have made.

My students, as some had noted, sometimes come from like war torn countries. They are refugees. They are English language learners. A lot of them deal with poverty or issues relating to poverty. And currently the way the Dearborn District is set up their needs are not being represented at all.

As other people have noted, the way the Dearborn District is set up it's this weird long chain that goes all the way to Ann Arbor somehow. And it's like these people do not have the representation that they deserve to actually make things better, to make the conditions better in schools for them. If they are not adequately represented, then it makes my job that much harder because I'm not getting the resources, I need to help them. They are not getting the resources they need to help themselves. And overall it's just not addressing their unique needs and unique experiences as a community.

So this is why we ought to combine Dearborn, Ecorse and Melvindale into a single District. So I want to thank you all for your time and good luck.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you so much for sharing your public comment with the Commission this evening. 29.

>> Hello. My name is Kari and I live in West Bloomfield. I'll admit that prior to this Commission I did not think too much about redistricting our districts. But when I looked at the current map, I could tell something was very wrong.

My current District looks like a messed up S. West Bloomfield has been separated from Bloomfield Hills while Farmington is cut out from Farmington Hills. And it would be helpful for group these counterparts together. Thank you for your work to represent the people and the state and to end gerrymandering.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you so much for taking the time to address the Commission this evening. 30.

>> Thank you. My name is Brazite. I have lived in the cities of Dearborn and Dearborn Heights for the last, past 47 years. I'm currently the codirector of the access

social services department. And today I'm standing in front of you as a proud resident and to share the story of my community, the Arab American community.

As you've heard from many people, the census does not include an option for people to identify as Arab, Middle Eastern or North African. This has affected my community in many areas from political representation to access to healthcare and even receiving grants, funding for health, social services, that are funded with at least 675 in billion Federal money distributed annually to communities with the help of the census data.

The communities we serve face challenges that are unique. From a basic needs perspective, immigrants and refugees here face barriers associated with their eligibility for State and Federal benefits and entitlement programs, as well as their ability to meet documentation requirements needed to obtain state licensing's and identification.

From an educational preparedness perspective bilingual education programs are not widely available and oftentimes youth who are newcomers to this country are not able to meet their basic educational requirements.

Over the past few months, new issues have emerged in community needs for access services increased. Access and its community partners rose up to meet the challenges even in the first few weeks of the pandemic.

In March of 2020 with we launch the COVID-19 response initiative to help our clients with emergency basic needs health and education. Today we are experiencing a collective trauma as a state. And the way that you prepare and redistrict will impact every single member that I am talking about. So I hope you take that into consideration. Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you so much for taking the time to talk with us this evening. 31.

>> Mark. I'm a resident of Dearborn Heights. That puts me in State House District 11 and State Senate District Number Five. And Congressional District Number 13.

And as far as the State District boundaries go, they are pretty well compact. That's how I see my area of my community of interest geographically because that is the west side of Wayne County. And that's where I work, I live, I play, I worship all there. I shop Western Wayne County.

That being said, the 13th Congressional District is pretty unique because it's the only one that is entirely within one county. With that being said, if you look at it, it stretches across the whole county east to west. And if we take a poll here of Wayne County people, you will find that the majority of people here are west siders. They rarely, if ever, venture to the east side.

So when you are drawing those boundary lines, consider east side, west side of Wayne County. If you look at the map of Dearborn Heights, my city, you might think it's gerrymandered itself. It's kind of funny. And there is several people here who have talked about the Arab representation. I think you will find that that is mostly in the north end of Dearborn Heights. The south end of Dearborn Heights less so. So the people

who want to have Dearborn representation or Arabic representation, it makes sense to include the north half of Dearborn Heights. And if you have to separate somewhere to balance out population, that's one way to go. I think that's all I have to say.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Mark, thank you for taking the time to address the Commission this evening. 32.

>> Good evening. My name is Pete Petoskey. My wife and I live in South Gate, Michigan. In Wayne County. I was born and raised on the east side of Detroit. And back growing up there, I thought there was Detroit going south, wilderness, and then Toledo. And then later on I met my wife at the phone company at work. She lived Down River. And I didn't know what that was, but I fell in love with my wife and I fell in love with Down River and moved there and haven't left since.

If you live in Down River, you know what Down River is. It's a feeling almost. And you can talk to anybody who lives down there. It's a wonderful place to live.

You folks are very, very lucky to be serving on this panel. What a remarkable opportunity to go around the state and listen to folks talk. I'm humbled by the wisdom of the people who have spoke before me at this microphone. I'm just amazed at the level of intelligence and articulation and heart-felt information that is being handed out.

I've always felt that the best governance is the governance closest to your front door. So, consequently, I hope you use that kind of a philosophy going forward. Both community of interests, we talked about that. But how about some nontraditional community of interests. I'm a biker.

Take a look at biking groups.

You have Down River biking club and the Oak Park easy roll. Take a look at some of the Facebook groups perhaps or some nontraditional advice on community of interest.

Again, thank you for your service, folks. You're in the politics game. And you've probably made some friends and enemies around the state. But, like the saying goes, if you want a friend in politics, get a dog, so good luck to you all.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you so much. I'll say hello to my dog for you. 33.

>> Hi. My name is Jackie Petoskey, that was my better half that just spoke. I would like to say that you folks have a really hard job ahead of you. And I wish you all the wisdom that you're going to need for this.

I think that looking at districts in Michigan should be kind of like looking at a map of the counties of Michigan. They are pretty much square. We don't have little snakes drawn for counties. And I think districts should look like that.

I also hope that you folks have the power to make this happen and that the state legislature will not pass laws and overrule all the hard work you are doing. Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you so much for taking the time to address the Commission. 34.

>> I'd just like to say thank you for the Commissioners. And congratulations on winning this position. I don't know if you're happy about it because it's going to be very, very hard work that you have to complete.

I live in Taylor, Michigan. And we've had good representation today. So I'm not going to beat that to death. I just would like to say that I think the majority of the people today are saying keep their communities together, not with crazy divided lines and everything.

And a lot of people have echoed my thoughts that keep Down River communities with Down River communities. And, again, good luck folks. Roll up your sleeves, and don't be swayed by politics. Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you so much for taking the time to address the Commission. 35.

>> Good evening, Commissioners. First, I would like to say thank you for your efforts in helping to make Michigan more fair.

My name is Marcella. I'm from the West Bloomfield area. And I'm a first generation American. I'm half Chaldean and half Lebanese. It's my understanding that the Commission will be using the recent U.S. Census data to redraw our districts in the state.

What I would like the Commission to be aware of, as many have brought up, is that many of my people, my people being of Americans with Middle Eastern decent, felt unrepresented filling out the census because we had to identify as white. And there is no Middle Eastern/North African box given to us.

For example, Chaldeans, we do not identify as white. We have our own history in Iraq as Christians. Our own history here in Michigan, building businesses and families, our own culture and even our own language.

I'm asking the Commission to please consider the Chaldean community as a community of interest for these reasons. Many of us reside in the West Bloomfield area and the Sterling Heights Area. And we tend to live in the suburbs since we are family oriented and neighborly. And would like to be grouped with those who share our values regardless of background in those areas.

I'm also asking the Commission to consider the entire Middle Eastern Community in Michigan with redrawing the lines so we may have better and accurate representation in Michigan. Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Marcella, thank you for taking the time to address the Commission. 36.

>> Hello. My name is Yavon and I'm from Westland, Michigan. And I am one of the petition workers. I was Number 31 in the state. I collected 9,900 signatures so that we could have a Redistricting Commission.

[Applause]

And I'm excited to be here. I think it's really important to focus on having communities of interest together. I think Westland, before it was kind of, as far as Congressional

districts, it was included in with Livonia, Redford and Canton and then going north. And now we are not as badly gerrymandered as lot of other places. Our State Senator is from Westland. Our House representative is from Westland.

But I really ask the Commission to focus on keeping people together. So Westland is partly working class. And currently we are in the 13th Congressional District. So I just want to underline what everybody else has said is to try to keep people of communities together and not break them up. Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Yvonne, thank you so much for taking the time to address the Commission. 37.

>> Hello. My name is Eric Grader. And I'm a faculty member at Henry Ford College here in Dearborn. I'm also a member of AFT Local 1650, which is the Henry Ford Community College Federation of Teachers. I want to thank the committee for being in our city tonight.

I'm here to ask putting Dearborn, Ecorse and Melvindale into one State District because of their common background and characteristics that a few others have spoken about as well. A House District that includes these three communities would be one that truly represents the people living in these industrial and working class communities and areas.

At HFC we have students from a number of different cities including Dearborn, Ecorse, and Melvindale. Throughout the pandemic, I've seen economic and emotional toll that COVID has taken on our students. There is a real digital divide for many of them.

We also have a large percentage who depend on our campus food pantry for basic supplies for their homes and families. As others have mentioned, we have a large immigrant Arab American population in Dearborn.

Even before COVID, many of our students struggled with life and death issues. Our school provides a lifeline for thousands of area residents. The students in Dearborn, Ecorse and Melvindale and their families would benefit having a common representative in Lansing to advocate for them in their school and their families.

Thank you again for coming to Dearborn and considering my views. Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Eric, thank you for taking the time to address the Commission. 38.

>> Hello. And thank you all for being here. My name is Andrew Sullivan. I work as a public defender in Detroit. For those of you who don't know, public defenders are attorneys appointed to people who are arrested and cannot afford an attorney, which is a lot of people who are arrested.

I want to bring your attention to the fact I'm here to represent this population of people who I have represented a group of people, Black and Brown people, who are unfairly policed, over policed and incarcerated.

I want to bring your attention to the fact that as I understand the census counts, prisoners in their communities that are incarcerating them rather than the communities where they live and where they would prefer to live. I would ask you to consider the fact that our -- I'm proud that our country and our state is beginning to reconsider this punitive and punitive nature of our criminal justice system. A lot of the people that are in prison ought not be in prison. There are -- we are beginning to consider rehabilitative programs and other pursuits of justice. And I would ask you to consider looking at that population and returning them to their home communities, the communities with which they identify. And not allowing the current system as it has been to steal political power from urban communities and transfer it to the rural communities that are incarcerating those individuals.

Thank you again for your time. I want to echo those other prior comments and appreciate everyone for being here. Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you so much for taking the time to speak to the Commissioner this evening. 39.

>> Yes. Good evening. My name is Robert Patterson. I'm a member of the Grand Mont Association Board. I'm also the treasurer for that organization. My community of interest is the Grand Mont Community Association. We are in Detroit bounded on the north by Grand River, M5 on the south by Schoolcraft Avenue. On the east by Asbury Park. And on the west by Southfield M39 Service Drive.

And we have been active and involved in community and community betterment purposes for many years. In the past more than 30 years, we have determined that it was in our best interest to expand our community of interest. And we partnered with Grand Mont with the two Rose Dales and the park and Grant Mont Number One. Five communities that are committed communities with educational diversity, social and racial justice, and exemplifying the best of the future of Michigan.

We want to make sure that that community stays intact as a community of interest. And that we can carry on our functions in a more homogenous way.

We also -- I would also like to thank you for having this here. And it's also very instructive for me to see so many of my union brothers and sisters here. I am a member of the National Treasury Employees Union currently but I have also been a member of the United Auto Workers and the Teamsters. And we all know when we work as a union, we always make things better. But we are still striving to make that a more perfect union. And it's very important that we keep that struggle going.

Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you so much for taking the time to address the Commission this evening with your public comment.
40.

>> Hi. My name is Emily Bowman. I live in the City of Westland and the County of Wayne in Michigan. And I want to thank you for what you are doing and the immense

task that you all have taken on to map out this state. This is no small feat. And, quite frankly, every time I think about it, it sounds overwhelming. I even brought my boys because I thought the experience would be amazing for them to see the civics in Government opportunity that we have right now to do this. They may say they are bored, but I hope they enjoyed this experience.

Last year I had the opportunity to walk several of my actually my entire town to help with some things with the election. And while I understand that the population and other restrictions must be reviewed, and I'm in full support of keeping cities and townships whole and not divided to every possible extent -- and not divided to every possible extent that you can.

I also see -- have seen, ask that the lines to define the districts be simple and clean, square and compact rather than that zigzagging thing that you see in some of the areas, especially in Wayne County.

And specifically in Westland, the current State House District of the 16th District is comprised of all of the City of Wayne and most of Westland. There is actually this little corner in the north, was it northeast corner that is represented by a completely different House District. And I would like you to keep all of Wayne and all of Westland in there. Even when the some of the precincts that would vote into that other area, there is -- I can't imagine the people that were working there had to deal with. You have to get this one because your District is just off. And it just adds all that extra stuff to it. And I think you should keep them in one District.

So please keep the city of Wayne and all of Westland together as one District. I actually have friends in that area who are not feeling completely represented and not understanding while we can live in the same city while not being represented by the same people. And Wayne and Westland actually share schools and a lot of things that they do.

So, again, please keep the natural community lines. And thank you again for being a part of this process and thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you so much. At this time that concludes our in-person public comment. But we are going to move to our remote public comment. We encourage you all to stick around and support those that are sharing public comment remotely. However, of course, you do not have to.

>> I'm 41.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Madam Chair, there are 49 total public comments.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: My apologies.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: That was 49.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Okay, thank you. My last update was something different, so I will go to 41.

>> I'm not Beverly Kindle Walker. Beverly Kindle Walker is running for Detroit City Clerk. I'm Cindy Garrett and got an e-mail today and really came to listen, but I can't give up the chance to make a public comment.

I am listening to people and they have got communities of interest. But what I would like to see is if you could do something about looking at the algorithms for the numbers of how this comes about where we have majority vote, gets the minority in the legislature.

So if you could take those communities of colors and communities of interest and then use those algorithms, maybe you can come up with something that makes sense with interest and with numbers so we can have a more fair Government. But, actually, if you had proportional representation, I have always thought it was too confusing to have all these different boundaries. People in Detroit, most of them, don't know which, where their District boundaries are. I can tell you what District I'm in. Six. But I can't tell you, you know, all of the boundaries.

And then you have got different boundaries for the State Representatives, the Senate, House, Michigan House, Michigan Senate, national. You know, so all of these different boundaries make it confusing. And maybe with proportional representation in the future, we could draw some boundaries of interest and then use proportional representation to give the right representation to the population.

But also, they were having algorithms showing how algorithms were better than Judge's decisions. So that is why I say maybe you can look at that.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you so much for sharing your public comment this evening. 42, please.

>> Good evening. I'm a resident of Dearborn, Michigan. I'm also a board trustee on the Dearborn Public Schools. I'm here speaking in my personal capacity as a resident. I acknowledge you have a very difficult job before you to draw fair and balanced districts for the State of Michigan.

I'm speaking here today to draw your attention to the zip code 48120 as well as 42817. And those are the areas in Melvindale and south end Dearborn, which have been affected and heavily affected by pollution from nearby industrial facilities.

The zip code 42817 is Michigan's most polluted zip code. The community is filled with toxic chemicals wafting from steel mills, coal fired power plants, smokestacks, salt mine, waste matter, treatment plant, and one of the nation's largest refineries.

Pollution does not stop at the border of these communities but travels to East Dearborn and southwest Detroit as well. I believe that these communities have been fighting environmental injustice for a long time. And that they deserve collectively fair representation at the State level and the Federal level. They deserve representatives who will advocate for cleaner air, better roads and better environments.

This area is also connected by proximity at the intersection of the freeway heading into soon and to the new bridge. There are so much that I can tell you about, which I

will be sending you in comments as well as suggested maps. These communities are also made up of immigrants and under privileged.

I also agree that Dearborn should be kept whole as one District for various reasons, and include the three precincts that are not currently in District 15. Thank you so much.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you so much for taking the time to address the Commission. 43, please.

>> Good evening and I want to thank the Commission again for coming to Dearborn. Given by our State Senate map that we have currently, it's evident that Dearborn and Dearborn Heights have often been under looked. So I think it is very symbolic.

I want to show a map of our current Senate District. And, frankly, I don't mean to be too harsh, but this is sort of a mess. Lincoln, Taylor, Allen Park, up to Detroit, I don't know, that is definitely not a community. The current map we have is not a map of communities. It's a map of squiggles.

And the reason it is like this is not because of gerrymandering as something but it's because of the Voting Rights Act. We want to -- we wanted five. And I do believe the Voting Rights Act is important. And minority representation in Government is important. And it is in important to have a decent amount of majority, minority districts.

When it gets to the point where in order to draw one you have to draw a map like this, which splits so many communities, and I want to speak briefly on how it is to live in a VRA seat that goes into Detroit. As a Dearborn Heights resident, I've never felt like I had a true Senator because my Senator always addresses me in fliers as Dear Detroit Resident. And I don't blame them because Detroit is an important part of their District. I just want to feel like I have an actual Senator.

Going in Dearborn, where it is split up into another VRA District because I believe the republican legislature that drew it wanted five VRAs to reflect criticism for its clear gerrymandering.

Nobody know whose their Senate senator is. So I think it's important to prioritize communities of interest, communities of interest, and have four VRA seats to make this map look better. And I will be submitting maps. Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you for taking the time to address the Commission. 44.

>> And if you want to give us those maps you can.

>> Good evening my name is Jessica Toth. I'm a current resident of Westland, in the County of Wayne. And I would like to thank the Commission for their service and certainly for your time. I understand that the task ahead of you is immense. And we appreciate you taking the time to listen to the many residents here that wanted to be part of this forum.

As a previous constituent noted, I'm part of Westland, which is State District 16. I'm in the northeast corner in State District 6, which is actually not part of the remainder of Westland.

The -- what I am asking for as part of Westland, which is also the tenth largest city and the 12th largest municipality within the State of Michigan. My community of interest is important to me. I've been a resident for 16 years. And also born and raised in Dearborn Heights where my brother and my dad still reside.

And it's important to me as a community of interest because of the availability of parks, my church, my place of work, and certainly friends all reside in this area. I do respectfully ask that the Commission, when drawing lines they, be as others commented, be simple, clean and compact. And keeping municipalities and townships, respecting their lines and intact as much as possible and considering fair representation for this area.

And I would like to again thank the Commission for their time by allowing me to speak tonight.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you so much for taking the time to provide your public comment this evening. 45.

>> Good evening. Look at this clock to start here. I have been a resident of Dearborn for over 30 years. And I want to really thank you for your service on this Commission. Finally, I got to see what I was dreaming about, the Independent Commission that can do our districts not based on partisan considerations, namely the public considerations, but based on logical and common sense factors.

I will try not to repeat many of the things that people said before even though I support them. It's difficult not to be redundant when you are number 45, but I will tell you I support the idea of putting communities back together. I will tell you I like especially Dearborn coming back together. And, of course, making maps that make sense when you look at them.

Before I became an attorney, I was an engineer. When I look at the map, the engineer in my jumps what is this about. This cannot be a map of districts. And I heard people telling you that you should start from scratch, which kind of makes sense if you look at how bad the map is today. It's tempting to do this. It's a good idea, but another good idea could be to go back in time, not too far back in time, the days I could remember, I've been here only for 30 years, when Michigan had 16th District. I remember I was 16th Congressional District, was Dearborn in Down River. And I was very involved in local politics. And I would attend meetings with people I felt had the same concerns. Not people who looked like me, certainly not sounding like me and the names were not like me because many -- there are much fewer Arab Americans involved in politics at that time. But I felt kinship to people in my District because we had the same concerns, the same issues and same problems.

When you bring Ann Arbor into the equation, like somebody said, we don't have the same problems. We have members of my family living in that area. I love them and everything. But we have different concerns. So when you look into the remapping that Congressional District particularly, in addition to everything that has been said here

tonight, please try to go vertically here from Dearborn down as opposed to going horizontally and either try to put us with Detroit or Ann Arbor. It makes a lot more sense for us to go with Down River. Thank you for your service.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you so much for taking the time to provide comment to the Commission. 46.

>> Hello. I'm a high school senior. I'm graduating tomorrow. I'm 18 years old and from Yemen, a country in the Middle East.

To start this off, I would like to take a moment to thank the Commission for the work they do as it's highly important. I'm here today to talk about the issue of misrepresentation because of the lack of the AMENA category. I come from a predominately Middle Eastern/Arab speaking neighborhood. And as many others mentioned before me, a reoccurring issue we face is the lack of representation and misrepresentation in this country.

As you know, the U.S. Census does not have a category for people from the Middle East and Northern African counties. We end up having to check the box labeled as white, and I'm definitely not white.

Feeling a sense of disconnection and marginalization is an experience many like me feel today. How can we truly be represented by our representatives if we are invisible by the data? What is a representative democracy without accurate representation?

I'm here to ask you and ensure that when you are redistricting our communities to be inclusive to communities like mine that are not represented by the census. And thank you so much for your time.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you so much for your time and congratulations on graduation. Whoot whoot whoot whoot.

[Applause]

47.

>> Good evening. And thank you guys for coming out and being in Western Wayne County. I am Gina Wilson Stewart. And I'm a resident of the City of River Rouge. River Rouge is a small city population under 8,000, just south of Detroit. We border Ecorse and Melvindale and as I said Southwest Detroit, which is a good combination of the people who love Down River. You heard some people talk about Down River. Down River is a wonderful place to live. We are all committed to loving each other and treating each other like family. Those are the cities of River Rouge, Ecorse, Lincoln Park and Melvindale.

We are all industrial. We all grew up with the Ford Motor Company right there. And I think it would be great if we were all in the House District in that area.

And as I move on my other volunteer responsibility is I'm the president of the Western Wayne County NAACP. And that covers three Congressional Districts, 11, 12 and 13. As we looked over those districts' maps it was unbelievable to see how they were so spread out. But what we did notice was a division of classism. Not necessarily racism.

But we looked at the median income on those areas, how those maps were drawn, and 13 was low. 11 was higher and 12 was higher. And as we looked at that, we said that's another form of, I think, discrimination. So when you redraw the maps try to think about classism as well because we need to have a little of all of them in each category. Don't just have one category where everyone is well off and one category where everybody is in poverty.

Thank you so much for your time.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Gina, thank you for taking the time to speak to the Commission this evening. 48.

If there is no 48, we will move on to 49. Oh, wait. Okay, no 48. Okay, 49, go ahead. Good evening.

>> Good evening, everyone. My name is Calley Bruley. I'm a resident of South Gate, Michigan. I've lived there most of my life. And I did want to say, I know a lot of people thanked you all today, but I do want to start by thanking you because you have a really difficult job ahead of you. And just want to thank all of you for taking on these very important and historic roles on the Commission.

So I want to make two quick points. The first is just to please when you are redrawing maps to be intentional in upholding what voters asked for when they have passed proposal two and start fresh with brand new maps.

The old maps and the maps that are currently existing are a partisan gerrymander. So it's very important that you start brand new.

And then my second point is to please draw as many competitive districts as possible to ensure fair representation for voters all across the state of both the Federal and state level. Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you so much for taking the time to address the Commission. At this time I think that concludes our in-person public comment. And we will be moving on to our remote public comment.

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

I will call your name and our staff will unmute you. If you are on a computer, you will be prompted by the Zoom app to unmute your microphone and speak. If you are on the phone, a voice will say that the host would like you to speak and prompt you to press star six to unmute.

I will then call on you by name. Again, if I -- well, I say again because I say this in every city that we've been to, but if I make a mistake on your name, please do not feel bad. And please correct me because I believe names are important. Note that if you experience technical or audio issues or we do not hear from you for three to five seconds, we will move on to the next person in line and then return to you after they are done speaking.

If your audio still does not work at that time, you can e-mail us at Redistricting@Michigan.Gov and we will help you troubleshoot so you can participate during the next public comment period or at a later hearing or meeting.

You will have two minutes again to address the Commission. Please conclude your remarks when your two minutes has ended and you hear the timer. Please go to the public comment tool and share other thoughts that you might have in writing, including any specific area of the map in which you are speaking. The public comment tool is at www.Michigan.gov/MICRC.

Our first in line to provide remote public comment is Adam Beddawi. Adam Beddawi. And please allow a couple moments for our staff to unmute you.

>> Hello.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Hi, Adam. We can hear you.

>> Hello and thank you guys. I want to thank the committee for holding this public hearing and for soliciting feedback from community groups within the State of Michigan.

I'm Adam Beddawi, the DC policy manager for Access, the Arab Community Center for economic and social services. I want to speak to how redistricting can address the realities facing the Arab American community in Southeast Michigan.

Access represents, in particular, the surrounding communities of Dearborn, Detroit, Ferndale, Hamtramck and Sterling Heights. However, in my job, I have a unique position. I try to work with Congressional staff and Government agencies to represent the voices of Arab Americans and to articulate their concerns.

However, a significant impediment on my ability to do so is the lack of a category for self-identification on the U.S. Census. One of the downstream effects of which is, of course, the drawing of District maps.

So I may be able to advocate for the community through antidotes or studies that are effectively a snapshot image. However, without a basis upon which to highlight the unique conditions as well as intersections that exist between our and other regional concerns, I cannot do so in the wholistic sense necessary to consistently deliver for our constituents.

So historically the lack of a demographic category for Middle Eastern or African people have contributed to the persistence of poor social and public health conditions for the community at large. And despite being the historical victims of policies rooted in anti-Arab discrimination, Arab Americans are not considered a racial and ethnic minority group.

So as the nation in general embarks upon an important effort to redress racial inequities along social and economic lines, Arab Americans are, once again, not represented. So as a result, organizations may consider to suffer for insufficient funding for social support services or a lack of investment in community development initiatives.

So this independent redistricting commission offers a chance for community groups to articulate their concerns, which are not yet reflected in the data. And it offers an

important chance for the community to articulate themselves within communities of shared interests. Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you so much for taking the time to share your thoughts and your public comment shared with the Commission.

Our second person to provide remote public comment is not present. So, for the purpose of public record, we will be moving on to our third person, who is Sara Moughni. Sara, I know that I mispronounced your last name.

>> It's Moughni. You are fine. First of all, I would like to thank the Commission for taking the time to hear me speak today. Hi. My name is Sara Moughni and I'm a junior in high school. I'm 16 years old and I've resided in Dearborn Heights, Michigan my entire life.

Yet my home is in the Dearborn Public School District where I go to Dearborn High School. I reside in a separate Congressional District from my school friends and peers. And I see myself failing to identify with the needs of my own Congressional District due to the great disparities among my own District's constituents. And rarely identifying with the needs of the constituents of my school friends and my school District.

It makes more sense because due to the fact that my school District is being exposed to similar socialization factors that I am. Not only this, but in my community of interest being an Arab American, we are not even included on the U.S. Census. We are considered Caucasian. And with all due respect I don't identify with that.

As our population is growing in the United States, we are even considered our own ethnic group. This strips away our funding and skews population data. Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Sara, thank you so much for that astute public comment. I hope what even you endeavor to do in life you continue to share and use your voice because it's power full.

>> Thank you so much.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: You are welcome so much. We are going to move to number four, Donald Stuckey the second, number four Donald Stuckey the second. Please allow a few moments to unmute you.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Madam Chair, the number four who had signed up, who was previously absent is now here. And her name is Madira-Tarik.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Madira Tarik?

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Correct.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Sorry, I did not hear the pronunciation for the first name. And that is going to be our number four remote public comment, correct?

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Correct.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Okay. Allow a few minutes for the staff to unmute. There you are.

>> Hi. Can I start now?

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Yes, you can start.

>> Thank you to the Independent Commission for holding these important public hearings. My name is Madiha Tariq. I'm a citizen and immigrant, a public health leader and currently I'm the deputy director for the community health and resource center at Access.

Access is the largest Arab American community nonprofit in the country. And I've been working for Access for ten years. And I consider myself a proud member of this community.

The Arab American community has been unrecognized not just by the census but across many sectors of the Government. At Access our mission is to provide the services that reflect the most pressing needs of the community. In fact, these very needs are what anchored our mission when Access came into existence in 1971.

And since then our organization has been providing an area of health and human services. The Access community has been the center, which I lead, currently plays a pivotal role in partnership with academic partners to collect research on Arab American community because it simply does not exist. And that information is extremely important to us as we are building programming and making the case for funding for our organizations.

The lack of MENA category, which Middle East North Africa, on the census has been detrimental to our community in many ways. In 2015 the U.S. Census conducted a survey that revealed that the percentage of Arab Americans who identified as white dropped from 85.5% to 20% when given an option to identify as MENA, Middle East North Africa.

After the survey, the Census concluded it is optimal to use a dedicated MENA, Middle Eastern North Africa, response category on the 2020 Census. We have a constitutional right to be counted as our own ethnic category on the Census. And I hope the Commission will take into consideration this request.

Population data is a key factor in political redistricting. Researching human rights, monitoring Government programs, and antidiscrimination laws, meaning Arab Americans are subject to lack of representation in health and human services. I would like to thank the Commission for taking the time to hear the concerns of Dearborn residents and family. And I look forward to your final decisions.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you so much, Madia, for sharing your public comment with the Commission. We appreciate that. And now we have number five, Donald Stuckey, the second.

>> Hi. My name is -- can you guys hear me?

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Yes, we can hear you.

>> Hi, my name is Donald Stuckey, II. I'm a former state representative candidate for State House District Nine. And currently work for Dearborn Public Schools as a Special Ed paraprofessional where I work with students with disabilities.

I would like to draw your attention to State House District Nine and to State Senate District Three. State House District, when I was running for State Representative in 2018, three precincts in the City of Dearborn are cutoff from the current District where most of the City of Dearborn is.

I believe that this is a very considerable issue as the issues that the people of Dearborn face are -- can be often different from what is faced by their neighbors in the western part of Detroit. And so that is something that needs to be considered.

Additionally, with State House District -- with State Senate District Nine, I'm sorry, State Senate District Three, many of the students that I serve come from Dearborn Heights. And having both of those school districts in a State Senate District would just be a lot better for representation purposes when it comes to funding, when it comes to the support services that students with disabilities need.

I would like to thank, again, this Commission for the job that you're doing and the service that you're providing the people of the State of Michigan. And I hope that you are able to conduct your business fairly and in the best interests of all of the people of our state. Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Donald, thank you for taking the time to address the Commission this evening.

We will now move to our final remote public comment who is Mariam Akanan. And allow a couple of moments for staff to unmute you.

>> Hello, can you hear me?

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Yes.

>> Awesome. Great. Good evening. I would like to thank you the Commission and everyone that was speaking about the community of interests that they feel should be shared. And I want to thank you for hearing, you know, our community this evening.

My name is Mariam. I'm a social work student and a first generation immigrant and a resident of Dearborn Heights. I also work at the Arab Community Center For Economic and Social Services and its national network for Arab American communities.

Oddly enough, I first heard of Access from my mom, an immigrant who needed assistance and Access can provide linguistically appropriate services. So it's not enough to talk about my community of interest. A community that has been underrepresented for decades.

Fellow team members mentioned the importance of the census, the census mandated by United States Constitution to take place every ten years. But and by we, I'm talking about community members, residents, citizens and immigrants who identify as Arab Americans or from the Middle East or North Africa.

Currently there are at least 3.5 million Americans of Arab that are living in the United States yet are not represented because of the lack of data collection that signifies our racial and ethnic categories.

An important element to keep in mind is language accessibility for predominately non-English speakers, which is integral to their ability to receive services and to be civically engaged and integrated into society. My mom is an immigrant and a non-English speaking resident of Dearborn Heights. And when I speak about language accessibility, I speak with her in mind.

I have witnessed her difficulty in receiving culturally appropriate services and resources. And this is why language accessibility is only one small example of how the census and ultimately redistricting affects our communities.

Representation matters, but without an accurate count of my community of interest, it leaves us with being constantly invisible and that factored into this part of the political process of redistricting.

Another important element is environmental health in the South Dearborn, that was mentioned by fellow members. And it is important to also note that the large number of immigrants and refugees that reside in Dearborn reside in also Southeast Dearborn.

What I hope is that when we are drawing the maps of the District is to be grounded by the primary reason why these hearings are being held in the first place. And to remain guided by an intersectionality lens. And I appreciate all your efforts for hearing the community needs and putting the interests and putting our interests and the interests of the community into this scope of the redistricting process. Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you so much for taking the time to share your comment with the Commission this evening.

Michigan Department of State staff, Sarah Reinhardt, is there anyone else for our remote public comment?

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: There is no further public comment.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Okay, just wanted to double check because sometimes we have folks that want to speak a second time, and that is okay as long as everyone else speaks first that signed up.

At this time, as you heard, that concludes our -- all of our public comments both in person and remote. And we will be moving on to our acknowledgments, if there are no objections to us giving acknowledgments, and saying thank you.

Okay. Well, we want to thank -- sorry, I had the awkward pause. I will acknowledge our General Counsel, Julianne Pastula, who is going to do our acknowledgment.

>> MS. JULIANNE PASTULA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I was waiting for the pause for objections in case Commissioner Witjes wanted to jump in there.

Thank you so much to the community of Dearborn and the surrounding communities indeed for welcoming us this evening. I'd like to thank, excuse me, please, the staff and everyone with the Ford Community and Performing Art Center that helped us facilitate and make this evening a success. I would especially like to thank all of our volunteers that staffed the event and helped behind the scenes, as well as in person at the event to make it happen. I'd like to thank the city of Dearborn, Access, M Gauge, the Arab

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American News, Web TV, New Michigan Media, the League of Women Voters, as well as Voters Not Politicians. And, again, to any other individual that participated in either staffing or volunteering at this hearing, and, certainly, to all of the attendees here. Thank you so much, whether you provided in-person or virtual comment or you just attended to listen, we really appreciate all of your participation. Thank you and have a good night.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you so much. You all are a warm group. As the items on the agenda are completed and the Commission has no further business, a motion to adjourn is in order. May I have a motion to adjourn?

>> COMMISSIONER WITJES: So moved.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: The motion has been made by Commissioner Witjes and seconded by Commissioner Rothhorn. All in favor raise your hand and aye.

>> Aye.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: All opposed raise your hand and say nay. Motion carries the meeting has been adjourned at 8:39.

Thank you, everyone. Please travel safe and be well.

(Meeting concludes at 8:39 p.m.)