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MICRC

10/22/21 1:00 pm Meeting/Public Hearing

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>> CHAIR SZETELA: As Chair of the Commission, we will bring the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission to order at 1:11 p.m.

This Zoom webinar is being live streamed on YouTube at www.Michigan.gov/MICRC YouTube channel.

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

Our live stream today includes closed captioning. Closed captioning, ASL interpretation, and Spanish and Arabic and Bengali translation services will be provided for effective participation in this meeting. Please 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 also being recorded and will be available at www.Michigan.gov/MICRC for viewing at a later date and this meeting also is being transcribed and those closed captioned transcriptions will be made available and posted on 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 both 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, our Communications and Outreach Director for the Commission at WoodsE3@Michigan.gov or 517-331-6309.

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

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Good afternoon, Commissioners. Please say present when I call your name. If you are attending Today's meeting remotely, please disclose during roll call you are attending remotely and where you are attending from, I will call on Commissioners in alphabetical order starting with Doug Clark.

>> COMMISSIONER CLARK: Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Juanita Curry.

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>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Anthony Eid?

>> COMMISSIONER EID: Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Brittini Kellom?

>> COMMISSIONER LANGE: Present 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?

>> VICE COMMISSIONER ROTHORN: Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Rebecca Szetela?

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Janice Vallette?

>> COMMISSIONER VALLETTE: Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Erin Wagner?

>> COMMISSIONER WAGNER: Present; attending remotely from charlotte, Michigan.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Richard Weiss?

>> COMMISSIONER WEISS: Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Dustin Witjes?

>> COMMISSIONER WITJES: Present. I will return to Juanita.

>> COMMISSIONER CURRY: Curry present from Detroit Michigan.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: 12 Commissioners are present.

And there is a quorum.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you. You can view the agenda at www.Michigan.gov/MICRC.

I would now entertain a motion to approve the meeting agenda. So moved. Motion made by Commissioner Witjes. Seconded by Curry. I will bring attention to the members we still have a debriefing session listed on the agenda if there is interest in skipping that like we did yesterday we kneeled a motion to remove 4C the designed briefing session.

>> COMMISSIONER LANGE: So moved.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Second.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Motion by Lange and seconded by Witjes to amend the meeting agenda to remove item 4C debriefing session is there any debate or discussion on the motion to amend?

Seeing none we will now vote all in favor please raise your hand and say aye.

All opposed please raise your hand and say nay.

By a vote of 11-1 the motion to amendment prevails and an adopted.

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All in favor of approving the meeting agenda as amended with removal of 4C please raise your hand and say aye.

All opposed please raise your hand and say nay.

The ayes prevail and the agenda is adopted.

Prior to public comment we have some Commission business to cover for this afternoon.

First on the agenda is approval of the minutes from October 7, held in East Lansing.

The minutes have been provided to the Commission prior to the meeting.

Are there any edits? Hearing no edits I will entertain a motion to approve the meeting minutes from October 7, 2021.

>> COMMISSIONER WITJES: So moved.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Motion by Witjes and seconded by Commissioner Lett all in favor please raise your hand and say aye.

All opposed raise your hand and say nay.

The ayes prevail and the meeting minutes are adopted.

Next on our meeting agenda is approving a November 18 meeting at the Michigan league at University of Michigan from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. I would consider a motion to add a Commission meeting on November 18th.

>> COMMISSIONER LETT: 11-18 may be a little bit in the future.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: No we are past 10-18.

>> COMMISSIONER LETT: We have not reached November yet.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: I know, this is for November.

Edward Executive Director is not here so can you give us a little guidance today.

>> MR. EDWARD WOODS: During the 45 day comment period we are trying to schedule meetings so people can interact with the Commission and November 18, December 2, December 16 and the vote on December 30th are the days we are looking at, the hours we are looking at are 10:00-2:00, the Michigan league came in and providing their facility complimentary so we wanted to take advantage of that opportunity to host a meeting during the 45 day public comment period and trying to meet every two weeks so the public can address us.

>> COMMISSIONER CLARK: Were these discussed previously?

>> CHAIR SZETELA: I think we had calendar meetings going through the end of the year.

>> COMMISSIONER CLARK: I remember the meetings being scheduled I did not know the public was going to be involved like that.

Okay thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Okay if we are okay with approving that meeting, I would entertain a motion to approve a meeting on November 18th at the Michigan league at the University of Michigan from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

>> COMMISSIONER WITJES: So moved.

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>> CHAIR SZETELA: Motion made by Commissioner Witjes.
Seconded by Commissioner Rothhorn.

Is there any debate or discussion on the motion?

>> VICE CHAIR ROTHORN: I wanted to offer I think what we are doing here the meeting has been scheduled and the time, it's just the location, I think.

And I think what director Woods was offering is that there is an opportunity to use our budget wisely because the resources that the U of M are offering do line up with our, yeah, they are offering complimentary.

We just have to pay for the audio visual and the mileage.

So I think that's what we are doing here is it's been calendared.

The times are the same.

It's a public meeting so we always have public comment before our meetings so there is nothing unusual about it but it's just the location we are approving at this point.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: We have it motioned and seconded to approve the November 18 meeting at the Michigan league from 10:00-2:00 p.m. all in favor please raise your hand and say aye.

Opposed please raise your hand and say nay.

The ayes prevail and the motion is adopted.

Okay moving on to our welcome and introductions without objection our host

Commissioner MC Rothhorn will provide a brief presentation.

Hearing no objection please proceed Commissioner Rothhorn.

>> VICE CHAIR ROTHORN: Hello Grand Rapids!

Thanks for having us here.

It's good to see your waving and smiling faces.

I'm going to try to show you what I'm going to do.

Can we have the slides up? All right, and I'm going to try to advance this.

There we go.

So on behalf of the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission thank you so much for joining us today.

We need you to #show up speak up to help us #draw fair maps.

In 2018 as many of you know Michigan voters by more than 61% empowered citizens not legislatures to #draw fair maps.

Consequently the MICRC represents an initiative by Michigan residents and not liberals moderates or conservatives, voters made an intentional and deliberate effort to form the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission by filling in the yes oval on proposal two.

Every ten years following the U.S. census District lines for U.S. Congressional, State House and State Senate must be redrawn in states across the country to accurately reflect their population.

The process of drawing District lines is known as redistricting.

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In Michigan there are 161 Congressional, State Senate and State House districts that need to be drawn for the 2022 election cycle.

For the first time in Michigan's history residents have an opportunity to provide input on drawing maps for Michigan's Congressional, house and State Senate.

Openness let me advance the slide.

Openness transparency and public engagement represent the principles of this new redistricting process.

Now you have an opportunity to ensure your voice and your community's voice is heard.

Instead of politicians choosing their districts to best interest their interests Michigan can share their interests in developing their interests through the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission.

We need your assistance to draw fair maps so thank you.

I'm going to turn it over to our Chair Szetela to continue this orientation.

>> CHAIR SZETELA:

>> VICE CHAIR ROTHORN: I will turn it to director Woods to talk about the public hearing is that true director Woods.

>> MR. EDWARD WOODS: That is true.

>> VICE CHAIR ROTHORN: All right let's do it.

>> MR. EDWARD WOODS: Can you go back, thank you.

Good afternoon we are excited to be in Grand Rapids.

It's a great to experience Grand Rapids and all that it has to offer.

Can you give Grand Rapids a round of applause? You're sitting there.

For the first time engaging in Michigan's historic process for redistricting and that's all you can do.

You spent all this time and energy coming off work, give yourself a round of applause.

You are in the house of democracy.

It is taking place right here at DeVos place.

Per the Michigan Constitution here are the requirements for the second round of public hearings.

We are here to hear from you.

That is right we want to hear from you on the proposed 161 districts that includes 13 Congressional, 38 State Senate and 110 House Districts.

Each proposed plan includes census data map a map and legal description that you can view on the website at www.Michigan.gov/MICRC.

Under proposed draft maps.

Finally we are required by the Constitution to hold five public hearings.

Today represents the third of the five public hearings that are taking place and we are happy to be here at the DeVos place in Grand Rapids.

Need to go back one more.

I think I'm looking at the wrong one.

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Proposed draft maps the MICRC voted ten proposed draft maps for your consideration through a collaborative process.

We named the maps after trees to prevent any preference or bias to a Michigan Congressional State Senate or State House plan.

You don't see here but Sarah Reinhardt was the brains behind it do a silent wave to Sarah to let her know you appreciate her.

Each Commissioner has an opportunity to submit one map for Michigan's Congressional State Senate and State House districts.

For the Congressional we received maps from Commissioners Doug Clark, Anthony Eid, Rhonda Lange and Rebecca Szetela.

For the State Senate we received maps from Commissioners Eid, Rhonda Lange and Rebecca Szetela and finally for the State House we received maps from Commissioners Doug Clark, Cynthia Orton and Rebecca Szetela.

Our redistricting criteria.

Includes equal population in the Voting Rights Act.

Geographically contiguous.

Reflect states diversity and communities of interest.

No disproportionate advantage to any political party.

No favor or disfavor to an incumbent elected official or a candidate.

Reflect consideration of County, City and Township boundaries.

And finally the last of the 7 ranked redistricting criteria in order is reasonably compact.

The process for adopting maps.

We want to ensure the maps are tested and protected.

Published I'm sorry after the public hearings the Commission shall follow procedure in adopting a map for Michigan Congressional and State House.

Before voting to adopt a plan, the Commission shall ensure that the plan is tested using appropriate technology for compliance with the 7 ranked redistricting criteria.

This process will take place between October 27th and November 5th.

Before voting to adopt a plan, the Commission shall provide public notice of each plan that will be voted on and provided at least 45 days for public comment on the proposed plan or plans for the Michigan Congressional, State Senate and State House.

Each plan that will be voted on shall include census data as is necessary to accurately describe the plan and verify the population of each District and shall include the map and legal description.

The 45 day public comment period starts November 14th.

And a final decision of the Commission to adopt a redistricting plan requires a majority vote of the Commission.

Including at least two Commissioners who affiliate with each major party and at least two Commissioners who do not affiliate with either major party.

This vote is scheduled for December 30th.

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The Michigan Supreme Court has the original jurisdiction as relates to this process. They can review at its discretion the challenges to any maps adopted, not proposed, but adopted by the Commission.

They can remand any plan that fails to comply with the Michigan and U.S. constitutions or superseding Federal law.

For example the Voting Rights Act.

The MICRC is the only body, let me say it again, the only body that has exclusive authority to create and adopt the maps for Michigan's Congressional, house and Senate districts.

I want to thank you so much for engaging me with this presentation and I will turn it over to my colleague the General Counsel for the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission Julianne Pastula.

>> MS. JULIANNE PASTULA: Thank you so much director Woods.

It is always hard to follow his energy.

Good afternoon Grand Rapids.

My name is Julianne Pastula I'm General Counsel for the Commission.

And I'm here to go over just a few public hearing public comment guidelines for you.

First the time limit for each public comment speaker today is one minute 30 seconds.

Please conclude your remarks when you hear the timer.

The timer will begin when you start speaking.

And you may not yield your time to another speaker.

The Commission will receive in person public comments first.

Followed by remote public comments.

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

And again you'll hear it a lot today but please provide your public comment and/or submit your proposed maps in the Commission's public portal available at www.Michigan.gov/MICRC thank you so much.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: All right thank you General Counsel.

At this point without objection we will now begin the public comment portion of our meeting. Hearing no objection we will begin with public comment.

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.

Please step to the nearest microphone when I call your number.

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I call in groups of four to facilitate the process a bit.

You will have 90 seconds to address the Commission.

Please conclude your remarks

when you hear the

timer.

You can also share your comments in writing including specific areas of the map you are referencing.

The public comment tool is available at www.Michigan.gov/MICRC.

And there is also a public comment station here today.

With volunteers to assist you in accessing the website if you so desire.

If you have a time constraint and don't desire to wait you can use the public comment portal to submit your comments online.

First in line to provide public comments are numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4 and we have two microphones on either side of the room so the closest one is fine.

Number one you can start speaking.

>> I live in Grand Rapids the maps you have drawn so far are improvement over the highly gerrymandered maps I voted for so long.

I worked hard to pass the Voters Not Politicians and want to see fair and competitive districts.

Your current maps are not there.

They need competitive elections to better represent the citizens in Grand Rapids and Kent County.

I lived here 42 years and know our City well.

I suggest the following adjustments.

Ada Township is east of my location.

It's a suburban area closely linked to the City in many ways and it should be included in the northern State House District.

Cascade Township in Grand Rapids airport should also be with the City of Grand Rapids.

On the State Senate map 24 the southern boundary should be moved from Fulton to wealthy with the City ward boundaries and better represent these communities of interest boundaries.

I'm asking you to please, please give our City and County politically fair and competitive districts.

It would be a welcome change for us.

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

>> Hello, my name is Karen.

I live in Cascade Township.

First of all thank you for your efforts.

I know this is a tedious job.

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And while the maps you've constructed are better than the maps, we currently have with a little more work I think they will represent partisan fairness which right now the maps don't.

I want to speak specifically to the Pine map which is for the State House.

My one issue with the Pine map though I think this is the best State House map there is, my one issue it does not include Cascade Township which is closely aligned to East Grand Rapids and Kentwood from both geographic and demographic alignment.

I live in Cascade Township.

I shop in Kentwood.

I shop in East Grand Rapids, my school tax dollars go to Kentwood and East Grand Rapids schools.

My sales tax dollars go there.

Right now it shows taxation without representation and I believe we fought a war over that.

I also border Gerald Ford airport which supports the businesses of Cascade Township. So my plea to you is that when you look at drawing your State House and your State Senate maps that you include Cascade Township with the greater Grand Rapids area. Thank you.

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

>> Before starting the timer please bring up map number 201, whatever tree that is.

My name is Dr. Calvin from the Grand Haven area in Ottawa County thank you Commissioners for all your hard work.

I believe it's imperative you make your decisions according to communities of interest and not efficiency gaps.

Today I speak in support of map number 201 because I believe Ottawa County the fastest growing County in the state has a unique situation in being located on a shoreline of Lake Michigan.

We are a center of tourism, recreational water sports sailing skiing fishing are huge in our County.

We are a center in shipping in we have three ports Holland Grand Haven port Sheldon and dredged by core of engineers and the map recognizes this community of interest and brings together other lakeshore Michigan Counties all the way south to the Indiana border.

Agricultural is one of the largest if not the largest industry in Michigan.

Ottawa County is the third highest producing County in Michigan and generates 506 million in market value of products sold.

It's a community of interest.

Manufacturing is another significant community of interest.

In Ottawa County.

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For all these reasons and more I believe Ottawa County should be kept intact in the same Congressional District.

And I urge you to adopt the map number 201.

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

>> Madam Chair.

>> Good afternoon to the MICRC.

My name is April good win and I'm here today to express my opposition to the proposed redistricting map the Commission presented to the residents of Grand Rapids.

Being a resident of the City of GR it only makes sense to keep my City whole with one State Senate District with the neighboring communities of East Grand Rapids and Kentwood.

This scheme as it appears to me it creates a Grand Rapids Kalamazoo District to create a Grand Rapids Kalamazoo District is the crime of racial profiling in its purest form as these are two completely different communities.

Both in location and interest.

And should not be included together in a Congressional District.

The only thing they have in common is low income level and population of minorities.

The Commission is as they say trying to create more diversity in elections and representation however dividing an already fragmented and polarized America is not the way to do this.

I'm sure you mean well.

But what you are doing is nothing more than placing a Band-Aid on top of a very deep and bloody wound in American society.

We are dividing and segregating the communities but we are not dividing and segregating the money.

You are separating the minority communities from opportunity and representation but your plan does not create separate but equal.

At least if my minority community stays within the confines of GR.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Your 90 seconds has expired thank you for addressing the Commission.

>> Is that what that is.

Please do your jobs and deal with the real issue, thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you.

Numbers 5, 6, 7 and 8.

>> Good afternoon.

My name is Joel.

I'm from Grand Rapids.

Thank you all for your hard work today.

One of the main reasons proposal two passed overwhelmingly in 2018 was that voters across the political spectrum wanted to end partisan gerrymandering.

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They did not vote for it to have partisan gerrymandering delivered to them by another body.

Fortunately you have powerful allies in your task.

Math and technology.

As you know we can statistically determine the fairness of maps and reduce partisan bias with incredible precision with such tools at your disposal approved gerrymandered maps and under mining, the will of Michigan voters would be a conscious choice.

Don't make that choice.

Make the right choice and end partisan gerrymandering.

Of the maps you've created so far, the most fair appear to be apple for U.S. house, Pine for State House with some minor adjustments keeping Wyoming and cherry and keeping Ottawa County whole.

You have an opportunity to do what few people will ever have.

You can strike a blow against an ugly feature of our political system that has existed for over 200 years.

How many people get to say that? You will.

But only if you make the right choice and end partisan gerrymandering in Michigan.

Thank you.

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

>> Hi, my name is Joan long I'm a lifetime resident of the Metro Grand Rapids area.

I'm a proud member of the local chapter of League of Women Voters.

I canvassed for and I voted for proposal two because I believe we deserve to have partisan fairness.

Unfortunately none of the current proposed maps create partisan fairness yet.

The current State House and Senate maps are just not good enough yet.

There is still work to be done to make them all fair.

I would like to echo the words of the director of the Michigan department of civil rights John Johnson who said we urge you to meet the test of fairness and accountability and rectify the Voting Rights Acts violations that are inherent in the maps under consideration.

I would also like to comment on map 201 the apple map my favorite fruit.

Of the four Congressional maps 201 has the best configuration.

This map links Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo which are the two largest cities in western Michigan.

These cities have much in common including their needs and interests in healthcare housing civil rights and for public education.

As you know these maps will be in effect for ten long years.

So if it takes a little bit longer to make them fair now, please do so.

And I thank you for your dedication.

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

>> Hi, my name is Rebecca.

I live in Grand Rapids.

And I've lived in Grand Rapids my entire life for 30 years.

I grew up in East Grand Rapids.

And I'm here to advocate for why East Grand Rapids Kentwood and Cascade Township should be on the same map.

These community populations have our diversifying and are connected culturally and politically which would help achieve partisan fairness while keeping communities of interest together.

How the map is laid out currently the republican party still has partisan advantage.

Making the change would help ensure that fair maps and giving each side an equal chance of winning elections.

Please consider this idea when you revisit the districts in West Michigan.

And thank you so much for coming to Grand Rapids.

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

>> Hi, welcome back to Grand Rapids.

My name is Cindy and I lived in the City for over 40 years as countless volunteers for proposal two I literally talked to thousands of people and gathered the signatures of 1300 voters.

People of various persuasions wanted one thing maps drawn with partisan fairness.

When you were previously here, I talked about how gerrymandered my northeast side of Grand Rapids has been.

I see great improvement in the draft maps.

Thank you.

I'm still concerned however about the area of east town.

Proposed House District 76 has an arm that reaches all the way across the heart of Grand Rapids to grab east town and connect it to unrelated cities to the west.

East town is unique vital part of the east portion of Grand Rapids.

And deserves representation as such.

Also on the northeast side Grand Rapids Township and Ada Township are suburban parts of northeast Metro Grand Rapids.

It would make sense for our community to put Grand Rapids Township and Ada Township into a northeast House District.

To resolve these issues in terms of population equity I would suggest moving the City of East Grand Rapids into a Kentwood District.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of these suggestions.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Numbers 9, 10, 11 and 12.

>> Commissioners my name is Harold senior.

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And I was born and raised in the City of Wyoming and had the honor to serve the citizens there as a councilman as their mayor, as a State Representative and 18 years as a county Commissioner.

I know West Michigan.

And I ask that you make some changes to the map as follows.

First, I want to encourage the Commission please keep Kent County whole within one District the current map proposed under the apple plan divides Grand Rapids Metro six region into two separate Congressional districts tying Grand Rapids into a Congressional District with Kalamazoo.

Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo form two different communities of interest.

And should be within their own respective districts.

Please reconfigure your map to keep Kent County whole within one Congressional District.

Secondly, I want to encourage the Commission to keep the City of Grand Rapids whole within one State Senate District.

The current maps puts Grand Rapids into two districts.

Grand Rapids is large enough to be drawn into one State Senate District and should not be split.

My area, the City of Wyoming, should be drawn into a State Senate District on the western border of the County with the Grandville and Walker area.

Instead of with Grand Rapids and Kentwood and other residents shop in neighboring municipalities.

I would suggest the Commission adopt a slate and Grandville be placed with the District Walker is currently in.

Thank you for your service.

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

>> My name is Sandra.

I've lived in our beautiful Ottawa County for over 30 years now.

I've worked in the school system for over 20.

Enjoy our beautiful parks recreation and West Michigan shoreline and beaches, healthy produce and farmers marking and schools and representation in Congress.

Ottawa County is one of the noted before one of the fastest growing communities in Michigan and if common economic and agricultural needs and common interests.

We tried to be good law abiding citizens and cherish the representation we have now in Congress.

We, okay, we are a rural community and you know we get together with common people that have like-minded ideas and we can express that in our community and with the representative if he lives in our District.

I think we are very successful so I think it's a bad idea to try to change something that has worked in the past.

Leave it as it is.

That seems like what is working now.

And I just want to thank you for your time, thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 11.

>> My name is Connie.

I have lived in Georgetown Township Ottawa County for 45 years and this is my community of interest.

There is no representation of West Michigan on the board and I do not expect you to be experts on our communities.

That is why I'm asking you to please listen to us, we the people who are the experts in our communities.

Communities of interest are higher constitutional priority than partisan fairness geography does not care about it and do not split in the name of partisan ship Ottawa County is the second most agriculturally and the 7th fastest and growing County in the state.

Three of the four proposed Congressional maps would divide many of our communities. One of the proposed maps map 201 keeps Ottawa County together and in one Congressional District.

This map also recognizes our breathtakingly beautiful West Michigan lakeshore community of interest by uniting a number of lakeshore Counties together.

Map 201 brings agricultural communities together to give a strong voice to our family farmers.

I respectfully ask Commission to keep Ottawa County together because of the economic manufacturing and agricultural ties that make our community a unique community of interest.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 12.

>> My name is Cynthia Davis I'm from Hudsonville and Ottawa County.

This community of interest we have one of the fastest growing school districts in the state.

One of the fastest growing Townships in the state both in the fastest growing County in the state.

It is the shared vision of Ottawa County that has given birth to this rapid grow.

My concern is that three of the four proposed Congressional maps for Ottawa County divide our many interconnected communities of interest.

The community of interest for example of Hudsonville public schools would be divided in two Congressional districts.

It covers approximately 80 square miles and makes it a rather significant community of interest.

We have a huge agricultural interest in Ottawa County.

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Some of the Congressional districts will divide farms into two districts what good can come from dividing such significant communities of interest.

In 2018 Voters Not Politicians advertised neatly apportioned maps when promoting proposal two.

Nice, neat rectangles as I recall not divided communities.

For Ottawa County I would urge you to accept map 201 at the Congressional level.

We would like for you to honor our independent inter dependent communities of interest.

The citizens of Ottawa County have a shared vision for the future of the County.

It is that shared vision which has made Ottawa County the fastest growing County in Michigan.

It has made the County a wonderful place to live, work and have a family.

Please, please keep us intact thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Numbers 13, 14, 15 and 16.

>> My name is grace I'm from Hudsonville as well as Abraham Lincoln said you can please some of the people some of the times, all of the people some of the time, some of the people all the time but you cannot please all of the people all of the time.

And designing these maps you are certainly faced with the same challenge.

Ottawa County has diversity communities of interest but it is a strong agricultural community.

I live on a farm.

And understand that the agricultural community is strong and connected to the environment.

And economic interests of Ottawa County.

Hudsonville community fair with a great attendance of upward towards 80,000 people reflect that connection 12000 reflects livestock to robotics to agricultural education to areas of personal skills.

It is a micro of connections to the community of interest that are interconnected to Ottawa County.

The most influential community of interest should be what we call home where we work, shop, make friends, great neighbors, attend schools, worship and, yes, grow to maturity.

I strongly encourage you to keep Ottawa County whole as map 201.

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

>> Good afternoon, Commission my name is Sarah Howard I'm the attorney for the AFLCIO's fair maps project.

You started down the right path in your deliberations a few weeks ago when you were finally allowed to look at the partisan data.

But you still have a long way to go in these maps.

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You are heard from hundreds of members of the public about how important it is to have maps that truly represent Michigan, true Voting Rights Act districts, true communities of interest, true partisan fairness.

Your maps are getting better.

But they are still horrendously bias towards one political party.

On the Pine map, which is the fairest of your State House maps, your seat count tells you 56 seats are democratic and 54 are republican.

But if you look at how many districts are better for each party relative to the statewide vote only 45 seats would favor democrats and 65 republican in a 50/50 statewide election.

That is not partisan fairness.

That is a rigged election.

You can do better.

The people of Michigan are demanding that you do better.

The Constitution requires you to do better.

And the AFLCIO's fair maps project shows you how you can do better.

We are not asking you to adopt our maps.

But to improve upon them.

Please do not ignore the voices of our million members and their families.

We are trying to help this process and get to truly fair maps in this state.

Thank you so much, Commission.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 15.

>> Hi, I'm Sherri fields I was born in Detroit, three of my children were born in Kalamazoo, two here in Grand Rapids.

I love my state.

I tried out to be on your group, the numbers just did not pick me so kudos for the hard work you are doing, I can only imagine I will try again in ten years unless you talk me out of it.

I don't have much to say.

I talked to the IT people saying I wanted to see the maps and couldn't find it and they said they would fix it.

The other day I was watching one of your representations or videos online and are fabulous thank you.

And it had where you could manipulate the maps to see how recent elections would be different if you tweak this would it have gone to a different party.

May I suggest that that itself to look at what would have happened in the past is self-gerrymandering even if you draw a set of perfect squares across the state.

Gerrymandering doesn't mean to draw a total squiggle snake like state but manipulate the boundaries of electoral consistency and an area so as to favor one party of class.

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With all due respect, if I'm deciding whether it's a community of interest so over all we get as close to having half of the representations being republican and half democratic that is itself gerrymandering.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 16.

>> I'm Dorothy Munson a lifelong resident of Grand Rapids.

I'm representing proactive and nonpartisan nonprofit organizations supporting underserved folks.

We strongly advocated for prop two.

We are depending on you to make sure the maps of West Michigan are fair and they need work to do so.

State Senate map cherry 220 is the best option.

However it needs to have Cascade Township with our airport and all its Commerce and population added to the northern Grand Rapids District 24.

It is now connected to Battle Creek and all the rural areas in between.

The southern boundary for the northern District should be Wealthy Street not Fulton Street so there is near clarity around communities of interest while maintaining current boundaries for two and three.

The best Congressional map is apple 201 with Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo in District Four.

It best represents minority populations in West Michigan with 31% being nonwhite.

They need representation in Washington.

It has significant commonality including being leaders in education, healthcare, and research.

I've made more detailed comments on the map.

Please understand that we are truly depending on you to protect partisan fairness.

We know this process is most difficult.

Better than what we have now is not good enough.

We look to you to be our heroes in getting this right and following the Constitution to finally give everyone fair representation.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Ma'am we have a follow-up question from one of the Commissioners.

>> COMMISSIONER CLARK: I just wanted some clarification please.

You indicated not to use Fulton Street or what was the Other Street you referenced.

>> Wealthy Street it's parallel.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Like money.

>> Yes.

>> COMMISSIONER CLARK: Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: I thought it was Welby.

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>> It's a half mile south parallel.

>> COMMISSIONER CLARK: Thank you so much.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you.

Numbers 17, 18, 19, 20.

>> Before I start could you put up the Pine map 227 and expand it around Grand Rapids, please? Can you expand it around Grand Rapids, please.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Can you approach the microphone? It's difficult to hear you.

>> Can you expand the map around Grand Rapids please?

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Absolutely.

One moment.

Is that better?

>> That is great my name is rich from Grand Rapids hello to the Commission.

I'm asking the committee to please keep in mind the main reason proposition two which was formed -- which formed the Commission was voted in by people to develop partisan fair maps rather than have the legislature draw bias maps.

The current Commission maps are improving but more work is needed to get partisan fairness correct.

The current house map divides six cities and complicates representation.

I suggest reconfiguring this area with related Townships simply by dividing by City lines to preserve communities of interest all within the same area.

You can combine Grandville and Walker cities to form 76.

Keep the west side culture together.

Keep Wyoming whole and add a small slice of Grand Rapids to the north as District 79.

To represent the Hispanic population well.

Combined Kentwood and East Grand Rapids with Cascade Township in 86 and like areas together there.

Use the south Grand Rapids City from Fulton Street south in District 78 to represent underserved minorities.

And then combine north Grand Rapids City from Fulton Street and include Grand Rapids Ada and Plainfield Townships south of the Grand River in District 75.

Representatives from the areas will be able to focus on each District's unique issues and needs.

There is a map 63361 District that I will put in my comments when I send this into Pine map.

Thank you.

It illustrates this situation.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 18.

>> Good afternoon.

My name is Austin Chang.

Most of you might know me as candidate for Governor.
First republican did for the office of Governor.
And today I'm not here as a candidate.
But I'm here as a resident of Grand Rapids.
And I'm from northeast Grand Rapids.
And I see the map that is drawn that divides up Kent County.
The first one that really concerned me was the one that put the City of Grand Rapids together with Kalamazoo.
As you've heard, we have nothing in common with Kalamazoo.
No offense to the people in the City of Kalamazoo.
I'm sure it's wonderful down there.
But we have nothing in common up here with the people of Kalamazoo.
It's a community of interest.
As you're going to hear.
Last year when I was earlier this year actually like when I was being threatened receiving death threats all around the country, I was looking to buy a home.
And I looked around the neighboring towns Ada was within of -- was one place I looked at because of a Community of Interest so keep us together.
I did not look at Midland, not at all.
So keep us together.
Keep the City of Grand Rapids together.
Keep Kent County together.
And maintain Community of Interest.
Thank you.
>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 19.
>> Hello, I'm speaking today on map P7083.
My name is Sarah.
I live in Grand Rapids.
I've been reading through the comments that were submitted in the Grand Rapids Metro region the Commission's maps and the comment portal.
The map I just referenced 7083 makes some tweaks to the Pine map based on public comments I saw and Community of Interests described and the overview and reasons were.
Ada and Cascade Township are considered suburbs of Grand Rapids Metro region and should be pulled into Grand Rapids base House Districts.
Cascade Township for example has the Metros airport.
They don't belong with rural areas.
East Grand Rapids and City of Kentwood share services as you have heard today.
That keeps two of the Metro six cities together and form a southeast District.

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The Pine map splits up Hispanic communities of Kent County and reside in precincts in the Wyoming and Grand Rapids border.

This map keeps Wyoming together and adds Hispanic precincts of Grand Rapids to give that community representation in the State House.

Rather than pulling in a rural Township like Byron.

Grandville Walker and northwest Grand Rapids is another community of interest.

And it keeps those cities together rather than pulling in the Townships and keeps school districts together.

Northeast rounds out the Grand Rapids Metro combining the rest of Grand Rapids, Grand Rapids Township and northeast Section of Plainfield.

The most urban in Kent County and keeps the north view and Forrest Hills school districts largely together.

Thank you for your time.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 20.

>> I want to start by thanking each of you for serving on the state redistricting committee. You have a huge task in front of you that will impact our communities for the next decade.

My name is candy and I live in Jamestown which is tucked in the southeast corner of Ottawa County eastern edge bordering Kent County and southern edge bordering Allegan County.

Jamestown is a sweet rural community and move here for the country feel.

The northern part is slowly being developed by the southern part is still mostly farms.

The smell of cows and chickens is familiar to the residents of the Township.

Barely 20 of the Township is serviced by public water and sewer and two thirds of the Township continues to be zoned agricultural.

As a resident and Township clerk of Jamestown charter Township I'm pleased to be part of the interconnected community known as Ottawa County.

We are a short drive from Lake Michigan with many residents spending their summer weekends at the Lake.

Keeping us connected with the lakeshore is important.

I see that two of the suggested maps keep Ottawa County whole.

Recognizing our County as a unique community of interest whose smaller cities and Townships share economic and agricultural ties.

Jamestown should definitely not be lumped with Kent County or the Grand Rapids area but we main with -- remain with Ottawa County and keep us with the Ottawa County when redistricting.

Thank you for your time.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 21, 22, 23 and 24.

>> Do we have number 21? If not 22 you can go ahead and speak.

>> Hi, my name is Josie.

I live in northeast Grand Rapids.

For the past 25 years.

And southeast Grand Rapids for about ten and prior to that I lived in Augusta Kalamazoo and I'm familiar with the businesses and recreation and small towns and the people and how they think and live.

The people I knew in Kalamazoo in Augusta looked to Grand Rapids as a big City and went to colleges in Grand Rapids but work and live in Kalamazoo County area.

Airports and hospital facilities were also not on the same level.

Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo have a common trait.

Being large cities in the west side of Michigan.

Yet these are not communities of interest.

Both communities have duplicating entities like Chamber of Commerce businesses, airports which would be competing for funds.

I've heard the 131 corridor unified these two cities and I think that is a poor unifier.

Otherwise why not develop districts along I-94, I-96, I-75 it's not good.

It's critical to keep Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo as separate districts to better serve their communities.

I recommend grouping Grand Rapids with Kentwood and East Grand Rapids.

As they are true communities of interest.

Within the same County.

Keep our communities intact.

Please don't create a hodgepodge of partial communities that meet a population count but divide neighborhoods into competing against each other.

Let's find a way to group and produce a harmonious and thank you for your hard work in accomplishing this task.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 23.

>> I'm David Bernstein and live in Grand Rapids.

And I've been here for over 40 years.

I've worked quite enthusiastically on the petition to get prop two.

And I've worked actually with Cynthia who spoke a little bit earlier.

I was so happy when proposition two passed that I called my friends and my family around the country, maybe too proudly about what we accomplished in Michigan.

I want to thank you for taking this critically important task of creating a more fundamentally democratic Government in our state.

At the very heart of democratic Government is the principle that every citizen's interest is represented equally and without prejudice.

The principle can be put simply as one person, one vote.

No person's vote should count more than any other persons.

Gerrymandering violates this principle.

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It erodes the bed rock available of equality or fairness that is a foundation of a true democracy.

In our present two party world the best measure of fairness is partisan fairness. Unfortunately.

It is critical that the number of representatives that a party wins reflects fairly the partisan votes.

In the pursuit of partisan fairness good is not good enough.

I urge you to continue to work toward the idea of maximum partisan fairness.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 24.

>> First of all I'd like to add my voice of congratulations and support for the Commission's hard work.

My name is Michael and I live in the City of Grand Rapids.

And the northeast Section.

Immediately contiguous with Grand Rapids Township and very close to Ada and Plainfield Townships.

Thank you for allowing ordinary citizens to participate in this process.

The eyes of the nation are focused on Michigan.

We now have an opportunity to demonstrate a sense of fairness for the entire country.

Michigan is in the forefront of establishing this fairness.

And we have a chance to deliver that system here.

You as Commissioners have been pressed for time from the very beginning.

Because of issues beyond your control.

But you are in control now.

And I urge you to take whatever time you need to get it right.

Keep communities of interest together.

And make sure that the shape of the districts fit the community and not the community to the shape of the districts.

Currently Senate maps are interesting.

I find that in the northern part where I live, Ottawa County has been included.

Ottawa County as we heard so many times before today is independent and they deserve to be separate as does Kent County.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 24, before you speak, I've got word we are having a technical difficulty with our video feed that we need to switch a cable real quick so we will do that so we don't have interruption with the people who are watching and come back in five minutes so it's 12:12 p.m. and hearing no objections we will take a break until let's say just say 12:20 to make it easier.

Thank you everybody.

[Recess]

2:20 sorry.

It's been a long couple days.

[Recess]

>> CHAIR SZETELA: As Chair of the Commission I call this meeting of the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission back to order at 2:24 p.m. will the secretary please call the roll?

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Absolutely Madam Chair.

Commissioners, please say present when I call your name. If you are attending today's meeting remotely please disclose during roll call you are attending remotely and announce your physical location.

I will call on Commissioners in alphabetical order starting with Doug Clark.

>> COMMISSIONER CLARK: Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Juanita Curry.

>> COMMISSIONER CURRY: Present; attending from Detroit, Michigan.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Anthony Eid?

>> COMMISSIONER EID: Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Brittini Kellom?

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Rhonda Lange?

>> COMMISSIONER LANGE: Present 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?

>> VICE COMMISSIONER ROTHORN: Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Rebecca Szetela?

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Janice Vallette?

>> COMMISSIONER VALLETTE: Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Erin Wagner?

>> COMMISSIONER 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.

And there is a quorum.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you we will continue with public comment and 23 is here and moving to 24, 25, 26 and 27.

>> Thank you to speak and accommodation, my name is John.

I'm with the Wyoming City Commission I'm here today to speak with the State House District taking place in southwest Grand Rapids metro area.

Wyoming is a City of 77,000 residents.

In July when you were here you heard at length to keep the Metro six whole and together and heard at length for a Grandville Wyoming District.

Until mid-October that was the case with the Districting maps and thus there was a change which created a split District with part of Wyoming with Kentwood and Grand Rapids Township and remainder with Grandville and Byron Township.

I'm here to advocate to keep Wyoming as a whole and a core part of the single House District.

There are two Senate communities of interest in that area.

One being Grandville and again you heard many statements in support of that District. But also with regard to the Grandville avenue corridor which would keep a Hispanic District in its entirety within the City of Wyoming as well as communities in Grand Rapids.

I hope you will consider this.

And create an opportunity for a minority majority District in Wyoming.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 24.

>> Do we have number 24? 25? Hi former pastor is here so I have to watch what I say.

Hi, Father Lou.

I'm a professional administration geek advocate for civic engagement and inclusion and thank you and I thanked you a couple times and want to do it again.

In 2018 was our way of bringing our own voices to the table.

And actually including ourselves in this process.

On six different occasions I raised my hand to swear an oath to uphold the constitutions of the United States and the State of Michigan.

Five times I've been sworn in as a poll worker and once I've been sworn in as a notary public. I familiarize myself with the constitutional criteria to bind your work and it's ranked and does not mean you can ignore any of them.

Partisan fairness is one of the criteria for a reason.

Your maps are an improvement over the status quo especially the cherry Senate map but I would like to suggest a couple of improvements.

So if you look right here.

If you can see, I live here in Kentwood.

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And I think it would make sense to move the southern Grand Rapids District just a little south to Wealthy Street keep southern GR in the District and move it to 76 Street because there is a tie between northern Gains and City of Kentwood and move the boundary to Wealthy Street.

I will revise and extend my remarks in the portal.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 26.

>> Number 26 and if not 27 okay 26 and 27 I'll note you are not here 28, 29, 30 and 31.

>> Where did everybody go? [Laughter]

That's okay, all right so we will go on to 32, 33, 34 and 35.

>> Okay 29 and 30.

Go ahead, ma'am.

>> Thank you for being here.

My name is Tony.

I live in Kalamazoo Portage area.

Lived there all my life.

We are connected in many ways including our utilities such as water and sewer.

The beautiful Kalamazoo river with many accesses throughout the County.

The County also has many services such as County wide public transportation, schools, libraries, historic sites.

We also have shared police and fire services that reach out and help everyone in the County.

Senior services with Meals on Wheels and new senior center in Portage and great colleges and universities.

We also have two great hospitals.

That serve the County and the surrounding small cities and Townships plus our industrial base that promotes business locally and globally.

It serves as a solid financial employment center for the County and beyond.

It is for these reasons and more that I ask you not to change or split our County.

I would also like to thank each and every one of you for your time and integrity you bring to the State of Michigan.

But unfortunately what I have seen of the maps our whole Community of Interest will be split down the middle.

Our District will be in bits and pieces.

And please do not let this happen to our community.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 30.

>> Thank you for taking my comment today and thank you for your hard work as members of this Commission.

My name is Kelly.

I'm from Kalamazoo or more specifically Texas Township.

I am commenting today specifically to share my concerns about the Congressional plan known as apple that would draw Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids into the same District.

The people of Michigan voted for the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission so that they would have representation that honors their community.

This map does not honor their community but forces competition between our communities.

Kalamazoo is a separate and distinct community of interest from Grand Rapids.

We have little in common.

We do not share infrastructure or Government services with each other.

Grand Rapids and Kent County share mill J as et cetera.

Please honor the promise by voters and not politicians that communities would be kept together and better represented by our new boundaries.

Communities should not be broken apart arbitrarily to achieve some type of number like partisan fairness.

In fact, doing so is exactly what this Commission was formed to avoid partisan fairness.

Thank you for taking my comments today.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. All right I'm going to call again for 24, 26, 27 and 28.

All right, are you number 31? Go ahead, sir.

>> Good afternoon my name is Nathan and I live in Virgins Township in Kent County and I was drawn with prop two and voters that supported prop two did so to have a system with 0 bias maps that would ensure the voters would be able to pick their representatives and not the other way around.

I think the maps presented so far are getting closer to that.

But we still have a little bit of work to go.

I'd like to talk about the cherry map.

Number 220.

For the Senate.

This map is on the right track but the 24 Senate District excluded Cascade Township.

I lived on the east side of Grand Rapids my entire life.

And very familiar with that.

With that area.

And in order to better reflect the local communities of interest and improve partisan fairness Cascade should be in that 24th Senate District.

And not tied to the rural areas extending all the way down to Battle Creek.

Cascade is suburban Grand Rapids or a suburb of Grand Rapids.

And should be combined with the northern Grand Rapids District.

Our state is a 53% democratic state.

And the current maps do not reflect even a 50/50 split yet at this point.

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This Commission has said that the party with the most votes should win.

And I totally agree with that.

However the maps that are out now do not quite reflect that yet and I think with a few changes you guys can get there.

I thank you for your time and appreciate all your work.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Numbers 32, 33, 34 and 35.

>> Hello, my name is frank.

I live in Grand Rapids.

I want to thank you for the hard work and commitment you put into in project.

But the maps for Kent County do not reflect partisan fairness.

The maps don't reflect the voting population of Kent County.

The cherry map is a good start but includes four rural Townships in Ottawa County which do not belong with the Metro Grand Rapids.

Cascade Township which shares commercial interests with Grand Rapids should be added and Cascade also houses Grand Rapids Metropolitan airport.

Cascade should be part of the Senate District.

Also the south boundary should be wealthy not Fulton Street because that coincides with the Grand Rapids ward District that existed for 40 years.

On the Pine house map it would be more nonpartisan to have a northeast House District.

This would consist of northeast Grand Rapids, plan field Township, Grand Rapids Township, Ada Township and east town in Grand Rapids.

Ada should be added because they are not a rural area and they are part of the forest hills school District with Grand Rapids Township.

North view and Grand Rapids also share a school District.

This would create a much more nonpartisan fair map, we need fair maps.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 33.

>> Good afternoon.

Can you hear me? There we go.

Good afternoons thank you for allowing me to speak my name is Brian birch and I live in Holland Michigan in Ottawa County and I drove across the state to deliver 500 signed pieces of paper that represented my neighbors who wanted a District that represents our lakeshore community in Lansing and Washington.

Thank you for having this meeting in Grand Rapids.

My drive here was a lot shorter so I appreciate that.

I'm really impressed by what you have done and you have listened to our pleas that Ottawa County belongs together.

By crafting a map called apple 201 it creates a clear lakeshore District that respects existing County and municipal lines and the lakeshore community of interest.

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You acknowledge our bringing together economics and environmental concerns and shared culture and a District that celebrates the diversity we hold dear.

The other maps oppose the founding principles of the body and my simple 30 minute day would have taken me through three districts 201 apple is the most commented on with more than 400 comments to date.

Thank you again for your thoughtful consideration and to listening to our voices.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 34. Okay 35? 36?

>> Okay, good hello Commissioners my name is Robert.

I live in Ada Township just a few miles east of Grand Rapids.

Looking at map number 227 as drawn by the Commission there is a little bit of partisan unfairness in this map.

My communities of interest are more in the urban areas like Grand Rapids East Grand Rapids Kentwood.

For 33 years that I've lived in Kent County most of my representatives in the house in Michigan and in Washington are people that I did not vote for.

To achieve partisan fairness someone should make a horizontal cut on the northern half of 75 and combine that with Ada Township.

And then take the northern half of southern half and combine with East Grand Rapids and Kentwood.

Splitting the urban areas of Kent County and combining northern part of the 96 combined with 75 and the southern part of 96 with 78 and 86 achieves a more partisan fairness.

So that's what I mainly want to say today.

Thank you for your time.

What you have done.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 37, 38, 39 and 40.

>> Good afternoon my name is Dennis.

I lived almost 70 years in Georgetown Township Jenison.

I'm not special and the most ignorant person on the subject in the room but living almost 70 years in Ottawa County you appreciate the County.

I also retired out of the Grand Rapids fair department after 30 years of service so I know the City also.

The City and the County have different needs, different ideas.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Can I stop you one second, it's my understanding you have requested that you wanted one of Commissioner Lange while you were speaking and wanted to know.

>> That is fine community of interest and we have spoke about it and I would like to have it where the representatives are linked with the City or the County that they represent.

So that they have common interests and common needs.

Also if we are going to do this with Grand Rapids and the lakeshore communities how are we doing it with Detroit to be fair? Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 38? 39?

>> Hi name is Gary Mitchell I live in Kalamazoo Township.

And I appreciate the chance to speak to you today.

Thank you for all your hard work.

As I understand it when this Commission was set up that the main issue was to keep communities of interest together.

And not gerrymander.

I see the map that apple map puts Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids together in a gerrymandered District.

And Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids have completely different interests.

There is different economics in both of them.

Sometimes they are in competition for instance we both have an airport.

And supposing we wanted to there is something wanting Federal money for the airport or something if one person when we are in competition and we have one representative who is going to represent us or which one is he going to represent? The other thing is that you are breaking up Kalamazoo County into different parts.

They are a community of interest.

And they should be kept together.

And basically that's all I had to say.

Thank you for your time.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 40?

>> I'm 39 so I don't know what number he was.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: He was 38 okay number 39.

>> My name is Michael I'm a lifelong resident of Grand Rapids.

You've heard a lot of terms first I want to say I saw the meeting in Detroit.

I want to apologize none of you should have been subject to the so called candidate of Governor.

That was ugly.

You don't deserve that.

And although I'm not responsible for it I want to apologize on that behalf.

You hear gerrymandering and I live in underserved and have my whole life.

I'm lost on all the trees and colors and apples, so I believe we should keep Kent County whole, the City of Grand Rapids whole, the City of Kalamazoo whole, the County of Kalamazoo whole.

They are completely separate entities and I think that is more or less you're compromising you have to do this because you want to compromise a lakeshore community.

The only thing you do by doing a 131 pipeline is you merge the big pharma and mega corporations and school districts that are very low.

I want to comment on the 75th District of Grand Rapids of State House.

That was drawn for minority to have yet the political privilege have owned that.

None of the people in the so called underserved community have been elected incidentally AFLCIO opposed underserved candidates therefore if you keep the cities whole you keep the Counties whole you continue, you can continue to draw fair lines anyway my time is up.

Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 40?

>> Would you pull up Pine 8, please?

>> I'm 40.

>> My name is Cathleen.

I'm from Cass County in Michigan.

And specifically the City of Dowagiac.

First of all I would like to say congratulations to all of you taking on this hard work.

We may not sound like it but I'm sure everyone appreciates it and what the heck are you going to do with a state that looks like a Mitten.

You can't easily do anything with it.

And we certainly in our area we are representative of you can't do anything with it.

If you will look at on this map at the bottom, please, southern Michigan, all the way to the bottom, you will see that what has happened to Cass County is that it stands alone and is shoved all the way over to Lake Eerie.

Now we are in a community which is totally tied to St. Joe, Benton Harbor New Buffalo.

We are a greater -- we are part of that community.

We are recreational.

We are not agricultural.

We have 114 lakes.

We have snow runs.

We have hunting.

We have fishing.

We have trails.

We have we are a part of recreational Michigan and we belong with Berrien County and St. Joe County thank you very much.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: What number were you.

>> 40.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: We have two 40s go ahead sir it's okay.

>> Hello, my name is Jonathan.

I am the executive board member for IBW131 out of Kalamazoo.

I would just like to say that well first of all this Commission is something that has been lived in my mind for 20 years.

I remember in high school we talked about gerrymandering.

And to me this was like the one way that you could actually overcome it in our political system.

In my mine it has and must first begin with achieving partisan neutrality in a sense that every vote should be weighted equally.

We should not be having Directors that are allow for one party to have a distinct advantage and right now we kind of have some maps that have that.

I think there are a few ways that we can achieve a more partisan balance and one of those is to adopt the Senate map which brings Holland into the same State Senate map here along the shoreline and.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Sir can you speak more in the mic?

>> I apologize and bring Holland in the same District over here if you can see on this map.

Another way is to bring Benton Harbor Covert and lakeshore communities on the west side of the state into one community which would unite Benton Harbor and Covert.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 41, 42, 43 and 44.

>> 42.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Go ahead.

>> I'm Julie elder citizen of Indians resident of Cass County is our homeland and speak as an individual not for my tribal Government.

Our native communities have historically been torn apart and on the trail of death to Kansas all three of the State Senate and house and the Congressional are again segregating us detrimentally.

Our tribal service territory is Cass Van Buren Berrien and Allegan Counties.

Our three casinos and non-gaming business are among Southwest Michigan largest employers and tribal health is clinics in Cass and Berrien County.

Tribal police are across deputized in Cass van and we live and work and shop in Michigan.

The State Senate separates Cass from Van Buren and Berrien.

And the state dissects all three Counties and more than a Community of Interest we are a sovereign nation.

Once again to be disenfranchised and keep our Counties together.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Do we have number 41? 43.

>> My name is Naomi I live in Cass County.

I want to emphasize that is in the southwest corner of the state.

South of Berrien and Van Buren Counties.

We don't belong with Counties on the east.

First, I want to stress that overriding purpose of this Commission is to create maps that show partisan fairness and has been pointed out earlier close to that is not good enough.

And maps that are better than they were before is not good enough.

So we would hope you will continue to work on this issue of maps that are fair in a partisan way.

These maps as a resident of Cass County I must say that once again that we in Cass are in Southwest Michigan residence.

We do not belong with Southeast Michigan residence in one District.

Congressional District 8 which I think is the Pine map House District 64 and State Senate number 26 are especially egregious in regard by putting us way over with Counties that are way over on the east.

And make a special point about House District 64 on the Pine map and House District 81.

These two maps split the City of Dowagiac the main City and only City in Cass County and takes the City and moves it and puts it in a separate District from the rest of the County.

I guess I'm up.

Thank you.

That separation makes no sense.

And must be addressed.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 44.

>> My name is Kent and I live in Ottawa County and I would like to thank the Commission for all the hard work they have done.

Thank you for this opportunity.

My wife and I were volunteers for Voters Not Politicians.

We joined because we believe in making every vote count.

To do that we needed balanced competitive and fair districts.

Where those running for office had to listen to their constituents and not outside interests.

We spent months gathering signatures over 550.

As I spoke to people it did not matter if they were republicans, democrats or independents.

When I told them that this amendment would take some power away from the political parties their response was where do I sign? So I urge you to respect these signees and draw maps that are balanced fair and competitive.

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I will say I live in Ottawa County and while I respect my colleagues that are here talking about Ottawa County, I might be on the other side.

I don't find them to be balanced, fair or competitive.

So thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 45.

>> Hello, I'm Tom hooker from Byron Center thank you for the opportunity to share my concerns with the Commission's apple plan for the Kent County reapportionment. Growing up in Wyoming living and teaching in Byron Center for 37 years as current trustee and former supervisor of Byron Township I know the south Grand Rapids south area and its needs.

The apple plan chooses to include Grand Rapids with Kalamazoo where there is little if any connection between the two municipalities other than their geographic location on the map of Michigan and 131 expressway.

Waking up Kent County causes the school districts, local Townships and communities of interest to be divided.

Let me illustrate what apple plan would do to my community of Byron Center as far as the State House districts.

My six square miles Township of Byron with a Byron school District where I taught for 37 years would need to be divided into three separate House Districts.

My house on 108th Street would be in a direction with Gains, Caledonia and part of Wayland and just north of me and west. Drew Jones who works for State Representative in Lansing who lives on 84th and Homerich would be a separate of Wyoming clear down to Kalamazoo area.

And Matt who is the current County Commissioner would be moved to a third District in Ottawa County.

We all live in Byron Township just three or four miles apart and yet we would be divided up.

We have to look at those areas of interest thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 46.

>> Hi everybody can you hear me?

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Yes, we can.

>> My name is gabby I'm running for U.S. house of representatives over Michigan current District 3.

I actually grew up with amazing, elected official and of course I'm referring to Mr. Voorhees in Kent County when I was very young.

I wanted to briefly say a few words of encouragement.

You know there is an old saying that the shadow of the farmer is the best fertilizer.

And what that means is there is no substitute for having your boots on the ground, going to events like this in person and saying what you have to say.

So I just wanted to thank the Commissioners and also wanted to thank everybody in this room for making your opinions heard.

Thank you so much.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 47.

>> Hi and thank you for listening to the people.

And we hope that is what you're doing is listening to West Michigan as well.

I have three close friends who live three miles from me. And we will be in three different districts with three different representatives.

Byron Center with Byron Center's population of approximately 27,000 people this makes absolutely no sense to me.

It sounds very difficult.

And it makes me question if there is an intentional gerrymandering trying to go forward here to strengthen one party and silence another.

In the quote from a very great president once a Government is committed to the principle of silencing the voice of opposition, it has only one way to go and that is down the path of increasingly repressive measures until it becomes a source of terror to all of its citizens and creates a country where everyone lives in fear.

And this is President Harry Truman.

Democrat.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 48.

>> Good afternoon.

I'm Tammy.

I'm a resident of Grand Haven for 26 years.

I'm here to talk about Ottawa County and how our community needs to be kept together.

I spent 16 years as a teacher in Allendale.

Right now three of your four proposed maps split these two communities despite there being a clear connection.

There are thousands of people like me across Ottawa County who live in one portion of the County and work in another portion of the County.

We shop go out to eat attend fairs parades and enjoy the lakeshore together.

Map 201 which the Commission refers to as apple accurately reflects Ottawa County as a Community of Interest.

Having grown up in the Tri-Cities of Midland Bay City and Saginaw for 34 years some claim it is a community I respectfully disagree.

I grew up in the City.

And one of the Townships of Saginaw.

They do not have the same needs or interests that alone with the City of Midland.

Here in Ottawa County we have a Tri-Cities as well.

They are Grand Haven Ferrysburg and Spring Lake and they are definitely tied together and are most definitely tied to Ottawa County.

We have so much more in common with places in Ottawa County like Holland and Hudsonville than communities over 100 miles away such as Mount Pleasant or Midland and they are great but don't know the lakeshore and certainly don't have much in common with my community of Ottawa County.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 49.

>> Thank you for giving us the opportunity to speak to this issue.

As a former mayor of the City of Grand Haven a lakeshore community in Ottawa County I know the importance of having elected representatives who have a thorough understanding of lakeshore communities like Holland, Grand Haven, Muskegon and Saugatuck and need representation with a thorough understanding.

The summer and moderating effect of Lake Michigan on local climate ties the area together agriculturally with the fruit and vegetable growers so important to the economy of the region.

The manufacturing industrial base is a large part of the economies of all of these communities.

All these interests tie these communities together.

There are strong cultural ties with many Dutch polish and German settlers and Hispanic and Asian communities.

Maps that split Ottawa County into three separate districts stretching across the State of Michigan can't possibly represent our lakeshore communities like they deserve and need.

Map 201 or the apple map keeps Ottawa County whole and the lakeshore together. It's important to maintain historical cultural agricultural continuity as reapportionment are accomplished and encourage you to keep Ottawa County and the lakeshore a voice in Congress.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 50.

>> Commission thank you for tackling this very difficult job.

My name is Ben.

I'm a lifelong resident of Michigan and a long-term resident of Gun Plain Township in Allegan County.

Which is pretty much smack dab in the middle of this apple map where you connect Kalamazoo with Grand Rapids.

And while residents of Michigan and residents of West Michigan we do have many common shared interests.

At the more local level.

Things begin to diverge and I do not mean negative pitting rural against urban just different.

I find that I would have more in common as a rural Township with the City of Allegan in my County than I would with Grand Rapids or even Kalamazoo.

I do many things with Kalamazoo.

So matching Allegan County keeping it the integrity of that with say Ottawa or Van Buren or Barry makes more sense to me.

Thank you for your time.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 51.

>> Thank you for taking my comment today.

And listening to all of our concerns.

My name is Veronica I'm from Portage, Kalamazoo County.

I'm testifying today to share my concerns about the plan that would draw Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids into the same District.

Kalamazoo is a separate and distinct community of interest from Grand Rapids.

We do not share infrastructure or services with each other.

In some ways our cities are economic competitors.

Please help honor the promise made by voters and not the politicians that communities would be kept together and better represented by our new boundaries.

Specifically I object to the Congressional redistricting plan known as apple.

Communities should not be broken apart arbitrarily to achieve some type of number like partisan fairness.

In fact, doing so is exactly what this Commission was formed to avoid.

Partisan gerrymandering.

Thank you for taking my comments.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 52.

>> Thank you.

I'm Tom from Cascade Township.

I'm going to provide you with objective views of your six different rules for each of the three maps solutions.

But I'm also going to provide you with some solutions to each of them.

Not just constructive criticism.

Most important thing I pulled this from the District R website where and how the lines are drawn influences who is likely to be elected to how resources are allocated.

When it comes to democrat community matters in bold.

If your community is split in different small pieces every ten years it's harder to have a voice in Government.

For the United States house the apple District stretches from Grand Rapids to Kalamazoo which is a 52 miles long and violates your compactness rule.

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It spans four different Counties splitting in the municipalities and Government and schools voting precincts et cetera.

Apple map fails on four of the six rules by the Commission.

The birch man spans three Counties and splitting them and associated municipalities and birch and Juniper fails three of the six rules established by the mapping Commission.

Keep Kent County whole as the second largest in Michigan Kent County deserves the own United States Congressional District to be sure it's effectively represented in Congress and Kalamazoo does as well.

I will see my time is up so I will be submitting these on the portal so thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 53.

>> Good afternoon.

How are you guys today.

I'm Chair of the Kent County board of Commissioners and welcome to Kent County. As the Chair of the board I understand the diversity of the community and board members and people we represent.

You have heard about keeping our County whole.

I echo and begging and imploring for that.

Splitting us up in the apple map and putting us down in Kalamazoo is really very concerning to me.

It sounds like you probably have the right path for Ottawa in that map.

But Kalamazoo and Kent County are two very different communities.

I grew up with family there.

I went to western Michigan University.

We have competing universities.

You would be effectively putting two urban communities and reducing them from two representatives to one.

Urban communities have to really fight for and advocate for various Federal resources including hopelessness transit, airports, again our universities.

I would beg you to keep us together.

Additionally we are a community that collaborates.

We collaborate with our neighboring Counties.

Our school districts kind of bleed over into those neighboring counties and argue they are Community of Interest and you could snag various pieces of to keep us whole.

We have County wide millages for seniors, Veterans and early childhood education that weave our community together and priorities we determined in Kent County.

In closing thank you for your service.

I appreciate all your work.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 54.

>> Good afternoon thanks for being here in Grand Rapids.

Just want to quickly address the issue of you know Ottawa County is the fastest growing County in the State of Michigan and Kent County is the second growing fastest second fastest growing County in the State of Michigan.

So it's frustrating to see us be split.

Unnecessarily.

And when you look at the map, I thought some of the comments today are clever.

The apple map actually increases the partisan advantage.

It's just to a different party.

And so it's a clever way for some of the speakers today to talk about how it's bringing it together when it actually increases the partisan advantage and it happens to advantage a particular party.

When you look at the Senate maps or back on the Congressional side, it's also frustrating to see our communities like Rockford lumped in with Midland County to all the sudden have a two hour discrepancy when it's unnecessary to do it.

So I really do implore you to keep us intact.

I find it ironic in some of the speakers advocating to keep Cascade in Kent County.

But then turning around and supporting the apple map and putting Grand Rapids with Kalamazoo.

So there is a little bit of irony and hypocrisy going on here and I understand your job is very difficult but implore you to try to keep us intact and reward us for our great economic policies making us the fastest growing region in the State of Michigan.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 55.

>> Actually I'm 56.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Go ahead sir.

>> Thank you.

My name is Larry Moss.

I'm mayor pro tem of the City of Greenville.

I serve as a nonpartisan member of the planning Commission and the Greenville City Council.

Greenville is a community about 35 miles north and east of Grand Rapids.

I would like to first thank you all for your commitment and your hard work.

I know this is not an easy job.

And you're getting advice from lots of different directions.

And good luck with all of that.

Oh, is it possible to get a map up? Or is it too late?

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Go ahead which map do you want.

>> Number 230 the birch map.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Could we bring up 230, birch?

>> I'll keep talking while you're doing that Greenville is very definitely a West Michigan community.

It is very closely related with Grand Rapids.

Rush hour on M57 and U.S. 131 is very heavy in both directions.

Morning and evening.

We have lots of interaction between the two communities.

Greenville is the center of manufacturing healthcare, food processing and retail.

It's not so much associated with the communities of agricultural.

College towns and resorts to the north and the east.

And yet most of these maps, if you could you just scooch that down a little that way, yes, if you look where Greenville is in the bottom left hand corner of that District, we are really more closely related to Grand Rapids than we are to communities to the north and to the east.

I know I'm out of time.

But I would like you to consider as you proceed that you would consider Greenville more as with communities of the south and the west than to the north and the east.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Do we have number 55? 57?

>> Hello good afternoon my name is Danielle and I'm here today as a private citizen and a resident of Grand Rapids.

To talk about Michigan Senate map P6717.

Which is titled the cleaner West Michigan map.

This map places the precinct south of Kentwood back in District 23 and places neighborhoods between wealthy and Fulton streets into District 24.

They better represent the Commissioners priorities with increasing compactness increasing partisan fairness and a more Metro COI measure while preserving the logical boundary lines and keeping Ottawa County whole all of which can create more fair and equitable Senate districts which is basically the foundation of this entire redistricting effort.

Thank you for your service on this Commission and the opportunity to leave my comments today.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 58.

>> Hi there.

My name is Mia.

I am a resident of Georgetown Township in Ottawa County.

And I'm here to ask you to keep our County intact.

Georgetown Township still maintains a rural identity.

We have a sense of being part of a small community and share a community of interest with the Ottawa County lakeshore communities.

I ask you to not split our close knit community of Ottawa County apart and send Georgetown Township to Kent County.

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Georgetown Township does not identify with the communities of Kent County as we do in Ottawa and we are not an urban community at all.

Why try to divide our Counties and communities Kalamazoo and Kent are very different from each other as well.

Why would you merge them and have a wide spans this does not make any sense.

Ottawa County is very different as well from these two other Counties.

We are already divided into communities of interest through our County lines.

I have not heard any good argument as to why we would break up our County communities.

I would hope this is not an attempt to gerrymander for one particular party of interest but right now I don't see any other reason why you're breaking us up.

Our districts are represented appropriately by County line.

Please do not change and break us up.

Even though we are on the border of Ottawa County and Kent, I identify and prefer to head west to lakeshore communities for shopping, entertainment and social gathering.

Every time identify.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 59.

>> Hi that's me.

My name is Kevin hunt, husband to the beautiful woman who just spoke.

I know, right, it always is the right answer.

Ottawa County West Michigan lakeshore community should stay intact and keeps manufacturing and Muskegon Ottawa and Allegan together and maintains the unity of family farmers who want to maintain a strong agricultural voice thank you for your time and consideration.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 60.

>> Good afternoon.

My name is Steve.

I live in the Holland, Michigan area.

I strongly urge the Commission to adopt either map 201 code named apple or Commissioner Rhonda Lange's maps.

Both will be fair and maintain the community of interest along the lakeshore and maintain the integrity of Ottawa Allegan and Muskegon cones.

The other maps do serious damage to the economic religious and political unity of the rural and lakeshore communities.

One of these maps splits Ottawa County into three Congressional districts.

People in Holland will vote with people in Kalamazoo.

People in Grand Haven will vote with people as far north as Mackinaw City and Georgetown Township gets pulled out of Ottawa County altogether.

The two maps I mentioned 201 apple and Commissioner Lange's map are the best for maintaining contiguous communities of interest.

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And current effective City Township and County boundaries in order to maintain the honesty and integrity and fairness of the redistricting process I urge you to endorse both of these maps, thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 61.

>> Right here good afternoon thank you for being here.

My name is Rob from the City of Walker Kent County.

As a former mayor in Kent County, I am here to express concern with any Congressional map which will divide Kent County.

Kent County with a population of over 670,000 people is an integrated unit and should be represented by one member of Congress.

Kent County has an integrated public transit system, a County intermediate school system, multiple coordinated sewer and water systems, a District library system, a County wide millage for cultural institutions and the Gerald Ford international airport which is a domestic and International hub for the region.

And have maintenance and coordination of thousands of lane miles throughout Kent County and coordinates and partners with local public work agencies to ensure smooth transportation through Kent County.

The Grand Valley is the MPO for the Grand Rapids area.

It does not do planning or coordination for the Kalamazoo area.

Divided Kent County will weaken the transportation, environmental and infrastructure planning and coordination efforts in this major Metropolitan area of Michigan.

Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo are never considered as being in common and, in fact, they are competitors with respect to public universities, airports and a number of other things.

There is no rationale reason to divide Kent County and I implore you to revise the map to keep Kent County intact, thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 62.

>> Do we have number 62? 63.

Go ahead, sir.

>> Hi, my name is Tim.

I'm a board member of West Michigan organization called road, ROAD stands for reviving our American democracy.

Which I believe is why we are all here.

We are the audience and you the Commission committed time and energy to reviving our American democracy and glad to be a part of it.

Along with the board of my organization road commend you on tackling the very difficult assignment.

I'm afraid you're not finished yet.

Particularly on the State House maps.

Please try harder to achieve partisan fairness for the State House maps.

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Aspiring to achieve the 53-47 balance between democrats and republicans flexing the current statewide voting patterns.

Much as you have done for the Congressional and state's Senate maps.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 64.

>> Good afternoon.

My name is Sandra Smith I'm from Wyoming.

Retired from UAW2145 I'm representing UAW retirees of Kent County.

We voted for balanced map and it will keep Metro together.

Consider bringing the north District all the way in Kent use Wealthy Street as a dividing line.

The State House map keep Wyoming whole and look to add the Latino and Wyoming is growing and almost large enough to have its own District.

We support the AFLCIO fair map project.

We need fair maps now.

Thank you for your service.

And thank you for allowing me to speak.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 65.

>> Could you pull up House Districts 83, 84 and 85 and I also gave you a handout that is pertinent to my testimony.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: For I would need a particular map.

>> They are for our area that they are all three I looked at are all the same for the House District.

83, 84 and 85.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: I don't believe we have a map that corresponds to those numbers.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: What about the Pine house map?

>> Could be.

They were just sent to me yesterday so.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: It has to be a house map with those numbers.

>> Can I give you a description? Would that help?

>> CHAIR SZETELA: What was the area.

>> Top part of Ottawa and down to port Sheldon and then Muskegon and then east to Allendale.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: What were the numbers.

>> 83, 84 and 85.

I mean I requested the maps yesterday and just received them yesterday.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: That looks like that is the Pine map.

>> Okay.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: You can take a look at it and if it's not the right map let us know.

Can we bring up the Pine map for her.

>> I just want to focus on those, okay if you can move it over, I really want to focus on the Muskegon/Ottawa House Districts.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Yep.

>> Got it, okay.

All right any way I'm going to get started with my testimony my name is Ellen and I'm from Fruitport Township and addressed the Commission in June and advocated for a lakeshore leaning house and Senate districts.

And I unfortunately have been heartbroken to find the proposed maps cut Fruitport Township out of our neighbor's area which is Norton Shores grand haven and Spring Lake so I'm really hoping that Fruitport Township can be drawn in the 83rd District for the following reasons.

Fruitport is a growing suburban District with 14,500 people includes mount mall in the area has been selected to be the home of a future casino and with our new proposed County maps it will include the Muskegon airport.

We are not rural in any way.

And we have very little in common with our neighbors to the east.

In fact, my current Commissioner who will no longer be part of the District will succeed from Muskegon County.

I passed a map out so you can see that recognize we had very little in common with the eastern part of the County and drew a new map that puts us in with Norton Shores.

It would split the new County Commission in half.

Fruitport Township is part of Spring Lake I'm sorry Fruitport is part of the Spring Lake Norris creek watershed and you have a map of that and I live two blocks from Spring Lake where we launch our boat in Lake Michigan and we would like to be E removed from 85 east to Coopersville and Allendale and put in 83 with Spring Lake, Grand Haven and Ferrysburg and Norton Shores thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 65.

>> Do we have 65? Sorry 66.

>> My name is Nancy and I live in Norton Shores in Muskegon County.

And I reiterate that Michigan is a democratic state.

And therefore the districts need to be drawn to reflect that.

They should not have an overall republican advantage.

Adopting any of your draft maps, the draft Senate State Senate maps for Muskegon County will recreate the same lack of representation the urban and suburban parts of Muskegon County have suffered this past decade.

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Since 2010 Muskegon County has been lumped with Newaygo and Oceana Counties, our state sent from Newaygo County is consequently always missing in action unless it's campaign season.

The three State Senate maps you propose for Muskegon County are all identical. And will give us worse representation.

We will be lumped with four other rural Counties to the north of us.

True we are all Lake front communities, which is an improvement.

But urban and suburban communities don't have the same needs as rural ones.

Muskegon County population is almost six times as high as any of those four Counties to the north.

Also, the new maps would double our chances of having a representative who lives far away and isn't aware of our needs.

We prefer with the waterfront cities of Grand Haven and Spring Lake and Ottawa County.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 67.

>> Could you pull up the birch map? Is it possible to call it by the tree name? Okay thank you.

So my name is Donna Pennington from Muskegon Michigan and the Vice Chair of the second Congressional District of the democratic party.

You might recognize my avatar Dr. Rob David son who has appeared on MSNBC as an expert on healthcare since 2018 when he was a candidate for U.S. Congress from my District.

Dr. Davidson was the best candidate we have are ever seen in West Michigan with a possible exception of Gerald R Ford himself.

He was a physician, a school board member, a tireless, bright and committed.

But we didn't understand in 2018 when we all worked so hard was that Dr. Davidson didn't have a chance because of the way the maps were drawn.

So this is the importance of partisan fairness and communities of interest.

And your maps are believed to shade to the right while most of Michigan shades to the left.

Three of the four CD maps of which this is one example adds Muskegon and Muskegon Heights to a huge 200 mile swath of northern rural Counties without a single other City with a significant number of people of color or grappling with urban suburban issues of education employment housing and very importantly to me systemic racism.

A gigantic District of rural white people plus Muskegon.

So your apple map with some tweaks for partisan fairness would be much closer to a place where Dr. Davidson could win.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 68.

>> Hi, my name is Kim gates from Caledonia Township.

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Thank you for your perseverance in this tough effort to create fair representative maps for the people of Michigan.

In 2020 democratic voters had 53% of the votes and therefore should win a majority of the seats on any maps that are drawn.

Your partisan fairness expert, Dr. Handley said that election results show that Michigan is a lean democratic state.

By the MICRC's own assessment the maps lean anywhere from 5-8% to the right giving republicans an unfair advantage.

Your current efforts to create maps with only slight improvement over the 2011 intentional republican gerrymander.

All maps also fall short in protecting voices of communities of color.

We want to see more minority voices elected, not fewer. Apple 201 map incorporates Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo Metro areas which makes up 90% of that Congressional District.

They share common needs of education civil rights housing healthcare.

The Grand Rapids Kalamazoo District contains a large population of African/American Hispanics and minorities.

31% of the District are nonwhite.

West Michigan's racial minority and immigrant populations deserve a vote in their Government.

Your maps currently unfairly benefit one party over another.

Please work for fair just representation.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. All right everybody, we are scheduled to take a recess at this time.

So it is currently 3:31.

Without objection we are going to recess from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. hearing no objections we will stand in recess until 5:00 p.m., thank you very much.

[Recess]

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Ready when you are, Madam Chair.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: As Chair of the Commission I call the meeting of the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission back to order at 5:03 p.m. for the purposes of the publish watching and for the publish record I will turn to the Michigan Department of State staff to take note of the Commissioners present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Good evening, Commissioners please say present when I call your name if you are attending remotely announce you are attending remotely and disclose your physical location.

I'll call on Commissioners in alphabetical order starting with Doug Clark.

>> COMMISSIONER CLARK: Present.

- >> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Juanita Curry.
- >> COMMISSIONER CURRY: Present; attending from Detroit, Michigan.
- >> 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: In attendance.
- >> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Cynthia Orton?
- >> COMMISSIONER ORTON: Present.
- >> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: MC Rothhorn?
- >> VICE COMMISSIONER ROTHORN: Present.
- >> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Rebecca Szetela?
- >> CHAIR SZETELA: Present.
- >> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Janice Vallette?
- >> COMMISSIONER VALLETTE: Present.
- >> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Erin Wagner?
- >> COMMISSIONER WAGNER: Present; attending remotely from Charlotte, Michigan.
- >> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Richard Weiss?
- >> COMMISSIONER WEISS: Present.
- >> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Dustin Witjes?
- >> COMMISSIONER WITJES: Could not think of anything so I'm present.
- >> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: All Commissioners are present.

And there is a quorum.

- >> CHAIR SZETELA: Mr. Rothhorn will have a presentation.

Hearing no objection please proceed, Mr. Rothhorn.

>> VICE CHAIR ROTHORN: Hello, Grand Rapids. And nice to see your smiling faces. Thanks for being here.

Can we have the presentation up on the screen so thank you.

We are going to back it up to the second slide after the third slide rather after the agenda.

Excellent so here is our agenda.

We are at the welcome and background.

So on behalf of the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission thank you so much for joining us today.

We need you to #show up speak up.

To help us #draw fair maps.

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In 2018 as many of you know Michigan voters by more than 61% empowered citizens not legislatures to #draw fair maps.

Consequently the MICRC represents initiative by Michigan residents not liberals moderates or conservatives, voters made an intentional and deliberate effort for Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission by filling in the yes oval on proposal two.

Can we advance the slide to what is redistricting, yes.

Every ten years following the U.S. census District lines for U.S. Congressional, State House and State Senate must be redrawn to accurately reflect the population.

The process of drawing District lines is known as redistricting.

In Michigan there are 161 Congressional, State Senate and State House districts that need to be drawn for the 2022 election cycle.

For the first time in Michigan's history residents have an opportunity to provide input on drawing maps for Michigan's Congressional house and Senate districts.

Openness transparency and public engagement represent the principles of this new redistricting process.

Now you have an opportunity to ensure your voice and your community's voice is heard. Instead of politicians choosing their Districts to best represent their interest Michigan residents can share their interests in assisting in developing their districts through the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission.

We need your assistance to help us #draw fair maps.

At this time I'm going to turn it over to our communications director Mr. Edward Woods III to give you some rules about our public hearing or some guidelines rather.

>> MR. EDWARD WOODS: Thank you so much Commissioner Rothhorn.

Good afternoon Grand Rapids!

Is there any life in the audience? Are you excited to be here? This is the purest form of civics you will ever see where Michigan residents have a direct result in the process and I'm so happy each and every one of you are here and able to participate.

Per the Michigan Constitution here are the requirements for the second round of public hearings.

Solicit public comments about the proposed 161 districts.

This includes 13 Congressional districts 38 State Senate districts and 110 House Districts.

Each proposed District plan shall include census data, a map and legal description, you can view this on the MICRC website at www.Michigan.gov/MICRC.

Under proposed draft maps.

Last but not least we are required to hold five public hearings.

And today represents the third one of the fifth of the five public hearings we are going to hold.

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The third of the fifth public hearings we are going to hold and we are happy to be at the DeVos Place in Grand Rapids.

Our proposed draft maps as you know the Commission approved ten collaborative maps through a process.

We named the maps after trees to prevent any preference or bias to a Michigan Congressional, State Senate or State House plan.

If you can wave your hand and thank Sarah, she can't see you but she can see if you wave your hand and thank her for naming them after trees.

Each Commissioner had an opportunity to submit one map for Congressional State Senate and State House districts for the Congressional we received maps from Commissioners Doug Clark, Anthony Eid, Rhonda Lange and Rebecca Szetela. For the State Senate Commissioners Eid, Rhonda Lange and Rebecca Szetela submitted maps and the State House we received maps from Commissioners dug Clark, Cynthia Orton, Rebecca Szetela.

As a part of the process all of the maps that the Commission will assess and vote and eventually adopt will have to meet the seven ranked redistricting criteria.

All will have to rank or meet I'm sorry the 7 ranked redistricting cite that includes one equal population in the Voting Rights Act.

Two geographically contiguous.

Three reflect the state's diversity and communities of interest.

No disproportionate advantage to any political party.

No favor or disfavor to an incumbent elected official or candidate.

Reflect consideration of County, City and Township boundaries.

And then, 7, reasonably compact.

In other words you have to follow them in order from 1-7.

We cannot go from 1 and then skip to item number 6.

These are the 7 ranked redistricting criteria.

Here is the process for adopting the maps.

After the public hearings the Commission shall follow the following procedure in adopting a map for Michigan Congressional State Senate and State House.

A, before voting to adopt a plan the Commission shall ensure that the plan is tested using appropriate technology for compliance with the redistricting criteria.

This process takes place between October 27th to November 5.

Before voting to adopt the plan, the Commission shall provide public notice of each plan that will be voted on and provide at least 45 days for public comment on the proposed plan or plans.

Each plan that will be voted on shall include such census data as is necessary to accurately describe the plan and verify the population of each District and shall include the map and legal description.

The 45 day public comment period is scheduled to start on November 14.

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A final decision of the Commission to adopt a redistricting plan requires a majority vote of the Commission including at least two Commissioners who affiliate with each major party and at least two Commissioners who do not affiliate with either major party.

This vote is scheduled for December 30th.

The Michigan Supreme Court has original jurisdiction as relates to the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission.

At its discretion it can review any challenges to any maps adopted.

Not proposed.

But adopted by the Commission.

They can remand any plan that fails to comply with the Michigan and U.S. constitutions or superseding Federal law.

For example the Voting Rights Act.

Let's be clear, the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission is the only body that has exclusive authority to create and adopt the maps.

For Michigan's Congressional, house, and Senate districts.

Thank you so much for this opportunity.

And without further ado we will turn the presentation over to our General Counsel, Julianne Pastula.

>> MS. JULIANNE PASTULA: Thank you so much director Woods.

And good evening Grand Rapids.

It's a pleasure for the Commission to be here and to hear from all of you this evening.

I'd like to briefly cover the public hearing guidelines in three areas.

Dequorum participation and procedure.

As to dequorum I would like to note that the subsection 11 of the Michigan Constitution prohibits both Commissioners, staff and consultants from discussing redistricting matters with members of the public unless the communication occurs in writing or during public comment at a meeting such as the one you're at today.

So during the breaks, the Commissioners like to engage people and visit, but again they cannot take public testimony outside of the meeting that you're at today at the podium so that all of the Commissioners have the benefit of hearing your insight. As to participation, the in person live public comment will occur first.

The Chairperson of the Commission will call on participants by speaking order.

By the number that you were issued to approach the microphone and provide public comment.

After in person public comment has concluded the remote public comment session will begin.

Members of the public needed to sign up in advance for remote public comment to participate by Zoom.

And those individuals will also be called in the number that they were given in order of sign up.

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For participation the time limit for each public comment speaker is one minute 30 seconds.

Please conclude your remarks when you hear the timer.

The timer will begin when you start speaking and you may not yield your time to another speaker.

If you issued a map number or a public comment number on your sign up card that will be displayed as you provide your comment.

If anyone disrupts the orderly progress of the meeting or refuses to apply with MICRC guidelines and rules the Chairperson may rule that person out of order and/or removal from the meeting.

Again reminder you will hear it many times throughout the evening but please share your public comment and submit proposed maps in the Commission's U public comment portal which is located at www.Michigan.gov/MICRC.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you General Counsel.

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

Hearing no objection we will proceed with public comment individuals who signed up and indicate they would like to provide live in person commentary to the Commission will now be allowed to do so.

Please step to the microphone when I call your number.

You will have 90 seconds to address the Commission. Please -- 90 seconds, geez, it's been a long three days, 90 seconds to address the Commission.

Please conclude your remarks when your 90 seconds have ended and you hear the timer.

We encourage everybody to go to the public comment tool and share your comments in writing including a specific area about the map which you are speaking.

The public comment tool is available at www.Michigan.gov/MICRC.

And if you would like to help have help accessing the website tonight, we actually have monitors out front and individuals out there who are willing to help you provide public comment on that portal.

All right so we had a few people who were missing from this morning so to make sure those people have an opportunity to speak I will recall some of the numbers from this morning who were not here and we will pick up where we were left off 24, 26, 27 or 28, are any of you here? 27 or 127? Okay I'm calling for 27.

Okay what about 34, 35 or 41? All right, 62? Okay so we are going to go ahead and start with 69, 70, 71 and 72.

And 69 when you reach the microphone please begin speaking

>> My name is Julia.

I live in South Haven in Van Buren County I worked to pass prop two and grateful for the work the Commission has put to the goal of fair partisan and population maps.

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My specific comment is for conditional approval of House District 87 on the Pine map draft.

This map does need further work to adjust for partisan fairness.

However looking at the map, this map as drawn is a long snaking District which at first glance looks like a classic gerrymandered District.

However, the lakeshore communities do have shared interests.

Such as the erosion of Lake Michigan shoreline and patch work ultimately in effective remedies.

The tourist dependent economy and the dirth of living wage jobs.

We need a person to educate legislatures and advocate for lakeshore concerns.

Please improve House District 87 as previously suggested and consider extending it even further up the Lake to include Saugatuck Douglas which shares our concerns.

Thank you for your diligence to draw fair legislative maps.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 70.

>> Good evening. I live in Van Buren and part of the South Haven team to pass proposal two and thank you for your dedicated work.

As a resident of what will become House District 88, I would like to voice qualified support for the Southwest Michigan state District maps on the Pine map.

Including districts 87 and 88.

I believe the districts have potential to closely represent the communities they encompass keeping the lakeshore and unique concerns together and separating the more rural areas into HT88 providing a representative to give their undivided attention to the residents' needs.

It may seem the Lake District goes on forever it's a very small strip and once I leave South Haven it turns to farms and small town.

In keeping with this fact it is important to include Saugatuck as it has more in common than HT88 where it's currently placed.

I would urge the Commission to have a more partisan map for 20.

The proposed District that includes Benton Harbor to Byron is seriously problematic.

Van Buren should be more together in a compact District to run up the cost of Holland and much more representative and connected for the major Hispanic and African/American populations that exist from Holland to Benton Harbor.

Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 71.

>> Good afternoon/evening.

My name is Mary.

And I live in South Haven which is in Southwest Michigan in Van Buren County.

This community will be in what is proposed as the new House District 87.

I've been a longtime advocate of the IRDC and I applaud the efforts you have made in what is truly a daunting task.

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Today I wish to comment for the proposed Pine HD87 map.

It is vital that the communities along the lakeshore be united and have a common representative voice to address the needs and concerns that are subject to whether it's fair housing, fair housing, diversity, and especially to me environmental.

My home which is directly on Lake Michigan has been in my family for over 100 years. And my own lifetime I've seen many changes to the shoreline, some natural, others manmade.

I know I'm not alone in my concerns and would feel greatly reassured my representative was truly listening to voices like mine.

The proposed Pine map for House District 87 is a definite improvement.

My only primary concern about this is the continued skewing towards partisanship.

As you revisit the map, I would please direct your attention you know to that factor.

And any redrawing that you do.

Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 72.

>> Hello, my name is Tom.

I live on Hunsberger Grand Rapids.

I'm a retired state Government employee and worked in local and state Government for 55 years.

My father worked for the City of Grand Rapids for over 30 years.

Three of my four children work passionately for Government and non-profits.

Our family has always taken public service seriously.

Our clear goal has always been nonpartisan service.

I don't want to see redistricting maps that favor democrats.

I don't want to see redistricting maps that favor republicans.

I want maps that represent the people and give the vote to the people.

White, black, Hispanic, democrat, republican.

That is -- representation to the people.

It needs to look like them and represent them.

The voters of Michigan clearly showed you that this is what they want.

They created you.

The Commission, to do their will.

Not the will of either party.

They sent you a very clear mandate you need to redistrict accordingly.

Give the people what they demanded of you.

Fair, nonpartisan representative maps.

Serve the people in a way that will make your children and your grandchildren proud.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 73, 74, 75 and 76.

>> Hi, my name is Nick.

I live in Grand Rapids.

And for the last ten years of my life I've worked for nonprofit conservation groups.

On local, regional and statewide issues.

Protecting the Grand River and my beloved Lake Michigan our precious Great Lakes requires a highly functioning democracy.

The functioning democracy that is only possible with just fair and competitive elections.

Our state's newest District maps should give Michigan voters meaningful control of who represents them in Lansing, not political parties.

To accomplish in the Commission should consider the ideas of maps in the portal like promote the votes and balance criteria three and four.

Maximizing partisan fairness and preserving the voter rights act.

Michiganders deserve to have their voices heard thoroughfare and balanced maps that reflect the aggregate and total will of the people.

Unfortunately while much improved the maps before us today to give a disproportionate advantage to one political party and at least in three of the four partisan scoring metrics.

You can and must do better for Michigan. This is our shot.

This is your responsibility.

If this process is completed with one political party having a foundational electoral advantage because of how you draw your maps you will fail in your mission.

I know that will not happen because I have faith in you and our democracy.

Thank you so much for your service.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 74.

>> No 74, 75? Good evening, Commissioners thank you again like everyone else said for now time. It is a thankless job.

We've heard a lot I'm sure that if you ever hear when you are done with your service for this Commission if you hear community of interest again it will be cause for violence.

But I think that there are some misunderstandings about what that phrase means.

And I'm sure while the Commission does understand that just to reiterate it's a group of people with a common interest or passion.

It is not a set of lines. It is not a County.

It is not a voting District.

It is a group of people.

And people after all is why we are here.

We are here to make sure that all the people have as much as we can, an equal opportunity to be enfranchised and to have a voice in the system that we have.

I've heard some confusing statements about the Senate District going from Grand Rapids to Kalamazoo and I just wanted to point out a couple of things why that makes sense and why it actually does address the community of interest that is there.

Contrary to statements that were made Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo are not completing or fighting each other.

We do not have disputes between us that must be settled violently or anything like that.
We work together.

The communities frequently work together.

We share a lot of things in common medically as well as socially so I would encourage you especially in the interest of minority act to consider the Senate District.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 76.

>> Do we have 76? 77? 78? Sir, are you 78?

>> I'm 79.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Why don't you come on up.

>> Hi, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak.

My name is Jeff Thomas.

I've lived in the City of Grand Rapids since I was a toddler and I want to thank you first for all of your hard work to date.

I want to speak in favor of combining Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo into a single Congressional District as the 201 apple map does.

After a decade of deliberate marginalization experienced by the City of Grand Rapids in particular under the current Congressional map the possibility of electing someone who will represent the two cities shared priorities and interests as larger urban areas is very exciting.

I would also like to express my surprise those who claimed this afternoon that the two cities are not economically connected.

As an owner of a business based in Grand Rapids the amount of time I have spent driving up and down the 131 corridor to meet with clients in Kalamazoo over the past decade says very much the opposite.

I also want to express my appreciation for the work that has been done on the State House Pine map.

That's map 227.

But I believe it could still be improved in particular by giving the City of Wyoming the well-deserved opportunity to anchor a District along with portions of southwest Grand Rapids.

Which would allow the Hispanic community that bridges the two cities a much better chance of representation.

Finally as someone who voted for proposal two and someone who is thoroughly tired of the extreme politics produced by gerrymandered districts, I would urge the members of the Commission to reject any map that will predictably allow either party to take majority of seats.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: One more call for 76, 77 and 78.

And if not, we will go on to 80.

Do we have 80, 81, 82?

>> Hi name is Kristina.

I commented I was going to make on behalf of my community of interest but my community of interest as an Asian American is a microcosm of people of color and my well-being is tied to fellow people of color communities.

Namely the African/American and Hispanic communities of Grand Rapids.

Hispanics are the second largest minority population in the greater Grand Rapids area. And yet in the draft maps they are divided into three distinct districts diluting their power and their ability to elect representative leadership.

I urge you to look at the Hispanic center of West Michigan's proposed maps and comments submitted by Claudia.

This lays out where the Hispanic community lives works shops and worships.

All three of the maps Pine Peach and oak barely keep 35% of the Hispanic community together.

Furthermore though your maps have kept 70% of the community together in Senate they barely keep 29% of the community together in the house.

To build responsive and representative leadership the Hispanic Black Asian American and indigenous communities in Grand Rapids must be able to build power. These issues can be addressed.

To say that addressing the needs of one community of interest comes at the cost and expense of another is simply not true especially when referring to minority communities who have historically faced oppression and discrimination.

To overcome systemic racism we must have a place at the table.

I thank you for serving on this Commission.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Do we have 82 or 83? Hi there, my name is Nicole and I live in Rockford Michigan which you probably know as northern Kent County and I'm here to ask you to not approve the apple map. Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo are competitors.

They are not communities of interest.

The residents of these communities don't work or go to school together, they don't recreate together.

There are separate housing and employment markets and separate health systems and competing universities in western and Grand Valley Pew campus in Grand Rapids as well as private universities in both communities.

As a citizen of Kent County we share libraries parks museums highway usage and many more things and want to vote with my neighbors and my coworkers.

131 does not unify the communities of interest any more than 96 unifies Detroit and Grand Rapids so make sure Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids have proper representation in the United States Congress and these communities of are in separate Congressional districts.

Thank you.

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>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 83.

>> Good evening my name is Trisha.

I spent the first half of my life in Kent County and now in Ottawa County, Zeeland and both are home to me but both are very different.

I came with concerns on where some of the lines are being drawn on many of the maps essentially as it relates to Ottawa County.

Though I'm sure some areas of the state may need some adjusting I do not support Ottawa County being senselessly split up and redistricted with fair off Kalamazoo or Midland or Mackinac.

Or even Georgetown with Grand Rapids.

We all want fairness but these kinds of changes are not necessarily fair.

Ottawa Allegan and Muskegon Counties have similar economies that rely on the Lake and tourism, have interconnected manufacturing and strong agricultural ties.

These truly are communities of interest.

I very strongly oppose any maps splitting up our County and communities.

Though there is no perfect map as it relates to Ottawa County, I can support two maps being considered.

Commissioner Lange's map and map 201 named apple though it would not be right to see Grand Rapids or Kalamazoo communities divided up either.

But these two maps preserve our unique lakeshore communities of interest.

Please keep us intact.

Thank you for your consideration.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 84 and 85.

>> Welcome back to West Michigan.

I continue to participate in these discussions because I don't believe you are hearing us. Only one of the four Congressional maps dubbed the apple map keeps Ottawa County whole.

Not only does apple keep Ottawa County a County district but District 9 and apple map makes a lakeshore community of interest from Muskegon to Berrien County.

This is what a lakeshore District should look like.

The other maps divide us in three Congressional districts.

This is simply not reflective of the community and not acceptable.

Grand Haven on Lake Michigan should not be put with communities on the shores of Lake Huron they are over three hours away and port Sheldon should not be able to drive to Detroit faster than the other side of the District.

Keeping Ottawa County together fixes this problem.

In addition to being a lakeshore community Ottawa County is currently one of the fastest growing Counties in Michigan.

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It's a major agricultural hub and tourism and major manufacturing center and keeping us together is keeping the trust in redistricting process and breaking up Ottawa County hurts the legitimacy.

Thank you for Lange and her map keeps Ottawa County together and keeping a bulk of the lakeshore population together in Muskegon Ottawa and Allegan County.

We have agreement from Commissioner Witjes a democrat and Commissioner Lange a republican that Ottawa County should be kept whole and the lakeshore community is a community of interest.

This is the common sense bipartisan recognition we need please advance a map to achieve these objectives.

People are watching the process and faith of Michigan voters are on the line keep Ottawa County together and thank you for your time.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you.

85.

>> Do we have 85? If not 86 can come on up.

>> Okay 87, 88, 89 or 90.

>> If you could please let me know your number when you get up there, go ahead.

>> 87, 88, 89 or 90.

What number are you sir?

>> 88.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Go ahead.

>> Just this, okay.

Commissioners and fellow citizens, I just came here today to voice my opinion to keep Ottawa County intact also.

Some of my other fellow residents and stuff have spoken eloquently about the County. And what it's all about.

So I'm basically just here to echo what they say.

And urge that we keep it intact.

The only two maps that do so as has been mentioned is map 201 and the Rhonda Lange map.

So thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 89 or 90.

>> I'm 90.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Go ahead.

>> Good evening, Commissioners.

My name is Rebecca.

I live in Laten Allegan County I'm concerned majority of the proposed maps particularly for the State House and Senate break up my largely rural County.

To the extent that it is very unlikely that we will be able to elect representatives who know or care about our values or concerns.

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I've only lived there for just over four years I lived in rural communities most of my life from Vermont to the eastern side of Michigan to the San Joaquin valley of California and latent Township where my husband's people came over a hundred years ago.

And I have seen for people who love the communities are sub servient neither love the place they have authority.

And waning care for in contribution to the community all flow from their gradual loss of voice.

If this fragmenting of rural Counties goes forward the result will be that the interests of a whole group of people will go largely unrepresented in our Government and in our legislature.

This goes completely contrary to the spirit of a constitutional representative democracy. And today I'm asking that you preserve the representation of the rural residents of Allegan County and the State of Michigan.

Thank you for your time.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 91, 92, 93 or 94.

>> I'm 89, I'm Emily. I'm from Kalamazoo. I want to thank you for your work.

I don't envy the position that you're in.

I think you've heard a lot of people talk about the improvements that are needed in order to bring your maps more in line with fairness.

I think one of the ways you could do that is in your house map in Kalamazoo specifically you have drawn two districts sort of a north, south split.

In reality Kalamazoo could hold three districts so the southern district of Portage makes sense and you could split the City of Kalamazoo into two.

Western Kalamazoo versus eastern Kalamazoo are two very different community of interests.

Most of us live our lives in like one versus the other.

It's not a lot of cross over.

And those would give us the ability to have a representative that respected our specific interests.

So three districts for Kalamazoo, west, east and then Portage and the south.

I would also like to say I heard you talk about proportionality and the party that wince the most votes wins the seats and I heard your expert talk about it as well.

In determining that you should look at individual elections not all elections combined because it's skewing your number of dem to republican seats look at president 2020 who won by how much would they have won majority of seat in your house and Senate District, no.

If you go election by election, I think it will show the maps don't do what you think they do.

And it will show just how far right they actually lean so that would be my recommendation there.

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And thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 91, 92, 93 or 94.
Go ahead sir.

>> Good evening I'm 94 Szetela se thank you.

>> Thank you for your service.

I'm Jim.

I'm the supervising for Georgetown Township we have over 54,000 residents and all of the Township lies within Ottawa County the largest community of City or Township in the County.

As such my phone number my e-mail address is available to all of the residents I hear from them quite regularly.

And somewhat anecdotally I have not received one response or communication from one of my residents advocating the division of Ottawa County either for Congressional purposes or State Senate or State Representative.

I'm here therefore on their behalf to admonish you and encourage you to keep Ottawa County intact.

Particularly I'd like to thank Commissioners Witjes and Lange for their work in the maps that see it together at the Congressional level.

I think they are a republican and a democrat Commissioner there.

And they see the value of the lakeshore prizes and encompassing Ottawa Allegan and Muskegon together.

Maps that divide others also do not accurately reflect Ottawa County's interconnectedness.

I fully recognize that's what you face as you endeavor to do right by communities across Michigan.

The geographic representation on the Commission is not a value challenge of your choosing but can be off set hearing residents who live and work and love their neighborhoods.

Keep Ottawa County intact in particular Georgetown Township Thank you for addressing the Commission.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. For addressing the Commission 95, 96.

>> I'm 96.

Good evening any name is Dave Gordon I hail from the great City of Portage and the County of Kalamazoo.

Be prepared to write down a few numbers to help with your deliberations consider map 199 or map 226 known as Elm and Spruce.

And please consider putting away map 244.

Elm and Spruce keep Kalamazoo County whole and it's understandable to append Mattawan to make the population numbers work.

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Map 244 splits Portage and Texas Township in half and the City of Portage needs to be whole despite a Portage rivalry.

The U.S. Congressional maps it should be considered because it puts Kalamazoo Portage and Battle Creek together.

Map 230 known as birch is okay and very similar to maps 218, 219, 238 and 240 which are Juniper, Clark's and Szetela.

Map 201 apple needs to be tabled because of the challenging Kalamazoo Grand Rapids industrial corridor.

Kalamazoo has a stronger connection with Battle Creek than with Lansing or with Grand Rapids.

As far as the State House maps all six maps are similar with Kalamazoo in its own District and Portage Texas Township and Oshtemo in another District.

Maps 227 and 278 Pine and Peach need to be considered the only two with Midland Bay City corridors created.

229 known as oak can be parked.

Thank you for the fantastic work so far and thank you for the opportunity to share our comments.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 97.

>> Good evening, Commissioners.

My name is David Anderson.

I was born and raised in Grand Rapids.

I've also lived in Ottawa County.

And Walker and I'm back in Grand Rapids right now.

I would like to ask a question from everybody that's listening.

If the majority of Michigan voters voted democratic across the board, how on earth can the republicans lock the legislature? Year of year after year.

There is only two possible answers.

Accident or gerrymandering.

I urge you to do what you were empowered to do and I'm sure you took an oath to accomplish that.

You must reverse gerrymandering.

And I've listened to a lot of comments about how Counties should stay together, cities should stay together, communities should stay together.

I don't care.

If the person across the street from me is in a different District, it doesn't bother me except to the extent that my vote is diluted.

And I can't get representation in Lansing or in Washington D.C.

Now the reason I'm here is because I care about the planet.

And there is only one party right now that cares about that and gerrymandering perpetuates the power and then the primary and the primary who wins and then they are in and that is all they care about so it goes from one extreme.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Sir your 90 seconds has ended.

Thank you for commenting to the Commission.

98.

>> 99, 100 go ahead.

>> Yes, my name is Doug and I live in Kentwood which has the peculiar condition of being in the lakeshore Congressional District.

And south of east of downtown Grand Rapids now.

So I urge you in these new Congressional districts to keep both Kent County whole and keep Ottawa County whole.

Unfortunately none of the proposed maps actually do those things but it's relatively easy to do to keep all of Kent County whole and go a little bit east and a little bit south of the County and that will get a sufficient number of persons in that Congressional District.

And it's also able to keep Ottawa County whole and certainly it has legitimate common interests with parts of Muskegon County to the north and Allegan County to the south.

But none of the maps really work very well so far.

But it's certainly possible to do that.

I encourage you to do that.

Nothing against Kalamazoo, nothing against Muskegon but Kalamazoo has been previously mentioned Battle Creek and other cities there have more in common can Kalamazoo and I think it's appropriate to first try to keep all of Kent County together.

And in the City of Grand Rapids please keep most of the City together.

It's fairly easy to have a very strong and stable centered in Grand Rapids City, State Senate District.

And then three additional Districts that sort of follow the commuting and working and living and shopping and worshipping major arteries that go into Grand Rapids M37 from southeast.

Lake Michigan drive west and 196 south and east.

It's pretty easy to get four State Senate districts that respect each other's geography.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 101, 102, 103 or 104.

>> Hello I'm 102.

My name is Josh.

Thank you for being here in Grand Rapids.

I request that you adopt the apple map.

As a resident of Holland, this map keeps my community together.

As well as Ottawa County whole.

This map accurately represents what the lakeshore residents believe should be done.

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Looking at the apple map it's clear the overwhelming majority of comments on the map are positive.

Which is especially what we've heard here tonight as well. Please hear our voices.

This will determine our future for the next decade.

And 2018 the people of Michigan gave you a unique opportunity to divide this future.

I encourage you to seize this opportunity to listen to residents of this area.

Especially considering none of the Commissioners are from Ottawa County.

Our future is brightest in Ottawa County when you keep us together.

With other lakeshore communities of similar interests such as Muskegon and Allegan.

Last point I want to make is that you guys all serve an important part in not only Michigan's history but also America's.

I ask you to please put aside all of your political differences and do what is fair and right for our republic.

America is built on fair elections and letting the best ideas prevail.

And I have faith that will work again.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Do we have 101, 103 or 104?

>> Hi, I'm Gavin and thank you for being here in West Michigan.

I'd like to address my concerns for Ottawa County and the maps you've made at the Federal level.

As a resident of the Zeeland area and a student at Grand Valley I'm very familiar with the County.

I regularly spend time in both Holland and Grand Haven with friends.

And it's clear to myself and those that I've talked to about this issue that Ottawa is a Community of Interest but only the apple map reflects this.

Communities I visit in Ottawa are all very firm particular and tied together by the lakeshore agricultural manufacturing.

But most importantly our priorities and values.

Priorities and values that are very different from Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo.

I want to ask you to keep Ottawa County together.

Dividing the County will divide the lakeshore community of interest.

Ottawa has more in common with Allegan and Muskegon than it does with the metropolitan area of Grand Rapids.

And either Grand Rapids or Kalamazoo are lakeshore communities.

Please keep the lakeshore in Ottawa County together so we have a voice that represents our community in Congress.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 103 or 104.

>> Hello, I'm 104 my name is Josh.

I'm the business agent for the local 26.

Represented here.

In DeVos Place and up and down the west coast of Michigan.

I represent people who live north of Baldwin down to Benton Harbor.

From what we can see on the maps Pine are people in labor.

Two Senate seats and four Congressional seats.

Split up in this large area.

I think that's the best for our industrial and our communities.

And I think it will help us grow the best we can.

Thank you much.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 105 or 106? I'm 105.

Madam Chairman and Commissioners welcome to West Michigan.

I'm Vince, a resident of Kentwood in Kent County.

Suburb south and east of Grand Rapids.

Thank you for taking on this important work for future generations.

We all wish you success.

What will success look like? Success will be competitive elections.

In which a challenger has a reasonable chance of displacing a comfortable incumbent.

The Commission's first priority under the Constitution is to draw districts that do not conflict with Federal law.

Including the Voting Rights Act.

And that is a serious and difficult constraint to comply with.

Here is a suggestion, you may very well have considered this before but I'd like to emphasize it.

Identify those communities there are probably fewer than 20 identifiable geographic concentration of non-majority populations protected by the Voting Rights Act of Michigan.

Not all of these communities have reasonably well defined limits or boundaries.

Identify the ones that do have established boundaries that are not too vague or fuzzy and map them as best you can and draw District boundaries so the minority population in each exceeds 50% but not so far in excess of 50% that the minority population becomes an entrenched unbreakable block.

No nonminority citizen in any District should be driven to conclude his or her ballot will never make a difference.

I thank you for your attention.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 106.

>> Good evening my name is Tom.

I'm also a member of IOTSI local 26 the stagehands union.

I'm also a delegate to the Kent Ionia Central labor Council.

I wanted to say our community of interest is the entire working class in this state.

Of all nationalities, all genders and we are proud that we are able to speak to you here tonight.

We are advocating for the Pine map.

We think it's the most fair and equitable map.

We wouldn't have a problem if it wasn't for the gerrymandering in our state.

And actually it exists in many states across the U.S.

Some of the maps are quite ridiculous.

And others are pure entertainment to look at.

So we want the Pine map.

And maybe the next time we have redistricting hearings we can begin to address getting big money out of politics.

We have to put an end to the rich people controlling all the political life in our state, our City our Counties.

Thank you very much solidarity.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 107 or 108.

>> Good evening, my name is Rob.

I'm number 107.

And I'm here to speak about the U.S. Congressional redistricting.

I have some significant exceptions in terms of the apple map where we are combining two of Michigan's four largest cities in one Congressional District.

Particularly when the vibes of those two cities are so radically different.

The representative that ends up serving for this District will mostly perhaps inclined to look after one urban area versus another.

And we can see in Texas with Fort Worth versus Dallas and in Minnesota with Minneapolis and St. Paul the smaller location ends up losing in the battle for Federal dollars because they are competing against the big neighborhood for the north or west or east.

Also that minimizes the opportunity for press oversight by the media both print and internet and over the air.

Our other maps that I would like to have another look at would be the many of them that seem to combine western pardon me eastern Jackson County and go all the way out towards gross isle.

That's just a -- that is a salamander and a gerrymander and hard to cover that District and hope we can get the local elected officials to be able to have their voices heard.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 107.

>> I'm 108.

Good evening my name is Mike.

I live in the southeast corner of Allegan County.

And I'm here to advocate for keeping Allegan County whole.

I know in the Senate maps we are split up into three different districts.

Allegan County is the largest rural County here in the state for agricultural products.

And so it does not seem right for the eastern half of the County to be merged in with Grand Rapids all the way down to Battle Creek.

We have nothing in common with those two other areas as an urban center.

The other map I have concerns with is the State House maps Allegan County has now been split up into five different districts.

And our last representation most of Allegan County is whole with just another rep to the northeast corner of the County.

And so my question to you tonight is please put us back to a more two representation instead of five by splitting us up.

We are diluted.

And the other question I have is on the Congressional map.

Please keep Allegan County whole.

I know there are some maps that do that.

And there is other maps that kind of split us up.

Please keep us whole as Allegan County because Allegan and Van Buren County we have a lot in common same with Ottawa County their agricultural too with the lakeshore.

And one of the other issues Kent County really needs to stay whole too.

Because they are an urban center.

And that is what needs to be done.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Do we have 107, 109 or 110?

>> I'm speaker 109.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you.

>> I'm Richard from Grandville you are right to keep the Metro six cities together.

However there are important changes to make State House districts better reflect communities of interest and improve statewide partisan fairness.

My maps fit into the area you first designated but better but with better internal borders of districts to match Community of Interest.

Keep the southern half of Grand Rapids together as majority of people of color District.

This District is nearly 50% nonwhite and will give constituents the chance they deserve to elect a Black State Representative for the first time in nearly ten years.

Do not split up Wyoming which has 77,000 residents.

Keep Wyoming whole and include the three majority Hispanic precincts in Grand Rapids.

This District would offer a real opportunity for Hispanic representation from Kent County.

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East Grand Rapids and Kentwood should form a District on the southeast side of Metro Grand Rapids.

Including Cascade with the District ties the Ford airport and 28th Street corridor to the area.

Walker Grandville should form its own District.

These are Metro six cities that share schools commercial District and heritage.

Grand Rapids in ward two in Grand Rapids are commercial and residential communities with close ties including with similar suburban Ada and Plainfield will create a compact District on the northeast side of Metro Grand Rapids.

I've spent most of my life in this area and know it well.

My map has four swing Districts in Kent County with clear commitment of interest that meet your statewide partisan fairness and please consider my map.

>> Madam Chair, behind you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Dustin.

>> Could speaker 109 please give the plan ID on that would be on the portal to link this for me please.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: 63361.

It's the same map that that lady referenced earlier.

>> COMMISSIONER WITJES: Okay thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Okay do we have 110? 111, 112.

Go ahead sir.

>> My name is frank.

I live in East Grand Rapids in Kent County and incidentally served as United States attorney for the Western District of Michigan.

I'm concerned about the Congressional District so called apple plan for District 4 which puts Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo in the same Congressional District.

I thought that the reason for this Commission was to avoid politically gerrymandered districts that look like snakes.

This proposed District looks like a snake more than a reasonably compact box.

It seems like a tortured way to come up with 770,000 voters.

There are much more logical ways to come up with a reasonably compact District with common interests like Juniper Maple and birch plans.

Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids have never been thought of a unit having common interests and they potentially compete for services infrastructure and industry.

Grand Rapids and suburbs have a common interest and always historically have been a District with which the other three plans accomplish.

I might add I don't believe it's in the interest of Grand Rapids community to divide the City in two Senate districts.

There is certainly no need to do that to form a reasonably compact District.

Thank you.

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>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 111, 112 or 113.

>> Good evening, Brad from Southwest Michigan.

We were told a vote for the referendum was to take politics out of the redistricting. People over politicians, real representation instead of gerrymandering by a political class.

Now I feel we are being subjected to this partisan fairness that seems to me Wayne County or any population centers will dominate even rural southwestern Michigan District lines.

It's a term that implies a pure democracy rather than a republic in a form of republic Government and that's demanded by the Constitution.

As a committee you haven't been circumspect to hide your agenda and disguising it as partisan fairness.

I'm sorry you can put lipstick on a pig but it's still a pig.

Partisan fairness is gerrymandering by the minority.

Southwest Michigan has been subjected to what turns out to be a very partisan committee.

Ignorance of the area is increasingly apparent.

And I have a difficulty in complementing a Commission who admits knowing nothing about our area other than it's a good place to launch a boat.

The Commission disregard for Southwest Michigan communities our interact and school District athletic conferences, media outlets, County and Township Governments is appealing.

Seemingly disregard or disparaging attitude to comprehensive is insulting.

To create a 60 mile long but few mile wide District over multiple Counties in a vain attempt to create a District for your own party is terrible.

I encourage you to do no harm with modest changes by the census and preserve our communities and Townships of interests as they are, that should be your responsibility.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 112, 113 or 114.

>> Good evening.

I'm number 112.

My name is Bob I'm a resident of Walker and suburb of the City of Grand Rapids.

I'm concerned that this committee has not given proper public notice about this meeting or the availability of your maps.

I heard about this meeting from wood radio Justin Barkley's show.

It's a morning show and this was last week for the first time.

I have not had a chance to review any of your maps.

I do believe that the area such as Kent County should be left whole.

Thank you for your time.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 113, 114 or 115.

>> I'm 113.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Go ahead.

>> Thank you.

Thank you for allowing me to speak here today.

I grew up in the apple orchards of Sparta it's ten miles north of here.

And I recently moved to downtown Grand Rapids.

When moving to downtown Grand Rapids it never crossed my mind there was a northern Grand Rapids or a southern Grand Rapids.

There is one Grand Rapids.

It's a close community.

It's a unique community and it's a community I love living in.

There is no need to split it up into two Senate districts, I'm talking about Senate 23, 24 which currently are split into two.

Folks are talking they don't care if the person across the street has a different Senator than them.

In my case where they live, they would have a different Senator it's a community of interest you are splitting up a Community of Interest to create another one and ask you keep the City of Grand Rapids intact in the Senate District.

Regarding the Congressional maps I ask you reject apple with Grand Rapids placed with the Kalamazoo District.

Right now growing up when anybody asks me where I lived, I really, I'm going to admit I did not say I was from Sparta.

I said I was from Grand Rapids.

That is where we eat dinner and my family works and right now you have Sparta in a District with Midland.

In that map.

So I ask that you keep community whole.

You keep the suburbs of Grand Rapids with Grand Rapids.

Again by splitting up that community of interest you're just creating another one that I feel doesn't exist.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 114 or 115.

Thank you and good evening I'm 114 my name is Andy and I have the privilege of working at the Grand Rapids chamber for the last 16 years.

The most logical community of interest are those that we already designed and that is our municipalities.

I'm here to offer my comments in support for keeping both Ottawa and Kent whole when it comes to the Congressional maps.

I'm very concerned about the proposed apple map in District 4.

And 131.

I love my business friends in Kalamazoo.

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But I can tell you we are 50 minutes and a world away.

We are not communities of interest.

That should be changed.

Under that apple map if you look at District 5 you also create some issues with a District that goes from Hastings to Howell and Brighton and District 16 from Lowell to Ludington to standish which is on the other side of the Mitten so this needs a lot of work.

Grand Rapids and were used as a definition on your website of what a community of common interest should look like.

We hope you do that.

I add my voice to keeping the City of Grand Rapids whole when it comes to the State Senate.

District 24 as proposed is very concerning.

As is District 3 which goes from our airport to Plainwell then around Kalamazoo and to Battle Creek.

That needs to be fixed.

And then on the State House maps 97 District 97 covers five Counties.

That would be problematic for that State Representative.

Or and so thank you for your time, Commission.

Thank you for coming to Grand Rapids and leave a lot of your money here with our local businesses if you would.

Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 114, 115.

Do we have 116 or 117? All right what about 118, 119?

>> Good evening I'm 119.

I did want to talk about the State Senate seat.

You're going to be hearing a lot about the people wanting to keep Grand Rapids together, not separating that.

I would put my support behind that.

Please keep the City of Grand Rapids whole within one State Senate seat.

Don't dilute the representation of the people of Grand Rapids.

It doesn't make any sense.

And then the Congressional seats.

You know, please keep Kent County whole.

We don't share a lot of commonality with Kalamazoo.

Then if you go Grand Rapids down to Kalamazoo and/or up to Muskegon, you're having all those communities which are very diverse and very separate compete for Federal funds.

That needs to not happen.

So please keep Kent County whole.

Okay, and then we get down to the State House.

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And there has been separation between the Walker and the Alpine area.

Those share the same school District.

Those are neighbors.

They should be kept whole.

You've got east Grand Rapids and Forrest Hills and Cascade and Ada.

Those should stay whole and together.

We are neighbors.

I live in east.

We all work together.

We play together.

Please honor the communities and the people who live there.

Not separate them.

Many of these maps do break down school districts and communities.

Please keep them whole.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 118 or 120.

>> Good evening I'm Ken from Kalamazoo County.

First, I'd like to say we need zero partisan favorer in the maps when we are done.

I know you guys can do that.

That is what voters would like.

Second, I'd like to address the house maps with regards to Kalamazoo City.

All the maps that you have presented list Kalamazoo City as one District house seat.

East side of Kalamazoo is very diversified.

And is a working class community.

While the west side of Kalamazoo is very suburban and overwhelmingly white and affluent.

By splitting Kalamazoo City in half it will give the east side of Kalamazoo equal and fair representation from a representative that looks like the community and has the same socioeconomic background as the residents in the community they will be serving.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 121 or 122.

>> Good evening my name is Emerson I'm number 120.

As there is no West Michigan Commissioner, I petition you hear me and the voices of our community with apt attention.

Kent County in its distinct local municipal groups should be considered a unique Community of Interest distinct from the surroundings and that particularly means Kalamazoo.

I'm a lifelong resident of the majority of which has been in Byron Center.

Byron Center is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Kent County.

Many of us residents commute into the City.

The business partner with community organizations and chambers and in the immediate area and historically been represented by Kent County based legislatures.

Yet Byron Center has not been recognized as the fundamental building block of Kent County that it truly is within the majority of the proposed maps.

And, in fact, Byron Center is egregiously split in some and others entirely lumped into State Senate districts that reach to the coast.

As if we were just an afterthought.

Implementing either or failing to consider Byron Center as intrinsic to Kent County is a disservice to my Community of Interest.

This miss fortune would splinter my voice and Byron Center within the state's differing needs.

I ask to rectify the matter keeping Byron Center residents together within the unique Kent County Community of Interest.

Thank you for your time.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 121 or 122.

>> Thank you.

My name is Kelly Mitchell.

I'm 121.

And welcome to West Michigan.

As a note of reference we have no West Michigan representation on your Commission.

I'm a resident of the City of Kentwood.

I would like to state my opposition to the apple map.

That splits Kent County into two Congressional districts.

Under this plan the City of Kentwood I'm sorry Grand Rapids and the City of Kalamazoo are tied into one seat with a large portion of the Grand Rapids Metropolitan region tied into a District to the Midland County.

The cities of Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo are vastly different Community of Interest and compete economically.

Please do not divide the Metropolitan region of Grand Rapids into two Congressional districts by keeping Kent County whole within one District.

Second, I would liken courage the Commission to keep the City of Grand Rapids whole within one State Senate District.

The City has always been within one State Senate District and our state's history and dividing into two districts it jeopardizes the opportunity of diversity in the State Senate.

Grand Rapids has a large minority population and they should be allowed the opportunity to elect a minority member of the State Senate.

By diluting it between two Districts with majority white population and other suburban cities it limits the diversity of the State Senate.

Please draw the City of Grand Rapids with the neighboring communities of East Grand Rapids and Kentwood into one State Senate District.

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Thank you.

>> VICE CHAIR ROTHORN: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 122.

>> Thank you, my name is Jeanie from Battle Creek.

Historically there is a 2-1 republican statewide election swing to republicans but many of those who speak to your Commission advocate favoring the democrats based on the recent election.

As a state and over time we lean red nearly two thirds of the time in statewide elections which cannot be gerrymandered.

The effort to favor the democrats or even to balance the state 50/50 requires gerrymandering.

Which your Commission was created to end.

As a citizen of Battle Creek I would like to point out an example of this.

The District you drew on all three choices for Calhoun County in the State House map joins Albion and Battle Creek.

These are not communities of interest.

Gerrymandering was one of the reasons your Commission was supported so favorably by the citizens of Michigan.

And yet the District that you drew joining Albion and Battle Creek was used as a poster District proving that gerrymandering was a problem.

And yet you have recreated this poster District in all three of your Calhoun County maps.

We have been given no real choice.

We need another map for Calhoun and we need it not to feature the poster District for gerrymandering.

Rural Counties especially those with limited Internet District access have been shut out of this process.

Due to the lack of rural hearings and the ever changing last-minute changes in meeting dates, locations and even cities.

Please remember your actual charge.

Thank you.

>> VICE CHAIR ROTHORN: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 123, 124 or 125.

Please let me know your number.

>> Hi y'all, I'm Chris.

I'm 123.

I'm not from here but I got here as soon as I could.

My dad was an Army Colonel and in the 50 states in 41 countries and when I moved to Michigan four years ago, I was shocked that the first thing people would ask me was what school did you go to.

They did not mean Purdue.

They meant what high school did I go to.

What junior high school did I go to.

What grade school did I go to.

Unfortunately they weren't here.

But it's very important I think especially in West Michigan that State House seats should reflect school districts.

They are communities of interest.

People are just so absorbed with their school districts and there is nothing wrong with that.

People buy homes so they will be in the right school District or the one that is appropriate for their family.

And so we need the State Senate maps to follow the Kenowa which is Alpine Township in Walker, they are split now and they need to be together.

GR Township Ada and Cascade are the forest hill h school District they need to be together.

Plainfield with Rockford and the Rockford school District they need to be together.

Talking about being together, the apple map and the Congressional District Grand Rapids needs to be together.

I've been here four years and I didn't even know that Kalamazoo was within an hour.

Thank you very much.

>> VICE CHAIR ROTHORN: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 124, 125.

>> Hi I'm 124.

My name is Joey from the St. Joseph area in Berrien County.

I wanted to commend the Commission of putting the lakeshore State House map on the map.

I know it's a strange looking District but the communities there are very tightly packed to the coast.

I think if you took a road trip down there you would find if you started driving east from St. Joe or south Haven you end up in pretty rural farm country within ten minutes it's dramatic and it's between three State House and in St. Joe and Benton Harbor, we are having a lead water crisis and our State Representative has not shown their face in the City at all largely because they don't live in the area.

These lakeshore communities deserve representation that is from these places that understands the challenges we have with water, short term rentals erosion tourism.

I want to commend you for putting the District on the maps and the only suggestion I would have is Saugatuck and Douglas is a lakeshore as well and it makes it look snaky but those four would be truly representative and give us a voice in Lansing for the first time ever really so thank you.

>> VICE CHAIR ROTHORN: Thank you for addressing the Commission. .
Number 125 or 126.

>> Hello, my name is 125.
I am a student at Calvin University and I reside in the Grand Rapids area.
Along with many other Calvin University students.
Who live all around the Grand Rapids area.
I would like to explain how splitting the State Senate map at Fulton Street will cause confusion and misrepresentation among all Calvin students.
Students live both north and south of Fulton Street and I believe separating our students will cause confusion during a time of learning and developing our roles within the community.
I will also it will also misrepresent the entirety of all Calvin students residing in the Grand Rapids area.
Also the Congressional map the apple map that combines Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo is problematic for providing a good representation of each of the cities.
It will also lessen the representation of Calvin students and the citizens of both of these communities.
Thank you for your time and consideration.

>> VICE CHAIR ROTHORN: Thank you.
Number 126.

>> Hello there.
I would just I don't know much about these redistricting lines or maps or anything.
I know they are very confusing and cities usually are together and rural areas are usually together and that is easy to understand for everybody.
And so if you are splitting things up it makes things different understanding if you don't know much about the subject it makes yourself having a very difficult time.
So thank you for listening to my concerns.

>> VICE CHAIR ROTHORN: Thank you for sharing.
1 -- you were 126 sir.
So 127.

>> Hello, I'm Michael.
And I'm from Ottawa County.
And I'm here today to ask the Commission to keep my community whole.
And it's important that this Commission listens to the voices of Ottawa County because no one from the Commission is from Ottawa County.
Ottawa County is not like other communities across Holland Grand Haven Coopersville and Jamestown there is a shared set of values beliefs and economic interests that unites us.
We all consider ourselves part of the lakeshore.

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As a resident of Allendale I'm blown away that some of these maps link Allendale with Kalamazoo.

These communities have basically no shared interest.

Allendale is considered a lakeshore community surrounded by agricultural.

Kalamazoo has so much more in common with Battle Creek than it does with grand haven Holland or even Saugatuck.

I believe the best map I have seen that represents a true lakeshore community is map 201.

Also known as the apple map.

I also want to thank Commissioner Lange for listening to communities across West Michigan keeping Ottawa County together.

And in a lakeshore based District is what so many are asking for.

And I also want to touch on the subject that the Congressional level too.

That I'm concerned with the District that represents the UP that touches all the way down to Mount Pleasant.

I don't really understand commonalities between iron wood and the soaring Eagle casino.

Thank you for coming to West Michigan.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 128.

>> 129 or 130.

>> I'm 136.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: You're 136.

>> You called 140.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: 129 and 130.

>> How are you? I'm Dandre. I'm 129.

I am commenting on the redistricting.

In 2018 I was one of the people knocking many doors on the south side of Grand Rapids for gerrymandering just because I understand how that creates a lot of different political problems.

Knowing that the power structure here are mostly controlled by republicans, I just ask regardless of political affiliation that you guys make the maps more reflective of the demographics of people regardless of democrat or republican I just like to see the maps equal.

I like to see the people be able to vote for their Senators.

For their state legislatures, for the Commissions, for the Kent County Commissioners whatever level of Township or election that people usually vote for.

I just ask that you guys make it fair, make it equitable.

Make sure the people can elect people that look like them.

There is a lot of African/American people that don't know anything about this Redistricting Commission.

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Don't know that people are actually controlling how the maps will look for the next ten years.

But complaining about the power structure here in the State of Michigan.

So I ask that you guys think about the other people that don't know about these meetings regardless of ethnicity.

That you guys make it fair and equitable for everyone.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 130 or 131.

>> Good evening I'm 131 and my name is Tom and I'm a City Commissioner for Kentwood.

I literally spent 14.5 years driving down 131 working in Allegan for 14.5 years.

And worked with people from Kalamazoo and the lakeshore.

And Kalamazoo is by no means a community of interest with Grand Rapids.

So the map, the apple map does not reflect what you're targeting and it does not accomplish your goals.

That map I've worked with people in Rockford and Ada, they consider themselves part of Grand Rapids.

Where people in Kalamazoo they do not consider themselves part of the Grand Rapids area.

So the Congressional map apple I'm opposed to.

The State Senate and State House we ask you consider keeping the City of Grand Rapids as a whole.

And putting together Kentwood and East Grand Rapids in that Senate and House Districts.

We share 28th Street and 44th Street with the City of Grand Rapids.

So the decisions they make on their side of the street effects our side of the street.

If you were to drive down 28th Street there is two major malls on the corner of 28th.

And Beltline which is the highest tax revenue corner in the State of Michigan.

But we have center point mall which is on the east side which is managed by the City of Grand Rapids.

We have wood land mall on the west side which is Kentwood.

So the decisions we make and the police we send to the accident and fire we send to an accident we share those resources as a group so thank you very much.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 132.

>> I'm 132.

My name is Roy.

And I'd like to commend the Commission for coming to Grand Rapids to have a listening.

And the maps of the State House I appreciate what you've done with the community of Kent County the Grand Rapids environments.

On the State Senate my concern is keeping the City of Grand Rapids a whole District within the State Senate.

And that would as in the past that would help with the municipalities as far as infrastructure and things that need to take place within the community of interest in that.

On the Congressional, I would prefer that you use Kent County as a whole.

I've seen numerous maps where you have Kent County and the environments of suburbs surrounding that.

Keep that whole and I'd appreciate all you've done and thank you for your service.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 133.

>> Good evening my name is Cleo, Jackson, the president of the Greater Grand Rapids Branch of NAACP and a member since I was a youth.

And leadership here.

On behalf of the greater Grand Rapids NAACP and members of the greater Grand Rapids community I would like to emphasize adhering to the state of redistricting principles as well as suggestions to expanding the Commission's guidelines.

We thank you for doing your best by keeping minority communities intact in West Michigan.

As an organization we understand that the City of Grand Rapids should be separated by north and south via Fulton Street to keep communities represented.

Additionally we believe that in order to have a strong minority Congressional District in West Michigan the City of Grand Rapids should be tied to the City of Kalamazoo and so that's why we are supportive of the apple Congressional map.

Additionally redistricting principles should include a clear definition of favoring or disfavoring incumbents and candidates and how partisan advantage will be specifically diminished.

And we ask it for be publicly available to racially polarized analysis population and studies et cetera.

So we appreciate this opportunity to provide public comment.

And we will reiterate this request with follow-up in writing and comments and reports.

And again thank you for this opportunity.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Sir if you could stay at the microphone for one minute, we have a Commissioner who has a question for you.

>> VICE CHAIR ROTHORN: You said Fulton and I have heard wealthy are you against that?

>> I don't have a comment on that at this time.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 134.

>> Hi, my name is Sherri and I will be short because most people said what I have to say.

I came to awareness of this meeting just a short while ago so I only have one map in front of me and that is this apple map.

And when I looked at it, I was kind of shocked.

And it was clear to me what your motive is.

And it's obviously more clear that there is no one from this side of western Michigan on this Commission.

What your motive is.

Obviously, you're trying to fix what you call gerrymandering with more gerrymandering. It can't be any clearer.

I would like everyone to know that I happen to live exactly at a point where Grand Rapids or Ada Cascade Townships and Lowell Townships all come together in the corner and I'm right there.

I have a Lowell phone.

I have Ada address but I vote in Cascade.

We are in the forest hill school District.

All this area, all these schools they all play together.

They all pay sports together.

We all see each other.

I have family that lives in Rockford.

I have people and friends that are in Lowell.

We spend a lot of time in Lowell.

And you are splitting all this up this is true not just in Grand Rapids but other areas.

And so to me I'd like to say it's pretty clear what you're trying to do.

And we are on to it.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 135.

>> I'm number 135 my name is Carla.

I'm a real estate agent I lived in Michigan all my life.

Most of it about 50 years in Ottawa County the last ten in Kent County.

I don't even know what to say.

I'm so disappointed in all of the maps as the lady prior to me said.

This is just more gerrymandering to end gerrymandering.

I thought your job was to take the census data and keep and sort out a population.

Keep municipalities whole.

Try to keep lines as straight as possible.

There is no way that you can figure into every one's communities of interest if there is ten million people in Michigan you will have ten million communities of interest.

Keep the lines as straight as possible.

Keep the districts together.

Specifically the apple map just blows my mind.

I live in Rockford.

I don't think I've ever been to Midland.

I don't want to be a part of that area.

I consider myself just north of Grand Rapids.

I go to Grand Rapids all the time.

Don't do much up north further than that.

Also Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo in the same District, I don't even see the feasibility of that at all.

I don't know what you're thinking with that.

These maps need to be redone.

You're not here to dictate where people -- it's like people will live where they want to live.

They choose to live around a school District or on a Lake front or they choose to live on the east or the west or the northern part of Michigan.

You can't draw lines to suit where these people choose to live.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 136.

>> I was at the TCF Wednesday evening.

In the meantime I did more research and my astonishment, I ran into something with the Commission.

The Commission is made up four republicans, four democrats and two of the self-identified Ms. Szetela and Mr. Eid their political actives align with the democratic party candidates and the democratic party policies.

So I respectfully ask the Commission to fix this first.

And then to put a better fitting process in place because self-identification doesn't work.

Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Commissioner Kellom?

>> CHAIR KELLOM: This is Commissioner Kellom I would just like to make a friendly reminder that we welcome all comments.

But please be aware that you should be addressing the entire Commission.

And not any individuals.

Thank you so much and we welcome to hear from the rest of you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you Commissioner Kellom.

137.

>> Good evening I'm number 137.

My name is Ivan.

I was born and raised in Grand Rapids.

I've lived in the rose village park neighborhood.

Wyoming and I was born in the Birmingham neighborhood.

My vibes I think you are interested in specifics so I want to draw your attention to a little more particular streets and lines.

I'm currently going to GVSU studying political science and following the work of the committee since it began.

If you pay attention to the Kent County reapportionment plan of 2021 it does a very good job of keeping the Hispanic and Latino of Grand Rapids together.

I went to Godfrey public schools and not sure you heard but before Rona happened the roof of the school actually collapsed.

And a big reason for that is because we can't get adequate representation.

North of 28th is much different than south of 28th Street.

It's much more Latino, much more low income.

So keeping that community with the Roseville park again major Hispanic together with the Birmingham neighborhood makes sense for the State Senate and house and all of that.

Lastly, I thank you guys for all of your work.

It's not easy dealing with some of these comments and I'm sure you guys will do a great job by the time you actually end the map drawing process thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 138.

>> I'm 138 I'm Bill from Calhoun County.

Just looking at the map today is my first opportunity.

And I have great sorrow in looking at this.

It's pathetic.

You have Calhoun County divided up with three different representatives and six different Counties.

I mean they chopped this up like liver.

I look at the Senate map and that's just about as bad.

You have taken two thirds of Calhoun County and you have joined it with three other Counties.

I mean how can you do this? How can anyone get representation and know where their representatives are even from? You know I personally doubt as to the outcome of this meeting I believe it's to be no more than a window dressing to a bad job of gerrymandering and the people of Michigan will have to pay the price.

I hope we can do better.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 139.

>> Good evening and welcome to western Michigan.

139.

I am master sergeant Thomas Sharon retired Michigan international guard.

I would like to speak for the military and the Veterans in the Battle Creek area.

Augusta and Battle Creek in 1917 gave the war department land for the fort Custard camp and out of that camp came fort Custard, WK Kellogg airport which homes the one-tenth air wing.

The fort Custard cemetery.

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The veteran affairs hospital.

And in addition to this, Kellogg sanitarium was sold to the war department during World War II is now the Department of Defense logistics center.

We have a strong military base, roots in Battle Creek. And we would like to say that Battle Creek and, yeah, Kalamazoo stay separate from each other.

Because we are two distinct communities.

And we would like to see that Battle Creek continue in its support for the military and for the Veterans and thank you for your time.

And God bless you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 140.

>> Good evening, Commissioners my name is Sonya Patrick and today I want to discuss the proposed Senate map.

There is the cherry Elm and Spruce maps and doesn't matter which one because they are identical for Calhoun County.

The Senate maps give 23 districts to democrats and 15 districts to republican.

This confuses me as to why people continue suggesting these maps favor republicans.

In District 3 you took the left half of Calhoun County and sent it up to Kent County.

This would be the new District 3.

It takes a small sliver of Kalamazoo County and a backwards staircase into Allegan County and we don't belong in a Senate District map that covers five Counties.

Calhoun County has a population of 134,000 people.

There is no reason to break up our County for a Senate District.

Kalamazoo County has a population for an entire Senate District.

In itself.

And a different Senate District you could put Calhoun with Branch Hillsdale or Barry County and you would get your population.

Do not put us with the City of Kalamazoo.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 141.

>> Hello Commission, my name is Fred and I thank you for this opportunity to present my point of view.

I am talking particularly today about the cherry map District 24.

Map 24 includes with Kent County several Townships from Ottawa County.

These Ottawa Townships are rural.

Kent County is suburban and urban.

They should not be included together in a single District.

And I think the people from Ottawa County that I heard tonight would agree with that.

If the goal is to draw fair districts within the respected and respect local boundaries, we can move District 24 to the east a little bit and then further south.

The southern border of District 1024 should be at the Wealthy street because Wealthy Street represents the southern boundary of one of the wards in the City of Grand Rapids.

Which is a community into itself.

I also think that they should in District 24 they should include Cascade Township because that is more a suburb of Grand Rapids than a southern rural community. It also should be the airport.

And I thank you for being here and listening to us.

And remember that the idea is to draw districts so that no party has a built in political advantage.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 142.

>> Thank you, good evening.

My name is Amy and I live in Kent County I've lived in western Michigan all my life. And I appreciate all the comments here.

And one thing I think resonates through everyone is the spirit of the community.

And I was sad to hear that this side of the state is not represented in your board.

Which is exactly what we are all trying to accomplish here as far as appropriately aligning these districts.

The only thing that is the common thread among everyone's comments is the sense of community.

I choose to live in the County and place that I do because that is where I have grown up and/or associate with as well as other people who choose to live in the communities that they do.

One thing that I think we are falling back to history can repeat itself and sometimes that's not a good thing.

And what I feel we're all hearing lately is a separate but equal doctrine.

That doctrine was overruled with our 14th amendment.

Equal does not always mean fair representation.

By equalizing and watering down the lines will not have representation that will ultimately produce a result.

We will just have a lot of equal votes.

What we do is have representation based on who we are and the communities in which we live.

So the comments I hear in regard to keeping those communities intact makes the most sense.

So that a true voice can be heard from that District, thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 143.

>> Thank you, Commission.

143.

Ron Jacobson.

I live in Cannon Township of Rockford.

I guess the words I would use tonight would be disappointed.

I spent my lifetime in sales.

And I've been to different committee national sales meetings and so forth and there was lots of clear visuals.

And we sold educational materials.

And it had to be clear to our students and so forth.

I asked for help looking at the computers and to see the maps.

And I asked for I'd like to see what the maps are presently.

And what they're proposed going to be.

Not available.

I was looking for around the walls to see some large posters with big visuals of the maps of what they are and what they are proposed to be.

Not here.

I was just flabbergasted.

As I have not had a chance to spend time studying the maps, I just heard about the meeting this morning, so I'm kind of disappointed that I did not -- this did not have more publicity as evidenced maybe by the empty chairs.

I wish there was more people here because this is very important.

I guess the last word would be in terms of the word would be division.

It seems like although your agenda was to be to end gerrymandering, it seems like what you have done is put gerrymandering on steroids.

Because this, the maps that I've heard about.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Sir your time has expired.

144.

>> Madam Chair.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Yes.

>> If that individual would like to stick around, we can get you the maps outside on the computer and show you how you can view them.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Yes, there is terminals right outside the door where they can assist you.

>> 144.

>> Meredith Kennedy.

Promote the vote maps are what I'm referencing today.

Why you do this good work of redistricting we ask you to recognize you are on indigenous land and a guest on our land as a guest on our lands it's important to uphold our values our values include teachings of love truth honesty and respect and comes a

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task of providing equity and fairness to the peoples of the land you occupy and within our communities.

Do not look at us here today as support of your illegal P occur pendency on our land but acknowledgment your drafted maps are not living up to our values you have silenced the voices of our relatives in the UP removing the only public hearing.

You are not valuing our Brown and Black relations kidnapped from the lands and not equal by the drafts and denied their full voice in Washington and Lansing by illegal gerrymandering.

It's important to us and our Black and Brown relations because we have social and economic justice that don't receive attention that they deserve.

My indigenous relatives from other tribal nations are here with me today.

Please remember you did not come to us.

We have come to you.

And you have a treaty responsibility to include us.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 145.

>> We have speakers 115, 116 and 117 as approved up front.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: 115, go ahead.

>> While your do this good work, we ask you recognize the indigenous populations of Michigan as a community of interest.

Per the C.D.C. there are approximately 80,000 tribal peoples in our state.

This is a gross under count.

As it does not include those who have been disenfranchised due to broken treaties and forced assimilation and includes Indian health service clinic run by the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi the health and human services department holds the responsibility of providing and coordinating access to quality culturally based health and social services to promote over all well-being for federally recognized American Indians Alaskan natives and descendants living in the Grand Rapids area.

This map holds our values and is more fair and equitable than the one, the MICRC has proposed.

And I request that it be used instead.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 116.

>> Howard City.

While you do this good work, we ask that you recognize the indigenous populations of Michigan as a community of interest.

Per C.D.C. there are approximately 80,000 tribal peoples in our state, this is a gross under count.

And it does not include those who have been disenfranchised due to broken treaties and forced assimilation practices.

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This map includes Indian health services, clinics ran by Nottawaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi. The NHBP health and human services department holds the responsibility of providing and coordinating access quality culturally based health and social services to promote over all well-being for federally recognized American Indians Alaskan natives and descendants living in the Grand Rapids area.

This map holds our values and is much more fair and equitable than the one that the MICRC has proposed and I request it be used instead.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 117.

>> Howard City.

Hello, my name is Jay green and I'm 14 years old and I'm from Howard City, Michigan. In our culture we value the voices of our youth.

I am a future voter.

Why you do this good work we ask you to recognize the indigenous populations of Michigan.

As a community of interest.

Per the C.D.C. there are approximately 80,000 tribal peoples in our state.

This is a gross under count as it does not include those who have been disenfranchised due to broken treaties and forced to assimilation practices.

This map includes the Indian health services clinic run by the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi.

The NHBP health and human services department holds the responsibility of providing and coordinating access to quality culturally based health and social services to promote over all well-being for federally recognized American Indians Alaskan natives and descendants living in the Grand Rapids area.

This map is much more fair and equitable than the one the MICRC has proposed.

And I request that it be used instead.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. I believe we are at 146 or 5.

>> 145, my name is Carla.

I'm a member of the Little Traverse Bay Band of Indians and born and raised in Grand Rapids.

While you do this good work, we ask you to recognize indigenous populations of Michigan as a community of interest.

Per the C.D.C. there are approximately 80,000 peoples in our state.

This is a gross under count as it does not include those who have been disenfranchised due to broken treaties and forced assimilation practices.

This map encompass the sovereign nations of the Little Traverse Bay of Indians and Grand Traverse of Chippewa and Ottawa Indians.

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Delineated reservation boundaries this map includes vital services for tribal communities including housing complexes, community centers and also Indian health services clinics.

These clinics oversee the well-being of our people with a variety of services including mental health, vision, primary doctor care maternal health and many more.

It is important to site these places as we receive basic needs, services within these areas and typically have to live within these areas to receive the services.

This map holds our values and is much more fair and equitable than the one that the MICRC has proposed and I request that it be used instead.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. It's my understanding 99 is now present as well.

>> Yes, my name is Ron.

I'm a Vietnam veteran, 58,000 of my buddies died in Vietnam so we could have a fair and balanced America.

Each of our votes counted in the way that they are intended.

My concern is specifically looking at combining Grand Rapids with Kalamazoo makes it a D plus 5 area statistically.

That's not fair in balance and I ask the Commission to correct that.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 146.

>> Buster from Grand Rapids Michigan while you do this good work, we ask you to recognize the indigenous populations of Michigan as a community of interest per the C.D.C. there are approximately 80,000 tribal people in our state.

This is a gross under count as it does not include those who have been disenfranchised to broken treaties and forced assimilation practices.

This map is centered around one of the very few places where indigenous community members the estimate of 50,000 in the Metro area from all tribal nations can receive services in the Detroit area.

The American Indian health and family services is a nonprofit health center whose mission is to empower and enhance the physical spiritual and emotional and mental well-being of American Indian Alaskan native individuals.

Families and other underserved populations in Southeast Michigan who culturally grounded health and family services.

This map is holds our values as much more fair and equitable than the one that the MICRC has proposed.

And I request it be used instead.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 147.

>> Hi, my name is Casey.

I was born and raised on the northwest side of Grand Rapids.

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While you do this good work, we ask you to recognize the indigenous populations of Michigan as a community of interest.

Per the C.D.C. there are approximately 80,000 tribal peoples in our state.

This is a gross under count as it does not include those who have been disenfranchised to broken treaties and forced assimilation practices.

This map is centered around one of the very few places where indigenous community members, the estimate of 50,000 in the Metro area from all tribal nations can receive services in the Detroit area.

The American Indian health and family services is a nonprofit health center whose mission is to empower and enhance the physical, spiritual, emotional and mental well-being of American Indian Alaska native individuals.

Families and other underserved populations in Southeast Michigan culturally grounded health and family services.

This map holds our values and is much more fair and equitable than the other one the MICRC has proposed.

And I request that it be used instead.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 148.

>> Hi, I'm Tinia from Grand Rapids Michigan.

While you do this good work, we ask you to recognize the indigenous populations of Michigan as a community of interest.

Per the C.D.C.

There are approximately 80,000 tribal peoples in our state.

This is a gross under count as it does not include those who have been disenfranchised due to broken treaties and forced assimilation practice.

This map encompass the sovereign nations of Little Traverse Bay bands and Ottawa Indians, Grand Traverse of Chippewa and Ottawa Indians delineated reservations boundaries.

This map includes vital services for tribal communities including housing complex community centers and also the Indian health services clinics.

These clinics oversee the well-being of our peoples.

With a variety of services including mental health, vision, primary care, maternal health and many more.

It is important to site these places.

As we receive basic needs services within these areas and typically have to live within these areas to receive them.

This map is holds our values in much more fair and equitable than one more than the MICRC has proposed and I request that it is to be used instead.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 149.

>> I am a member of the Sioux St. Marie Chippewa Indians and want to speak about the Congressional map one.

While you do this good work, we ask you see us as a community of interest.

Per C.D.C. there are 80,000 tribal members in the state and do not include disenfranchised due to assimilation and it has the sovereign nations of the Travis Indians and Chippewa Indians and the Odawa Indians the reservation boundaries.

This map includes vital services for tribal communities including housing, complexes community centers and also the Indian health services clinics.

These clinics oversee the well-being of our people with a variety of services including mental health, vision, primary doctor care, maternal health and any other that is important.

To site these places it is important to site these places as we receive basic needs services within these areas and typically have to live within these areas to receive these services.

This map holds our values and is much more fair and equitable than the one the MICRC has proposed and I request it be used.

And one common thing I noticed together not one person on either side have spoke for indigenous people and I want to remind every one of you Commissioners you are on our land and it's not negotiable we did not ask you to come here and it's time we get a voice in your system.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 150.

>> Hello, my name is David Moore.

I'm swan creek.

I am one of the original descendants of the treaty signers here in the State of Michigan. While you're doing this good work to recognize the indigenous populations, in this community, but per the C.D.C. you say that there is only 80,000 of us tribal members here.

But you failed to recognize me.

You guys are removed our Federal recognition so I'm no longer included in your count.

This map includes Indian health services run by the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi, the HNBP health and human service department holds the responsibility of providing and coordinating access to the quality based health and social services promoted over all well-being for federally recognized American Indians Native Americans and descendants, that's me.

Living in the Grand Rapids area.

This map is much more equitable than the MICRC has proposed.

And I request that it be used instead.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 151.

>> Thank you, Commission, and welcome to West Michigan my name is Paul.

I'm from the City of Grand Rapids.

And I'm here speaking for myself and three other voting members in my household.

In keeping the intent and principles of establishing proper voting districts, we encourage you to keep Kent County whole.

For the Congressional District and to adhere to proper boundaries and communities of interest as many people have spoken very well about tonight.

And establishing the State House and Senate districts.

The urban and rural areas of West Michigan deserve to have their votes represent their values.

And not be diluted by being blended with nonaligned regions.

I can ask you reconsider the maps that are currently being proposed under those circumstances.

Thank you and have a good evening.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 152.

>> My name is Daniel.

I live in Grand Rapids.

While you do this good work, we ask you to recognize the indigenous population of Michigan as a community interest per the C.D.C. there are approximately 80,000 tribal peoples in our state.

This is a gross under count as it does not include those who have been disenfranchised due to broke treaties and forced as assimilation practice.

This map includes the Indian health services clinic run by the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi, the NHBP health and services department holds the responsibility of proving and coordinating access to quality.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: You're doing great keep going.

>> Based health and services to promote over all well-being for Federal recognized American Indians, Alaskan natives and.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Keep going.

>> Descendants.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Nerve wracking to speak in front of so many people but you are doing great.

>> In Grand Rapids area.

This map is -- holds our value much more fair and equitable than the one the MICRC has proposed and I request that it be used instead.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 153.

>> My name Elizabeth I'm from Grand Rapids.

While you do this good work, we ask you to recognize the indigenous populations of Michigan as a community of interest.

Per the C.D.C. there are approximately 80,000 tribal peoples in our state.

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This is a gross under count as it does not include those who have been disenfranchised due to the broken treaties and forced assimilation practices.

This map includes the Indian health service clinic run by the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi, NHBP health and human service department holds responsibility of providing and coordinating access to quality culturally based health and social services to promote over all well-being for federally recognized American Indians, Alaskan natives and descendants living in Grand Rapids area.

This map is holes our values and much more fair equitable than the one the MICRC has proposed.

And I request that it be used instead.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Were you 154? Or 153? 153 okay thank you just to let the people online know we have 171 people signed up to speak online today.

Or to speak in person.

We are going to continue through that list and probably take about a ten minute break so everybody can get up and stretch then we will move to remote comment so I'm guessing it will be another 20 or 30 minutes before we move to remote comments 154.

>> I'm McCalia, I'm Navajo and grown up in Grand Rapids all my life.

While you do this good work, we ask you to recognize the indigenous population as a community of interest.

Per the C.D.C. there are approximately 80,000 tribal people in our state.

This is a gross under count and does not include those disenfranchised due to broken treaties and forced assimilation practices and includes the Indian health services clinic run by the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi.

NHBP health and human services department holds the responsibility of providing and coordinating access to quality culturally based health and social services to promote over all well-being for federally recognized American Indians Alaskan natives and descendants living in the Grand Rapids area.

This map holds our values and is much more fair and equitable than the one the MICRC has proposed and I request that it be used instead thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 155.

>> I'm a tribal member of the Navajo nation and Laguna and I lived in Grand Rapids since I was adopted.

While you do your good work, we ask you to recognize the indigenous people of Michigan as a community of interest. Per the C.D.C. there are approximately 80,000 tribal peoples in our state.

This is a gross under count as it does not include those who have been disenfranchised due to the broken treaties and forced assimilation practices this map includes Indian health service run by the Huron band of Potawatomi, the health and human services

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holds responsibilities providing and coordinating access to quality cultural based and social service to promote the wellbeing for federally recognized American Indian Alaskan natives and descendants living in the Grand Rapids area.

This map holds our values and is much more fair and equitable than the one the MICRC has proposed and I ask that it be used instead.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 156.

>> I'm swan Lewis and I'm from Grand Rapids Michigan.

I'm a member of the little river band of Indians.

While you do this good work, we ask you to recognize the indigenous populations of Michigan as a community of interest.

Per the C.D.C. there are approximately 80,000 tribal peoples in our state, that is a gross under count as it does not include those who have been disenfranchised for broken E treaties and assimilation practices.

This is a place where indigenous community members the estimate of 50,000 in the Metro area from all tribal nations can receive services in the Detroit area.

The American Indian and family services is a nonprofit health center whose mission is to empower and enhance the physical spiritual and well-being of American Indian Alaskan native individuals.

Families and other underserved populations Southeast Michigan through culturally grounded family services and this ma'am holds values and is fair and equitable than the one the MICRC has proposed and I request that it be used instead.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 157.

>> I came here to represent the little river band of Ottawa Indians Monday the other tribes here in Northern Michigan.

We ask that you recognize the indigenous populations of Michigan as a community of interest.

Per the C.D.C. there are approximately 80,000 tribal peoples in our state.

This is a gross under count as it does not include those who have been disenfranchised due to broken treaties and forced assimilation practices.

This map encompass the sovereign nations of Little Traverse Bay Indians and Grand Traverse of Chippewa Indians delineating reservation boundaries.

Including housing complex and health clinics and oversee the well-being of our peoples with variety of services including mental health, vision, doctor care, maternal health and many more.

It's important to site these places as we receive basic needs services within these areas and typically have to live within these areas to receive the services.

This map holds our values and is much more fair and equitable than the one the MICRC has proposed and I request that it be used instead.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 158.

>> My name is Nicole from Grand Traverse in Traverse City Michigan I'm also a resident here in Grand Rapids.

As I kind of had a split growing up.

I'm a Grand Valley State University alumni and a United States Army combat veteran.

And I am here representing indigenous people of Michigan.

So while you do this good work, we ask you recognize the indigenous population of Michigan as a community of interest.

Per the C.D.C. there are approximately 80,000 tribal peoples in our state.

This is a gross under count as it does not include those who have been disenfranchised due to broken treaties and forced assimilation practices.

This map encompass the sovereign of Grand Traverse Bay Indians and Ottawa and Chippewa Indians reservation boundaries.

This map includes vital services for communities including housing complexes, community centers and also the Indian health services and clinics.

These clinics oversee the well-being of our peoples with a variety of services including mental health, vision, primary doctor care, maternal health and many more.

It's important to site these places as we all receive basic needs services within these areas and typically have to live within these areas to receive the services.

This map holds values holds our value and is much more fair and equitable than the one the MICRC has proposed and I request that it be used instead.

And again we would like to reiterate again to American citizens that you are all still our guests here and thank you for your time.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 159.

>> I'm 159 my name is Shirley and I'm from the Grand Traverse band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians in Michigan.

And I am bear with me, I did not bring my glasses.

While you do the groundwork as we ask you to recognize the indigenous population of Michigan as a community of interest.

Per C.D.C. there are approximately 80,000 tribal peoples in our state.

This is a gross under count as it does not include those who have been disenfranchisement and forced assimilation practices.

The Page this map includes the Indian services clinic run by Huron band of Potawatomi, the NHBP health and human services department holds the responsibility of providing and coordinating access to quality culture based health and social services to promote our well-being for federally recognized American Indians Alaskan natives and descendants, living in the Grand Rapids area.

This map holds our values and much more fair and equitable than one of the MICRC was proposed and request that has been used instead.

Thank you for your time.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 160.

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>> Hi, my name is Kaylee, part of the Afro indigenous and part of the tribe. While you do good work, we ask you recognize indigenous populations of Michigan as a community of interest.

Per the C.D.C. there are approximately 80,000 tribal peoples in our state.

This is a gross under count as it does not include those who have been disenfranchised due to broken treaties and forced assimilation practices.

This map encompass the sovereign nations of Little Traverse Bay of Ottawa Indian and grand Chippewa and Ottawa delineated reservation boundaries.

This map includes vital services for our tribal communities including housing complex community centers and the Indian health service clinic and over see our people with a variety of services including mental health vision primary doctor care maternal health and many more.

It's important to site these places as we receive basic need services within these areas and typically have to live within these areas to receive the services.

This map holds our values and is much more fair and equitable the one the MICRC hazard proposed and I ask this be used instead.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 161.

>> Hello, my name is Anna and I live in Plainfield Township of Kent County.

And to be honest I was pretty shocked when I saw the proposed Congressional districts of the apple map.

What I saw was four small slices off of four Counties that were cobbled and stitched together to make one District.

And then two Metro areas were tied together that are located a full hour apart.

And I struggled to interpret that as anything other than gerrymandering.

When I look at this, I see no whole County being representative.

I see a skinny strip stretch an hour's drive to add a second Metro area to the first one.

And as I said I don't know how to interpret that as anything other than trying to tie enough democrat voters together to squeeze a democrat when out of what is conservative mostly conservative West Michigan.

I don't understand how that could be considered fair representation.

I don't understand how that is respecting communities of interest.

And reasonable shapes.

My parents live 12 minutes away from me and under this plan we won't be represented together, they will be represented with voters from Schoolcraft Michigan and hour and 15 minutes south and two Counties away.

I feel strongly in order to be faithful for the vision of prop two that was sold to the voters whole Counties should be represented in districts to the greatest extent that is possible.

And when it comes to the state legislative districts whole Metro areas should be wrapped together whenever possible we need to respect communities and municipal lines and not slice and dice areas to create any type of advantage thank you.

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>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 162.

>> All right, good evening, Commissioners, I had a map I wanted to show.

But if it's not possible it's okay.

Pine map 227.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Can we pull up Pine for him, please.

>> There we go.

And so my name is mark Paine and what I want to bring your attention to is the northern part of District 8.

And it's cut along 14 mile and north Campbell.

As you go down Detroit area, we are starting to cut alongside streets Wildemere and Lawton and I ask that the Commission take a look at that.

Also when you deal with VRA districts it's okay to give yourself a little bit of leeway that way if you do have to adjust for partisan ship you won't District the VRA districts that you have drawn.

Also since we don't have a...the Commission decided they don't want to go through a debriefing is it possible that the staff Secretary of State can compile something similar to what Dr. Moon came up with.

Just because I know it's a lot of information and I know it's a lot going on.

And these comments are too critical just to blow by and act like it's nothing.

Not saying you are doing it but maybe compile it through you know the secretary of state or your staff.

So that is it.

That is all I have to say.

So you can go down there if you go and Zoom in and it's cut along the northern part, in fact, a lot of the Detroit districts is cut on main roads like Puritan Grand River but not only in that area, the Dexter area. I spoke about it yesterday. And it's cut there and Lawton. And if I'm right here right across the street that person has a different representative.

It makes it hard to organize, hard to talk about the districts and overall confusing for the people.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 163.

>> I'm number 163 my name is Diane and of Newaygo and a lifelong resident of Michigan and business owner in Newaygo County.

I'm here to make a statement in regards to supporting Newaygo and Muskegon Counties being considered as communities of interest.

Because of their occupational likeness and the impact that the natural landscape and industries have on the economies are both of these Counties.

Muskegon and Newaygo share a rich history of manufacturing agra business that continue to be significant economic drivers for this region.

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Newaygo Muskegon Counties were built on hardworking values and continue to grow economically.

With many businesses utilizing skilled trades and manufacturing.

Both Counties are home to manufacturers like Magna mirrors progressive, Adac automotive, close quality foods and many more.

These businesses contribute to much of the County's employment and economic status and employ a large portion of the County's workforce.

In addition to manufacturing business the natural landscape of our soils wealth of rivers lakes and streams create an agra business region that is unmatched.

There are hundreds of family owned farms and orchards across Muskegon and Newaygo Counties along with some of the most famous commercial farms and food processors Gerber is the top employer of Newaygo County attracting talent to the area.

This is continued to thrive with many partnerships with local family farms in Muskegon and Newaygo Counties I'm asking for you to consider please maintain these interests for these Counties so the residents of these Counties are properly represented in Michigan legislature.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 164.

>> Good evening my name is Sarah Hampton I'm from Grand Rapids ward three.

I want to share the appreciation for State House District 78 on the southeast side of Grand Rapids.

According to the census data the District is a people of color, majority District which we believe is critical for ensuring our community's interests are represented in Lansing.

You, the MICRC, is tasked with redefining voting boundaries using the 7 ranked criteria in Michigan's Constitution.

So I Sarah Hampton charge you to do the same.

For the Congressional District maps I think the apple map is the best option.

Put it together the cities of Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo and increases the diversity of District 4 and the influence of these two historic cities and they will have grace influence in Washington D.C.

This will also give people of color a chance to elect the candidate of our choice.

It keeps the cities together.

So their issues and needs can be voiced at the Federal level, not only be voiced but be addressed.

In conclusion I want to thank you for your service to the important process.

I commend your commitment to increasing community power.

By keeping communities of interest intact and citizens involved.

Fair representation.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Your 90 seconds has elapsed.

165.

>> Hello thanks for the opportunity to provide feedback for the on the proposed maps. My name is Kent Vanderwood. I've been a Kent County resident for 65 of my 68 years. I currently live in Wyoming where I serve on the City Council.

Proposal two which was Voters Not Politicians made some promises one is that the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission would focus on keeping our communities together and not split portions of our state apart for political purposes. These were referred to as communities of interest.

We believed you.

We passed proposal two.

All summer long residents of this state provided comment and were encouraged to talk about communities of interest.

However now the final maps are being decided this principle is clearly not in place.

The maps I'm looking at for at least as gerrymandered as they were in past.

We are seeing certain communities divided up solely to pack voters of one party.

This is wrong and not what we were promised.

For example, let's talk about the Congressional mapping for West Michigan.

I implore you to keep Kent County whole.

The apple plan is bad for Kent County.

Don't put Grand Rapids with Muskegon or even worse Kalamazoo.

The voters for politicians chose to rank communities of interest higher than partisan fairness.

But this didn't happen, Kent County Grand Rapids does not have much in common with Kalamazoo.

Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo should each be anchor points for their own districts.

Please honor communities of interest.

The maps.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 166.

>> You're welcome.

>> My name is Keith from Holland Michigan.

I'd like to begin thanking the Commission for the countless hours you have invested in what must feel like a game of Rubik's cube and you turned a green for a Jean and have a red District pop up next, door.

Ottawa County has a lot of those.

Our lakeshore community is unique with its erosion issues, summer rental and vacation home communities and the tourism industry.

These are issues that are unique and have no commonality with Kalamazoo and certainly not with Midland.

Our agricultural is unique with the need for immigrant workers and our weather and vast blueberry farms and Dutch and Hispanic are part of the fabric and shouldn't be divided.

Ottawa County belongs as part of a lakeshore District that is accomplished in apple Congressional nine and I encourage the Commission to adopt that map.

I'd also appreciate the work that Commissioner Lange did to present a map that shows a lakeshore and agricultural District.

If tweaks are necessary this map shows a good potential for West Michigan.

I believe it's map number 243.

Thank you for your time and for your consideration and for coming to West Michigan to listen to our concerns.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 167.

>> Do we have 167? 167.

>> Hello, my name is Thomas from Ottawa County.

I was to the understanding that this Commission was put here to do a better job than the democrats or republicans.

From the maps I've seen, you have failed miserably.

I noticed there is not a single representative here from West Michigan.

So you don't really understand West Michigan.

Also note even though I'm not from the UP there is not a single representative from the UP on this Commission.

How can you draw maps when nobody has a clue what is going on in these communities? I say you have dropped the ball.

Please pick it back up and do a better job.

Especially to West Michigan that I think you guys really do not understand.

But you could.

It's a good community that needs to be representative and respected.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 168.

>> You were 168, 169.

>> Hi, I'm 169 my name is Sarah and I live in Grand Rapids.

And I have for the past five years.

But I'm originally from Holland and so I grew up in Ottawa County and Allegan County.

This is what has given me an understanding of what makes Ottawa County different from Kent County where I now live which is what I will use to frame my comments.

I'd like to first voice my support for part of the apple 201 map the map which creates a Congressional District joining Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids.

These are two communities of interest.

It makes sense to group them together because of their similar sizes.

And community groups.

Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo have similar needs in regards to housing, healthcare, the environment and education.

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I'll echo the lead ship of the Grand Rapids NAACP grouping them together would help ensure the community and needs are recognized and addressed at a Federal level. Other maps join Grand Rapids with Ionia or Ottawa County which are both more rural. And therefore do not have the same level of similarities.

I'd also like to speak to the same issue in regards to the State Senate map cherry 220. There are a handful of Ottawa County Townships included in the Grand Rapids Metro area.

Again it would be to everyone's benefit if the boundary line instead separates them creating Districts with more similar communities so that a majority's needs can be addressed and partisan fairness ensured.

Thanks for all of your work and for your reception of our comments today.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 170.

>> I'm 170 my name is Mary and I live in the Wyoming Grandville public school District and I own a small business that is located in Grand Rapids Township. And also in Ottawa County.

Thank you for spending your Friday night with us to receive feedback on the proposed redistricting plans.

For me partisan redistricting efforts to manipulate elections has been a concern ever since I learned about gerrymandering in high school civics class a very long time ago. The amendment to the Constitution was something that held promise for workers in the communities that actually live together and share common concerns.

This should not be a partisan issue as the communities develop and evolve their representation should reflect the community and not be manipulated.

I'm disappointed to learn that West Michigan is not represented on the Commission. And I think that explains some of the concerns that are being voiced here today.

I'm particularly concerned with seeing the Congressional plans that include a plan like apple.

That cuts a swath out of Grand Rapids, stretches down 131 and connects to a City of Kalamazoo an hour away.

There is no way the people of the City of Grand Rapids and the City of Kalamazoo would be fairly represented by one person in Congress.

These are two distinct cities and two very different communities that deserve to have their own representation.

The unfortunate citizens come in between who live in very different communities will not be well represented.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 171.

>> Timothy I'm elected firm in a small City in Ottawa County.

And one of the things that we faced over the years is people coming into our community and telling us this is what you have to do because it works on the east side of the state.

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And Ottawa County is being sliced up being removed from a community that is very it works very well together, is very well represented in the state of Lansing or the City of Lansing.

And I have a lot to say but going in 90 seconds.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Take your time.

>> But I would like to see our cultures kept together.

What it's good for, the City of Grand Rapids is not necessarily good for the City of Kalamazoo.

And vice versa.

Same thing with the small communities that we have in Ottawa County.

We are looking at having a representative from Muskegon County.

Muskegon County is a unique County.

Ottawa County is a unique County. But we will not get the representation in Lansing that we need to have.

So I encourage you to try and keep the areas together as much as they were previously.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 172.

>> Hi there, my name is Jordan I'm from Ottawa County specifically from Holland.

I wanted to say two things today but first wanted to thank you for making the trek to West Michigan and echo some speakers before and I'm disappointed there is no one from West Michigan on the Commission I'm glad you are able to listen to our comments and I hope you give them extra weight as you know we lived here our whole lives and obviously feel very passionate about this area.

So the first thing I wanted to say is that when it comes to the State House maps there is something that was a little concerning to me.

Being from Ottawa County looking at District 83 from I think every house map that was drawn you saw the City of Norton Shores included in with most of Grand Haven area.

I would recommend a change include Fruitport Township with Norton Shores.

Fruitport and Norton Shores are split on Harvey Street and that is a corridor of growth and department and giving rural areas on the south of that specific District would balance both of those.

The other thing I wanted to say is Ottawa County and Muskegon Country similar to what I said on a Congressional level should be kept together.

They share very similar lakeshore concerns, the lakeshore District is something you heard about an incredible amount and should be kept distinct from the City of Grand Rapids.

So I hope you take those into consideration and I thank you guys for you time.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. 173.

>> Before we begin can we please pull up the apple map. I would appreciate that.

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Good evening I'm Orlando and lived in Holland Ottawa County all my life.

The one thing I want to bring to your attention I'm asking that you keep the lakeshore in Ottawa County whole.

I'm going to tell you why.

There is a large Hispanic population I'm a part of, proud of being a Mexican Hispanic decent and feel you are splitting my peoples voice.

The reality is this I have tons of family all over Muskegon and Allegan County and the way you have these maps made up you have it split up.

Apple map is the only map that makes logical sense when it comes to Congressional because it keeps my people in the stronger voice.

I'm not going to have my voice diluted by a bunch of maps that don't make logical sense so I say Ottawa County needs to be whole.

Keep my culture whole and along with having the lakeshore whole and makes logical sense and I'm bringing that to your attention right now.

With that being said being there living there all my life I know that that is the best way to keep the community voice strong.

And I know that obviously as people said before the west side is not properly represented in the Commission.

And I'm not here to hammer you on that, it was a random draw but please pay special attention to West Michigan and please do not split my voice.

And I hope the people are talking while I'm talking took me seriously because I don't appreciate that.

Once again, I ask this Commission to take seriously keep Ottawa County and West Michigan whole and the people that are Mexican Hispanic decent and Latino decent whole as well.

Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. I do want to give a shout out to our Commissioner from Battle Creek, Cynthia Orton because I know every time someone says we don't have someone from the west side I see the look on her face and it offends her a little bit.

She is from the west side.

She is from Battle Creek so thank you Commissioner Orton for being on the Commission.

>> COMMISSIONER ORTON: Thanks for the recognition I realize I'm from Southwest Michigan and West Michigan doesn't feel that Southwest Michigan is the same.

But yes, it is the west side.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Without objection we are going to take a recess. Do we want ten minutes or 15 minutes? 15 we have been sitting here for almost three hours.

So without objection it is 7:49 right now we will come back at 8:05 and begin with our remote public commentary that concludes our in person public commentary.

Thank you everybody.

[Recess]

Czar ready when you are Madam Chair.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: As the Chair of the Commission I call this meeting of the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission back to order at 8:02 p.m. Will the secretary please call the roll.

>> Absolutely Madam Chair.

Commissioners, Please say present when I call your name. If you are attending Today's meeting remotely please disclose during roll call you are attending remotely and where you are attending from .

I will start with Doug Clark.

>> COMMISSIONER CLARK: Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Juanita Curry.

>> COMMISSIONER CURRY: Present; attending from Detroit, Michigan.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Anthony Eid?

>> COMMISSIONER EID: Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Brittini Kellom?

>> 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?

>> VICE COMMISSIONER ROTHORN: Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Rebecca Szetela?

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Janice Vallette?

>> COMMISSIONER VALLETTE: Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Erin Wagner?

>> COMMISSIONER 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: 12 Commissioners are present.

And there is a quorum.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you we will move on to remote public comments individuals who would like to provide live public comment to the Commission will now be allowed to do so I will call on your name and our staff will unmute you if you are on the computer, you will be prompted to unmute and speak.

If you are on the phone a voice will say the host would like you to speak and prompt you to press star six to unmute. I will call on you by your name also please note if you experience audio or technical issues or if we do not hear from you for 3-5 seconds we will move on to the next person in line and return to you after they are done speaking. If you your audio still does not work you can e-mail redistricting@Michigan.gov and we will help you trouble shoot.

You will have 90 seconds to address the Commission please conclude when the 90 seconds have ended and you hear the timer you can share your comments in writing about specific areas of the map you are speaking and it's available at www.Michigan.gov/MICRC.

First in line to provide public comment is James Gallant.

>> This James Gallant, Marquette these are my opinions. It was out of order for Commissioner Kellom to call a member of the public out of order and under the approved rules of procedure and that member's statements were addressed to the Commission.

And also please repost these five public hearings meetings which they are as stated by Ms. Reinhardt in an e-mail earlier today.

Meetings starts at 1:00, public comment starts at 2:30, so please provide everyone who spoke this week with three additional minutes to speak of issues other than the draft maps at future meetings for my personal losses of due process and the first amendment and you know the ones.

And also the due diligence should include formal written reports from our legal team on controversial issues brought up by the public for transparency to us outside of your obscured bubble.

And also please issue a correction to Commissioner Rothhorn's statement suggesting that prop two amendment was an initiative of a large group of nonpartisan cities across Michigan.

It's my understanding that the prop two ballot proposal was issued and authored by less than ten people, the voting director of count my vote, including Dr. Nancy Wang, under assumed name voters not politics. So ask Dr. Wang to come before the Commission and explain her Supreme Court cross complaint win, which revived a reiteration of the Commission.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Anthony Skinnell.

>> Before we start the clock you can throw it off and take it down thank you.

All right so start the clock.

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As a long time MMNP patient I'm coming at you with some highly informed comments right now and also, I sent some mail correspondence written can any of you nod approval forward to that or copy it or something.

What do they do with mail? Can you answer that afterwards.

Otherwise there is no independence of this Commission.

There is Dems GOP and nonaffiliates whatever that means I covered that.

My area of interest is Down River southwest Detroit and anyway I have a problem.

Your Congressional districts have a big problem.

I just realized today.

Absolutely zero of them well some of them apple birch VRS and 1L have 0 let alone majority Black majority BVAP Congressional districts for Detroit 0 out of two.

Juniper and promote the vote I checked theirs just for fun each have one.

Well I bring to you my configuration if I can pull it up on the screen.

It has two BVAP plurality districts.

Don't you think Detroit and I split Detroit more evenly.

I explained to you why I think both districts deserve Detroit river frontage and you said you were willing to make a wholesale at a press conference and deserved two BVAP plurality discussions.

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

>> That was great.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: In terms of what happens with comments that are mailed to us those comments are scanned and circulated to members of the Commission.

Douglas.

>> [No audio]

Divides the greater Kalamazoo area in two districts and would be improved serving the area with three the eastern and western parts of the City have different populations and I feel confident in saying the needs of my community are very different from those on the eastern side of the City.

Both populations deserve their own representation in the State House as Portage on the south side of Kalamazoo.

I urge to reconsider the State House in the Kalamazoo area to improve their partisan fairness and representation of communities of interest.

Thank you for considering my comment.

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

>> As well as violate the voters rights protection act and thank you for coming to West Michigan have a great day.

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

>> Can you hear me?

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Yes.

>> I'm Greg I'm a retired physician and lived in Kalamazoo most of my life using the 2011 maps the republican party controlled the State House and Senate every year from 2011-2020.

In 2018 democrats received 42-447 for State House and 48 for State Senate despite that republicans won a 58-52 majority of seats in the house and maintained 22-16 majority in the Senate results like this explain why prop two passed which I supported. The MICRC has made significant improvements in fairness of Congressional State House and State Senate maps compared to 2011.

There is no perfect solution.

I do support the apple map with Congressional District Four that combines the cities of Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids.

And the Pine map with three districts in Kalamazoo County.

According to a report in M live the Commissions independent consult apt Lisa Handley found maps tended to favor republicans Michigan is a swing state and statewide elections are competitive.

The new maps should not give advantage to either party. The party that receives the most votes should win the seats.

The vote in a large City should count the same as a rural community.

Thank you for your attention.

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

>> Hello.

I can be heard, everything is good.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Everything is good.

>> Amazing hello everyone my name is Katie and I'm a junior at Central Michigan University and also a redistricting fellow with campus vote project today I'm like to implore you to keep colleges together as a community of interest in the proposal that has been presented Grand Valley State Oakland University Washtenaw community colleges college campuses are broken up the University of Michigan is split in the Wayne State Senate map and split GVSU and Oakland in two Peach oak and Szetela split Washtenaw into three districts even worse Pine Orton and Clark horrifyingly split one of the biggest community college in this state into four districts with Pine being particularly questionable.

U of M is also split in two to four districts in each of these proposals.

For the U.S. Congress plan the apple and Lange plans keep GVSU as it currently is which is together and every other plan has problematic splits oak land is split in every Congressional plan and it's split out of convenience but remind the Commission community of interest are third on the list of priorities while reflecting County, City, and Township boundaries, are second to last.

Not a single map should be approved where a college campus is split so when you tell us to show up and speak up, please ensure we are able to show up to the polls and

speaking our votes in a way we will be able to be represented fairly as college students
thank you so much.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Joyce Smith?

>> Good evening my name is Joyce Smith and I'm a resident of Grand Rapids or of Wyoming.

I would like to encourage the Commission to please keep Kent County whole with one Congressional District.

The current map of Kent County proposed under apple plan divides the Grand Rapids Metro six region into two separate Congressional districts.

Tying Grand Rapids into a Congressional District with Kalamazoo.

Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo form two different communities of interest and should be anchors for their own respective districts.

Please reconsider your map to keep Kent County whole with one Congressional District. Second, I wanted to encourage the Commission to keep the City of Grand Rapids whole within one State Senate District.

The current map splits Grand Rapids into two districts.

Grand Rapids is small enough to be drawn into one State Senate District and should not be split.

My area of City of Wyoming should be drawn into the State Senate District.

On the western border of the County.

With Grandville and Walker.

Instead of with Grand Rapids and Kentwood.

The residents of these communities share a community of interest at our school systems overlap each other.

And our residents will stop in neighboring areas.

Please also keep Ottawa County whole and thank you for your time.

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

>> Thank you.

Am I on now?

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Yes, you are.

>> Berrien county the true southwest corner of Michigan also known as Michiana and it's known that way because we have no Michigan media our services are linked to other border counties and tourism is linked to Indiana and Illinois.

To create small House Districts that go up the lakeshore or divide our County does not make for a community of interest.

It does not take into account all the people that live and work just inside those borders. Of those lakeshore communities.

And provide the support for the high cost homes and second homes on the lakeshore. Perhaps you are creating Elite District.

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Since no one from the Commission is from the southwest side, the true southwest side, I would ask when was the last time you visited West Michigan? South Haven Saugatuck Grand Rapids haven Ludington did you ever think of St. Joe or New Buffalo was that ever on your radar probably not because both are in Berrien County and to split them divides our community of interest.

We do not get Michigan news, we don't get Michigan tourism because our interest again is Indiana and Illinois.

They have second homes here, they pay taxes here but they do not vote here.

As close as South Haven and Van Buren is it's not the same.

It's part of the Kalamazoo market.

We are a part of South Bend.

Partisan fairness is the new term for gerrymandering.

Done don't fall for this and should not be considered communities in our County as a whole keep our County.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Shannon Abbot.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: For the public viewing, Shannon is number 16.

>> Hi, my name is Shannon Abbot I grew up in Mid-Michigan both in last and East Lansing and lived in various communities through the Metro Grand Rapids area over the last ten years.

Including my current residence which is in Grandville.

I've also worked throughout the greater West Michigan area including Grand Rapids Holland and Kalamazoo.

This all covers Kalamazoo Kent Ottawa, Ingham and Eaton. I'm going to talk about Pine and cherry and they are acceptable of maps moved forward and believe the maps are pretty good but still improvements I'd like to note.

Very specifically I have concerned about the bundling of parts of Kent County with Kalamazoo.

Also with Portage western Kalamazoo and eastern Kalamazoo would I feel should anchor their own districts.

More work to be done to keep in City County lines and along main streets and highways and believe in the Kent County area there are many spots where the boundaries can be cleaned up to reflect simple boundaries with little to no population of the population and demographics needed to meet the constitutional requirements.

I will be submitting on the Pine cherry and birch maps as well that I hope will be considered.

Thank you for your time and your hard work during this critical and meaningful process.

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

>> Hello, can you hear me.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Yes, we can.

>> Hi sorry about that.

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My name is Kelsey and I am calling in remotely from Lansing Michigan.

The capitol.

And just a couple points here one is I'm so thankful that we have a hybrid option.

As a person who is disabled, I really appreciate that.

And I would encourage you to keep doing this.

On that same note I think it's really important for the funding that we do allow more disabled inclusivity.

So it's super important.

I also was really encouraged by the indigenous representation we have tonight so to encourage that.

I would just say which has been echoed many times tonight we can't fix gerrymandering and we need to have clean lines as to where the districts are.

And like transparency around that.

But yeah, we need more transparency.

You cannot fix gerrymandering, gerrymandering like it just becomes this cycle so I would encourage as much transparency as much as possible for those written comments to be readout loud as well as trusting some of the organizations that have proposed other maps, other progressed organizations like the ACLU so I hope you have a good night.

And if you come to protest in Lansing I will join you, thanks.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thanks.

Thank you for addressing the Commission. Vadette.

>> Hi yes this is Vadette can you hear me.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Yes, we can.

>> Okay thank you very much.

Okay, thank you for this opportunity to speak with you.

First and Foremost I was made aware that there wasn't a representative from the west side of Michigan.

And from hearing the past calls I'm sure you're now well aware of this.

For the redistricting.

Even though we are all Michiganders our State of Michigan offers uniqueness in every corner of the state.

But I do want to share that Berrien Cass and St. Joseph County has always been represented as Michiana County our public news source comes from South Bend Indiana.

So we cannot majority of the people who watch TV get their news is mostly from the South Bend, Mishawaka in all three of the Counties.

After reviewing the various versions of redistricting I noticed Berrien County would be split and Cass and St. Joseph County would be removed.

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In my perspective how can the Senate state and Congressional representatives success through serve with split Counties.

In my view this would create confusion and lack of accurate information to the citizens. As an election worker and I'm an election worker for almost 20 years I could see a state of confusion for a lot of voters especially if we have to deal with split Counties. I've worked with almost over five different Presidential elections. I'll finish please leave our current districts as is and concentrate.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Abigail barker.

>> Hi, can you hear me.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Yes.

>> Thank you, so hi my name is Abigail barker I live in Grand Rapids and have grown up in West Michigan I would like-to-start by thanking the Commission for their work and taking public comments in consideration.

Today I would like to talk about partisan fairness and the drawing of the maps in the Kent County area.

The maps Pine cherry and birch provide the best representation for Michiganders compared to the other maps presented.

Additional improvement must be made in West Michigan area and across the state.

The lack of partisan fairness needs to be addressed.

All the maps you bring before us today give a disproportionate advantage to the republican party.

The final maps will be in place for ten years and it's critical they are drawn fairly and partisan fairness is upheld.

I urge you to closely consider alternatives on the portal and reevaluate the current maps being presented.

I would like to talk specifically about the Kent County area and the changes that need to be made.

You should keep the Grand Rapids Metro districts within inside Kent County keep Ottawa whole and make Wealthy Street the border between the two Grand Rapids districts.

Greater Grand Rapids should retain two Senate Districts the southern District as drawn is good and north needs work to be entirely within Kent County.

Communities of interest must be kept together. Carefully consider the comments you received both from the hearings and online portal submissions.

Finally thank you for your time.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 22, Jim Story.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Jim, if you can unmute yourself, you are free to address the Commission.

>> I'm unmuted now thank you.

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Commissioners I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you tonight.

I am the Chairman of the Allegan County board of Commissioners.

And my main concern naturally is how our County is going to be treated in your work product.

Allegan County was organized two years before Michigan became a state.

And in the 186 years since then we have built a very strong agricultural County, in fact, number one in Michigan.

Our number two industry is tourism.

Our number three is manufacturing.

All of those interests will be hurt by especially the State Senate maps and unconscionably hurt dividing our County into five State Representative districts.

While other speakers have been concerned about how representatives would carry out their jobs in such districts, I'm concerned about the 120,000 people who call Allegan County home.

And do have that community of interest.

Their voices will be totally marginalized by this carve up kind of like carving a turkey.

Or should I say chicken because we have 3.5 million chickens in our County.

By that measure.

So I would really encourage you to take a look at what has been done to Allegan County and at least reduce the number of cuts.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 28 Brittini-P.

>> Good evening my name is Brittany and I live in Novi and southwest Oakland County.

A diverse and fair map can be made by keeping Novi whole across all maps Michigan liens democratic but your maps are 5-8% to the right.

This area was drawn last and not given the consideration necessary to do it correctly. Please remedy this.

Novi currently has a partisan balance so I'm extremely disappointed to see all three collaborative State House divide in HD36 and 10 and Novi is north of 14 mile road and Pontiac trail your maps strangely pairs southwest Oakland County with rural Washtenaw County.

We share nothing in common, no resources, services interests or economies.

Novi has one of the largest AAPI communities in Michigan and the collaborative maps destroy that.

Unjustly diminishes the voting power of AAPI and other communities of color and rips apart the Novi school District the AFLCIO maps specifically P3623 is far better.

It respects partisan fairness and communities of interest.

Please keep Novi whole and with surrounding Oakland County areas, thank you for your time.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 32, Ilene-M.

>> Yes, thank you, I know you've heard a lot of comments tonight thank you for your time.

You have an unenviable task but there is still much work to be done.

We would do well actually the very first maps you drew in terms of Grand Rapids, I'm a resident of Grand Rapids.

And to pair it with Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo and the Congressional District just absolutely makes no sense.

I've heard people say they have communities of interest and I kind of wonder where they live because they really don't.

And I really would appreciate if you took a second look at the map that divides Grand Rapids into two State Senate districts.

That again there is no need to.

Grand Rapids is a big enough City to be included whole.

As one part of one State Senate District.

And I greatly appreciate you looking back at some of your early maps.

As opposed to this newest one that really you kind of have to you know reconfigure yourselves to, you know, to make it that it doesn't make sense.

And I know you're trying to not gerrymander.

And yet the latest maps look terrifically gerrymandered.

So keep pressing on.

I appreciate your listening to our comments.

I know you have heard a lot tonight.

And thank you.

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

>> This is Bill Witte.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: We can hear you.

>> Can you hear me? Okay.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Yes.

>> I'd like to first and Foremost say we would like to keep Kent County in the County whole and also Ottawa County whole.

These two Counties represent the fastest growing Counties in the State of Michigan and because of this they should be in separate Congressional districts, to not overpopulate a single District.

The Grand Rapids Metro six area should be kept together with areas within Kent County and not merged with Kalamazoo.

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Those from West Michigan know Kalamazoo forms a natural community of interest with Battle Creek given their airport reflects that.

Efforts to put Kalamazoo with Holland or Grand Rapids are manufactured.

Please reconfigure your Congressional map to keep Kent County whole.

And keeping Ottawa County whole and the lakeshore District.

Second, I want to encourage you to keep Grand Rapids whole in one Senate seat and it splits it in two Senate districts and the easily could fit in a single seat and Wyoming should be drawn in the Senate District to western borders of Kent County and include Grandville Walker instead of being in Grand Rapids and Kentwood. Wyoming Walker create a community of interest because they share overlapping school districts and residents work and shop in the neighboring municipalities adopt the Senate plan and includes Grand Rapids, East Grand Rapids, Kentwood and allows Grandville and Wyoming to currently be in Walker.

Lastly, I'd like to encourage the Commission to keep.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Number 34 Patricia Davis.

>> Good afternoon my name is Patricia Davis from Kalamazoo Michigan representing mothers of hope.

The area around western Michigan University campus can be combined with Kalamazoo college and northwestern Kalamazoo County.

Oshtemo all mow and Cooper Townships which were most of WMU students housing is in one State House District.

Kalamazoo south of Cork Street near the airport can be combined with Portage and Schoolcraft in a suburbanizing into a State House District.

The north and east sides of Kalamazoo City can be combined with eastern Kalamazoo County allowing the African/American in the City to nominate its own preferred candidate for state rep instead of being dominated by the voters in the campus neighborhoods.

The western part and eastern part of Kalamazoo County have different communities with different interests and needs.

People who live on the northern and eastern side of the City of Kalamazoo have similar socioeconomic interests as people who live in the eastern part of the County in places like Comstock Township.

These communities have similar socioeconomic needs, should be represented by the state rep of their own.

Since the western side of the City and the County is more affluent and have different interests.

Thank you for your time.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Next in line is Gretchen.

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>> Can you hear me.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Yes.

>> Okay, thank you.

Just want you to know that I was I worked very hard to get this, to have petition signed so we could have you, the Commissioners do this.

I believe in you.

I'm glad you're there.

And thank you for this opportunity to talk to you.

I actually don't have -- I have very few suggestions at this point.

What I would like to say is that I think in Kent County we need to keep the Grand Rapids Metro districts within Kent County.

And in terms of dividing Grand Rapids into two Senate districts, I think that is I support that idea.

But I would also like you to make the dividing line Wealthy Street.

I believe right now it's Fulton avenue, Fulton Street, I think it should be Wealthy Street.

So that there is a southern area.

And then the northern area would be north of Wealthy Street.

In addition I suggest that the northern Senate District of Kent County which would be north of hopefully Wealthy Street should be entirely within Kent County.

Please.

I also support the idea that Ottawa County should be kept whole.

As should Kent County.

Thank you for all the work you're doing and I appreciate this opportunity.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Wendy sellers.

>> Hi, my name is Wendy sellers and I'm a lifelong Michigander and I worked very hard to collect signatures to get this Commission seated, so I want to thank you very much for your extensive work on redistricting.

I'm grateful for your inclusive approach.

You're well aware of the importance of creating unbiased maps to ensure fair voting that reflect the will of the voters.

So thank you for unpacking the Grand Rapids voters for fair State House districts.

Unfortunately this was not done as well with the State Senate maps.

So I'm asking you to take another look at -- with partisan fairness Foremost as you look at those Senate state maps.

And lastly please make sure as you work make sure Kent County has the about to be represented fairly in the Senate.

Thank you so much for all your efforts.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Ann number 39.

>> Can you hear me.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Yes.

>> Thanks sorry about that.

You think I've done enough of these Zoom meetings I ought to know how to do this.

Hi, I'm Anne from Grand Rapids.

And I supported proposal two.

And very happy to be able to meet some of you tonight.

And this afternoon.

As you know in the last ten years western Michigan has had the highest population growth in the past decade.

And with that I would like to say I'm very positive about what you've done with the apple map 201.

And Kent County looks good.

And the Congressional races.

Because of that map, yes, we have linked Grand Rapids with Kalamazoo but I think that is a positive thing since on a national Federal level we vote similarly on issues, issues and healthcare services, you know, other avenues.

And I also think that we have similar voices regarding civil rights.

And that's great.

Both Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo include a majority of African/American Hispanics and immigrants.

This is good.

They will have a voice in Government.

So thank you very much kudos to the Commission and go with map 201.

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

>> Jasmine are you there?

>> We appear to have lost Jasmine.

Commissioner Lange?

>> COMMISSIONER LANGE: The name said that that was Mary Ann Mahoney.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Jasmine her audio is still loading.

We will give her another second.

>> CHAIR SZETELA:

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: It looks like Jasmine may be experiencing audio issues.

Oh, hold on one moment.

I think she just joined us.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Jasmine are you there?

>> Hello.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Hello.

>> Okay hi my name is Jasmine I'm a resident of Flint, Michigan.

I would like to first thank the Commissioners for this historic opportunity that you all are engaging in.

I do have concerns regarding our State House map. You are changing majority minority District into putting us out with the County.

The City of Flint has some very unique challenges as a result of the water crisis.

And I would encourage the Commission to consider the AFLCIOs map we keeps the City of Flint whole.

As we all have specific challenges.

I know I'm a mother of three children.

Who were school age.

One under four when the water crisis happened.

And there are a lot of things where we need proper representation in Lansing to make sure that we have the services that we need available.

Thank you so much for your time.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Next in line is Markala.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: That participant is not currently present.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: What about Mary Ann Mahoney.

>> Yes, this is Mary Ann can you hear me okay?

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Yes.

>> All right wonderful.

Again my name is Marian I'm a 25 year resident of Novi, Michigan.

That is in western southwestern Oakland County.

I'm very grateful this evening on a Friday evening is an opportunity to testify.

So my feedback this evening is on the house maps.

Specifically plans 227, 228 and 229.

All three of these maps really have a significant republican bias.

And they are really not yet fair.

Of the three maps I believe that the Pine map is better.

But still needs some work.

And specifically in the area of District 110.

And that encompass in part the City of Novi.

This map really divides up Novi.

And this is my concern.

Novi runs north, south from 14 mile to 8 mile.

And from east to west the roads of Haggerty to Napier.

This map you have laid out excludes a strip of about two miles across our northern border in those precincts.

And those precincts in particular are really a very diverse, have a very diverse population.

So just in general, in the City of Novi we have a growing Asian American community.

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

>> And David is number 46.

>> Hello, can you hear me.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Yes.

>> Good evening my name is David D.

And I have grown up in both Kent and Ottawa County and currently live in Kent County Plainfield Township.

First, I want to thank the Commission for all their hard work over the last few months drawing out these maps.

I do have a few concerns with a couple with the maps.

To start with, with the Congressional map, the apple map does not do justice with the Kent County area.

Kent County and the surrounding area around Grand Rapids is one unique area.

And putting the Grand Rapids District with Kalamazoo jeopardizes the representation and splits up the interests of the community with the Kalamazoo area.

As someone who has lived around the Grand Rapids area my whole life, I don't consider myself from Kalamazoo, I consider myself from Grand Rapids.

Regarding the State Senate and house maps, as someone from Plainfield Township we share a common interest with the Rockford community.

While and most of the proposed maps I see the northern half of Plainfield Township shares information with Rockford it does split across the Grand River at the southern part of Plainfield Township.

Splitting our community into two which does not represent equally, thank you.

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

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Kate if you can unmute yourself, you are free to address the Commission.

>> Hi, my name is Kate from Livonia.

And I'm here tonight to talk about partisan fairness.

And also, I would like to talk about the House Districts impacting the City of Livonia.

I've appeared before and talked about it.

Specifically they are House Districts 14, 17 and 35.

It's very different for a mayor or City clerk to operate in a City where there are three different representatives you have to work with.

The clerk in particular has a heavy burden at election time whether it's at the polls or in the office.

I was down at the Commission hearing on Wednesday in Detroit.

And on the way back I drove through what would be the eastern most parts of 14 and 17 through the Brightmoore area of Detroit it's a blighted and depressed area.

It's human nature to know any candidate for the house come out of either Livonia or Redford the bulk of the donations would come from there.

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And the representative would listen more to Livonia and Redford residents than the ones from Detroit.

And the people in Detroit deserve to have representative that will listen to them and their problems.

So thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Sharda chambers.

>> Hello, can you hear me.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Yes, I can hear you.

>> Okay thanks sorry about that.

Okay we can get started.

My name is Sharda chambers from Kalamazoo County and live in the City of Kalamazoo and one of the maps that well two of the maps I wanted to talk about the first one was going to be the State Senate map that you guys have, the one thing I do like is you do keep Kalamazoo County together for the most part.

The one thing I find discouraging is that you added more so to the west side of the state and Van Buren and in Kalamazoo County we have no interest with Van Buren.

When you push us further to the west you begin to put us in a different space where we have no we share no similar interest.

If you want to leave Mattawan that would be perfect because that is a smaller rural area and fit in that place.

But when it comes to the rest of those Senate maps Kalamazoo County as a whole needs to be left alone.

Also when it comes to the Congressional maps Kalamazoo County does not need to be added in with Grand Rapids.

We share none of the same interests and do better if we were put closer with Calhoun County which we have shared similar interests.

And we also share similar work base and also our communities Branch off together and share similar doctors, we share similar hospitals, we even share similar education systems.

Putting us with Grand Rapids will not help.

And what I will leave on this call is if you guys don't take anything from this what you should take from tonight is Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids need to be separated Kent County and Kalamazoo County are totally separate and they need to be separated.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. Do we have Mary.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: The next participant present is number 55 Allen.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: 55, Allen.

>> Can you hear me now.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Yes.

>> Okay, I'd like to address the issue of partisan fairness.

I think that the measures that people are using are fundamentally misguided because they don't take the geography of the state into account.

Things like the efficiency gap, they just consider the aggregate vote as a whole.

But you know voting for a republican up north and voting for a republican in Oakland may not be the same because of differ candidates.

If you use partisan fairness look at it statewide and distribution of the districts.

I think you will find that the maps are not skewed in the way that a lot of people are saying.

And I think many of the commenters who are urging you to do things like put Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo together, that is clearly gerrymandering.

That's not what this Commission is supposed to be doing.

I would encourage you to keep Grand Rapids in a single State Senate District.

There is for good reason to split it up.

Almost always the best community of interest is going to be the actual community that people live in. Their City Township or County.

I certainly splitting this City of Kalamazoo up makes no sense.

None of the people suggesting that have given any consideration to the you know rural and suburban areas you know next to Kalamazoo.

Those areas representatives.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Thank you for addressing the Commission. John Schneider.

>> Hello.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Hello.

>> So I just wanted to say thank you so much for staying this long.

I wasn't convinced I was going to be able to speak and this is quite lovely.

I know it's in the hour over when you guys were hoping to go home and I really value that.

There you go.

I am also really tired.

And I just finished putting my kids to bed.

So I'm going to try to shorten down what I wanted to say.

I live in Lansing.

And I've been here for ten years.

I was at the hearing yesterday.

And didn't have really a chance to finish all of the comments I wanted to say because I got distracted in too passionate about one thing.

But I did want to emphasize that I feel like Lansing is a big enough City that it has a wide variety of communities built into it and inside of it.

I know it would be very easy to separate us even up to five separate house seats.

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While still maintaining unique cultures and communities of interest.

Within each of those five Directors.

And I think that, that would go a long way in helping to create a map that reflects us as a people here in Michigan as a whole.

And make us more reflective of the way that we have been shown to vote over the last 20 years.

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

>> Hello, can you hear me.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Yes.

>> Hi, my name is Paul and I'm a resident of Kentwood.

In Kent County.

And as a resident of Kentwood first of all I'd like to say that we are concerned that we don't believe West Michigan is truly represented.

I know we have one member that is from Southwest Michigan as she even stated.

But Southwest Michigan is different than West Michigan.

On the Congressional District maps we really believe that Kent County, Grand Rapids should be considered on a single map and not included with Kalamazoo as it is in the apple map.

And the same with the Senate the State Senate maps we think Grand Rapids should be one State Senate District.

The communities of interest should keep in mind school districts, libraries, parks, infrastructure, shopping, the things that make up a community.

And that's why we think Grand Rapids should be included or Kent County should be included with the City of Grand Rapids.

And East Grand Rapids.

And not included, not combining that with Kalamazoo.

I think you should look back at the reason.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Anna, you are not on mute.

Please continue, sir.

>> All right I think his time ran out.

We are going to move on to Yousif, number 60.

>> Hello Commissioners.

My name is Yousif, I'm from Troy.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Hello.

>> Can you hear me.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Yes, we can.

>> Okay, sorry.

Okay. My name is Yousif and out of 8 million plus voters. There is a Chaldean on the Commission. Mr. Anthony Eid. It's amazing to have Chaldean in this once in a decade Commission.

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All the Chaldeans and Middle Easterns are registered as whites.

We are not white.

Our voices have always been neglected.

And we want to change this.

We voted for proposal two to have community of interest take priority and not efficiency gaps.

They are not mentioned in proposal two.

They are partisan wishes take COI as number one and I implore you not to dilute our voices and we go to the outskirts of Wixom, we are Shelby, Troy and more.

We are a faith based community and tentacle Dean churches in Detroit area and estimated to be 160,000 and growing.

All of these proposed maps dilute Chaldean voices and give us a voice in one District.

This Commission promised to give communities of color a voice.

Please give the Chaldean community a voice in one District.

I created this map 68270 that is 68270.

This map represents majority of Chaldeans in one District.

Thank you, Commissioners, for your hard work.

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

>> Can you hear me?

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Yes.

>> Okay finally.

I have listened to most of the comments and most of the people are from Grand Rapids.

As is appropriate.

Since that is where the meeting is.

But since there was no meeting in southwestern Michigan this is the best, I could do.

I am concerned particularly with the Congressional map for Battle Creek and Calhoun County.

Most of the maps are absurd on the surface.

Including Battle Creek and points southwest.

All the way to Lake St. Clair.

Which I believe is Monroe County.

But I'm not even sure what Counties are there.

I couldn't even tell you what cities are there.

That is not appropriate.

I looked at the Lange map.

And EID I don't know how to pronounce that map.

That includes Battle Creek with Kalamazoo which is a much better fit.

Battle Creek and Kalamazoo have a community of interest.

People in Kalamazoo work in Battle Creek.

People in Battle Creek work in Kalamazoo.

And that would be a much better fit than to try to include Calhoun County with Detroit.

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

>> Hello, can you hear me?

>> CHAIR SZETELA: Yes.

>> Great thank you.

My name is start my video, okay, start my video, okay hi my name is Amy and I lived in Berrien County on the lakeshore my entire life.

I'd first like to commend the Commissioners for creating the lakeshore State House District on the Pine map.

This does create a diverse and representative District and if chosen will allow the people's voices in that area to be heard for essentially the first time ever.

By enabling the election of a representative who understands and can advocate for our unique and important needs.

For example the Benton Harbor water crisis we are living through right now should have been avoided but our current representatives failed to advocate for us.

In part because they do not appreciate or prioritize the needs of our lakeshore communities.

I would also like to suggest the addition of Saugatuck to this District because it's very similar to South Haven and other lakeshore communities it's adjacent to.

Commissioner Szetela's individual suggested map which divides all of the Lake communities would create the same problems we are having now by obstructing our citizens able to have true representation.

So I wanted that to be noted.

As for the State Senate District maps there is no connection between Benton Harbor and Byron Township.

And creating a District like that makes little sense to anyone who lives in really any part of it.

Instead I urge you to keep it with the Senate with Van Buren.

The real issue here is.

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

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Alexis if you can unmute yourself, you are free to address the Commission.

Alexis if you can hear us, you are free to address the Commission if you unmute yourself.

It appears Alexis is experiencing audio issues and that will conclude public comment.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: That is our last public comment for the evening at this point without objection we will have the Vice Chair Commissioner Rothorn provide acknowledgments without objection please proceed Commissioner Rothorn.

>> VICE CHAIR ROTHORN: Thank you Chair Szetela.

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Could we have the slides please for the acknowledgments? So we want to appreciate the League of Women Voters who helped us with the outside in the lobby.

And then we want to appreciate Michigan State University students who also volunteered at the portal stations and appreciate premier event tech.

We do not want to appreciate TCF center because that was Wednesday.

But we are going to appreciate our audio and tech from premier anti believe we are at the DeVos center tonight.

Thank you also to the University of Michigan students.

Who volunteered and the Voters Not Politicians who volunteered in several places.

We could not do this without you and thank you, thank you, thank you.

We want to continue to ask you to show up and speak up.

And sign up for e-mail alerts and text messages and have an old fashion way including calling us at 1833 you draw, thank you so much follow us on Facebook, follow us at Twitter, subscribe to YouTube www.Michigan.gov/MICRC for all our public comments thank you thank you.

>> CHAIR SZETELA: We are completed and no further business and can I have a motion to adjourn.

Motion made by Commissioner Witjes seconded by Commissioner Lett all in favor please raise your hand and say aye.

All opposed say nay.

The ayes prevail and the meeting is adjourned at 9:09 p.m.

Thank you everybody.