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MICRC

06/29/21 5:00 am Meeting

Captioned by Q&A Reporting, Inc., www.qacaptions.com

>> CHAIR KELLUM:

Good evening Muskegon!

That's better.

I like a lively group.

As Chair of the Commission, I call this meeting of the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission to order at 5:02 p.m.

This webinar is being live streamed at YouTube.

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

Closed captioning, ASL interpretation, and Spanish and Bengali and

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

This meeting is also being transcribed, and those transcriptions will be made available And posted on Michigan.gov/MICRC along with 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 additional questions before, during or after the meeting should direct those questions to Edward Woods III, who is our Communications and Outreach Director for the Commission. at WoodsE3@Michigan.gov.

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

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT:
Thank you Madam Chair and
Good evening.

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Commissioners.

Please say present when I call your name. If you are attending the meeting remotely, please announce during roll call that you are attending the meeting remotely. And unless your absence is due to military duty, announce please your physical location by stating the county, city, Township or village and the state from which you are attending the meeting.

I'll start with Doug Clark.

>> COMMISSIONER CLARK:
Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT:
Juanita Curry.

>> COMMISSIONER CURRY:
Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT:
Anthony Eid?

>> COMMISSIONER EID:
present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT:
Brittini Kellom?

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Present

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT:
Rhonda Lange?

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

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT:
Steve Lett?

>> COMMISSIONER LETT:
Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT:
Cynthia Orton?

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>> COMMISSIONER ORTON:

Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: MC

Rothhorn?

>> COMMISSIONER ROTHORN:

Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT:

Rebecca Szetela?

>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA:

>> 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 KELLOM: Thank you Michigan Department of State staff.

We will move on to our welcome and introductions and without objection our host,
Commissioner Cynthia Orton, will now provide a presentation.

Hearing no objection please proceed Commissioner Orton.

>> COMMISSIONER ORTON: I'm Cynthia Orton and welcome to the MICRC public
hearing in Muskegon.

I've had many people say welcome to Muskegon.

It's a very friendly place, I like that.

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

In looking at the agenda, please note that the vast majority of our time this evening is spent listening to you.

We are eager to hear your ideas either in person or remotely about drawing Michigan's Congressional, house and Senate districts.

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

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

So start with Doug.

>> COMMISSIONER CLARK: Welcome.

I'm very pleased to have all of you here and looking forward to your comments.

I'm Commissioner Doug Clark and I am from Rochester Hills, Michigan.

>> COMMISSIONER ROTHORN: Hello everyone it's nice to see such a big crowd today appreciate you coming out and looking forward to hear what you have to say.

My name is Anthony Eid and I'm from Orchard Lake, Michigan.

>> COMMISSIONER CURRY: Good evening everyone so good to see everyone out today.

My name is Juanita Curry and I am residing in Detroit, Michigan.

>> COMMISSIONER ROTHORN: I'm MC Rothorn and I stay in Lansing and yeah thanks for being here tonight.

>> COMMISSIONER WITJES: Good evening my name is Dustin Witjes.

I come to Muskegon quite a bit and I love this town very much so I'm excited to hear what every one of you have to say depending what day of the week it is I'm either from Howell or Ypsilanti.

>> COMMISSIONER LETT: Good evening and welcome my name is Steve Lett and I come from the Interlochen Traverse City area so I'm the northeast west coast Commissioner for everybody.

>> COMMISSIONER WEISS: Good evening Muskegon so nice to see a big crowd my name is Richard H Weiss and I live in Saginaw Township in Saginaw.

>> COMMISSIONER VALLETTE: My name is Janice Vallette and I live in a small town 50 miles outside of Detroit it's Highland, Michigan and we are all anxious to hear what you have to say thanks everyone for coming.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: My name is Brittini Kellom. I'm the current Chair of the Commission.

I'm from Detroit, Michigan, thoroughly enjoyed my ride here and seeing the water, I almost did not make it to the meeting because I love sitting by water so it's very good to see each and every one of you.

So thank you again for the warm welcome, Muskegon.

>> COMMISSIONER ORTON: I live in Battle Creek, Michigan. In 2018, 61% of Michigan voters intentionally passed proposal two.

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A ballot initiative for voters and not legislatures to take responsibility for map fairness and public feedback in the redistricting process.

And created the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission.

The MICRC.

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

This Commission is comprised of 13 randomly selected Michigan residents that include four who affiliate as democrats, five who affiliate as independents and four who affiliate as republicans.

Through a lottery random lottery done by the Michigan Department of State.

The MICRC has the exclusive authority in this new redistricting process for Michigan's Congressional, house and Senate districts.

As fellow residents, the MICRC understands your expectations to draw the maps in an open and transparent manner that meets constitutional mandates.

In your interaction with the MICRC and its staff, you should witness the core values of integrity, respect, transparency and intentionality.

Once again, we are glad you are here and look forward to hearing from you.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you so much, Commissioner Orton, for that warm welcome and introduction.

Without objection, we will have our Executive Director, Sue Hammersmith, come to us and share the purpose of the public hearing.

And hearing no objection, please proceed, Executive Director Sue Hammersmith.

>> MS. SUANN HAMMERSMITH: Thank you, Commissioner Kellom.

You should know that before the Commissioners can draft any plan, before the first line on a map is drawn, that they have to hold at least ten public hearings according to the Constitution.

You are looking at a bunch of over achievers.

This is the 15th of our 16 public hearings that are being held across the State of Michigan.

[APPLAUSE]

The Constitution also lays out the purposes for the public hearings which include informing the public about the redistricting process, sharing the purpose and responsibilities of the Commission, and I think most importantly soliciting information from the public about potential redistricting plans.

What is redistricting? Every ten years after the U.S. census is complete, the District lines have to be redrawn in states across America to accurately reflect the population. So people move, people pass on, babies are born and population shifts across the State of Michigan that this Commission will be responsible for looking at in their efforts to draw the maps.

The process of drawing the District's lines is known as redistricting.

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And in 2020 the U.S. census has confirmed our Michigan's population as 10,077,331 people.

Oh, my goodness.

So there will be three sets of maps that will need to be drawn so the 13 Michigan Congressional districts will have about 775,000 people in each of those districts.

The 38 Michigan Senate districts will have about 265,000 people.

And the 110 Michigan House Districts will have about 91,600 people.

The Commissioners have very important responsibilities in this process.

First of all they are going to exercise the powers granted to them in the Constitution to redistrict Michigan.

They will operate in an impartial and transparent manner that reinforces public confidence in the integrity of the redistricting process.

They will conduct statewide public outreach that's why they are here and they are here to invite meaningful public participation in this process.

Also they will adopt three maps one for each type of District, while complying with the U.S. and Michigan constitutional mandates.

They will ensure integrity, public availability, and accountability for the data, for the public comments and for Commission information and they will assure compliance with the redistricting criteria.

These 7 criteria are also spelled out in the constitutional amendment that was approved but 61% of Michigan voters.

They start with the Federal requirements which are equal population and adherence to the Voting Rights Act.

The lines must be geographically contiguous.

Third is the concept called communities of interest.

The fourth and fifth are in regards to political parties or incumbents or candidates for political office and there cannot be a disproportionate advantage or favor or disfavor to any.

Six, the lines have to reflect consideration of county, City and Township boundaries and 7, the districts must be reasonably compact.

It's a pretty tall order but this Commission is up for the challenge.

What are communities of interest? The Constitution says they may include but are not limited to populations that share cultural or historical characteristics or economic interests.

They do not include the relationships with political parties, incumbents or political candidates.

What do we want to know about your community of interest? We want to know what name you would give your community? What is the common bond that unites your community's shared identity? What is the geographic area covered by your community of interest? What governmental policies are important for your community of interest?

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How would keeping that community of interest together enhance the quality of your representation in Congress or the Michigan legislature? And are there nearby areas that strengthen or weaken your community of interest? You will hear many times tonight the website where you can do to the public comment tool and actually download maps of your community of interest.

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

Why should you care? This is a historic process.

This is the first time ever in Michigan where citizens have had a voice in redistricting. This Commission will model openness and transparency with the opportunity for statewide participation and this Commission is inviting communities of interest to share their voices about how they can best be represented.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you so much to our Executive Director Sue Hammersmith.

For explaining the purpose of our public hearings.

With we will move to public comment guidelines and without objection our General Counsel Julianne Pastula will now provide a presentation.

Hearing no objection please proceed General Counsel Pastula.

>> MS. JULIANNE PASTULA: Thank you very much Madam Chair and thank you to Muskegon for the warm welcome.

My name is Julianne Pastula. I serve as the General Counsel to the Commission and would like to cover the public comment guidelines with you this evening.

First, we will have the in-person public comment take place followed by our remote public comment participants.

The time limit for each speaker is two minutes.

Please conclude your remarks when you hear the timer and there will also be a visual countdown clock on the screen, if anyone disrupts the orderly progress of the meeting or refuses to comply with applicable MICRC guidelines and rules, the Chairperson may rule that person out of order and/or order their removal from the meeting.

Please provide public comment and/or submit your proposed maps in the public comment portal which is available at www.Michigan.gov/MICRC.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you, General Counsel.

And now we will have our in-person public comment if there is no objection.

Hearing no objection, we will begin in-person public commentary.

Individuals who have signed up and indicated 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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You will have two minutes as General Counsel said to address the Commission.

Please conclude your remarks when your two minutes has ended and you hear the timer.

If you feel that you just two minutes is not enough or if what you have practiced or you have prepared today extends beyond the two minutes, have no fear, we encourage you in that moment and beyond to utilize our public comment tool which you can share your comments in writing including any specific area of the map that you're speaking about. Again, you all will be website pros, the website for the public comment tool is www.Michigan.gov/MICRC.

So don't get nervous and think that you this is your, you know, only time with us. Please utilize the tool and keep coming back to the tool and just concentrate on sharing with the Commission this evening.

First in line to provide public comment is one.

Whoever has lucky number one.

>> Lucky number one, thank you.

My name is James Gallant. I'm with the Marquette County Suicide Prevention Coalition. And my community of interest is people who believe in the fundamental principles of parliamentary law in the United States of America and it's enclosed in the Robert's Rules of Order, which has been approved by this Commission. And I want you to please start using that because in my personal opinion you have been pretty shaky in it.

And as the petition in the Supreme Court says that you have the ability to draw maps in lawful plans pursuant to the orderly and transparent process chosen by the people of the State of Michigan.

And you're debating in committee and all about what that really means and you providing for your own rules, well, the constitutional amendment provided for a ballot proposal, that is your motion.

And then the petition drive, that is the second.

And then discuss it for a few months and put it on general election.

This is your process the people of the State of Michigan provided to you, motion, second, vote.

And this collaborative, facilitated dialog, consensus building process that you are trying to create on the fly is inconsistent with the Constitution of the state and the Constitution of the United States. You can't do it. Majority vote rules. You had discussion in this, it's all in the transcripts, and you all don't want to motion, second, vote. And I would ask you to revisit your code of conduct because your code of conduct says in there, there is one specific thing it says you have to be respectful. And that is a known and is identified by the Michigan State Public Health Institute as oppressive and white supremacist tactics.

And they should be ban from your code of conduct. Because being respectful means you don't want to call each other out. Yeah, you got to call each other out. Hey, wait a

minute. There are a few rules here. Wait a minute. And I appreciate your colleague Lange who is kind of concerned about the rules. And should be able to get up here and say, hey, and just earlier today you approved the organizational plan, but nobody got to make any motions. Everybody wanted to do it. Everybody wanted to change it, but nobody got to do amendments because there was no motion before the discussion. And that is inconsistent with the Constitution and this is why the process.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Mr. Gallant, your allotted two minutes has ended.

>> Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you for providing public commentary to the Commission. And we will hear from two.

>> Number two.

>> Hello. My name is Pat Camp. And I live in Roosevelt Park, the City of which is smack dab between the City of Muskegon and the City of Norton Shores, very small community.

I want to tell you that I have taken advantage of your forwarding the access to your meetings.

I very much appreciated watching you deliberate.

You seem to be very respectful of one another.

And your meetings are quite long.

But I lasted through it.

So I thank you very much.

I want to leave you with four thoughts today and one personal request. My first thought is that I'm hoping as you do your job that you make sure that every voter has a United States Senator representing them and for whom they can vote, as well as a state Senator, representing them for who they can vote.

The second is that each person in our state would have a Congressional representative in their area that represents them for whom they can vote, as well as a representative from the State of Michigan for whom they can vote.

The third one is school districts.

In Muskegon County we have more than one school district that is divided in terms of voting for millage, et cetera.

And it makes it very difficult for those school districts to conduct their business and to convince people of the funds they need to continue their operation.

The fourth thought is that I'm so happy you came to Muskegon. We are on the lake.

And all of the communities that are on the lakeshore have unique priorities that apply only to the lakeshore group, not necessarily to other communities in the State of Michigan.

So I hope in your deliberations you're able to keep them as whole as possible.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Pat, thank you so much but your allotted two minutes has ended.

I did not want to interrupt you, but I have to, to honor the time.

So that final thought, can you please submit to us in writing so that we can review it?

And thank you so much for the encouragement and the appreciation.

Can we hear from three?

>> Good evening.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Good evening.

>> My name is Janice. I live in Muskegon County.

I'll let you guys worry about exactly where the lines are drawn and how that is going to go. I may have input later, but for now I would like to say a word of the consent of the governed. And the idea here and the start of the country was that the people get to decide who it is that makes the rules for them.

And that when they did so, and ever since then, everything about the Constitution is laid out for that matter, for the organized Government and for the people to have the power and for them, the Government, to do what the people wants them to do.

And as the Constitution has been rewritten and added to and amended, it has been nothing but better about that.

And, in that process, the idea is to get more people involved in voting and then trust what happens.

The idea at the very beginning was if a lot of people who all have their own interest, get a voice, then the magical work in the mix. And out of that will come a Government that works for everyone pretty well.

And we have to have faith in that.

We have to trust that's going to work. And when you layout these districts, if there is a political option in mind, where the representatives can pretty much be sure I don't have to worry about my District, I only have to appeal to the people that I know are going to vote for me.

Then we lose the other side.

The people who are politicians have to be voting, have to know that they represent everyone and have to be concerned about everyone.

And, you know, when you divide up your lines you make that work so that everyone is involved and everyone knows not to skip the vote because it will matter.

Thank you.

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

Four.

>> Good evening my. Name is Rick. I'm a resident of South Haven. Thank you for your work and the opportunity to speak this evening.

I'm here to ask you to consider information that will allow citizen sharing common interests and concerns to be represented in Lansing and Washington D.C. by people that best understand and live with these same issues on a regular basis.

My community, and those facing similar challenges, are currently being represented by individuals that are not able to completely understand the factors impacting lives of our residents.

The southwest coast of Michigan including South Haven, St. Joe and as far south as New Buffalo confront similar challenges facing all Michigan residents. However, the factors contributing to our issues are unique to the lakeshore area. And the citizens of our communities will be best represented by someone who lives and works in our area. Lakeshore erosion, beach preservation, local control of short-term rentals, developing affording housing, allowing workers to live in the same community where they work. Revising the tourism economy and creating that jobs that attract, maintain and provide wages for seasonal and year-around workers are but a few of the issues regarding knowledgeable representation for reasonable and appropriate solutions. These are not issues that more inland communities, even in the same county, can contend with. And they, like us, should be represented by someone familiar with their issues.

Minority representation is another important factor.

Current Southwest Michigan electoral maps divide communities of color. A map that will bring together the larger African/American communities of South Haven, Benton Harbor and Covert will allow all citizens to realize more fair and equitable representation leading to policies benefitting the greater community, providing more diverse representation at all levels of government is important. Electoral maps that bring communities together rather than divide them apart should be a priority.

When drawing the new electoral maps, please consider the southwest lakeshore area as a community of interest.

A map that brings together these communities will provide more equitable and inclusive representation and allow us to be more...and allow more responsible to preserve our lakeshore communities so they can be accessed by people across Michigan. Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you, Rick. For taking the time to address the Commission.

We appreciate you.

Five.

>> Hello.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Hello.

>> Just want to say I'm from Muskegon.

I lived here my whole life. And the biggest thing I want to talk about is the lakeshore, keeping the lakeshore together.

Newaygo is not the same. And I know other people have said it. I'm just going to reiterate the same thing. And try to keep the lakeshore together, Grand Haven all the up through Ludington. I'm not going to take the whole two minutes. That is my spiel. That's all I got.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: All that grand entrance and then.

Thank you so much for taking the time to address the Commission.

We appreciate that.

And, six.

>> Sorry about that, lost my name tag.

Good evening. My name is Jonathan Bird. And I currently live in Battle Creek, Michigan.

And I'm here again to talk with you guys about Calhoun County.

I've had the pleasure of living in Calhoun County my entire life, having growing up in Marshall and currently a property owner in both Albion and Battle Creek areas. I want to encourage you again to consider drawing fair State House districts, which includes Battle Creek and Albion in one district. And Marshall and the similar communities along M60 in the other.

I served on the Kellogg Community College Board of Trustees as a nonpartisan member since 2007. And we are proud to have campuses in both Battle Creek and Albion.

Battle Creek and Albion share similarities that make them jointly communities of interests. They are both long-time industrial towns. They have institutions of higher education. They both have significant minority populations, including partner branches of NAACP.

They have significant Catholic Parishes within the Diocese of Kalamazoo.

And both communities have Eastern Orthodox Church Parishes. Both communities have significant amounts of union members. And they are connected by the Kalamazoo River and included in the same watershed and are both connected by Michigan Avenue or M96 and I-94.

In regards to the other State House seat, having grown up in Marshall I want to highlight that the City of Marshall has far more in common with and similar communities of interests with the small, rural communities along M6, including Athens, Tekonsha, Burlington, Union City and Homer. All these communities share similar interests and read the same weekly papers and share similar school districts.

While someone claimed the previous map is gerrymandered, the draw they used in Calhoun County in the State House is fair and represents our community well. Please be sure to consider the similarities of Battle Creek and Albion and Marshall and the communities along M60 as communities of interest in Calhoun County.

I would like to thank the Commission and look forward to sharing more thoughts with you. I'm grateful for your service to the people of the Michigan. Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you for taking the time to address the Commission and we will move to seven.

>> Good evening. My name is Michelle.

I live in North Muskegon, about ten minutes from here.

I wanted to say thank you for doing the important work that you're doing and thank you for hearing our comments.

I would -- I'm here to request that you group Muskegon County along with Oceana and Ottawa counties for several reasons. We have a very unique lakeshore as you know here which has special environmental impacts we need to consider.

It also has industry considerations that are very unique.

Such as fishing, tourism, our gorgeous lakeshore and seasonal employment, a large amount of seasonal employment rather than year around.

And short term rentals.

And issues that are very unique to the lakeshore such as the flooding that we've had for the last two years, people losing their homes to the lake, and whole neighborhoods not being able to be accessed.

So, again, I'm requesting you keep the lakeshore community together.

And allow us to have representation from people elected from here that understand those important issues. Thank you.

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

I'm going to call eight.

>> Good evening. My name is Betsy Ann.

And I'm from the 102nd District, which looks like this. I'm from Mecosta County.

I would advocate for the 102nd District to be drawn Mecosta County with Isabella. The 33rd to be drawn Mecosta, Isabella with Clair and Gratiot County. And my biggest concerns are the watershed and other concerns about the Great Lakes.

This shows an outline of Michigan and how we have the effect of harmful algae blooms from the farm livestock runoff and fertilizer runoff, and that's a concern.

We need to protect our wonderful watershed.

And I'm concerned about injection wells in Michigan.

We have a lot of them in the middle of the mitten.

There is more up here. There is 1400 injection wells in Michigan.

And that is injecting chemical and radioactive waste from fracking wells. And this is in a subterranean storage that is really not quite that reliable and not easy to track.

And the first time many people know about it is because their wells are contaminated.

And we want to protect our Pine River, Chippewa River, Muskegon River, all rivers running to the Great Lakes.

And I'm concerned in our western part of Mecosta County we have a Nestle Perrier water plant. And they are bottling water and at a rate faster than our watershed can recharge itself. And they are making billions and nearly paying nothing for it.

In a case in point is what happened when Flint residents were unfortunately subjected to drink unpotable water and were forced to buy the water from Nestle at great profit. And I want to finish by saying this sacrifices local watersheds for private profit and plastic pollution. Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you so much for taking the time. And thanking you for taking the time to show us those maps and express your community of interest. If, like the last public comment, you have things that you would like to give us or you're referring to, you can. You don't have to wait to submit them online. If you have them and it's something you are willing to part with, you can share.

But, again, utilize our public comment tool to get all that good stuff in terms of the different areas you are speaking of today.

I'm going to call nine, ten, 11 and 12.

If the odds want to come to the left, and I know I just messed it up.

Come to where you are comfortable first, that's what I always say.

But if you are already dancing and moving, the odds are on the left, the evens are on the right. And it's because we are keeping things sanitized and we can keep the flow if you are kind of moving and we are giving her some sit-down time too.

So nine, ten, 11, 12, odds on the left, evens on the right.

If you're comfortable walking and standing, do that.

If you need to sit, please do that first.

Nine, you're at the mic, you can begin.

>> Thank you.

My name is Jessie.

And I live in Mecosta County.

As you draw the lines for the State and Federal districts, I hope you keep in mind this vital fact: The Great Lakes system is the largest source of freshwater in the world and holds approximately 22% of the planet's freshwater.

Lake Michigan is the largest body of freshwater entirely within the boundaries of the United States.

I found this information on Michigan.gov by the way.

My father and mother chose to move to Michigan for the lakes and the rivers.

As avid hunters, fishers and outdoors enthusiasts, my family relished the beauty of pristine quality of the state. I will never forget my family members cheering when we saw the welcome sign, welcome to Michigan,

The water winter wonderland.

My community of interest is the Pine Chip Community.

It is a part of many lakes and river in Mecosta, Isabella, Clair and Gratiot Counties. And together we can help us maintain the Muskegon River Watershed and the Pine and Chippewa Rivers which are part of the Saginaw River drainage basin.

I along with so many others realize how important it is to preserve, protect and restore and keep sustainable use of our waterways.

Whatever we flush, fill up and drain into our Great Lakes, affects us all in a myriad of ways.

Healthy waterways will add to our economy for today and for our future generations.

We are after all called to be stewards of this great earth. Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Jessie, thank you for sharing your comments with the Commission.

Ten.

>> Hello.

My name is Bridgett Fox. And I'm a resident of Grand Haven and Ottawa County.

I have lived on our Michigan west coast for over 40 years.

I would like to thank each of you for serving on this Commission.

Your hard work and dedication have not gone unnoticed.

I am very much a supporter of proposal two.

I was so pleased to see that the recommendation of the redistricting process committee is to start from scratch when drawing District maps.

This is what the citizens of Michigan have been waiting for.

I believe this is a fair, unbiased way to approach your work.

Thank you for that.

As I mentioned, I live in Grand Haven.

Yet I worked right here in Muskegon, another lakeshore community.

I shop in Muskegon as much as I shop in Grand Haven. I go to the symphony in

Muskegon. I eat out in Muskegon. I cross country ski in Muskegon. I took classes in

Muskegon. I have a daughter and grandchildren who live in Muskegon.

I have friends in Muskegon.

Muskegon is very, very close.

It is connected.

It is part of my home.

Though in different counties, these two cities are joined at the hip by the dunes, sandy cost line.

The industry, tourism, lifestyle and lumbering history are common.

The community is dependent on this lakeshore.

Grand Haven and Muskegon, along with the other lakeshore communities, makeup a significant community of interest, the Lake Michigan west coast.

We need governmental representation that understands the values and interdependence of this natural resource.

We need districts that share the common bond of the shoreline.

It is the life blood of our community.

Farmland and orchards exist in both Ottawa and Muskegon County.

These communities are at the east of the counties, away from the lakeshore.

These rural areas have different needs than the lakeshore and should be represented differently.

Again, I would like to thank you for your time and for listening to me today.

I appreciate your work.

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

11.

>> Hi. My name is Kim.

I live in Jenison, which is in Georgetown. Thank you very much for giving us the opportunity to speak with you today.

I want to speak simply to the east side of Ottawa County.

Georgetown is right against the Kent County line, so Georgetown is Jenison, Hudsonville, Allendale, that area.

We are hoping that the east border of Ottawa County stays intact and that no District lines would cross us into Kent from Georgetown Township.

We identify very much as Ottawa County.

The Grand Valley State University is an anchor for us for entertainment, for sports, for education.

And we have different environmental concerns than our friends in Kent.

And we certainly identify as lakeshore even though we are the furthest point east.

So we are hoping that you will very carefully consider that county line.

My personal feeling is our needs are so significantly different, particularly in terms of things like the water table, which is a very big issue for us right now. PFOS is a bigger problem for us than it is in Kent, that it would be kind of tricky to represent all of those communities of interest.

So we hope you will consider that line.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with the Commission.

12.

>> Good evening. My name is Talia and I live in the northern part of Muskegon County.

And I have actually two points and a lovely visual for you.

My first is being that we are in the northern part of Muskegon County, my community of interest is everywhere from Muskegon, all the way up to Ludington.

This lakeshore is important.

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We go to church in Oceana County. My daughter takes ballet in Ludington. We shop and we frequent businesses all the way from Muskegon to Ludington. These people are our friends, our neighbors. And we all share the same common interest. So I would urge you to look at that and consider as you draw your maps.

I also want to talk about Muskegon County as well.

Because what we have done in Muskegon County is draw our communities of interest because our County is very diverse.

We have the urban cities right in the middle.

We have recreation and tourism up to the north.

We have agricultural.

We have suburban and commercial to the south.

And so we have drawn those lines within our county itself to represent those communities of interest. So I would urge you as well to consider those types of communities of interest, both at the local level and then larger at the District level. And if it's all right I do have a copy of my pretty map. I would love to share with you as well. Thank you for your time this evening.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you for taking the time to address the Commission. And we will definitely take a look at these maps that you have for us.

13, 14, 15 and 16.

13, 14, 15 and 16.

>> Hello.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Hello.

>> I'm Kathy and I have the auspicious honor of being number 13. And I'm speaking of the west side of Allegan County, which is along the lakeshore, and it's the Blue Star Highway and M-89 corridor.

And this encompasses Saugatuck, Douglas, Washington Township, Ganges Township, Casco Township and the Community of Glen.

We are all bound together, A, by the lakeshore and the dunes.

And a long history of tourism, that is our primary economy.

We have in the Tri-Community area of Douglas, Saugatuck Township we have the district library, fire authority, sewer and water authority, Tri-Community Planning Agreement, Kalamazoo River Association, Coastal Dunes Alliance, Lake Michigan Shoreline Association, and a lot of different parts of the community all working together for a lot of different reasons.

We also have many parks and nature preserves along the Lake Michigan shoreline in our little Section of Allegan County.

What we do not have, however, is a real common cultural bond with our neighbors to the north,

In the City of Holland and Grand Haven. And we love our neighbors but we are just not the same kind of people.

So we would appreciate it if when you're looking at the lines, because this happened once in the past. Allegan County was split in half and the northern part of the area where I live, we were put in the second District with Ottawa County and Grand Haven and all that stuff.

And but southern part of Allegan County was put into the sixth District with all of the neighbors to the south, which the area that I live in does identify with more closely. And I've used up my time talking too much.

Please look up Blue Star Highway and M-89 corridor.

I did draw a map and I put lots of information in there.

Thank you very much all of you for all the things you are doing.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with the Commission.

14.

>> Hello. My name is Wes. First, I just want to say thank you for all the immense time and effort you all are putting into this. I imagine it's a lot.

I came here to speak because I'm from Norton Shores in Muskegon County to talk about putting similar counties in similar groups of interest in the same area. And we have much more in common with Grand Haven and Ludington in the state Senate District than we have with the more rural farm communities. And the reason that is important is because the interest of a voter in a suburban area or an urban area is much more similar to that of each other than a rural area.

And so for the 91st District we do a gerrymandered, backward C around the City of Muskegon. And so for us it would make more sense to be in something with Grand Haven, Norton Shores, Muskegon.

The other thing is it is important to make sure that we aren't following the traditional County lines as districts have done in the past.

It's more important to follow a community of interest rather than say we need to make this fit perfectly inside this County, this County. And on the western and northern parts of the state you have seen over the years in every District map, and we like to draw them inside counties and make them look nice. And I think it's important to look at the Districts that are similar, just because a County ends there it does not mean a City five minutes away from the other where Norton Shores and Grand Haven are five, ten minutes away, they are in completely different districts in State Senate and State House. And they are very, very similar versus the top half of my State House or State Senate District, which can be 30 minutes or 50 minutes away.

So in my view we should make sure that they are in similar areas if they are similar communities of interest. And thank you again for all that you do and all the time you put into it.

I really appreciate it and have a great rest of your day.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Wes, you have a great rest of your day and we appreciate you taking the time to speak to the Commission.

15.

>> I'm Deede from Newaygo County, which is just right next to Muskegon County. But we very much do associate with the lake counties also.

We have a strong connection to the lakes.

But we are a little more rural.

But I'm here to encourage the Commission to keep the present lines of this State, House and Senate in this area.

Please don't split neighborhoods or counties or townships if it's at all possible.

Please don't use highways or roads as dividing points, which could split municipalities and cause lines that don't make sense.

Straight lines are usually most effective and they fall in line with service organizations and churches and areas of community involvement. So the lines we feel right now, the present lines that we are living with, within Newaygo County connected to the lake counties, we feel those lines are very fair and should remain that way.

Thank you all very much for the work that you're doing.

I know it's a lot of work.

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

16.

>> Good evening. My name is James Reinhardt. I live in Spring Lake in Ottawa County. I grew up in Benton Harbor, St. Joe Area for 22 years and then moved up to Mt. Pleasant, went to school, and came down to Ottawa County and lived in Ottawa County, Muskegon for 46 years.

I just would like to say that I believe that I'm really pleased that we are not going to see any gerrymandering in this state, I would assume anymore.

And I would also like to say that I believe we want to do districts that take the politics and all of the information that they are telling you, you got to have this and this and this, just draw lines vertical, horizontal lines, up and down, left to right. And if there is any bit of changing, okay, you can make it, you know. You will have squares and you don't have to worry about, oh, is Allegan County like Ottawa County, or whatever.

You just draw the lines straight up and down and get everyone in them and you will be done.

You don't have to take political participation out of it, okay? And try to get the same number of people. I don't know how you're going to do all that everywhere because right now the Upper Peninsula and half of the Northern Michigan is all one area; is that correct? Right? Because there is not enough people up there, or whatever; but they still have their views that need to be said.

Allow that.

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And just make it easier rather than more difficult with all of the different things that you have to come up with.

That's all I have to say.

Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you, James, for that bit of advice and encouragement. We will make sure that we call you specifically when we draw those tick tack toe lines. 17, 18, 19 and 20.
17, 18, 19 and 20.

>> Good evening. I'm Vern from Holland Township, Ottawa County. Thank you for this hearing and the opportunity that we have to communicate with you. The Commission process is new for everyone, from the committee, the Michigan legislature and all the voters in the state.

There is lots of assumptions that this process will be a better method to serve the community, citizens' expectations and restore some common sense to the representative model.

The test of those inspections will be the results of your work.

Maybe if both political parties dislike, you might be on the right track.

May this process be a model of honor and respect and that principles and values prevail.

Geographic boundaries are fair and needed.

They are hard evidence and easy to understand.

But I'd also like to give you some feedback as I've talked to a few people about this process and what's going on.

And here is some of the questions and their statements that they have.

It's hard to identify a governmental person who you can trust.

What is truthful? The bitterness between parties is uncalled for and drags down everyone.

Making rules and then reversing them is really inefficient.

The rules of the people must be protected.

Integrity and trust must be maintained.

Is it true that this committee is controlled by the Secretary of State Benson? Is it true that a decision is already made which disregards the area boundaries? And community groups of interest will be used as districts for representation? Are records kept, given to all the members and available to the public? Do you have time and progress goals? Are there limits to what this Commission can establish as represents for the state?

Time is up.

But the process is more important than the net few things.

And we like our neighbors.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Vern, thank you for taking the time to address the Commission. 18, yes, 18.

>> 18.

My name is David.

I'm from West Olive, Michigan in Ottawa County.

I'm here to advocate for a criteria I believe should be above communities of interest.

I volunteered to be one of you.

Because our democracy is at risk.

I am a proud progressive democrat. And I'm also speaking on behalf of moderate republicans.

Lincoln republicans.

Even republicans in name only.

Moderates are an endangered political species.

Gerrymandering is largely why. Representative democracy depends on people who are willing to compromise.

Competitive districts empower the middle.

The rational.

The sane.

There is no more important standard by which I will judge your work than the creation of the largest possible number of the most competitive districts possible on as many criteria as possible.

I consider creating safe districts of any kind as a sin against democracy and a slap in the face of all the people who work so hard to create this body.

Competitive districts empower the middle.

The middle is the only place we can meet.

I was not chosen for this.

You were.

Thank you for serving.

Don't screw this up.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you so much for addressing the Commission.

It's our endeavor that we make some people happy. But, above all, that we do the right thing and we are transparent in the process.

So, with that, let's hear from 19 and 20, you can kind of standby.

>> A District made up of all short people anyway.

Hi. My name is Ellen. And reside on Fruitport, Michigan which is on the border between Ottawa and Muskegon Counties literally.

And as a previous speaker mentioned, we go between Grand Haven and Spring Lake and Muskegon County all the time for shopping, recreation.

I don't want to talk about the House Districts, but rather the State Senate District as it currently is configured.

And I would suggest that we remove Newaygo County because it's rural and then add Mason County, which is up to Ludington.

And also add Spring Lake, Ferrysburg and Grand Haven and Grand Haven Township. Besides the fact these areas are more suburban and have little in common with Newaygo, we are all bonded by the lakeshore as our Chair pointed out. She had a hard time getting away from the water.

Our communities are heavily dependent on tourism for the success of our economies. In fact, I counted and we have eight state parks from here up to Ludington and on the lakeshore.

The populations of these communities along with Muskegon, Oceana and Mason County would create a Senate District of the requisite 260,000 people to be comparable to other districts.

Finally, and I want to echo the previous speaker, the purpose of elections is to educate, present people with clear options and inspire debate about ideas. When a District is drawn in such a way that one party has a lock on the outcome, where elections are decided in primaries by a very small group of voters, we lose the opportunity to elect the very best candidate to represent the majority of voters. I would hope that you will find a way to create districts that are competitive and fair so people will get excited about the process again. And I want to thank you. And thank you for your service.

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

20.

>> Hello, my name is Cindy.

I'm here from Mason County to request that the new redistricting map leave Mason County intact and whole so that we may continue to work together for our common social and economic interests.

Mason County is within District two, bordered on the west by beautiful Lake Michigan and comprised of many resort communities, supported by tourism.

We are bordered on the east by verdant agricultural areas and on the south by manufacturing.

Mason County echoes this mix.

With Mason County as the City -- within Mason County is the City of Ludington, the County Seat. It's a rural resort community bordered by Lake Michigan on the west. And again, verdant agricultural land to the east and manufacturing to the south. And within Ludington is Hamlin Township, which is splintered into two precincts, which makes no sense to the citizens or the Township manager.

People are unsure of which group they belong to and it thwarts our sense of community and cooperation in our common social and economic interests for our Township. It's awkward.

We ask that any redistricting required for changes in the population be done with great care to allow Mason County to remain whole, to protect the unity we have and

preserving the scenic character of our area on which tourism depends, as well as our water quality and our sensitive wildlife environments.

Please do your best to leave District 2 and Mason County intact so that we may continue to work together for our common social and economic interests.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you for taking the time to address the Commission. 21, 22, 23, and 24.

>> Good evening. My name is Lorette. I'm from Ottawa County and I'd like to say that Ottawa County epitomizes Pure Michigan.

It's a tourist destination for a reason.

Some of you may not know, but we have two cities in Ottawa County that are in the top ten places in the entire United States to live, Grand Haven and Holland.

And there is a reason for that.

We have -- it's because of Ottawa County I would like, by the way, to remain intact from Grand Haven all the way to Holland and across.

We have parks everywhere.

I live in Mississippi for 21 years.

When I came to Holland, I couldn't believe all the parks.

We had no parks.

We had no place for kids to play.

There are playgrounds everywhere. There are parks everywhere. There are hiking trails. There is fishing, camping, everything you can imagine for families.

We have family values that we hold dear.

I have six children, five of whom were able to remain in Ottawa County and wanted to remain here and raise their families because of the most beautiful place to live.

We have lakes.

We have the Great Lake.

We have Macatawa, fishing,

Anything they want to do they can do here.

We have incredible recreational activities in every single Township.

They can play soccer.

And the we have soccer fields everywhere.

We have baseball fields everywhere.

Anything you can imagine is here.

The economy is phenomenal.

They can find jobs.

They can enjoy being here and so I would like it to remain intact.

I have -- I would definitely not want Grand Haven taken away.

Grand Haven is just as close to Holland and all the shopping and Allendale and all the shopping as it is to Muskegon.

So one of my kids lives in Grand Haven and one in Allendale. So thank you very much for being here. And please come and visit Holland. We would love to have you.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: All right. We appreciate the invitation. And thank you again or thank you for sharing about Ottawa County.

22.

>> Good evening, Commissioners.

My name is Charity and I live in Holland right in Ottawa County.

I just wanted to say that Ottawa County is a wonderful, thriving community and it is a great place to call home.

Ottawa County has a unique heritage and values that also spread beyond its borders to neighboring counties.

Holland is by the border of Ottawa and Allegan County. And Saugatuck, which is in Allegan County, relies on Ottawa County tourists as well. Ottawa and Allegan County should be placed together on a Congressional level because of the economic and regional ties. Commuters also travel between Ottawa and Muskegon County. So it is practical that Muskegon and Ottawa County be kept together on a Federal level.

It is also crucial that Ottawa County be kept whole at both the State and Federal levels for the sake of both communities along the lakeshore and fair District lines.

Thank you for your time.

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

23.

>> Hi. My name is Joey Andrews. And I just want to echo what so many people here have already said today, that the lakeshore are communities along Lake Michigan are community of interest. We differ dramatically from pretty much everything from by as much as 15 or 20 miles. And you can stretch pretty much from New Buffalo in the south all the way up to Petoskey and even Mackinaw City in the north and find all along the coast there communities that share tourism, second homeowners that are dealing with lakeshore erosion, short-term rentals, issues that are fairly unique to those regions and that are not well represented by people who are not from those communities and don't understand those issues.

So just to echo that one more time.

Do your best on both the House, the Senate level to keep those lakeshore communities with each other.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you, Joey, for taking the time to address the Commission.

24.

>> Good evening. Welcome to Muskegon. My name is Michael. And I'm from here in Muskegon County.

I want to thank you all for coming here and giving us a chance to speak to you and to give you our opinions.

I came from the other side of the state 38 years ago to here.

I found that along the lakeshore communities we all pretty much in the same love of our lake, of our tourism, of our communities.

Please try to keep the lakeshore together as much as you possibly can.

And I don't envy you one little itty bit because you are about to have to recut a jig saw puzzle.

I wish you the best on that.

Keep the numbers as close as you can so that everyone has equal representation at the polls.

Have a wonderful night.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you, Michael. And you have a wonderful evening and thank you for addressing the Commission.

25, 26, 27, and 28.

Again, if at any time I call your number and do not feel you have to stand the entire time. 25.

>> Hello. My name is Steve Markman. I'd like to make several points.

I thank the Commission for their efforts. And I think almost all of the people of Michigan are very appreciative of those.

First of all, on behalf of Hillsdale College where I've taught part time for many years, I've been requested and I have put together a response to the University of Michigan report.

I've done that because we notice that it had the infra matter, Secretary of State as well, so we thought it was a report worth responding to. And we shared it with you, and, obviously, hope you will take a look at it and consider its analysis.

In particular, we find the University of Michigan/Secretary of State report to be deficient in not assessing the context of the community of interest.

There are a number of Michigan Supreme Court decisions that gave meaning to that term. And we urge you to look at that meaning because we think that meaning is far more in accord with what Hillsdale believes that the community of interest ought to resemble, namely the borders of counties, cities, townships and villages and even some of the geometric understandings that my predecessor spoke about, rather than communities of interest based upon things like interest groups, affinity groups, identity groups and such.

We think one should get involved in the latter kind of consideration. Inevitably you will get increasingly, deeply involved in what are political considerations. And when you do that, we think that the integrity of the whole enterprise, a remarkable part of the

constitutional enterprise that we are engaged here is risked. And by that, I mean that the great achievements that people look for in this process and into gerrymandering and into self-interest, distributing and into partisanship are all threatened.

And we urge you again to look at our report to see the details of why we think that that's the case.

Finally, the principle mission of this constitutional experiment is to replace an interest to the legislature with a non-interested citizenry who stand apart from the legislative and political process.

We hope you will closely bear that in mind. If you do, this will be a great success.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you for taking the time to address the Commission.
26.

>> Hello. My name is Tim Cross. I live in White Hall, which is about 20 minutes north of here.

And I want to say thank you for being here.

I can't imagine what you guys have to do, all that you're going to have to do.

I know this is a tough job.

And I'm a pastor in this area.

I've been a pastor here in Muskegon for 37 years.

And I almost think I need to pray you guys need the wisdom of Solomon to know how to split this thing appropriately.

I can't imagine that.

But I pastored in Muskegon 37 years. I had a second church up in Ludington. I've worked a great deal with a church down in Holland. And I guess I say all of that to somewhat echo what's already has been said. I believe that it's very important that we keep especially Muskegon Oceana and Ottawa, maybe even up to Mason County, that the lakeshore have that community of interest.

I've hunted. I fished and ran dunes and walked up dunes, drove over dunes, that is just part of the lakeshore.

And plus our economies are very well mixed together just in terms of tourism up and down the lakeshore.

And I think that we have learned to work together. And maybe I get a little bit concerned if things go too far especially towards Grand Rapids. I love Grand Rapids, but I know sometimes when you get a very large area mixed with a smaller community, a lot of the focus goes to the larger city than it does to the smaller communities.

And we have some great cities.

We've got some great communities up and down the lakeshore. And I know I'm sort of echoing what has been said, but I would really encourage you to keep, at least on the Federal level and maybe the Senate level, the lakeshore counties together because we are a community of interest.

We have the same problems.

We deal with some of the same issues, and I would really encourage you on that.

Once again, I will be praying for y'all.

You have that baby to split all over the place. So good luck and I trust you have the wisdom to do that. Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you, Tim, for your trust and for representing your community of interest.

We appreciate that.

Can we hear from 27?

>> Good evening. My name is Tim.

I'm from Muskegon Township.

Thank you for this opportunity to address you.

One of the things that I think was attested to by the comments of many of the people who came before me is this specialness of water to Michigan.

It is the thing that makes Michigan what it is.

One could very well say that our dependence on water, in this state makes us all part of a single community of interest.

Now, if we start from that standpoint, how does that provide a mechanism for dividing us up into districts? Well, in the handout that I've given you, there is a map that shows that the U.S. geologic survey has divided this state into roughly 60 water basins. And that is a comprehensive mapping of the entire state.

The strategy I'm proposing is that we could derive head count for each of these water basin units using information from the 2020 census linked to County GIS data.

Units with similar surface water and land use futures can then be combined to form the 13 new Congressional districts that are needed.

So the idea, the simple idea here is that we take water use and water as a primary kind of concept from which we construct the mapping from the base level up.

For example, one particular District might consist of a dozen watershed units such as the Muskegon, Pere Marquette and Manistee and so forth.

The proposed strategy, I provided a copy of these maps in the portal as well for you to find.

The strategy would produce a set of Congressional districts without a hint of political bias.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Tim.

>> While at the same time, affirming the vital interest of water. Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Your allotted two minutes has ended, but please submit the strategy on the public comment portal. And we will definitely look at what you gave us this evening.

28.

>> Hi, my name is Tim,

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Seems to be a trend around here, Tim.

I'm a board member of an organization called ROAD, which stands for Reviving American Democracy, which I believe is the reason we are all here.

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

Several of our board members have taken your excellent seminar on how to use District R, the web tool.

And we then as a group tried our hand at drawing a map.

And shared it with our fellow citizens last night at the Montague City Hall. Hi, MC.

He was there.

It's based on our -- your three criteria for a community of interest, cultural and historical characteristics and, of course, economic interests.

We will be passing out our map, which, of course, we call our roadmap.

And here is our thinking behind it.

First of all, like much of the State of Michigan, our community is dependent on tourism, on summer people.

Of course, they don't vote in our elections.

But their spending gets us full time residents through the cold, hard winter when revenue is tight.

Our form of tourism is a function of our location.

In other words, water sports, boating, and fishing. And in addition to our environment invites camping and biking.

This is not to say that agricultural is not an important part of our community, because it is.

It's just that it does not include as many voters as the tourist industry does.

The second characteristic that we weighed heavily is more of a cultural one.

Am I done?

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Tim, your allotted two minutes has ended.

>> Okay.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: As always, our public comment portal site is www.Michigan.gov/MICRC.

If you're someone that does not have easy access to the Internet or you are willing, again, to part with your comments today,

You can actually physically, as you have seen, give us anything that you have prepared.

That was me deciding on, okay, 29, 30, 31 and 32.

29, 30, 31 and 32.

>> And, 29, go ahead.

>> Thank you.

Welcome to Muskegon County.

Appreciate you being here.

My name is Gary.

I'm from the City of Norton Shores.

I'm actually the mayor of the City of Norton Shores and have somewhat of a different perspective. I think there has been lots of great comments about the Federal level, how you are doing that. And don't wish to really speak to that. I'm interested on a smaller level and how the communities of interest are determined and would just encourage you to look at combining or continuing to combine the Cities of Norton Shores, Fruitport Township, Spring Lake Township, and perhaps Spring Lake as we continue to work on a governmental level on many projects. We have combined school districts.

We share a state park.

We have, share a large commercial district, Harvey Street. And we work well together. And we would just encourage you as you look at the map and that we keep these communities together, that we can continue to do the work that we are doing on so many local governmental levels. And keeping us in separate districts isn't necessarily leading to us working well together, so appreciate that.

And certainly don't relish the work you have to do, so good luck and thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you so much for providing your commentary to the Commission.

And 30.

>> Hi. My name is Joe Spaulding. I'm a Latino. I'm from Holland. I'm actually uniquely proud to be here because I was the strategist for Voters Not Politicians for prop two, their petition.

I am speaking only for myself.

As a Latino, obviously, that is a community of interest I have a personal stake in. And I have a lot of unique stories about growing up in this area.

My family is from Hesperia primarily, which by the way is split between Oceana and Newaygo Counties. I live in Holland now, which, by the way is split now between Ottawa and Allegan Counties.

And the most gerrymandered map is the history of Michigan is the county map. So I think we should consider the fact that the County lines were drawn a very long time ago by a certain set of people and a lot of voices were not heard when they were drawn.

The other thing besides looking at Latino demographic data at the Township level, because a lot of our communities in West Michigan are segregated at the Township level, is at the Federal level. I would like the Commission to consider the fact that the business interests in Holland and in Grand Rapids are uniquely unified.

And that when they are split between Congressional districts, that doesn't split their voice.

That gives them double the amount of voice in Congress.

And we need to consider the fact that the business interests between Holland and Grand Rapids might not come out to speak in favor of being unified at the Federal level because they understand that game is being played.

But they are a community of interest that should be grouped together because they are exactly what we are looking at when we are looking at the Commission from the beginning, which, by the law, is very clear in the order about things that they should be considered.

I do, I am proud of living in Ottawa County; but I do think we need to examine data at the Township level to get a clear look at what is going on, especially if you're not from there. Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: We appreciate so much you took the time to address your perspective this evening.

31

>> Thank you.

My name is Virginia Greenly. I'm from Holland, Michigan, Ottawa County.

I want to encourage the appropriateness in keeping together the lakeshore, as others have already, said and West Michigan counties.

We have similar waterfront concerns due to the changing water levels of Lake Michigan from year to year.

There is erosion concerns, beach and usage of parks with their maintenance and upkeep, the popular beach tourism and related industries.

For example, where I live there was a need to bring in huge sandbags and large boulders to protect the dunes from eroding into the lake the past two years.

Will others care if they are unaware? We have wooded dunes for which the acidic soil lends itself to being the blueberry capital that it is here, and for other crops to grow well here in our summers with long daylight hours.

The west side of Michigan is very different from east Michigan, which should have made a difference with the COVID-19 measures that were not customized, since we are not like the Detroit side.

We need to keep together the counties of Mason, Oceana, Muskegon, Ottawa and Allegan Counties intact. They are obviously geographically related and, therefore, economically associated counties, that make senses to keep intact. And thank you for being fair to our community footprints.

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

32.

>> Sherry, City of Grand Haven. I'd like to address the special needs like many before me about the lakeshore communities.

And the importance of having representation that understands the needs that are special to lakeshore, the legislature, the budgets that are important to these communities.

It's important that continuity of representation is maintained among these cities.

The economies of the lakeshore communities have similar needs and concerns including harbor maintenance, dredging, marinas with pleasure craft, charter and sport fishing the communities have to deal with the influx of summer visitors. And the can grow from 10,000 to 100,000 easily with a special event. And your infrastructure, your public safety, your restaurants, all have to be able to accommodate that influx. And yet when everybody goes home, then you have to deal with what, the normal 10,000 population.

It's important that representation understands these things, and the dynamics and the great influence that they have on the health and vibrancy of the communities along the lakeshore.

It's imperative the needs are understood and addressed by the representation.

It must be in the forefront of their thinking so that continuity of representation is ideal.

And even though the lake gets much of the focus of the area, industry and manufacturing are dynamic parts of Ottawa, Muskegon and the area with many unique industries, finding a home here and employees drawn from the local labor pool.

Agricultural is also a large part of the economies of Ottawa, Muskegon, Oceana Counties, being huge in the farming community with production of fruits and vegetables, nursery stock, which continues to grow at a large part of the interests and economic interests of this area.

The communities of these counties are tied closely historically and have a great working relationship, whether it involves tourism, manufacturing and agricultural. Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you so much for sharing your comment with the Commission. And I encourage you, whatever you are about to say, finish it on the public comment portal at www.Michigan.gov/MICRC.

33.

>> Hi. Besides being 33, my name is Don, and I'm not 33 in age. I live in Norton Shores.

And as other people have indicated, the lakeshore is one of the communities of interest. And it has to be noted that the lakeshore community of interest would be different boundaries with the U.S. House, Michigan Senate and the Michigan House.

So while I first grouped the lakeshore area from roughly the cities of Holland, Zeeland, north to White Lake, which includes Grand Haven, Spring Lake, Fruitport, Norton Shores Muskegon Heights and Muskegon, White Hall and Montague, those are some of the areas that could be in the community of interest.

And I say they are sharing a community of interest because they share cultural, historical, economic, and environmental interests.

And then people living along the lakeshore travel up and down the lakeshore to their jobs.

They are affected by rising and falling lake levels similarly. Homes on the shore are threatened by erosion up and down the shore. And the communities share in commercial shipping traffic, recreational boating and business opportunities.

And along the lakeshore there are recreational connections of parks, green spaces, and bike paths.

Officials need to look at a greater sharing of resources such as police and fire protection, which could result in better services at a reduced cost to the community. And the lakeshore has been developing parks along the shore, and these need to be made accessible to all of the segments of the community regardless of economic status.

While much progress has been made at developing bike paths, these paths need to be connected to allow exploring the coastline safely.

Public transportation within the lakeshore is disjointed and does not allow easy movement between cities, villages and counties along the shore.

Keeping the lakeshore community intact would enable the representative to focus on the needs of the lakeshore.

Thank you very your time.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you.

And if there is no objection, at this time I would like to take a ten-minute recess so folks can take care of themselves and stretch and walk around, whatever you need to do in those ten minutes, that is up to you.

Hearing no objection, we will return at 6:37.

Don't leave.

Stick in there and hear your fellow citizen out.

[Recess]

>> CHAIR KELLUM: There is a lot of excitement and information in the room, that is a good thing, but let's find our way back to our seat.

As Chair of the Commission, I call this meeting back to order at 6:40 p.m.

For purposes of the public record, I will now turn to our fabulous Michigan Department of State who is ready for a roll call.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Hello again, Commissioners.

Please say present when I call your name.

If you are attending

the meeting remotely, please

announce during roll call that

you are attending the meeting

remotely. And unless your

absence is due to military duty,
announce please your physical
location

by stating the county, city,
Township or village and the
state from which you are
attending the meeting.

I'll start with Doug Clark.

>> COMMISSIONER CLARK:
Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT:
Juanita Curry.

>> COMMISSIONER CURRY:
Present

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT:
Anthony Eid?

>> COMMISSIONER EID:
present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT:
Brittini Kellom?

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT:
Rhonda Lange?

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

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT:
Steve Lett?

>> COMMISSIONER LETT:
Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT:
Cynthia Orton?

>> COMMISSIONER ORTON:
Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: MC
Rothhorn?

>> COMMISSIONER ROTHORN:
Present.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT:
Rebecca Szetela?

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>> VICE CHAIR SZETELA:

>> 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 KELLOM: Thank you, Michigan Department of State. Without objection, we will now resume our public comment. Hearing no objection, we will resume now our public comment and return with number 34.

>> Good evening, Commissioners. And thank you again for your service to the community and state. I genuinely appreciate what you are doing here. Over the last 30 to 40 years, the Michigan labor community has seen a gigantic disparity in wages versus the cost of living, and in no small way the way that Michigan districting has been drawn is as a result.

I'm here representing two communities. First of all, I represent 14 skill trades from Masons, plumbers, carpenters, pipefitters and other trades in the skilled labor community.

I also represent the West Michigan and Southwest Michigan Building Trades Councils.

I have two messages. First is for labor. The primary message that labor needs to send for Districting is we need competitive districts.

We are not here in a republican capacity or in a democratic capacity.

We need Congressmen and Senators who are sensitive and willing to listen to the needs of our membership.

Competitive districts is the answer to those things.

To that end, among other things, we need the communities of Muskegon and Grand Haven to be in similar districts.

We do not need Muskegon and Newaygo to be in similar Congressional districts. They are different communities. They have different needs. And they have different values and different attitudes towards labor.

When you are drawing communities, when you are drawing Congressional maps, please take in mind that the communities of Muskegon and Grand Haven have much more in common with each other than communities of Muskegon and Newaygo.

I appreciate your time and I appreciate what you are doing is unprecedented. And the first and there will be no other first commissions of this type, so I appreciate what you are doing and thank you for your work.

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

35.

>> Good evening.

My name is Phil Leach.

I live in Spring Lake Township.

I appreciate the work that you are doing.

And I want to say, first of all, I was one of nearly 10,000 people who applied for the position you're in.

So I'm very envious of you.

Secondly, I wanted to say that I have been active with Voters Not Politicians and your Commission as a result of the work of many thousands and thousands of people to bring this to the point.

I'm not going to get into communities of interest.

I just want to say that I know you will do a good job.

This is something that the State of Michigan can be proud of, that we have created this Commission.

And when all is said and done, I hope you talk to our legislatures about what work you are doing and how working together can get things done.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you, Phil, for sharing your perspective on a collaborative sphere and taking the time to address the Commission.

We appreciate that.

For purposes of the public record, 36 has chosen not to speak, which you all are perfectly allowed to do.

And we are going to move to 37.

I'm going to call those, 37, 38 and 39.

37, 38, 39 and 40.

37, you can speak.

>> Thank you, Commissioners.

I'm so thankful for you being here today. And we so appreciate what you are bringing to this process.

I want to speak on a subject that is similar to what others have spoken about, and that is the importance of the lakeshore as a community of interest.

Now, it's not just about the fact that we have a unique ability as members of this state to be able to show our family and friends from other communities where we live by using or anatomy.

We couldn't do that without the lakeshore.

But, of course, that's not why I'm here to speak to you today.

I want to talk about the unique interests that the communities of Ottawa County and Muskegon County have and how they should be kept together.

Not only are the things similar to what others have spoke about today related to tourism and industry, that is bordering along the lake.

But if you take a look at the United States Department of Agricultural Hardiness Zone Maps, these are maps specifically designed to help people in the agricultural industry to understand growing conditions.

There is a sliver of our state that has a whole different Hardiness zone. And that is important to you because it should speak to this idea of another industry, that of agricultural, that is unique to the lakeshore community.

I would strongly like to recommend that as you're considering through this very hard deliberation you have in front of you, you keep the lakeshore communities together as a cohesive community.

Now, if there is need to go north, we have a high connection with Oceana County as well and Allegan County as well.

But, again, I want to encourage the use and the consideration of the lakeshore as one cohesive community and District at the Federal level.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you for sharing your comment with the Commission.

38.

>> Hi. Hi Tim Meyer from Grand Haven Township.

I've got notes, but I'm going to wing it.

We used to have a State Representative in the Tri-Cities of Grand Haven, Spring Lake, Ferrysburg who I really liked.

He had been our school board president.

He was a professor at Grand Valley.

Very involved in our local community and see him at events.

Skip to where we are now.

The guy we have now you never see.

He's not from the Tri-Cities.

What happened in the meantime was our area grew less conservative over time.

In fact, if you take Spring Lake Township, Grand Haven Township, the City of Grand Haven and Ferrysburg, Barack Obama carried all that in 2008.

Similarly, Carl Levin could win that.

So the last time District lines were drawn, that got fixed by some precincts being removed from the District and other precincts that you won't see on your map easily, Blendon Township, a little town of Borculo, precincts that run 89% republican were put in the mix to fix that. So last time we had an open seat, our local republican candidate who had name recognition got beat by this guy.

Holland has its own representative.

This guy is not from Holland, but the other side of Holland, and had no community involvement there.

No one in our town knew him, but he beat the republican that was known by 30 points.

And the reason for that is Betsy DeVos, through the Great Lakes Education Project, funneled so much money in his campaign and mailers that he won that thing.

He beat me in the general election. Just full disclosure, I was the democratic candidate.

And he also beat the libertarian was there, too.

We never see him.

We haven't seen him in six years.

He doesn't come to Chamber of Commerce events. Bill Huizenga comes to a chamber breakfast and he is not there.

Looking forward to the results of your job and someone we can be proud of again.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you for addressing the Commission. And we will move to 39.

If we don't have 39, 40.

>> Hello. My name is Ben Spencer. And I hope you are enjoying it here in Muskegon.

I love living here.

It's amazing place.

I'd like to give you an example of lines drawn with bias in Muskegon County.

In Muskegon we have nine Commissioner districts that are supposed to average about 18,000 people each for the nine districts.

However, in their City districts they tend to include only 14-16,000 and rural areas include 20,000.

Excuse me.

That buffer, you know, the give or take from the 18,000 was clearly abused to consistently favor democrat districts.

Every two years our republican Commissioner districts are underrepresented by having up to 25 percent more people in the District but the same amount of representation.

I urge you not to play those same games because it all adds up.

And that's a lot of misrepresented people.

Please ensure also that our diverse districts are also represented fairly by not grouping urban and rural areas with the same State House districts.

We do not want to see cities split between both our State House districts.

We want both the urban communities to be represented and we want the rural communities to be represented because they live very differently.

I love the inner City of Muskegon and I love the rural.

And the people live different lives and they have different values. But it's not that they value things differently. They live their daily lives differently and they see things that others don't see.

So the people in the rural areas, they are going to see the issues that the people in the urban areas don't see and vice versa.

So we do need to make sure that each of them have that representation.

And they are not, you know, like someone suggested, having swing districts for the same of swing districts.

So thank you so much for your time.

If you get a chance go to the beach, watch a Sunset, it's amazing. Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you so much for addressing the Commission.

41.

Okay, if 41 decides to change their mind, 41, 42.

43 and 44.

My assumption is that this is 42.

You're 43? Okay, now what number are you?

>> He is 44.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: 44 so 41 and 42 we do not have.

And we will start with 43.

>> Good evening. My name is Ryan Bennett. Welcome to my beautiful hometown of Muskegon.

I appreciate the schedule where you guys kept the best side of the state for last.

And the words of the great American prophet Tupac Shakur, the west side is the best side.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Okay.

>> So I'm here to talk about a little bit about communities of interest.

Currently we are represented in the Senate by a gentleman John Bumbstead from Newaygo. We feel that that district could be more fairly drawn to include Spring Lake and Grand Haven. We have much more in common with them, as you have heard several times this evening.

So we ask you to consider that when redrawing your maps.

I really appreciate the opportunity as a voting member of the Michigan public to have a fair and nonpartisan maps being drawn for the first time in my voting lifetime. So I appreciate the work you do and thank you for coming up.

I hope you enjoy Muskegon.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you. And as my fellow Commissioner Cynthia Orton said you are a warm group and quoting Tupac. So 44.

>> Hello, Commissioners. Again, thank you for coming up here to Muskegon tonight. I hope after this meeting is done you all have a chance to get to the beautiful lake tonight.

I too am a lifelong resident here in Muskegon County and would like to speak about communities of interest.

Like many people have said, currently in the State Senate we are represented by a man from Newaygo, which is about 45 minutes inland from here in the State Senate. And that District would make a lot more sense and be a lot more connected community wise if it were to run from Grand Haven to Ludington, including Spring Lake and all of Muskegon County.

The same with the State House, including the tightly connected communities of Norton Shores, that of Grand Haven and Spring Lake, Muskegon Heights as well. Many people live here in Muskegon and work in Grand Haven. My dad commuted to Grand Haven across the very divisive draw bridge that seems to mess up everyone's traffic every day for 40 years.

And just like many of the other speakers, people do the exact inverse as well. Living in Grand Haven, coming up, to here.

As people have stated before we share parks, you can start in Muskegon County at Hoffmaster State Park and walk through public parkland to the Grand Haven channel or the Grand River.

The school districts overlap parts of the City of Muskegon or the City of Norton Shores and Grand Haven Public Schools. And it makes sense I think largely across the state to really look into the school districts to see how they impact the communities and use that as a guidepost to connect.

But even going up to Ludington, another beautiful beach front community with similar ethos and similar ways of life, as former industrial towns are now trying to work through what it is like to become a tourism based economy as the factories have all left Muskegon, Ludington and up and down the lakeshore. And now we are trying to become tourist communities. All right, thank you.

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

45, 46, 47 and 48.

>> Hello, I'm Margo from Montague, Michigan, which really shares a lot with White Hall. And I'd like to address communities of interest mainly in terms of Congressional districts.

Water divides people historically. And I would encourage you to have a look at this wonderful book by Dan Yates, two volumes, cross river rivals about Montague and White Hall. But water also unites us in life and in health.

And I support the gentleman who submitted the geological watershed map showing watershed connections.

It's a strong community of interest and increasing in importance. As we get big ag and pollution of waterways, we need to protect ourselves.

My second point, Muskegon itself as a County appears like a gerrymandered District. And so trying to follow County lines is connected with historical weirdness.

And in the case of Muskegon County, you might consider dividing it because of that.

And my third point, I'm strongly opposed to dividing Montague and White Hall away from areas to the north and Pine to Norton Shores, which, in a backwards C, is south of the City of Muskegon.

And City of Muskegon votes separately from White Hall, Montague, and Norton Shores, which are separated north and south. And so there is a backwards C for the District, which is also very strange gerrymander.

We have a lot of things in common with lakeshore areas to the south as you've heard. But we also have a lot in common historically and economically with areas inland that are fruit growers and small farms historically.

And Montague, White Hall really has no connection with Norton Shores.

Thank you very much.

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

46 please.

>> Good evening. And if anybody out there starts to laugh while I'm speaking it's because the one before me was my wife.

So full disclosure here.

My name is Bruce.

I live in Montague.

I served 8 years on the City Commission there and I'm in my fifth year serving on the ambulance board in that part of the county. I've also served on the library board and fire District board. So I've had eight years of governance in these local bodies.

That part of the County, the northern part of Muskegon County, functions I think quite independently from and differently from the remainder of Muskegon County. And so I would respectfully ask you to consider using the top tier, the top row of the Townships and meld us with counties to our north.

Possibly the top two tiers in Townships. But you must look once at your maps to see the detail. Separating us along Township lines will make a clearer demarcation. And it will be the accustomed demarcation that people, you know, vote from their Township supervisor, clerk, treasurer and so on.

And I think it will also be more reflective of some of the concerns you have heard earlier from other speakers tonight about urban and rural, about tourists and ag interests, small farms, and that sort of thing.

And I think you would find that at least that top row in Muskegon County, if not the top two rows, have probably more in common with the Oceana and Mason County areas than they do, for example, with the bottom row in Muskegon County, along Norton Shores.

Thank you.

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

47.

>> Hi. My name is Heather. I live here in Muskegon. And thank you for coming and thank you for your work.

I'm asking to end the practice of prison gerrymandering when you draw the District lines.

Michigan incarcerates over 38,000 people who are not allowed to vote.

Yet these people are included in the population, in the County where they are incarcerated.

Communities with prisons, therefore, have their political power inflated because their populations are inflated by people in prison who don't get to vote.

Rural areas specifically claim a significant number of incarcerated people as constituents.

They benefit from housing, people who have no voice in their own democracy.

I urge you to join the other 11 states that have ended the practice of prison gerrymandering.

Thank you for your time.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you so much for sharing your perspective on prison gerrymandering.

48.

48. All right, no 48 at the moment, so we will move to 49.

>> Hello. My name is Nancy Steer. I live in Norton Shores. And thank you for this opportunity to speak.

I think that all the District lines for Norton Shores should be redrawn. And I support proposal two, which asks you to start from scratch.

We are very much a victim of gerrymandering.

And I do agree with other people that it's a good idea to keep the lake front communities together.

But I also think that the urban communities should be kept together.

Muskegon County and Ottawa County have grown a lot in the last 20 years.

And the urban areas have different interests than the super rural areas like Newaygo County.

In Norton Shores I think we have a lot in common with Muskegon, that's our cultural center.

I think we should be lumped with Muskegon.

I agree also that Grand Haven and Ferrysburg and Spring Lake have grown a lot. They are becoming more urban areas. We have a lot in common with them.

And the mayor of Norton Shores mentioned that he thought that Grand Haven, Spring Lake, Ferrysburg and Norton Shores should all be lumped together. But what he failed to mention those are all white communities. And I submit that diversity is a good thing.

And I would think that the group, those cities would benefit from being part of Muskegon, which is the cultural center for this whole area.

Thank you for your time.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you for taking the time to address the Commission. 50, 51 and 52.

49, okay, thank you.

>> Hi. First, thank you for your commitment and time taking out of your lives to ensure elections are safe and fair to reduce gerrymandering for the people across the entire State of Michigan.

My name is Carina. I'm the Chairwoman of free peoples. I live in Ottawa County. But I'm a sixth grade teacher in Muskegon at a title one, low income school. And I'm speaking on behalf of the underrepresented.

We have been watching the meetings that have been taking place across the state and realized you all have so much to consider from each location you visited.

So, to make your task easier for our districts, over the past few months we at the free peoples have gathered people from representing State House districts 91 and 92, asking them to define a community of interest.

This was based on schools, hospitals, churches, existing neighborhoods, et cetera.

With that input we used the tool, the mapping tool provided by people not politicians to create a map that represents the people.

Once the maps were drawn, we went back to the streets and got over 200 signatures in support of these new districts.

These signatures have been sent to the committee. And I have originals here for you for your consideration as you redraw our maps.

Again, I know you have lots to consider, so I don't want to take any more time.

We are open for questions if you have any.

And we hope that you will use our community of interest maps to help you guide your process.

We look forward to your return with the new maps.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you so much for taking the time for that due diligence. I used to work in a school.

So thank you for taking the time to come out and address the Commission. 50, 51 and 52.

>> Good evening. Thank you. My name is Joy Bush. I'm from Muskegon County. I've lived here for my entire life.

I've worked as an attorney in the City of Muskegon for over 23 years, representing people of all different backgrounds, businesses, unions, you name it, all different socioeconomic backgrounds as well.

I'm here to address more of a micro level view of what we want to do going forward. And I believe more than just the lakeshore, but when you start looking at urban and suburban areas, we need to look more at I wouldn't say diversity is relevant.

We are focusing on is trying to get people that are communities of interest on a smaller level to make sure their voice is heard. But also, we have fair lines drawn politically.

You can divide things for diversity and still end up with a tilt one way or the other.

So the focus should be on how that comes out in terms of voting.

So it ends up being closer to a fair election.

If you look at Muskegon from a the 91st and 92nd District now, you have one District that predominately is competitive in the 91st. And then you have the 92nd, which is almost always slanted more of a democratic way and ends up being with a democratic candidate consistently winning that District.

So what I would suggest is I hope we can look at socioeconomic status and racial differences. We look at the urban areas. We look at the City of Muskegon and Muskegon Heights. They have a collective interest as a community of interest on a smaller level.

So however things get divided up, I believe those two areas should really stay together. They had -- predominately have the lower income individuals that reside there.

They have a tendency to work more in manufacturing than they do in other areas. And they also have a tendency to work within each other's community.

That is predominately also an area that is -- tends to be more African/American with higher levels there.

But regardless of race, the point is to try to keep people that have similar interests collectively together to get representation.

Thank you for your time.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you for taking the time to address the Commission. 51.

>> My name is Lada. And I currently live in Ludington, Michigan. However, I raised my family in White Hall and spent many, many years working in the Muskegon area. So I'm kind of covering it all.

Our County is represented by Congressman Huizenga in the second and Jack Burgman in the first District.

The second covers approximately three quarters of the county and the first one quarter. I would like to have the whole county return to the second District as it was before the last redistricting.

We are similar to Grand Haven, Muskegon, Pentwater, White Hall in our activities, jobs, tourism industries, agricultural, et cetera.

And can best be represented by the congressman serving like areas.

The first District is huge, covering all of Western Michigan north of Mason County including the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

Not only are our activities and needs not similar, but it's unrealistic to expect a Congressman representing this much territory to come to Mason County for a handful of constituents. Therefore, I again request that you consider returning all of our County back to the second Congressional District.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you for taking the time to address the Commission.
52.

>> Hello. My name is John. I'm from Muskegon.

Thanks for being here.

I would just like to express the opinion to you all that the goal of the redistricting should be to return us to every person's vote matters as much as everyone else's.

That elections, the outcome of elections should not be predetermined by how the lines are drawn.

And, therefore, would restore more democracy back to our kind of shaky democracy as it is now. So really, very simply, a group of related goals that get us back to one person, one vote.

I agree with the gentleman that was up here earlier that the lines should be generally straight lines at right angles from each other.

I know you are going to laugh and think it's not that simple but maybe it should be.

And that those districts should have approximately the same amount of registered voters within those districts.

That gets us back to a true democracy.

I think it's -- I didn't read the U of M study that the gentleman from Hillsdale University mentioned earlier, but I intend to.

He seemed to be paraphrasing in a way that suggested that to draw lines based on common interests and people who are like you is risky.

I don't know how you would ever accomplish that, how you would ever determine where a line is where all the people are the same or would you even want that? And, at worst, I think it might maintain existing powers of empowerment, disempowerment, Economic prosperity versus a lack of such prosperity and disenfranchisement.

So I guess, to sum it up, don't make this more complicated than it should be.

Thanks.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you so much for addressing the Commission.
53, 54, 55 and 56.

>> Good evening. I'm Susan and I'm from Mason County.
And I want to thank you all for your time and letting us speak.
Thank you very much.

Mason County is divided into two districts, as you have heard continuously tonight.
And I would like to see us put back as one District in the second District.
We have about a quarter of the County that goes to the north, to the first District and about three quarters of our County that goes to the south.
We are a lakeshore County.
We have a lot in common with all of the lakeshore counties.
Please put us back as one county.
We feel divided because we truly are.
Thank you again for your time.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you so much for taking the time to address the Commission.
54.

>> Hello. I'm Cindy Larson, Muskegon County. I do work for the Chamber of Commerce, but I'm not representing them today. I'm just a resident because this is a super complicated issue and good luck on all this.

On a macro level, agreeing with everybody here about the lakeshore.
We do not have much of a voice in Lansing or in Washington for that matter.
And the lakeshore has a lot of needs. And, again, with our capitol in the center they are all land people. So they really don't get what we have to go through on the lakeshore to protect the waterways and how the economy works.
A lot of the state incentives have to do with job creation, and the water doesn't have direct job creation.
It's all of the activity and the businesses around the water. And that is just not recognized right now in our state very well or not very well at the Federal level.

Micro level, that's going to be really tricky because as we just talked about the lakeshore goes north and south.

Well, micro level we have these watersheds and they kind of go east and west. And so these lakes that bring us together are also dividing us.

It takes a long time to get around the lake. So there are some issues there with how that works and why sometimes we are divided that way like the White Hall, Montague. White Hall one way and Montague the other. And at the same time, that lake does pull everybody together. So that is why we don't have a position on this because this is going to be a tricky one to figure out. I hope you study Muskegon County in detail and to understand again the urban, rural. And, yes, we love our diversity; but we also want to bring everyone together.

So less than two minutes.

Oh, and Muskegon is the most beautiful community in case someone earlier said it wasn't, but we are.

Good-bye. Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with the Commission.

55.

>> Hello, everyone.

I'm Josie James. I'm from Muskegon.

I'd like to first of all thank you folks for taking on this very difficult job.

I only had these few maps to do it.

I'm not really sure my brain is right yet.

This is all I have to say.

I did look at the maps very carefully.

I did some history.

I wanted to see how the maps looked before they were gerrymandered and how they looked afterwards.

So I kept it as simple as possible.

I did know all those little funky kind of things on the maps indeed happened because they threw the balance of representation off.

And so, you know, when we honored all the clean borders everything started coming, a lot of it, not everything, but a lot of it started coming back equally.

The only thing I can ask for is that we have the City of Muskegon and the City of Muskegon Heights.

It's the largest African/American population in West Michigan.

Diversity, of course, says its tributes. But, you know, also there is a sense of power when you keep communities of interest together.

And I know all of this is a very delicate balance.

But I'm going to leave it up to you folks the experts, and that's all I have to say about that.

Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Josie, we appreciate you taking the time and coming to speak with us this evening.

If you would like to give them to us, you can give them to us.

56.

>> Good evening. My name is Lawrence.

I'm a lifelong resident of Muskegon County, 32 year resident of downtown Muskegon. And a little disclosure, I'm a former elected official, having served four terms on the City of Muskegon City Council.

I'm going to take a different tack than some people have had because I think I agree with what everybody has said so far at the state level, that our community of interest more shifts to the south than the north when it comes to the State Senate.

Yeah.

We never see our state Senator or they are from Newaygo County. It's extremely rural. We are urban center. We are the largest City, close, we will see what the new census says with Holland as far as size on the lakeshore.

We have more in common with Holland than we will ever have with Fremont.

At the legislative level, again, you've heard about the backwards C.

Again, the urban district is split in two to create basically two safe districts, one for each party.

The outer District, the 92nd District, is pretty much democratic. The 91st District is widely republican, but has not elected a republican or a democrat in a very long time.

At the Congressional level, I think our community of interest is not just the lakeshore but it is the urban centers.

And the Metropolitan Area for this area is Muskegon, Holland to Grand Rapids.

When you look at the people who transfer back and forth between those three counties, every single day for work, we function very, very closely as pretty close to a single urban cluster.

And we are considered a Metropolitan statistical area by the Federal Government. And I think that should be taken into consideration as you go forward. Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you for taking the time to provide your commentary to the Commission.

57, 58, 59 and 60.

57, 58, 59 and 60.

And 57.

>> Hi. My name is Karen Palmer. I'm from Twin Lake in Muskegon County.

I don't have a lot of experience with statistics and economics and political analysis, so I'm glad that there are people like you who are willing to sit in those seats and analyze those things.

That is not my area of expertise.

So I'm going to speak on my personal experience instead.

For almost five years I was a member of Kent County search and rescue.

I was living in Twin Lake and having to drive almost every week somewhere in Muskegon County for our training, and sometimes for searches. So what I saw in that experience as that Kent County is very different from Muskegon County and a lot of ways.

Geographically, even the weather is different from traveling just an hour away.

They think differently than we do.

They behave a little differently than we do.

So I support the idea that the lakeshore communities should be districted together.

I like what the gentleman said previously what this boils down to is every vote, every legal vote should count exactly as intended. And then our representation should be a re-representation of the people.

That's what it all boils down to.

For me it's pretty simple in those terms.

I will, however, politely correct the gentleman when he said we are democracy.

We are not a democracy.

We are a republic.

I hope you kind that in mind.

Thank you for your time, and appreciate your time listening to all of us today. Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you so much. I think exactly what you shared is what you are supposed to, so don't worry about your knowledge of statistics.

This is not what these moments are about.

We are going to move to 58.

No 58.

Are you 58? 59, I'll take it come on.

>> Hello. I'm Jason, lifelong resident here in Muskegon County.

Also a Government teacher in this county, so I can really appreciate what you guys are doing. Shout out to Federalist Madison Federalist ten. This is where king George wrong by allowing all the people to speak and give their points of view.

The one thing I would bring regarding a community of interest, when you came into Muskegon and we mentioned the reverse C, growing up here my whole life Sea Way Drive that turns into Shoreline Drive behind you, growing up in the '70s and '80s was a 1,000 foot racial wall. And as I went through school and learned about the trouble in the south and all the things that went on in the civil rights movement and I rode my bike around this community and I thought we are no different. And in the late '80s and '90s than they were Birmingham, Alabama in the south.

And so it does explain the reverse C when you look at the map and 92nd versus the 91st.

Those communities, Muskegon and Muskegon Heights, I grew up in Muskegon, do deserve to be represented in that way.

And if you do look at the reverse C, it is mainly white.

And I went to the high school here locally in Muskegon and we were divided by Sea Way Drive.

I can give you history into red lining and all that kind of stuff. But, you know, it is something that has to be taken into account.

The other thing I wanted to give to you was I teach gerrymandering and redistricting at the classroom level, at the high school level.

And I know you can do compactness.

I know you can do contiguous and you can do population of quality. But when they mention competitive, good luck.

Because I think the term is more competitive.

It's going to be difficult given the geographic landscape of our state and where people have chosen to live with their communities that you would ever have 13 competitive districts.

Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you so much for sharing your insight with the Commission.

We appreciate that.

60, if you are in the room, I feel like I need to start saying that now, 60 if you are in the room, please approach the mic.

No 60.

Okay 61.

61 come on.

>> Thank you.

Having been -- I'm Dallas Deen. And I was born in Muskegon County. But my parents had a good sense to move to Newaygo County when I was six months old. And we are not that stupid.

Unfortunately, you elected the guy.

We didn't.

Well, okay, we did too.

I didn't.

But let me ask and point out some things to you folks, and that is Michigan is interconnected.

Mona Lake had a sewage problem, had E. Coli. Where did it come from? A large dairy farm in Newaygo County. When you look at the watershed for the Grand River, that goes through Grand Haven, it starts at Skipperville Lake, Grant Township. And I was on the Grant School Board and currently on the Newaygo County board of canvassers, yes, the Grant School District has two Townships in Muskegon County and part of one township and Kent County. And we are all interconnected.

And I would like to remind you of one other thing, and don't know how much time we have had, but when we had a flood in '86 we almost lost Hardy Pond. And Hardy Pond is the largest earthen dam west, I mean, of the Mississippi River. The wall of water, when it hit where this building stands today, would have been over 20 feet high.

So, yes, all of Michigan counts.

Thank you.

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

62.

>> Hi. My name is Chris.

I live in Muskegon Township.

I moved here in '95.

I moved into Norton Shores and raised four kids in the Mona Shores School District.

I've had to move out of the state about four times because of lack of work.

I'm a chemical engineer, moved up in here for some of the old chemical industry.

It's pretty much all disappeared.

The big point I want to make is Grand Rapids and the lakeshore are two distinct business type of environments.

They have different ideas about development.

They have developed very rapidly in Grand Rapids over the last 20 years, where the lakeshore has had a completely different experience, especially in Muskegon.

I work in the Black community as a handyman.

I know quite a few people there.

If you divide the rural areas from the cities too much, you're going to create division in the community.

Okay? I would suggest for the state you divide it east-west so you have a mixture of Black community and the white community and the rural communities together.

We are a community in this County very much.

And if you want to bring people together, do that because we all have vested interest in tourism, the water, which is very different than what happens in Grand Rapids.

From a Federal level, I think the lakeshore needs to be or stay intact from Ottawa up. Ottawa tends to have a little bit more weight than we get up in this side.

It would be nice if the northern part of the Federal representative had more weight up in Muskegon and Oceana Counties.

But we are very distinct from Grand Rapids.

Even though we travel back and forth what we want, how we live, is a very different place over here on the lakeshore than there.

Even down in Grand Haven compared to up here. But thank you for your time.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Chris, thank you for the time to share with the Commission. We appreciate you and what you shared at this time. We are going to move to remote public comment. And those that have signed up to speak a second time for in person will take their turn after remote public comment.

We as the Commission and everyone that worked to put this together encourage you to stay. If your time does not permit, do not feel guilty if you have to politely leave.

We thank you for being here, but we are going to move to our remote public comment.

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

I will turn the floor over to Michigan Department of State who will unmute you.

If you are on a computer, you will be prompted by the Zoom app to unmute your microphone and speak.

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

Again, the Commission, the Michigan Department of State will introduce you.

Please note that if you experience technical or audio issues or we do not hear from you for 3-5 seconds, we will move to the next person in line and then return to you after they are done speaking.

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

You will have two minutes to address the Commission.

Please conclude your remarks when your two minutes has ended.

And you hear the timer.

Again, if you feel like you didn't say exactly what you wanted to say, you want to add to the comment or want to say something completely different and join into the community that is already commenting online, please visit www.Michigan.gov/MICRC.

At this time I will turn to Michigan Department of State staff.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: Thank you, Madam Chair.

For the public record, there were three individuals who signed up for virtual public comment currently. Only one is present.

So for up for public comment is Douglas Vanbenacom.

Please allow us a moment to unmute you.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Hi, Douglas, we can hear you.

>> I'm Douglas from Grand Haven, Michigan. And I'd like to talk about connecting Kent and Ottawa counties, particularly Grand Rapids with Ottawa County, because I believe there is a lot of cultural and economic ties between the people living in Ottawa County and the people living in the greater Grand Rapids area.

Many people who have been moving to work in Grand Rapids recently have been moving into Ottawa County because housing is more affordable there and other reasons like that.

And I think that those people deserve to have the representation with the people who are living in Kent County right now. And I think that that's an important community of interest.

And I also think as the area around Ottawa County continues to grow, especially in the eastern part of Ottawa County, there is going to be more integration with the City of Grand Rapids itself.

Right now between Allendale and downtown Grand Rapids, the Rapid, the transit allows people to move directly from the Grand Valley Campus to downtown Grand Rapids.

And I think over time you're going to see more expansive of the rapid and other things that will more tightly tie eastern Ottawa County to Grand Rapids and you will see more of a political combination of those areas.

So I think it's important to take in consideration that population growth and how many people have those ties to Grand Rapids.

That's all.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: Thank you, Douglas, for sharing of your community of interest.

>> MS. SARAH REINHARDT: That concludes remote public comment.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: And thank you, Michigan Department of State.

At this time we will now move back into the room for our in-person, second time in-person public commentary.

At this time we have one person who will provide a second comment for today's hearing.

Again, just a quick reminder of the rules, I will have you come to the mic, you will have two minutes to address the Commission.

You will conclude your remarks when the two minutes has ended, which will be indicated by a timer.

If you feel like you have been cutoff or there is something else that you would like to say, please do visit the website www.Michigan.gov/MICRC.

At this time we will hear from second -- we will hear from public comment one, number one.

>> That's me, number one.

James Gallant, Marquette County Suicide Prevention Coalition.

And I think it would be important for you folks to clarify what you meant in your Supreme Court petition because you all submitted this, very important, it says the orderly and transparent process chosen by the people of the State of Michigan.

What is the process they choose for you? Because you're kind of making it up.

You are making your own process.

You are, you know, consensus type thing.

Except for that process is motion, second, vote.

Every time.

Majority rules in America.

That's how it works.

And you folks think that you want to be just -- we are going to remake and redesign how they do it in America. And, you know, that -- the Robert's Rules of Order is how you effectively document your discussion, your deliberation.

You make a motion.

You second it.

Amend it.

Revisit it.

You can see where it went and where it came from.

But this process you're doing you can't.

It's everybody is talking over each other. It's nobody has the floor. And it's interesting that I guess the one question is did you start drawing maps yet? Because your second director said you could start drawing maps after ten public hearings. So have you started yet because this is 15? Because what is happening is you are making decisions over the top of the table with no motion, no second.

Because Mr. Brace submitted maps to you the just other day, a couple days ago, based on your discussion.

Is that like did you know that? So these are the beginnings of maps. You started drawing maps already. And Mr. Clark, Commissioner Clark, he has got, by golly, he has a little spreadsheet and all the sudden it shows up in discussion. And all the sudden motion vote for this thing. It wasn't on the agenda, did not start the discussion. He just meander on through. So this collaborative and facilitated, dialog, consensus building process is incompatibility with the Michigan Constitution. It's just not compatible.

And the gerrymandering issue, maybe we can get legislative approval, your legislature or your vendor said. So maybe we should count them for when they are in prison, when they get out recount them back at their other place where they went back to live.

For infrastructure and social service type stuff.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: At this time your allotted two minutes has ended.

>> Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLUM: And we thank you.

We are a group that appreciates the rules, and that goes with our two minutes for the timer. And we are appreciative of our General Counsel's clarification, have not began drawing the maps. And we will continue on with our transparency.

At this time we are going to move to our acknowledgments. And without objection, hearing no objection we will now have Executive Director Sue Hammersmith come to us with acknowledgments.

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>> MS. SUANN HAMMERSMITH: Thank you again for everyone who made public comment tonight.

We truly appreciate the warm welcome we received here and hearing from everybody.

We want to thank the Van Dyke Convention Center here.

Chase Creative who has done an awesome job with our AV once again.

The League of Women Voters and Voters Not Politicians for providing volunteers this evening to help people sign up for public comment.

And we invite people who still have more to say to go on our public comment tool or see us in Grand Rapids on Thursday, July 1st, starting at 5:00 p.m.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Thank you, Sue, so much for those acknowledgments.

At this time the Commission has no further business and has no -- there are no other items on the agenda for us to complete.

And I would entertain, if there are no objections, a motion to adjourn.

>> COMMISSIONER WITJES: So moved.

>> COMMISSIONER LETT: Second.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Motion by Commission Witjes and second by Commissioner Lett. All those in favor please indicate with a raised hand and saying aye.

>> Aye.

>> CHAIR KELLOM: Aye.

All those opposed raise your hand and say nay.

And the ayes have it, motion carries, meeting is adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Thank you so much, Muskegon, for sticking around and for showing up.

Thank you.