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BEFORE THE  
ILLINOIS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
101ST GENERAL ASSEMBLY

REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE - ROCKFORD

Hearing held, pursuant to Notice, on  
the 5th day of April, 2021, between the hours of  
10:00 a.m. and 10:34 a.m. via remote  
videoconferencing.

Reported By: Timi M. Turunen, CSR, RPR  
License No: 084-003517

1 APPEARANCES:

2 COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Gordon-Booth, Chairperson

3 Representative Avery Bourne

Representative Dave Severin

4 Representative Dave Vella

Representative Maurice West

5 Representative Tim Butler

Representative Tom Demmer

6 Representative Jeff Keicher

Representative Theresa Mah

7 Mr. Darrin Reinhardt, Staff

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1 CHAIRPERSON GORDON-BOOTH: Come to order. I  
2 have the honor and the pleasure of serving as the  
3 co-chair for the redistricting committee, and my  
4 name is Jehan Gordon-Booth, and I am the state  
5 representative from the 92nd district.

6 I am also a member of this  
7 redistricting committee and will be chairing  
8 today's hearing. I'd like to welcome all of the  
9 local representatives who have joined us.

10 I see that we have with us  
11 Representative Maurice West. Good to be with  
12 you -- good to be with us today. Good to see you.  
13 Hope everything is going well with you, and the  
14 family and in particular, Miss BMW. Would you like  
15 to share anything at the moment?

16 MR. WEST: Yes, ma'am. Thank you, Madam  
17 Speaker Pro Tem. I appreciate you, and thanks for  
18 everyone who is here for this -- this important  
19 subject matter that we're going to discuss, and I'm  
20 looking forward to a robust conversation, and I'm  
21 hoping to see a lot of people from the community  
22 chime in. So thank you, Madam Leader.

23 CHAIRPERSON GORDON-BOOTH: Awesome. Awesome.  
24 Good to be -- good to see you again today.

1                   And we also have with us another  
2 local representative, the newest kid on the block  
3 in the Rockford area, Representative Dave Vella.  
4 Would you like to have some comments?

5                   REPRESENTATIVE VELLA: Yes, thank you very  
6 much for doing this. I'm really looking forward to  
7 it. I've, obviously, only been on the job for a  
8 couple months now, and it is just exciting, so  
9 looking forward to what everybody has to say, and,  
10 you know, helping the process forward, so thank you  
11 very much.

12                  CHAIRPERSON GORDON-BOOTH: Awesome. Awesome.  
13 Well, we have a little bit of housekeeping this  
14 morning, and then we're going to get right into the  
15 work -- right into our work.

16                   So I'd like to also thank everyone  
17 who has chosen to participate in today's hearing,  
18 whether it be members of the committee, other  
19 representatives who have decided to join us today  
20 just to learn more about the process. And in  
21 particular, those of you that are not necessarily  
22 elected, but you're engaged in the community-level  
23 work, whether it be through an association, an  
24 organization or just as an everyday citizen. Thank

1 you so much for being a part of this hearing today.  
2 Your insight and participation is as important as  
3 ever as we begin this redistricting process under  
4 such unprecedented times.

5 The United States and the Illinois  
6 Constitution require the General Assembly to redraw  
7 the political boundaries every ten years to account  
8 for population shifts. These hearings are a part  
9 of that very important process. House Democrats  
10 are dedicated to transparency and public  
11 participation in the redistricting process.

12 While state law requires a minimum of  
13 four public hearings throughout the state, our  
14 committee intends to hold far more and present  
15 additional avenues for public participation. Our  
16 goal is to hear from as many as possible and to  
17 gain as much information as possible about the  
18 diverse communities of our great state.

19 Our staff has been making hundreds of  
20 phone calls to encourage participation in all of  
21 the upcoming hearings around the state. Those who  
22 wish to participate should be given the opportunity  
23 to do so, period.

24 We're holding a series of virtual as

1 well as in-person hearings throughout the state.  
2 Early last month we announced a schedule of 23  
3 hearings before proposing a redistricting plan.

4 For comparison, in 2011, when we  
5 embarked upon this process, the House Redistricting  
6 Committee held only 17, so it's quite a bit more  
7 because we really want as much public engagement as  
8 possible.

9 While we're enguined [sic] in this  
10 endeavor by the Illinois state -- by the United  
11 States Constitution, the Federal Voting Rights Act,  
12 the Illinois Constitution, and the Illinois Voting  
13 Rights Act, we are also interested in any relevant  
14 demographic information such as social, political,  
15 economic, religious, or any other characteristics  
16 that make our communities -- excuse me -- that make  
17 your community unique.

18 We want to hear your specific views  
19 on any social, political, economic, or religious  
20 interests commonly held in your community, any  
21 specific interest groups that exist, any concerns  
22 that you may have regarding the current boundaries  
23 or alternatively, what works well with the current  
24 boundaries and suggestion for the drawing of new

1 boundaries.

2 In short, we want to hear your  
3 testimony that is relevant for drawing the new  
4 political boundaries. This year for the first  
5 time, Illinois residents will be able to  
6 participate in the process from the comfort of  
7 their own homes, as many of you all are today,  
8 including through a remote participation in these  
9 hearings and by drawing their own maps via a  
10 website.

11 The public drawing portal will be  
12 available at [ILhousedems.com/redistricting](http://ILhousedems.com/redistricting). It will  
13 allow Illinois residents to draw districts and  
14 share those maps with the committee for  
15 consideration.

16 The public may also submit written  
17 testimony or other public comment to the committee  
18 by email at [redistrictingcommittee@HDS.ILGA.gov](mailto:redistrictingcommittee@HDS.ILGA.gov).

19 All written testimony, public  
20 comments, and maps submitted to the committee will  
21 be made publicly available [ILGA.gov](http://ILGA.gov) and  
22 [ILhousedems.com/redistricting](http://ILhousedems.com/redistricting). Transcripts of the  
23 committee's hearings will also be uploaded to these  
24 sites.

1           As for today, we will begin with a  
2 short slide show by Mr. Reinhardt. Following that  
3 brief presentation, we have a number of witnesses  
4 who have indicated a desire to testify at  
5 Rockford's hearing today.

6           If you have any written testimony  
7 prepared, we would ask that you submit that  
8 testimony to us and just briefly summarize your  
9 oral presentation.

10           With us today, we also have the  
11 minority spokesperson leader Tim Butler.

12           REPRESENTATIVE BUTLER: Thank you,  
13 Representative Gordon-Booth. And we're trying to  
14 monitor both hearings right now so I'm going to let  
15 Representative Spain kind of be the spokesperson  
16 for this Rockford committee if you don't mind. So  
17 Representative Spain, your colleague from Peoria  
18 has anything to say, I'd appreciate it.

19           CHAIRPERSON GORDON-BOOTH: Certainly. Good  
20 morning, Rep -- Good morning, Leader Spain.

21           MR. SPAIN: Good morning, Madam Speaker Pro  
22 Tem. Thanks for having us and for chairing this  
23 meeting. And, yeah, we are all trying to do -- or  
24 at least some of us are trying to do double-duty



1 because we have two redistricting committees that  
2 are taking place simultaneously, and this is very  
3 important.

4 Not quite sure why they were  
5 scheduled at the same time, but we're all trying to  
6 do the best we can to cover this important  
7 information. So thanks, everyone, for joining us  
8 today.

9 CHAIRPERSON GORDON-BOOTH: Thank you.

10 So we're going to be presented with a  
11 presentation by Mr. Reinhardt. And after -- and  
12 following his presentation, we'll kind of go  
13 through sort of the order of business and how we  
14 will move forward on today. Mr. Reinhardt, are you  
15 ready?

16 MR. REINHARDT: Yes. I will share my screen.  
17 Thank you. All right. So hello everyone. My name  
18 is Darrin Reinhardt, D-a-r-r-i-n,  
19 R-e-i-n-h-a-r-d-t. I'm an employee with the  
20 Illinois House of Representatives, and I'm here to  
21 give a brief overview of the State's redistricting  
22 procedure. I'll briefly discuss the background of  
23 redistricting and the redistricting process in  
24 Illinois, and I'll also go over the federal and

1 state redistricting requirements and guidelines.

2 Finally, we'll be looking at what  
3 preliminary data revealed about population trends  
4 in the state and the region.

5 Redistricting is a process that  
6 ensures all Illinois residents are afforded equal  
7 representation in the state legislature and federal  
8 congress as guaranteed by the United States  
9 Constitution.

10 The U.S. Supreme Court held a series  
11 of rulings in the 1960s that congressional and  
12 state legislative districts in each state must give  
13 approximately equal population establishing the  
14 principle of one person; one vote.

15 As a result, states redraw their  
16 congressional and state districts every ten years  
17 to reflect population changes. The timeline for  
18 redrawing the legislative maps are based on the  
19 Illinois Constitution. The Constitution in  
20 Illinois gives the Illinois legislature the initial  
21 responsibility of passing the new legislative map.

22 Both the state House and the state  
23 Senate must pass a plan and which must be signed by  
24 the Governor. If a map does not go into effect by

1 the constitutional deadline of June 30th,  
2 responsibility for creating a new map passes from  
3 the legislature to a legislative redistricting  
4 commission.

5 The commission would consist of eight  
6 members with two each appointed by the legislative  
7 leaders, and no one in four from the same political  
8 party. A majority of five or more commission  
9 members will constitute a final approval of a new  
10 map.

11 However, if the commission does not  
12 agree to a map by September 1st, the Illinois  
13 Supreme Court will submit two names, one from each  
14 party, to the Illinois Secretary of State, who will  
15 then choose one name at random to serve as the  
16 ninth member of the commission. Five of the nine  
17 members of the commission must agree to a plan no  
18 later than October 5th.

19 In order to understand the process of  
20 creating new districts, we must look at some legal  
21 guiding principles. First among these is equal  
22 population.

23 Congressional districts must be  
24 nearly equal in population while state districts

1 must be substantially equal populations. Federal  
2 and state law also require that all districts be  
3 contiguous, which means that all parts of a  
4 district must be next to each other unless  
5 connected by water. Annexations and unincorporated  
6 areas in municipalities and counties sometimes mean  
7 that communities are discontinuous. However,  
8 congressional and state districts must be adjacent  
9 or connected at all points.

10 A more difficult requirement to  
11 define is compactness. There are at least 30  
12 different ways, scientific ways to measure how  
13 compact a district is, but no statute or court  
14 precedent identifies standard criteria of  
15 compactness.

16 In theory, compactness focuses on the  
17 shape of a district's boundaries, how spread out a  
18 district is from a central core or where a  
19 district's population center of gravity is.

20 In practice, compactness is hindered  
21 by geography and on-the-ground realities. So  
22 often, the interpretation of compactness involves  
23 more than a visual test.

24 Illinois is one of 14 states that

1 nests its house districts also, called  
2 representative districts, inside one of its Senate  
3 districts, also called legislative districts.  
4 Mapmakers will look where possible to follow  
5 existing political and geographical boundaries in  
6 ways that maximize community's opportunity to have  
7 its interests represented.

8 As you know, however, county,  
9 municipality, township, and natural geographic  
10 boundaries are not always compact or contiguous.

11 By setting population data and  
12 holding public hearings like this to study -- to  
13 listen to the thoughts of residents across the  
14 state, lawmakers look to identify what are known as  
15 communities of interest.

16 A community of interest is a group of  
17 people concentrated in a geographic area where  
18 socially, culturally, ethnically, economically,  
19 religiously, or otherwise alike can be joined in a  
20 district to most effectively have their voices  
21 heard.

22 The factors contributing to any  
23 particular community of interest will vary  
24 throughout the state.

1 Federal law requires redistricting  
2 plans respect minority representation. The  
3 principles of the Federal Voting Rights Act are in  
4 place to prevent the reduction of opportunities for  
5 minority populations to participate equally in the  
6 electoral process. However, districts cannot be  
7 drawn solely on the basis of race.

8 Illinois also -- Illinois law also  
9 protects representation of racial and language  
10 minority groups. The Illinois Voting Rights Act  
11 helps prevent minority fracturing or dividing the  
12 concentration of minorities among two or more  
13 districts by requiring mapmakers to consider  
14 creating crossover districts, coalition districts,  
15 or influence districts.

16 A crossover district is one in which  
17 large minority groups may elect the candidate of  
18 its choice with the hope of voters from the  
19 majority group.

20 A coalition district brings together  
21 multiple racial or language minority groups  
22 together to elect a candidate of their choice.

23 An influence district allows a group  
24 to influence an election outcome without being the

1 majority population in the district.

2           These state law requirements come  
3 into play only after compliance with federal law  
4 and U.S. and state constitutional requirements on  
5 redistricting.

6           In addition, the law ensures  
7 transparency and public participation by requiring  
8 public hearings across the state, one of which  
9 we're having right now.

10           At the end of the presentation, we  
11 will have an email address on the screen that Chair  
12 Gordon-Booth already provided, or you can submit  
13 your ideas, and the committee will also be  
14 accepting written testimony today.

15           Now that we've covered the  
16 redistricting process, let us discuss what the data  
17 shows about Illinois population.

18           The U.S. Census Bureau has delayed  
19 the release of much of the census data by more than  
20 six months until this fall. However, the U.S.  
21 Census Bureau's annual population estimates show  
22 some trends that can help inform the work ahead.

23           The census 2019 population estimate  
24 shows an overall decline in state population over

1 the past decade. There are, however, areas that  
2 are projected to have population gains.

3 Communities with the largest  
4 population by percentage increase since 2010 are  
5 Kendall, Monroe, Champaign, and Kane Counties.  
6 Demographically speaking, the state's white  
7 population is projected to decline while  
8 African-American population statewide will likely  
9 see a smaller overall decline. Hispanic and Asian  
10 population across Illinois are projected to see  
11 growth.

12 Locally, population in Winnebago  
13 County is projected to decrease. The county's  
14 white population stands to decline while  
15 African-American, Asian, and Hispanic population  
16 will likely increase.

17 Thank you so much for your attention  
18 and for coming to share your thoughts today. As  
19 the Chair mentioned, you'll be able to find  
20 testimony from this and other hearings on ILGA.gov  
21 and on ILhousedems.com/redistricting.

22 The redistricting website offers  
23 additional ways to engage in the process including  
24 our public drawing portal, where you can draw and



1 submit your own district maps. You can send  
2 further written testimony and suggestions to the  
3 committee any time by emailing  
4 redistrictingcommittee@HDS.ILGA.gov. Thank you so  
5 much.

6 CHAIRPERSON GORDON-BOOTH: Awesome  
7 presentation per usual, Darrin. We've already had  
8 the opportunity to acknowledge a couple of the  
9 local legislative leaders from the Rockford area as  
10 well as leaders Tim Butler and Ryan Spain, but I  
11 would be remiss if I did not recognize the other  
12 legislative leaders that have taken the time to be  
13 a part of this hearing on today.

14 I see that we have with us  
15 Representative Theresa Mah. Thank you for being  
16 with us. We have Leader Tom Demmer. Thank you for  
17 being with us Leader Demmer. I see Leader Avery  
18 Bourne. Thank you so much, Leader Bourne, for  
19 being with us. I also see Representative Dave  
20 Severin. Thank you so much for being with us,  
21 Representative Severin.

22 I see we have with us, Rep Jeff  
23 Keicher. Thank you for with us this morning. I  
24 think that might be a complete list of who we have

1 with us on today.

2 So we actually have only two people  
3 who are prepared with oral testimony that they will  
4 be providing at the hearing today. We have -- or  
5 testimony that is going to be provided by Armando  
6 Cardenas from the Coalition of Latino Leaders in  
7 Rockford.

8 And we also have with us -- excuse  
9 me -- we have Deena -- we have Deena Habbal from  
10 the Illinois Muslim Civic Coalition, and she -- her  
11 panel will follow directly after Armando's.

12 Today we have written testimony from  
13 Madeleine Doubek with Change Illinois.

14 With no further ado, we're going to  
15 go directly into Mr. Armando Cardenas' presentation  
16 this morning. Armando, are you there?

17 I believe you're on mute. Yep, still  
18 on mute. Yep, still on.

19 MR. Cardenas: How about now?

20 CHAIRPERSON GORDON-BOOTH: Perfect. There we  
21 go. Thank you for joining us today. You may  
22 proceed.

23 MR. Cardenas: Yes. My name is Armando  
24 Cardenas, and I live in Rockford, Illinois. I see

1 Mr. Dave Vella, who's of the district that I belong  
2 to, and I see Mr. Maurice West, who's our  
3 neighboring -- good friend -- both of them's a good  
4 friend of mine. We've worked together on Hispanic  
5 issues, and we're working on issues that impact the  
6 Latino community.

7 I've been involved with the Hispanic  
8 community for many, many years, and I'm still here  
9 looking at the political issue and the  
10 redistricting. And I appreciate the invite. I'm  
11 going to -- like to recommend that your committee  
12 consider the establishment of a maybe Hispanic  
13 Latino district in the Rockford area because the  
14 statistics as I've researched in 2019, there are  
15 two wards in the Rockford area that are -- that are  
16 both in Mr. West's district, but the 611 -- it's  
17 the fifth ward which is 61102 area code, and -- or  
18 ZIP Code I should say. And the 11th ward, which is  
19 61104. And in those -- both of those wards, you're  
20 looking at the population, the Hispanic population  
21 has been increasing, increasing year after year.  
22 In those two areas, there's many, many Hispanic  
23 businesses along two major corridors. In the 61102  
24 the south main corridor has many, many stores where

1 people are shopping, Mexican stores, restaurants.

2 And in the 11th ward, there's the  
3 main corridor which is Broadway Street, there's  
4 many, many businesses many, many Hispanic people  
5 living there.

6 More focusing on the 11th ward, which  
7 is 61104, I looked at the statistics in terms of  
8 blacks versus Hispanics, and there are 4336  
9 Hispanics based upon the information that I got,  
10 which does not represent all the area, but at least  
11 it's close. The 61104 is 22 percent --  
12 22.5 percent Hispanics, and 21 percent  
13 African-American. So we've gained there with  
14 Hispanics over black residents.

15 And the 61102, which is the fifth  
16 ward, yet there are more African-Americans, 6,955  
17 versus 5,120. So we're not as many  
18 African-Americans there, but we're still gaining.  
19 So I predict that the population of the Hispanic  
20 community is probably more now, and it will  
21 continue to be. And for that reason, I would  
22 appreciate, and I believe that -- that a district  
23 should be named -- or I don't know what titles you  
24 have, designated district or a named district, but

1 if -- I'm hoping that our local representatives  
2 Maurice and Dave would support this idea as I'm  
3 here representing the coalition of Latino leaders,  
4 which is an organization in Rockford that has been  
5 meeting for at least eight, maybe more, years.  
6 It's a group of Hispanic leaders that care about  
7 the issues that concern the Hispanic community, but  
8 it also is for individuals, not only Latin people,  
9 but African-Americans and white people who care  
10 about the Hispanic community and want to help the  
11 Latino community in all aspects of their issues  
12 that they care about; economic, social, education,  
13 political.

14 So I'm here to make that  
15 recommendation, and I appreciate the time. And I'm  
16 looking forward to what comes out of this  
17 testimony. Thank you very much.

18 CHAIRPERSON GORDON-BOOTH: Thank you so much  
19 for that profound testimony. We want to go to  
20 the -- to the committee to ask any questions that  
21 you may have of Mr. Cardenas.

22 If there are no questions -- if there  
23 are no questions, we're going to move over to  
24 Ms. Deena Habbal with the Illinois Muslim

1 Coalition. Deena, are you ready?

2 MS. HABBAL: Yes. Hello, everyone. Thank you  
3 so much for having me here today. My name is  
4 Deena Habbal, and I'm with the Illinois Muslim  
5 Civic Coalition. And we are a coalition of over  
6 150 partners, allies, of all races, ethnicities,  
7 classes, faiths, and backgrounds.

8 And our focus is to make sure that  
9 policies are made for us, are made with us. And we  
10 think redistricting is one of the critical pieces  
11 of this. And we appreciate Change Illinois for  
12 sharing information about these meetings with us.  
13 The coalition recommends that legislators make sure  
14 census data supports redistricting, and that the  
15 process is transparent, inclusive, and clear.

16 In Illinois, we have communities that  
17 did not exist in 2010. Others that were never  
18 vocal about their needs, and others who have grown  
19 in the past ten years. And we have many  
20 communities that fit into this criteria.

21 The Muslim community identifies as  
22 African-American, Asian, white, Arab, Latino,  
23 African immigrant and many more. And oftentimes,  
24 we don't know about this because we are an

1 invisible community.

2 Now, if it's okay, I'm going to share  
3 my screen and talk about a little bit of the work  
4 that we are doing because of the diversity of  
5 Illinois.

6 So this is one of our initiatives is  
7 advocacy and policy. And what we are doing are we  
8 have four bills in the legislature and one of them  
9 is the reverence for diversity in Illinois. And  
10 this is where we want to amend the oath of office  
11 to protect and honor the diversity of people in  
12 Illinois.

13 And in the second one we have the  
14 Cross-Cultural Mediation Among Students Act, and we  
15 want to make sure if there is any bullying in  
16 school based on, you know, religion, race, anything  
17 that it's not just a slap on the wrist, that it's a  
18 mediation between the students so that they don't  
19 go on and, you know, become bullies in their  
20 workplace or, you know, just as adults.

21 And the third one is Inclusive  
22 Athletic Attire Act. And this one is so then when  
23 you want to wear -- like modify your uniform for  
24 sports and whether it's, you know, to make it more

1 modest or just make yourself feel more comfortable,  
2 putting leggings on instead of shorts, we want to  
3 make sure we're -- you know, students don't have to  
4 get a special paper to do this or get disqualified  
5 when they're playing sports.

6 And we got a lot of people jumping on  
7 this one, you know, from the Jewish community, the  
8 Christian community, the Muslim community.

9 And then our fourth one is the  
10 contributions and history of Muslims in America  
11 Bill. And this one is so we can give curriculums  
12 to schools, so then they can teach about, you know,  
13 what did Muslims give to Illinois and to the  
14 country. So then, you know, when they hear about  
15 Muslims, it's not only about what's on the news  
16 and, you know, what's going on in social media.

17 And then we also are creating -- we  
18 want to have a Muhammad Ali Day on his birthday.  
19 So I just wanted to show these because we  
20 understand the diversity of Illinois, and we want  
21 to make sure that this is an inclusive place for  
22 everyone and just being part of the census last  
23 year and going into different communities and  
24 talking to different organizations and communities,



1 I honestly got to see firsthand how diverse we are,  
2 and we just want y'all to take this into  
3 consideration when redrawing the maps. So thank  
4 you very much.

5 CHAIRPERSON GORDON-BOOTH: Thank you so much,  
6 Deena. You have provided really profound testimony  
7 throughout the process and look forward to your  
8 continued advocacy on behalf of the Muslim  
9 communities, but it's just all across our great  
10 state.

11 Well, ladies and gentlemen, we have  
12 come to the end of this hearing. We have no  
13 additional members seeking oral testimony unless  
14 there are some who have not already filled out a  
15 slip and would like to do so. We do not have any  
16 others scheduled.

17 The written testimony is made  
18 available. We do have one person seeking written  
19 testimony as a part of this hearing. So if there  
20 is no one else seeking oral testimony, the house  
21 redistricting committee for the City of Rockford  
22 will stand in recess to the call of the chair.  
23 Have a great day, ladies and gentlemen.  
24

1 STATE OF ILLINOIS )  
 ) SS:  
2 COUNTY OF COOK )

3 I, Timi M. Turunen, a Certified Shorthand  
4 Reporter of the State of Illinois, do hereby  
5 certify that I reported in shorthand the  
6 proceedings had at the meeting aforesaid, and that  
7 the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of  
8 the proceedings of said meeting as appears from my  
9 stenographic notes so taken and transcribed under  
10 my personal direction.

11 In witness whereof, I do hereunto set my hand  
12 at Chicago, Illinois, this 22nd day of April, A.D.  
13 2021.

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Timi M. Turunen, C.S.R.  
Certified Shorthand Reporter  
C.S.R. Certificate No. 084-003517

HEARING 4/5/2021

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