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BEFORE THE
ILLINOIS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
DECATUR

Hearing held, pursuant to notice, on the 7th
day of April, 2021, between the hours of 10:00 a.m.
and 11:05 a.m. via Zoom teleconference.

1 A P P E A R A N C E S

2 COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

3 Representative Jehan Gordon-Booth, Co-Chairperson
4 Representative Jay Hoffman, Co-Chairperson
5 Representative Tim Butler, Republican Spokesperson
6 Representative Avery Bourne, Member
7 Representative Dave Severin, Member
8 Representative Ryan Spain, Member

9 Representative Dan Caulkins
10 Representative C.D. Davidsmeyer
11 Representative Theresa Mah
12 Representative Michael Marron
13 Representative Chris Miller
14 Representative Sue Scherer

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Court Reporter
Lydia Pinkawa, CSR
Illinois CSR #084-002342
Alaris Litigation Services
711 North Eleventh Street
St. Louis, Missouri 63101

1 CO-CHAIRPERSON GORDON-BOOTH: Good morning.
2 The hour of 10:00 having come and gone, the
3 redistricting, the House redistricting committee
4 shall come to order. It's good to be here virtually
5 with you all for this hearing in regards to what
6 folks would like to see as it relates to
7 redistricting in the Decatur area.

8 Before we get into the formalities of this
9 redistricting hearing, you know we always like to
10 start off with a little bit of housekeeping just
11 to kind of set the table for what we'll be going
12 through. Again, my name is Jehan Gordon-Booth and
13 I am a state representative from Peoria. That's
14 the 92nd district. And I, too, am a member of the
15 redistricting committee and will be sharing the
16 co-chairing duties with my colleague from the south,
17 Leader Jay Hoffman. I'd like to welcome the local
18 representatives from the area that are on the call.
19 If you could -- I'm actually operating off of my
20 phone today. Would the local representatives please
21 like to un-mute their phones and say a few words
22 before we begin.

23 REPRESENTATIVE CAULKINS: Thank you, Leader. I'm
24 Dan Caulkins from the 101st here in Decatur. And we

1 are very pleased that you've chosen to do this today,
2 recognizing Decatur as an important stop in the
3 journey. I look forward to hearing some testimony
4 and also giving you some of our thoughts here. And
5 we'll wait for, I guess you'll call on us when it's
6 time to testify, Leader Hoffman?

7 CO-CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: Yes, what we will do is
8 we'll have testimony, questions, if you have any
9 questions of the witnesses and then there will be
10 time for comments. I think that's the way it's been
11 going.

12 REPRESENTATIVE CAULKINS: Very good. Well, thank
13 you and welcome to Decatur.

14 CO-CHAIRPERSON GORDON-BOOTH: Thank you. Are
15 there any other local reps that would like to jump
16 in?

17 REPRESENTATIVE SCHERER: Yes, I'm Representative
18 Sue Scherer from the 96th district. I have the
19 central part of the city of Decatur is my district as
20 well as Springfield and the small towns in between.
21 So I, too, say welcome to Decatur.

22 CO-CHAIRPERSON GORDON-BOOTH: Thank you. Thank
23 you so much for that. Do we have any others, any
24 other local reps that would like to be recognized?

1 REPRESENTATIVE MILLER: My name is Chris Miller.
2 I'm from the 110th district.

3 CO-CHAIRPERSON GORDON-BOOTH: Well, welcome,
4 Representative Miller. Thank you for being with us
5 today. Are there any others that would like to say a
6 few words before we continue?

7 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIDSMEYER: Are you asking for
8 all of the representatives on the list or just local?
9 Because --

10 CO-CHAIRPERSON GORDON-BOOTH: At the moment, just
11 the local reps. Any other representatives to the
12 Decatur region seeking to speak? If not, we'll move
13 forward. I'd like to also thank everyone who has
14 chosen to participate in today's hearing. Your
15 insight and participation is as important as ever as
16 we begin the redistricting process under such
17 unprecedented times.

18 The United States and the Illinois
19 constitution require the general assembly to redraw
20 political boundaries every ten years to account for
21 population shifts. These hearings are part of that
22 significant process. The House Democrats are
23 dedicated to transparency and public participation in
24 the redistricting process. While state law requires

1 a minimum of four public hearings throughout the
2 state, our committee intends to hold far more and
3 present additional information, excuse me,
4 presentation additional avenues for that public
5 participation.

6 Our goal is to hear from as many people as
7 possible and to gain as much information as possible
8 about the diverse communities of our state, and
9 Decatur most certainly is one of them. Our staff
10 have been making hundreds of phone calls to encourage
11 participation in these upcoming hearings. Those who
12 wish to participate should be given an opportunity to
13 do so, period.

14 We are holding a series of virtual as well as
15 in person hearings throughout the state. Early last
16 month we announced a schedule of 23 hearings before
17 we would propose a redistricting plan. For
18 comparison, in 2011 when some of us were around, the
19 House redistricting committee held only 17 hearings
20 in total. So we're doing quite a bit more this time
21 around.

22 While we are guided in this endeavor by the
23 United States constitution, the Federal Voting Rights
24 Act, the Illinois constitution and the Illinois

1 Voting Rights Act, we are also interested in any
2 relevant demographic information such as social,
3 political, economic, religious or any other
4 characteristics that make your community unique.
5 We want to hear your specific views on any social,
6 political, economic, religious interests commonly
7 held in the community, any specific interest groups
8 that exist, any concerns you have regarding the
9 current boundaries or alternatively, what works well
10 about the current boundaries and suggestions for the
11 drawing of new boundaries. In short, we want to hear
12 any relevant testimony about what you all feel about
13 the drawing of the political boundaries.

14 For the first time in the history of doing
15 the redistricting process, Illinois residents will be
16 able to participate in the process from the comfort
17 of their own homes, including through remote
18 participation in these hearings and by drawing their
19 own maps via the web site. The drawing portal
20 available at ILHouseDems.gov, slash, Redistricting
21 allows any Illinois resident to draw districts and to
22 share those maps with the committee for
23 consideration.

24 The public may also submit written testimony

1 or other public comment to the committee by e-mail
2 by e-mailing RedistrictingCommittee@HDS.ILGA.gov.
3 All written testimony, public comments and maps
4 submitted to the committee will be made publicly
5 available at ILGA.gov and ILHouseDems.com, slash,
6 Redistricting. That was a mouthful. Transcripts of
7 the committee's hearings will also be uploaded to
8 those sites.

9 As for today, we will begin with a short
10 slide show presentation by Mr. Reinhart. Following
11 that brief presentation, we will have a number of
12 witnesses who have indicated a desire to testify.
13 If you have written testimony prepared, we should
14 ask that -- we will ask that you submit that
15 testimony to us and just briefly summarize what your
16 remarks would be as a part of the oral presentation.

17 If there are -- what we'll do next is the
18 minority spokesperson, certainly if you would like to
19 have words, Leader Butler, or if there are any other
20 members of the committee that would like to have
21 comments after Leader Butler, please do so. And upon
22 the culmination of those comments, I'll be turning
23 the chairmanship over to Leader Hoffman.

24 REPRESENTATIVE BUTLER: Thank you, Leader

1 Gordon-Booth. And let me just recognize our House
2 Republican members who have joined us today. I know
3 a couple have been introduced so far. But we have
4 Representative Avery Bourne from Morrisonville, we
5 have Representative C.D. Davidsmeyer from
6 Jacksonville, Rep Chris Miller from Oakland, Rep Dan
7 Caulkins from Decatur, Rep Dave Severin from Benton,
8 we've got Representative Mike Marron from Vermilion
9 County, Representative Ryan Spain from Peoria here
10 for the Decatur area hearing today.

11 I did have a couple of questions. I don't
12 see Representative Hernandez, the chair of the
13 committee on, but a couple things, Leader
14 Gordon-Booth and Leader Hoffman, if you could at
15 least take back or find answers on. One, it was
16 mentioned the other day in one of the hearings that
17 citizen -- maps that are drawn by citizens on the
18 ILHouseDem sites will be available to the public to
19 view as well. And I'm wondering if that has been
20 done yet, if there's any maps that have been
21 submitted and if so, where they will be able to be
22 viewed on the web site. So if we could get some
23 answers to that.

24 And the other thing is, just a comment, I

1 know we've seen a couple hearings now become
2 official. We've got an East St. Louis hearing on
3 Sunday at 11 a.m., we have a Carbondale -- which is
4 in person in East St. Louis. We have a Carbondale
5 virtual hearing. And as far as I know, those are
6 what's on the list today are the only committees that
7 are being scheduled hearings.

8 We have wide areas of this state that have
9 yet to be scheduled for a hearing. I believe there's
10 only two hearings scheduled for Illinois south of
11 Interstate 72 and that's the East St. Louis and
12 Carbondale hearings. Western, southern and eastern
13 Illinois are largely being ignored in these hearings.
14 I would ask that we take a look at having hearings in
15 other parts of the state that have not been scheduled
16 yet as we move forward. So glad to be here today,
17 looking forward to it and looking forward to hearing
18 what the folks from Decatur have to say and another
19 fine redistricting hearing. Thank you.

20 CO-CHAIRPERSON GORDON-BOOTH: Before we move to
21 the additional, the other members that may want to be
22 recognized, Leader Butler, I did want to respond to
23 your question. Thank you for the question. What
24 we'll do, we'll work on that and we'll have House Dem

1 staff get back with House Republican staff.

2 REPRESENTATIVE BUTLER: Sounds good. Thank you.

3 CO-CHAIRPERSON GORDON-BOOTH: Thank you.

4 CO-CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: Also, Chairperson
5 Gordon-Booth, we have Representative Theresa Mah has
6 joined us from the Democratic side.

7 CO-CHAIRPERSON GORDON-BOOTH: Thank you for being
8 here. Leader Hoffman, would you like to take the
9 wheel?

10 REPRESENTATIVE HOFFMAN: Thank you, Leader
11 Gordon-Booth. Let me just ask Representative Butler,
12 Leader Butler whether any of your members would like
13 to, before we get into the witnesses, like to make
14 any additional comments.

15 REPRESENTATIVE BUTLER: I think -- I haven't had
16 anybody reach out to me directly, but certainly I
17 think we can get into the witnesses. I don't have
18 the witness list, but let's go through like we've
19 done with the panels and then we can ask questions.
20 And if any of our members have questions or remarks,
21 they can make them either after the panels or at the
22 end of the hearing. How about that?

23 REPRESENTATIVE HOFFMAN: Okay, great. Thank you.
24 Our first panel is Councilman Lisa Gregory, who is,

1 I believe, on the city council of Decatur.
2 Councilman Gregory.

3 COUNCILWOMAN GREGORY: Good morning,
4 representatives. I want to thank you very much for
5 inviting me to this hearing today to share with you
6 about communities that I represent and that I love.
7 I want you to know that Mayor Julie Moore Wolfe sends
8 her regards and she regrets that she was unable to be
9 here with you today. However, again we both thank
10 you for the invitation to provide testimony about the
11 redistricting process that will ultimately impact the
12 city of Decatur's congressional and state legislative
13 boundaries. As you know, it is these very boundaries
14 that are at the core, the starting point of policy
15 discussions and ultimately decisions, taxation and
16 revenue distribution, political agendas, priorities
17 and just about every quality of life issue that will
18 impact the citizens of my hometown.

19 I can tell you many wonderful things about my
20 city. It's the largest city in Macon County and it
21 is the county seat. It is home to a diverse set of
22 major global industries. Our major employers include
23 manufacturing giants such as ADM, Tate & Lyle and
24 Caterpillar. And in 2020 Decatur was ranked fourth

1 in the nation as a best place to work in
2 manufacturing. Critical to manufacturing is an
3 abundant supply of water. Our beautiful Lake Decatur
4 boasts a reservoir reserve of nine billion gallons of
5 water, which is really a 30 percent increase over
6 previous years due to the recent dredging project
7 that was completed in 2019.

8 Few cities in the state of Illinois can
9 compete with the fiberoptic band width we offer in
10 Decatur, a network that continues to expand annually.
11 We're home to two institutions of higher education,
12 Richland Community College and Millikin University.
13 Both institutions work hand in hand along with our K
14 through 12 district to assure smooth transitions
15 throughout our students' educational journey. We are
16 home to the Midwest Inland Port, a multi-modal hub
17 with international and domestic capabilities and
18 provide access to more than 99 million consumers with
19 same day delivery. We're able to perform this
20 because we have three Class 1 railroads that run
21 through Decatur.

22 We are home to two hospitals, St. Mary's and
23 HSHS -- St. Mary's and Decatur Memorial Hospital.
24 We have one of the best federally qualified health

1 centers, Crossing Health Care. And we have
2 approximately 2,000 acres of park land that includes
3 bike, walking trails, gardens, golf courses and I
4 could go on. But the most recent addition is the
5 water park that will be the excitement for all of our
6 children and young adults this summer. I could go on
7 about so many more wonderful quality of life elements
8 that we have in Decatur.

9 What I really want you to know, what I want
10 you to understand are our citizens, the people that
11 make up our great community of Decatur. In 1980 we
12 were at the height of our population, 94,081
13 individuals. In 2019 Decatur's approximate
14 population stands at 70,746 people. That's a
15 27.3 percent decline. Decatur is now listed by the
16 United States Census Bureau as number three in the
17 15 fastest declining large cities.

18 So who are the people that make up Decatur?
19 6.6 are five years of age and under. 21.3 under 18.
20 19.7 are 65 years of age and older. Females
21 represent 53.2 percent of our population. Our racial
22 orientation consists of 71 percent are white,
23 21 percent are black, six percent are two or more
24 races, three percent are Hispanic or Latino. Decatur

1 is home to approximately 5,000 veterans. 61.4
2 percent of our homes are owner occupied, with a
3 median value of \$83,000. 88 percent are high school
4 graduates, 20 percent have a bachelor's degree or
5 higher.

6 Our median household income is \$42,701. Our
7 per capita income in the past 12 months in 2019
8 dollars was 26,571. About 22 percent of our
9 population is below the poverty line, including
10 35 percent of those under 18 and 10 percent of those
11 over 65. So what that really means is that Decatur's
12 majority female white population with a high school
13 education, where roughly 60 percent own their own
14 home on a median income of 42,000, pay 11 separate
15 taxing districts. They are protected by first
16 responders whose pension obligations take the
17 majority of the city's property tax dollars, where
18 these homeowners pay the third highest property tax
19 when compared to all contiguous counties.

20 Despite all of that, what is most important
21 is really the hearts of our citizens. We take care
22 of our own and many times that includes our
23 neighbors. We are an incredibly philanthropic
24 community. For the last 19 years, a local radio

1 station and one of our many great community partners,
2 WSOY, has hosted food drives. In 2020 Decatur didn't
3 let COVID-19 stop our philanthropic nature because we
4 knew that now, more than ever, the need would be
5 great. The food drive raised \$600,000, but thanks to
6 purchasing power through Central Illinois Food Bank,
7 that equated to 3.2 million pounds of food.

8 Food funds are used to help the Salvation
9 Army, Catholic Charities food pantry, the Good
10 Samaritan and the Northeast Community Fund, the
11 Reasonable Services food pantry, the Blue Mound food
12 pantry, Crossing Health Care prescription guarding
13 program, Mount Zion food pantry, Big Blue Backpacks,
14 God's Shelter of Love and the Moundford food pantry.
15 We don't even stop there. Several years ago when a
16 tornado devastated parts of Taylorville, it was only
17 natural that the Decatur community wanted to help.
18 In just three hours, Decatur ship* passed the 20,000
19 goal and went to raise \$50,000 for the Taylorville
20 food bank.

21 In a very short time, it is my hope that I
22 have adequately described to you my community and our
23 people and that you understand what and who make this
24 community a great place to live. But what I really

1 didn't expand on at the beginning is what I've been
2 doing in this community that I love. And I don't do
3 that because I want to highlight myself, because what
4 I do and the manner in which I do it is relevant to
5 this redistricting conversation.

6 For the past six years I have served on the
7 Decatur city council. Since 1958 Decatur has
8 operated under the council manager form of
9 government. The mayor and all members of the council
10 are elected at large and therefore, we represent all
11 the citizens of Decatur. We have 71 official
12 neighborhoods. I just happen to live in the Bay
13 Shore neighborhood. But because I am elected at
14 large, I do not have the luxury of just hearing and
15 serving within the boundaries that encompass my
16 neighborhood. I serve all the people who live in
17 those other neighborhoods. That means when a mother
18 loses her child in broad daylight in the middle of
19 the street to gun violence, I serve her and her
20 neighborhood. And I work with her and her
21 neighborhood and many other partners to find
22 solutions.

23 When the residents of Old King's Orchard, one
24 of Decatur's inner city neighborhoods needs help, I

1 work with the Good Samaritan and the Oasis day
2 center, the Old King's Orchard community center,
3 Grace United Methodist church and others to find ways
4 in which to meet their neighborhood needs. When the
5 Johns Hill neighborhood needed a new school building,
6 my city council collaborates with District 61 to
7 build a new school building, tear down dilapidated
8 and unsafe structures, pave streets and fix sidewalks
9 and ensure that every child in that neighborhood gets
10 to go to the school in their neighborhood.

11 I know that the drawing of a new legislative
12 map every ten years is fiercely competitive and a
13 very political process. I understand it and I get
14 it. I've also been around long enough to remember
15 when the city of Decatur was divided into three
16 congressional districts. Congressman Ray LaHood, Tim
17 Johnson and Lane Evans were congressional members.
18 It was a simple fact that advocating for the many
19 needs of our entire city among three congressional
20 representatives was a challenge at best.

21 It is important that elected officials listen
22 to the public interest to ensure that our voters
23 matter, and so again I thank you for this
24 opportunity. A critical step is to draw district

1 lines that keep communities intact. The way district
2 lines are drawn affect how politicians represent
3 their constituents' interests. When communities are
4 kept whole, we have a greater ability to hold our
5 politicians accountable. I'm not asking more of you
6 than is expected of me in my service to the city of
7 Decatur. On behalf of the residents of Decatur, I am
8 simply asking that when you draw the new map, please
9 do not divide our city into pieces of many
10 legislative districts to simply ensure political
11 viability. Again I want to thank you for allowing me
12 to provide this input and I will be available to
13 answer any questions you may have.

14 CO-CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: Thank you, Councilperson
15 Gregory. Are there any questions of the witness?
16 Representative Butler.

17 REPRESENTATIVE BUTLER: Thank you, Leader
18 Hoffman. And Alderman Gregory, thank you for being
19 out here. I'm honored to count you as a friend and
20 appreciate all the good work that you do for the
21 citizens of Decatur and Macon County.

22 And I just want to reiterate what you said,
23 especially at the end of your testimony about
24 dividing communities. And I'm glad you pointed out

1 the congressional map from 20 years ago. The
2 community, not only was Decatur and Springfield
3 divided between three congressional districts, but a
4 village that I represent in the general assembly,
5 Illiopolis between Springfield and Decatur, was also
6 represented by those three members of Congress. It's
7 astounding to think that a small town like Illiopolis
8 probably had as much congressional representation as
9 any city in the country because they had crazily had
10 three congressional districts going right through it
11 including Representative Evans', former Congressman
12 Evans' district that basically went down Interstate
13 72 to get to Decatur.

14 And I think that really underscores so much
15 of what you said, what we've heard over the last week
16 and a half on these hearings. People are rightly
17 concerned about dividing communities and dividing
18 neighborhoods for partisan political gain. And
19 that's happened on both sides of the aisle, to be
20 very honest, when Republicans have drawn the maps or
21 when Democrats have drawn the maps. And my hope is
22 that we get away from that in drawing not only the
23 congressional maps, but drawing the legislative maps
24 as well. I appreciate your testimony here today and

1 keep up the good work for the people of Decatur. I
2 appreciate it.

3 COUNCILWOMAN GREGORY: Thank you, Representative.

4 CO-CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: Any questions? Seeing
5 none, thank you, Councilperson Gregory, for your
6 testimony.

7 COUNCILWOMAN GREGORY: Thank you, Representative
8 Hoffman.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: We would now move on to
10 something that I was supposed to do first but forgot.
11 There's a presentation that will be presented by
12 Aaron Lowe, who works for the House Democratic
13 majority. Please proceed.

14 MR. LOWE: I'm just going to take a second to
15 share my screen. Good morning, everyone. My name is
16 Aaron Lowe, A-a-r-o-n, L-o-w-e. I'm an employee of
17 the Illinois House of Representatives. I'm going to
18 give a brief overview of the state's redistricting
19 procedure. I'll briefly discuss the background of
20 redistricting as well as the redistricting process in
21 Illinois. I'm also going to be going over federal
22 and state redistricting guidelines. Finally, we'll
23 take a quick look at what preliminary data reveals
24 about population trends in the state and region.

1 So what is redistricting? Redistricting is
2 the process that ensures all Illinois residents are
3 afforded equal representation in the state
4 legislature and federal Congress as guaranteed by the
5 United States constitution. The U.S. Supreme Court
6 held a series of rulings in the 1960's that
7 congressional and state legislative district in each
8 state must be of approximately equal population,
9 establishing the principle of one person, one vote.
10 As a result, states redraw their congressional and
11 state districts every ten years to reflect changes in
12 population.

13 The timeline for redrawing the legislative
14 map is based on the Illinois constitution. The
15 constitution gives the state legislature the initial
16 responsibility of passing a new legislative map.
17 Both the state House and the state Senate must pass a
18 plan which then must be signed into law by the
19 governor.

20 If the new map does not go into effect by the
21 constitutional deadline of June 30th, responsibility
22 for creating a new map passes from the legislature to
23 a legislative redistricting commission. The
24 commission would consist of eight members, with two

1 each appointed by the legislative leaders and no more
2 than four from the same political party. A majority
3 vote of five or more commission members would
4 constitute final approval of a new map.

5 However, if the commission does not agree to
6 a map by September 1st, the Illinois Supreme Court
7 will submit two names, one from each party, to the
8 Illinois secretary of state, who will then choose one
9 name at random to serve as the ninth member of the
10 commission. Five of the nine members must agree to a
11 plan no later than October 5th.

12 In order to understand the process of
13 creating new districts, we must look at some legal
14 guiding principles. First among these is equal
15 population. Congressional districts must be nearly
16 equal in population, while state districts must be
17 substantially equal population. Federal and state
18 law also require that all districts be contiguous,
19 meaning that all parts of a district must be next to
20 each other unless connected by water. Annexations as
21 well as unincorporated areas in municipalities and
22 counties sometimes mean communities are
23 discontinuous. However, congressional and state
24 districts must be adjacent or connected at all

1 points.

2 A more difficult requirement to define is
3 compactness. There are at least 30 different
4 scientific ways to measure how compact a district is,
5 but no statute or court precedent identifies standard
6 criteria of compactness. In theory, compactness
7 focuses on the shape of a district's boundaries, how
8 spread out the district is from a central core or
9 where the district's population center of gravity is.
10 Compactness is hindered by geography and on the
11 ground realities. Often the interpretation of
12 compactness involves more than a visual test.

13 Illinois is one of 14 state that nests its
14 House districts, also called representative
15 districts, inside one of its Senate districts, also
16 called legislative districts. Map makers will also
17 look, where possible, to follow existing political
18 and geographical boundaries in ways that maximize a
19 community's opportunity to have its interests
20 represented. As you know, however, county,
21 municipality, township and natural geographic
22 boundaries are not always compact or contiguous.

23 By studying population data and holding
24 public hearings like this to listen to the thoughts

1 of residents across the state, law makers look to
2 identify what are known as communities of interest.
3 A community of interest is a group of people
4 concentrated in a geographic area who are socially,
5 culturally, ethnically, economically, religiously or
6 otherwise alike and can be joined in a district to
7 most effectively have their voices heard.

8 The factors contributing to any particular
9 community of interest vary throughout the state.
10 Federal law requires redistricting plans to respect
11 minority representation. The principles of the
12 Federal Voting Rights Act are in place to prevent the
13 reduction of opportunities for minority populations
14 to participate equally in the electoral process.
15 However, districts cannot be drawn solely on the
16 basis of race.

17 Illinois law also protects representation of
18 racial and language minority groups. The Illinois
19 Voting Rights Act helps to prevent minority
20 fracturing or dividing a concentration of minorities
21 among two or more districts by requiring map makers
22 to consider creating crossover districts, coalition
23 districts or influence districts. A crossover
24 district is one in which large minority groups may

1 elect the candidate of their choice with help from
2 voters of the majority group. A coalition district
3 brings multiple racial or language minority groups
4 together to elect a candidate of their choice. An
5 influence district allows a group to influence an
6 election outcome without being the majority
7 population in a district. These state law
8 requirements come into play only after compliance
9 with federal law and the U.S. and state
10 constitutional requirements for redistricting.

11 In addition, the law ensures transparency and
12 public participation by requiring public hearings
13 across the state, one of which we are having here
14 right now. At the end of the presentation, I'll
15 display an e-mail address on the screen which
16 Representative Gordon-Booth already provided where
17 you can submit your ideas. The committee is also
18 accepting written testimony today.

19 Now that we've covered the redistricting
20 process, let's discuss what data shows about the
21 state population. The U.S. Census Bureau has delayed
22 the release of much of the decennial census data by
23 more than six months until this fall. However, the
24 Bureau's annual population estimates show some trends

1 that can help inform the work ahead. The Census
2 Bureau's 2019 population estimate shows an overall
3 decline in state population over the past decade.
4 There are, however, communities that project to have
5 population gains. Communities with the largest
6 population by percentage increase since 2010 are
7 Kendall County, Monroe County, Champaign County and
8 Kane County.

9 Demographically speaking, the state's white
10 population is projected to decline, while
11 African-American populations statewide will likely
12 see a smaller overall decline. The Hispanic and
13 Asian populations across Illinois are projected to
14 see growth. Locally, population in Macon County is
15 projected to decrease. The county's white population
16 stands to decline, while African-American, Asian, and
17 Hispanic populations will likely increase.

18 Thank you all so much for your attention and
19 for coming out today to share your thoughts. As the
20 Chair mentioned, you'll be able to find testimony
21 from this hearing and all the other hearings on
22 ILGA.gov as well as ILHouseDems.com, forward slash,
23 Redistricting. The redistricting web site offers
24 additional ways to engage with the process, including

1 the public drawing portal where you can draw and
2 submit your own maps. You can submit further written
3 testimony and any suggestions to the committee at any
4 time by e-mailing Redistricting Committee at
5 HDS.ILGA.gov. And back over to you, Chairman.

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: Thank you, Aaron. We'll
7 now move on to our next witness. The next witness is
8 Ms. Malverta Wilkins. She is the owner of Lucy Loft
9 and Company, which is a local business in Decatur.
10 She's also COO of Sister Girls and Friends, which is
11 another local business. Ms. Wilkins.

12 MR. FEENEY: I'm sorry, Chairman. If I may, we
13 have actually not taken the roll call yet. If we may
14 do that before the next witness.

15 CO-CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: Yes, please.

16 MR. FEENEY: Hernandez, Tarver, Butler.

17 REPRESENTATIVE BUTLER: Here.

18 MR. FEENEY: Bourne.

19 REPRESENTATIVE BOURNE: Here.

20 MR. FEENEY: Burke. Gordon-Booth.

21 CO-CHAIRPERSON GORDON-BOOTH: Here.

22 MR. FEENEY: Hoffman.

23 CO-CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: Here.

24 MR. FEENEY: Mah.

1 CO-CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: Mr. Clerk, it's my
2 understanding that we aren't doing rolls. But if you
3 want to proceed, you can.

4 MR. FEENEY: I was not informed of that. If that
5 is not the case, I apologize.

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: That's okay. You're
7 doing your job.

8 MR. FEENEY: Yes, sir. Severin.

9 REPRESENTATIVE SEVERIN: Severin is here.

10 MR. FEENEY: And Spain.

11 REPRESENTATIVE SPAIN: Spain is here. Thank you.

12 MR. FEENEY: Thank you very much.

13 CO-CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: Ms. Wilkins, please
14 proceed.

15 MS. WILKINS: Good morning. Thank you, Chairman,
16 for the opportunity. I'm very grateful for the
17 opportunity just to be able to speak. And Lisa
18 Gregory, you spoke so eloquently this morning and
19 thank you so much for your statistics and the things
20 that you said.

21 And I won't be before you very long, but I do
22 want to bear witness that when you speak about how,
23 for instance, in Decatur, and I think we could
24 probably mirror Springfield with some of the very

1 same statistics, especially when it comes to the
2 African-American community or a community where it's
3 majority women and 70, you said 70 percent white.
4 And many times when we try to pool everything
5 together into one pot, there's a set of people that
6 are missed out. And we saw that during COVID, we saw
7 that with the vaccinations, we saw that with how the
8 vaccinations were distributed. We see that many
9 times with how money is distributed. And the
10 minority many times are not a part of the solution
11 but are looked on as the problem, and the majority
12 moves forward.

13 It's almost ridiculous to think that we can
14 get different results if we don't change something,
15 if we don't start working together, if we don't
16 collaborate, if we don't take our resources that are
17 diminishing and pool them together. Collaboration is
18 key. Working together across Springfield and Decatur
19 is key. We see some things and how that's starting
20 to work and how we can maybe get together, maybe, and
21 work on what it is that we currently have and make it
22 better. Innovation, collaboration, gentrification
23 and maybe doing it in a way that is more positive and
24 not negative.

1 So I know, I understand that this, even in
2 every community there are so many different facets of
3 the community, but we have to put an investment in
4 the community portion that doesn't look or feel or
5 know or touch like the majority. And so I'm
6 representing the minority and I'd like to see our
7 city more successful. I'd like to see Springfield
8 more successful, us working together. We're 35, 40
9 miles away from each other. How about bringing these
10 communities together and crossing racial barrier
11 lines and things that separate us, manufacturing and
12 farming, pooling those people together, sharing
13 resources, sharing information, getting things out
14 there so that everyone is equally taken care of,
15 everyone is equally -- feel adequate with what's
16 going on, that I can call Representative Caulkins and
17 get the same information or the same results or the
18 same response if I call Representative Sue Scherer,
19 because it is about the people. That's why we're all
20 here. That's why you're here. It's about the
21 people.

22 And if we get to where you put everyone in
23 the same pot and we can't get some diversity from
24 another community to see how they're doing things and

1 to pool it into here and us work together, I don't
2 know how we can move forward into a higher level.
3 And that's what we all want. We all want what's best
4 for our families, we want what's best for our
5 community. We want to be able to drive down the
6 street and not be shot at or to go to places and not
7 be shot at. I want to be safe wherever I go. I have
8 an establishment here in Decatur. I want it to be
9 safe, I want the people who come here to be safe.

10 But we all know the things that are happening
11 in our communities. So what are we doing? What are
12 we doing and how do we work together? Because that's
13 the only way, the only way. If we don't come to the
14 table together, if we don't take the resources that
15 we have and make sure everyone is a part of it and
16 not the majority or the women or this pot is for
17 these people, this is for this, only white people can
18 do this or only black people can do this, if we don't
19 find those racial barriers and knock them down and
20 come together, it doesn't matter how you draw the
21 lines. We're not successful.

22 So for me as a witness today, I would ask
23 that you take everyone into consideration, that you
24 take every piece of crime that's happening in every

1 community and look at all of that and see how will
2 that best fit everyone, how can we all work together
3 to eliminate all of this. And not just for one group
4 of people, but for the whole melting pot, right? And
5 that's the challenge.

6 So thank you for the opportunity to be able
7 to say that and to be able to speak. I definitely
8 appreciate every one of you who wake up every day and
9 come to roles and jobs like these because it's not
10 easy. It's difficult. It's difficult because you
11 have a heart, you have empathy, you understand what's
12 going on in the community, but you're not restricted.
13 Because together, collaborations, bridges, all of
14 those things that you hear about or talk about are
15 real. So let's just put those feet to action and see
16 what we can do to help when we draw the lines. If we
17 can think of those things, the people, all the
18 people. Because for me, that's what matters, our
19 safety, our education, bridging together, working
20 with other communities, working across the line with
21 the state reps regardless of what your party line is,
22 Republican or Democrat or otherwise.

23 So thank you so much. I would ask that we do
24 continue to work with Springfield and we do continue

1 to work with other communities. Because I do see
2 progress and I've seen progress in the
3 African-American community since that has happened,
4 since Representative Sue Scherer has helped and
5 worked in Decatur. I've seen things happen and
6 things change and I'd like that to continue. Thank
7 you so much for the opportunity.

8 CO-CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: Thank you for your
9 testimony. Before we go to any questions of
10 Ms. Wilkins, I have to read into the record a few
11 witness slips. There are two no position witness
12 slips that were filed. T. Ray McJunkins, regional
13 communities and boundaries of Illinois district in
14 Decatur. He is also with the Union Baptist church in
15 Springfield, Illinois. And Ryan Tolley, regional
16 communities and the boundaries of Illinois districts.
17 That's what we're talking about today. He is with
18 Change Illinois Action Fund and he has no position.

19 Any questions of the witness or statements
20 regarding the witness' testimony? Representative
21 Scherer.

22 REPRESENTATIVE SCHERER: Thank you, Chairman. I
23 would just like to say a word to Melverta. Thank you
24 both to you and to Lisa Gregory. You both spoke very

1 eloquently and we appreciate people taking time out
2 of their busy day to share with us. We know that
3 what really matters here is that we care about people
4 and we want to help and make a difference in the best
5 way we can and thank you for your time. It's greatly
6 appreciated.

7 CO-CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: Thank you. And I have
8 one opponent witness slip, Michael Buehler. He is
9 with McHenry County board. Any other questions of
10 the witness? Well, thank you.

11 MS. WILKINS: Thank you.

12 CO-CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: Now, Leader Butler, I
13 don't believe that there are any other witnesses for
14 the Decatur hearing. If any of the representatives
15 would like to make any closing statements or would
16 like to make any statements, now would be the time.

17 REPRESENTATIVE BUTLER: Yes, feel free to have
18 any of our colleagues, if Representative Caulkins who
19 represents Decatur wants to say anything or any of
20 the other ones. But let me just add, before
21 Representative Caulkins says something, to
22 Ms. Wilkins, I appreciate your testimony. And I'll
23 tell you the same thing that I told a woman who
24 testified on the south side of Chicago on Saturday.

1 We have a lot more in the state that brings us
2 together than divides. I live on the north end of
3 Springfield. I've had someone killed by gunfire
4 within the last few weeks a couple blocks from my
5 house. We have economic development issues, major
6 economic development issues in communities like
7 Decatur and Springfield. And as somebody who's lived
8 in Springfield but also has done significant work in
9 Decatur, I think I can speak pretty forcefully to the
10 problems Decatur has seen over the last couple
11 decades, with the loss of the manufacturing base
12 especially, and how that's impacted decline in the
13 population of the community and economic development.

14 But we also have issues, food deserts,
15 there's an issue that came up in Chicago. A lot of
16 us today at this hearing represent rural areas that
17 have food security issues as well in rural areas as
18 well as urban areas. We face a lot of the same
19 economic development issues downstate, across
20 downstate. And that's why I think it's important
21 that downstate really has a loud voice in these
22 redistricting hearings and that's why I said at the
23 beginning of this hearing I was concerned about the
24 fact that we only have two hearings scheduled south

1 of I-72. That's a concern because those people have
2 as much right to be heard as somebody from Lake
3 County or the Gold Coast has to be heard in these
4 hearings as well. And so my hope is that we can hear
5 from them as well.

6 So I appreciate your testimony today and I
7 agree with you. I think Springfield and Decatur
8 could do great things if we work more together. I
9 think we're neighbors that know each other pretty
10 well, but we could certainly do a lot more together
11 for the region of our state. So thanks for being
12 here today.

13 CO-CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: Representative Caulkins.

14 REPRESENTATIVE CAULKINS: Thank you very much,
15 Leader Hoffman. A bit of housekeeping. I have
16 written testimony from two people. You named them as
17 witnesses, but I show that there is some written
18 testimony that you may want to check on from Ryan
19 Tolley and from T. Ray McJunkins. I've received two
20 documents. So perhaps we need to find a way to get
21 those in the record.

22 CO-CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: I would ask the clerk,
23 if you do not have them, Representative Caulkins, I
24 would appreciate it. Because these virtual meetings

1 are sometimes difficult, I would appreciate if you
2 could provide that to the clerk's office and we'll
3 make it part of the record.

4 REPRESENTATIVE CAULKINS: Hand these over to you?

5 REPRESENTATIVE BUTLER: I believe that's written
6 testimony that has been submitted to your staff, Jay.
7 I know our staff forwarded it to us. They've
8 testified, you know, Change has testified at each of
9 these hearings. I know it's similar testimony, but
10 we certainly want to have been Pastor McJunkins'
11 testimony there. But I believe that was provided to
12 the staff, Jay.

13 CO-CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: Okay, if we do not have
14 it, I would ask our staff to get it from you and make
15 it part of the record, please.

16 REPRESENTATIVE CAULKINS: I just wanted to make
17 sure that their testimony got entered. They took
18 the -- made the effort to do this.

19 I want to say that in this process, I believe
20 that it's very, very important, as I think
21 Ms. Gregory pointed out, that this be a less partisan
22 process than it's been in the past. We've advocated
23 for an independent map commission, we've advocated
24 for a fair map. The governor ran on the position of

1 a fair map. Many of us, when we run for election
2 and re-election, we speak about a fair map. I'm
3 advocating for a fair map and, you know, I'm in a
4 district where I didn't have an opponent last
5 November because this district is drawn for a
6 Republican representative.

7 And I'm speaking against, I guess my own
8 interest, but I think it's important that we draw
9 maps fairly, that we draw maps without regards to how
10 many Republicans lives in this neighborhood, how many
11 Democrats live in that neighborhood. People need to
12 feel empowered, they need to feel like they have a
13 reason to go vote. And I think that's part of the
14 problem we have with turnout, is that voters, after
15 having paid attention for a cycle or two, understand
16 that the representatives are already basically
17 determined by whatever party the map was drawn for.
18 And I think that is harmful. It's harmed our
19 participation in this process. I think it's also had
20 a harmful effect on how we get along in the general
21 assembly. I think that we need to have competitive
22 districts, we need to have fair maps.

23 I also, I think that this is an issue that
24 we're going to face, as to when the map gets drawn.

1 We listened to the presentation and there's no way
2 that the census data for 2020 is going to be
3 presented before we reach some very, I guess
4 definitive timelines. And going through that process
5 is going to make it very, very difficult for people
6 to run for office, not just incumbents, but anyone
7 that wants to get involved in this process.

8 And I think one of the ways that we can fix
9 that is to move the primary date. I think we could
10 easily move the primary date from March to May or
11 even June to give this opportunity for a map to be
12 drawn and adopted, to give people that want to run
13 for office an opportunity to see where they live and
14 what districts they fall in, be it a congressional
15 district, a Senate district or a House district.

16 You know, there's nothing that says that we
17 have to go through a March primary. I know that in
18 the past, that date was selected because we wanted to
19 be in some position nationally. I don't think
20 Illinois has ever -- I say ever. That's not probably
21 good. But I don't think Illinois' primary is a
22 determining factor on who our presidential candidates
23 are. So I think we need to think about, we need to
24 think about perhaps moving that date for the

1 primaries. It will also shorten the amount of time
2 we have between the primaries and the general
3 election. I believe that would be welcomed by the
4 voting public, you know, to have people campaigning
5 for months and months and months on end.

6 So to the commission, to summarize, I think
7 that this map needs to be drawn with the 2020 census
8 data. Many, many things happened in 2020, population
9 shifts. And I think by doing that, we should look at
10 moving the primary date. And I hope that we find a
11 way to work together, Democrats and Republicans, to
12 do a fair map. We couldn't get it on the ballot, we
13 couldn't get it in the constitution, but hundreds and
14 hundreds of thousands of people have signed petitions
15 saying they want a fair map in Illinois. And thank
16 you, Leader Hoffman, for this opportunity, to your
17 commission and I look forward to the outcome.

18 CO-CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: Thank you,
19 Representative. Representative Scherer.

20 REPRESENTATIVE SCHERER: Thank you, Chairman,
21 both Chairman Hoffman and Chairman Jehan
22 Gordon-Booth. I agree with Representative Butler and
23 Caulkins in saying that we need a fair map. And
24 having been the representative of both the inner city

1 of Decatur and the inner city of Springfield, I feel
2 like this is as fair of a map as we're ever going to
3 find because the interests of the people in both of
4 these areas are so similar, their needs are so
5 similar. And it amazes me even how many of the
6 people, as I go door to door, know each other.
7 There's been the same types of communities.

8 I felt that Councilwoman Gregory gave some
9 very interesting factual data that affects our
10 community. I think it can't be ignored that many of
11 the areas that she discussed were areas that are
12 outside the center of the city. And I feel that my
13 forefathers, so to speak, before my time saw the
14 importance of combining the inner cities. We look at
15 urban exodus. And when you see the poverty that both
16 inner cities face, I think that it enables us to
17 better help those people when we have a person who
18 sees that as a predominant part of their district
19 instead of a fringe.

20 Another point that I have noticed in my eight
21 years has been how well Bill Mitchell and I work
22 together for things for the city of Decatur. It
23 wasn't unusual at all for a Saturday afternoon to
24 meet, for me to be at a closet in my garage, at a

1 birthday party and for him to be out in his back
2 pasture and we're talking about how to bring things
3 for the Decatur community. And I remember he said,
4 and when I started, first thing he said to me was
5 Sue, we have a lot more in common than we do
6 separate. And you'll find that we will be voting
7 alike on some things. And that always stuck with me,
8 that I felt that it was an advantage. I saw that
9 also with Rep Butler and Murphy in Springfield, that
10 when we go to the table to look at perhaps historic
11 preservation, there are three reps in the room
12 instead of one pushing for that same project.

13 So there are advantages that haven't really
14 been mentioned. Springfield Urban League is so close
15 to Decatur that Decatur cannot get an urban league.
16 So for our inner city people, we work in Decatur as
17 an umbrella under the Springfield Urban League. I
18 worry if we separate that, that's going to cause some
19 serious problems for us as far as working with our
20 inner city youths especially. For us to work
21 together and be unrepresented is very difficult to
22 do. So by keeping them together, it's much easier to
23 get things accomplished.

24 The folks in both communities need jobs

1 desperately. The folks of my level of community, I
2 have some college educated people but I also have a
3 lot of blue collar people, I have a lot of poor,
4 desperate to find work. And those are the kind of
5 jobs, the minimum wage jobs in both communities. So
6 there's a great similarity there.

7 I just think that we really need to focus on
8 how much our districts are alike in that we're both,
9 I guess you'd call them smaller metropolitan areas.
10 Of course, Decatur is smaller than Springfield. But
11 we both have the same kind of problems with inner
12 city violence, poverty and all that kind of thing
13 and we have it in both communities. So as the
14 representative for those areas, that's not the only
15 thing I focus on, but that's something that I feel
16 those populations would be left out if we change
17 this. Thank you for your time. I appreciate it.

18 CO-CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: Thank you,
19 Representative. Representative Bourne.

20 REPRESENTATIVE BOURNE: Thank you. I will be
21 really brief. I think this will probably be the
22 closest hearing to the district that I have the
23 privilege of representing or maybe East St. Louis
24 this Sunday. But I just wanted to speak on behalf of

1 one particular community that I think shows what a
2 political map making process can produce for small
3 communities and having their voice diminished. I and
4 Representative Scherer have the privilege of
5 representing Stonington, which is in rural Christian
6 County, which happens to be a town of 932 people. It
7 is small, does not have their own school district.
8 And it's been a challenge under this map because
9 their community is split completely in two. And it
10 doesn't make sense to me, except for drawing
11 politically motivated maps to scoop up one party or
12 the other in a district, that something like that
13 would happen.

14 So on behalf of Stonington and other
15 communities across the state who have been sliced and
16 diced in the name of political expediency, I would
17 hope that this upcoming map making process will be
18 more respectful of community lines and existing
19 political boundaries. Because when you have a mayor
20 who lives on one side of the town and a couple
21 aldermen who live on the other side of the town,
22 there was a previous comment that that might be an
23 advantage for some larger communities and I would
24 argue that particularly for smaller communities, it

1 becomes an extreme challenge. So I just wanted to
2 speak on behalf of Stonington. I have heard from
3 several of them. I had a quick conversation actually
4 with someone yesterday about this exact problem. So
5 I wanted to voice their concerns. Thanks.

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: Leader Butler, anything
7 else from any of your members?

8 REPRESENTATIVE BUTLER: I think we're good.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: Okay. Leader
10 Gordon-Booth?

11 CO-CHAIRPERSON GORDONBOOTH: Bring us home,
12 Leader.

13 CO-CHAIRPERSON HOFFMAN: Well, thank you. So the
14 House redistricting committee shall stand in recess
15 to the call of the Chair. Thank you, Decatur. Thank
16 you, everybody.

17 CO-CHAIRPERSON GORDON-BOOTH: Thanks, everybody.

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1 STATE OF ILLINOIS)
) SS.
2 CITY OF SPRINGFIELD)

3

4 I, LYDIA B. PINKAWA, a Certified Shorthand
5 Reporter, do hereby certify that the meeting
6 aforementioned was held at the time previously
7 described.

8

9 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my
10 hand and seal.

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