

CHAIRMEN: Senator Williams

MEMBERS PRESENT:

SENATORS: Fasano, McKinney

REPRESENTATIVES: Donovan, Nafis, O'Neill

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Good afternoon, folks. Welcome to our Reapportionment Committee public hearing here in Hartford. This is one of two public hearings. Another will be held at seven o'clock this evening.

We have held public hearings in five geographic locations all over the state. I am State Senator Don Williams, President of the State Senate. We'll have the rest of our committee introduce themselves in just a second, but I did want to give you an overview of this reapportionment process.

Now in that regard there are a couple of handouts, and if you haven't had a chance to pick them up at the table outside the hearing room they are on a table. And there's a whole series of frequently asked questions, which I imagine will address any questions you may have about the actual process.

But just to give a quick overview, every ten years there is a U.S. Census, as we know, and the population of Connecticut is measured in that process. And in the past ten years the population of Connecticut grew at about 4 percent, a little over that.

Now Connecticut and every other state, when the census numbers comes in, we have to take a look at all of our districts, state

representative districts, state senate districts and congressional districts and adjust them according to changes in population over the last ten years.

Now you might ask, why do we have to do that? Why can't we just keep the district lines the same? We like the district lines, or whatever. Well, the answer to that is in order to ensure one vote for one person so that one man, one vote principle that's been enunciated by our courts, we can't have a situation where one district grows so much in population compared to another and yet they still have just one state representative, for example. Let's say that as opposed to another district that perhaps did not grow or lost population and has one state representative. In that case that smaller district is being disproportionately represented. You can see how that would impact in congressional districts as well.

So that's the principle. That's the reason why every ten years that we look at our districts and by law we must reapportion those districts to, not necessarily achieve mathematical perfection, but get pretty close to it and the standard is higher for the congressional districts as opposed to the state legislative and state senate districts.

We are in our fact-finding phase right now so we have been, as I mentioned, at public hearings getting input from the public. So that we have not drafted potential maps at this point. That will come later in August and September. So we just want to get input.

And again, if you pick up those handouts that I referred to you'll find a website for the Reapportionment Committee that has a lot of

other good information and can keep you informed about this process.

There are computer terminals here at the state capitol where you can come and take a look at the districts and run potential models. So there's a way for you after this public hearing to stay involved in the process.

And finally, as to the process let me just say this, in other states they do it somewhat differently and I'm sure you've all read about accounts in years past and past cycles where, you know, a legislature with a majority of one political party will wield their political power and redistrict in a way that overtly favors that political party and creates districts that helps elect folks from a particular political party.

In Connecticut our process is different than in some and in, perhaps, many other states. We have a bipartisan tradition, so regardless of whether one party or the other controls the Legislature or a congressional district, we have an equal number of Democrats and Republicans on the Reapportionment Committee. It's a check and balance so that we don't see partisanship run away with the process. And in addition to that we have as transparent a process as possible by having public hearings and trying to get out of as much information on this process as we possibly can.

So with that let me thank you for coming here this afternoon to this hearing. And I want to introduce our other members of the Reapportionment Committee who are here this afternoon, starting with Senator Len Fasano.

Len.

SENATOR FASANO: Thank you, Senator Williams.

Len Fasano, 34th District, which is Wallingford, North Haven and East Haven.

Thank you.

SENATOR MCKINNEY: Good afternoon, everyone.

John McKinney, 28th District, Fairfield, Easton, Weston, Newtown.

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Chris?

REP. DONOVAN: Chris Donovan, Speaker of the House, State Representative representing Meriden.

REP. NAFIS: Hi. I'm Sandy Nafis. I'm the State Representative from Newington, which is the 27th District.

SENATOR WILLIAMS: I thought there was somebody down there on the other end.

So I'll introduce myself again. I'm State Senator Don Williams from the 29th District representing eight towns up in North Eastern Connecticut.

So let's move right on to our first speaker. I'd ask Bob Berman from Bloomfield to come to the microphone.

And you know, we are asking folks to be efficient, concise, but we want to get as much information as possible. So please feel free to give us your views, but you know, usually at the Legislature we have a three-minute time limit. We're not going to have that for this hearing, but we do ask you to be considerate of the other speakers who are waiting to go.

Mr. Berman.

You know, Mr. Berman, we're going to need to have you come -- for the purposes of our record we're going to need to have you come to the microphone here.

Can we do it over there? That would be great.

ROBERT BERMAN: They had assured me that that microphone would pick it up too.

A VOICE: That one has got you.

SENATOR WILLIAMS: That's fine. You're on.

ROBERT BERMAN: Excellent. I have a map of Bloomfield here. Bloomfield is one of the smaller towns in the state and I'm using that as an example as well as a problem we have in Bloomfield.

You will notice that we actually have six voting districts and I have outlined in red and in green the two senate districts -- I'm sorry, the house districts.

The problem we have is that we have in blue and green, we have -- I'm sorry, it's blue and yellow, where you have Senate District 2. In green we have Senate District 5, however we have House District 1 is blue. The green and yellow is House District 15.

So every time we have a state vote we have people who are not sure where they should go and we cannot reapportion our districts appropriately because the state -- the line for the state house district and the senate districts don't correspond. They're not in sync.

I would ask that when you reconsider when you're redoing this take a look at wherever you can, especially in the small communities let the -- have the house lines and the senate lines correspond to each other wherever possible. Because if you do that small towns like Bloomfield are going to have the same expense per voting location as a large town. It's going to be the same basically.

The problem is small towns don't have as large a budget, so as a percentage of their budget they're spending more on voting than they need to. If those lines were compacted it would help.

It also helps us when we want to redistrict in our town, we don't have to worry about, well, we've got to worry about this one. We've got to keep these together because they're in the same house district, but we've got to figure out how to deal with separate senate districts. That adds another layer of confusion that makes life a little bit more difficult for our registrars.

The other thing I want to point out is that looking at the census I notice that -- and I'm making a presumption, which is probably a bad presumption. The presumption is the number of house seats and senate seats in the Legislature would remain the same. Probably not a good presumption, but I've got to make something.

If I make that presumption, according to the material you've given us every house district is going to have 23,670 approximate voters in it. But when I add up Bloomfield and Windsor populations for 2010, as an example, I get a total of 49,530. If I were to divide that in two I get 24,765, almost the right number for

two house districts split just between those two. That -- there's logic to that.

Now is that what's going to happen? I don't know, but I will tell you right now I believe that between Windsor and Bloomfield we have four house districts, at least three.

So I think again we're adding a layer of complexity here that maybe can be avoided. You may not be able to, but I'm asking you to consider those issues.

Thank you.

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Thank you very much.

Are there questions for Mr. Berman? No.

Thanks for your testimony.

Next, Mary Legnard from Bethel.

MARY LEGNARD: Good afternoon. My comments are very similar to what Mr. Berman just said. Small towns have a major, major problem with redistricting. I've written just a quick statement that I'd like to read to you just from my own experience.

In Bethel there are less than 11,000 voters, but because there are two senate districts and two assembly districts we have five voting districts and four different ballots. There are ten other cities in the state that have two senators and two state reps, but they're all much larger than Bethel. They include: Farmington, Naugatuck, New Canaan, New Haven, Stamford, Stratford, Torrington, Waterbury, West Haven and Wethersfield.

I'm here today to ask the commission to please

consider placing our District 5 back into our District 3. It's a very expensive process to have a district that only has 515 voters.

Now for instance, when I have a primary in September I have to staff the polls with a moderator and six workers from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. And if 20 percent of the registered voters in that district, which would be about 30 people, cast the votes that day, cast a vote that day, that's about \$30 a vote.

As just as some background information, I've been the registrar for 30 years and when I started -- that was supposed to be temporary. It was supposed to be a temporary job -- there were just two districts. And then after each census in '82 and '92 and 2002 an additional district was created.

I would like to submit this map -- which I will -- to show you that our District 5 is just a part of what was 3 and they split off these 515 voters. It's strictly residential. There's no public building. There's no way you can hold an election in that district, so we've had to move it to the school where the people always voted when they were part of the district.

And just in closing I'd like to say that my coworker Mary O'Leary was not able to be here today, but hopefully you will consider our request to combine Districts 3 and District 5 the way they were ten years ago.

Thank you.

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Thanks very much.

Are there questions?

Thank you for your testimony.

MARY LEGNARD: Thank you.

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Next, Rick Levy from Kent.

RICHARD LEVY: Thank you, Senator Williams.

It's Rick Levy, but that's okay. It's often mistaken that way.

I do have a quick question before I begin. The other three members of the committee who are not present at the moment, will they be at the evening session or at other sessions?

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Some may be and they have certainly been at the other sessions as well.

RICHARD LEVY: Thank you.

Good afternoon. My name is Richard Levy. I've been a resident of Kent for the past 27 years and a former two-term selectmen of my town. I appear here today to appeal to this committee to finally align Kent with its common neighbors as part of the upcoming redistricting decisions.

When I moved to Kent -- when I moved to Connecticut actually, Kent was a tiny part of the district that was dominated by New Milford. I actually ran for state representative for that district, then the 67th.

And during my months of door-to-door canvassing I found there was little in common between Kent and New Milford other than a border. Folks in New Milford, a town whose population is nearly ten times the size of Kent, knew almost nothing of the problems of

their northern neighbors.

After the 2000 census Kent was subsequently moved to the 108th District, which is dominated by New Fairfield with a little bit of New Milford, Gaylordsville and Sherman tossed in.

Not only do we not share a border with New Fairfield, we even have a different area code from our state rep who lives in New Fairfield.

Our other partners in the 108th being members of the Danbury Chamber of Commerce are really considered part of greater Danbury. They share few commonalities of interest with Kent in terms of our geography, economy, cultural and historical heritage, our educational issues or even our innate sense of regional identity.

Kent is deeply invested in a number of regional organizations. Starting with the obvious, Kent is part of the Region 1 School District along with its neighboring towns to the north. Other organized groups include the Northwest Council of Governments, the Northwest Regional Planning Collaborative and the Northwest Chamber of Commerce. Even the federal government recognized Kent to be the southern border of the National Heritage District. None of the other towns in the 108th District are part of any of these groups.

As the obvious entrance to the Litchfield Hills, Kent has been aggressive in protecting its small-town aura. Thanks to a proactive planning and zoning commission, Kent was one of Connecticut's first towns to pass the village district regulations protecting the look of Kent for many years to come.

We passed ridgeline protections -- regulations rather, to prevent clearcutting of our beautiful vistas. Thanks to the Kent land trust the land that forms the southern entrance to Kent will never be developed.

With an eye on the extensive development on Route 7 in New Milford Kent's regulations are designed to keep out the big-box stores that pervade the towns to the south and keep Kent one of our state's most desired tourist destinations.

In every logical way Kent identifies itself with its northwest corner -- with our northern neighbors, Sharon, Salisbury, Goshen and Cornwall, all to size and community interest/identity.

The job of redistricting is difficult and complicated. I admit that. I'm sure the intent of our founding fathers was to bring neighborhoods together and not be a political tool. While the statutes call for a relative equal number of residents in each district, there is nothing in the statutes that speaks to how many Republicans or Democrats should be included. Redistricting along political lines distorts the very diversity of our citizens.

As a representative of many of my neighbors, Democrats and Republicans, unaffiliated included, I appeal to you to consider moving Kent to the 64th Assembly District, thus joining us with those towns who share so many of our problems. We need to have our Representative responsive to the needs of all of these special towns in Litchfield County.

And I noticed in the material that was left on a desk, under the factors that determine the districts the first one said, respecting

communities of interest. I ask you to please put Kent where it belongs.

Thank you very much.

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Thank you.

Are there questions?

Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO: Not a question, as much as -- the statement that you just read, can you make copies and leave that?

RICHARD LEAVY: I did, sir. Senator Fasano. I left copies. It's in your -- it should be in your book. I left at the last moment, so you didn't have a chance.

SENATOR FASANO: And also the lady before, Mary Legnard, I think her name was, if she could leave her copy, too, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Anything else from committee members? Great.

Next is Nick Kapoor of Monroe.

NICHOLAS KAPOOR: Good afternoon.

Senator Williams and distinguished members of the Reapportionment Committee, my name is Nicholas Kapoor from Monroe, Connecticut. As a recent college graduate of degrees in mathematics and political science and being involved in state government by being an intern for Representative Lyddy this past session, reapportionment has become a very fascinating topic for me.

As I started to study and understand the

concepts surrounding this decennial process I found some troubling things occurring in Connecticut's current method of reapportionment, concerns which I would like to share with you today.

The Reapportionment Committee's website's opening line is, the purpose of redistricting is to establish and maintain voting districts that are faithful to the principle of one person, one vote. This purpose is unfulfilled when incarcerated persons are counted for redistricting based upon the prison they are detained in.

In an OLR, Office of Legislative Research report in 2007, the OLR noted the problems with counting prisoners. The issue of whether to count prisoners at their permanent home of record rather than at their usual residence is becoming more controversial as the number of prisoners continues to rise.

There is merit to the argument that prisoners should be counted at their home of record, but that ability to do so does not now exist. This just goes to show that there is a serious problem with the prisoners and how they are considered in reapportionment, a serious problem that needs fixing.

Another serious issue plaguing reapportionment in our State is its unnecessary political nature. A situation that should be apolitical is quite the contrary. Aside from the budget and its implementors, the vote to approve the maps that will be drawn by this committee is, I believe, one of, if not the most important vote that a Connecticut legislator can cast. Reapportionment is not the death penalty. It's not the legalization of marijuana and it's certainly not dealing with captive

audiences, but it is important.

Reapportionment determines who is eligible to run for office in which district. It determines who will represent thousands of people in Hartford and millions of people in Washington.

To make reapportionment political and drawn districts to help an incumbent or to help a Democrat or Republican is a shameful act. Representative Cafero at the July 5th public hearing of this committee stated, it's not about protecting who's in there now. It's about doing what's right and what's fair. I hope this committee is able to draw maps that are right and fair and that includes non-gerrymandered districts.

Furthermore, a healthy democracy is one in which an engaged citizenry participates in fair, clean, open and competitive elections. That's my definition. I'm sure there are many others of democracy. Clean and open has been achieved through a Connecticut election law. Elections have become more level in recent cycles, more prevalently the most recent cycle in 2010 because of the citizens election program. However competitive, in some things it needs some work.

I believe you all have copies of my testimony. You can see from the chart below that nearly one in four elections in 2006 and 2008 for General Assembly seats had no votes cast in them except for the winner. So for this chart I defined uncompetitive as the only votes in an election -- the only votes cast in election were for that of the winner.

Former Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger said, competition creates performance. I believe

this is true because when the issue is discussed more and more from opposing viewpoints each side becomes more educated. A room full of people thinking the same way does no one any good.

The CEP began the process of bringing healthy competition to the Connecticut General Assembly and hopefully this committee can enhance this competitiveness even more. When an incumbent must defend his or her positions against a challenger the voter becomes more educated about whom he or she is voting for. However when only one name is on the ballot for a particular office the voter is certainly disserved.

Another problem area that can be gleaned from the 2000 reapportionment is population deviation. Under federal law districts may vary from an ideal district by up to 10 percent, though the lowest number achievable is preferred. I understand this is for congressional districts, but it's also, I believe, a good guideline for state districts. 10 percent still being a little high, though.

In 2000 the House of Representatives districts in Connecticut had a deviation of 9.20 percent and the senatorial districts, a deviation of 8.03 percent. This is unacceptable. I cannot honestly believe that there was not a better way to draw the districts in 2000 than to have these numbers. When the maps come out this time around and the population deviations are calculated I hope they are as close to zero as physically possible.

A further interesting note, the State of Iowa has made it the state law that no district can be over 1 percent deviated from its ideal population number, a law I think any state

would benefit greatly from.

Another way to further the discussion is to look to other states and see how they are handling reapportionment. In Iowa, for example, software is used to draw districts based solely on population. Open and incumbent-versus-incumbent seats occur, but the State Legislature of Iowa approved these maps because of their truly bipartisan nature.

Actually in Iowa they just went from five congressional districts to four and in two of the districts there's an incumbent-versus-incumbent situation going on right now for next year's congressional election. So it does happen, but they approved the maps because they know that they are truly bipartisan.

The State of New York chooses two citizens to sit on their commissions, but even better the State of Arizona has a commission that is made up of all citizens yet still chosen by politicians.

The State of California however has an excellent plan. Propositions 11 and 20 passed by voter referendum, which gave the power of redistricting to a commission of 14 citizens. Eight citizens chosen from applications given to the state legislature and six chosen by those eight. A truly independent commission is what is needed to remove the politics from reapportionment.

In conclusion reapportionment is a multivariable problem. To consider the socioeconomic status of persons in a district, communities of interest, I said before, their shared interests, keeping town lines together, being careful not to be too deviated from an

ideal district, et cetera, is a large responsibility and task. To satisfactorily fulfill this obligation we need not only politicians, but the help of some bright minds. That's not to say that politicians don't have bright minds, but other bright minds as well.

PhDs in many disciplines have studied reapportionment. Psychologists, sociologists, mathematicians and political scientists and many more have lectured or taught on the problem that is redistricting. There are many institutions in our state including the number two University in our country in Yale, that I am certain have adequate members of their community to assist in this process. At least consulting some of these people would take some of the politics out of a supposed bipartisan issue.

And I know Senator Williams said, I believe, at the first hearing that you do consult people outside of the political realm, but this is just another suggestion.

It is too late in the process now to commission an independent committee, but the fact that the members of this Reapportionment Committee have the power to redraw the lines of their own districts is slightly disconcerting. I understand that maps still have to be approved by the General Assembly, but the fact that this commission can redraw districts how they want, especially their own district is a little troubling.

Going forward in the short-term I hope the politics of reapportionment can be removed, the populations deviations kept as close to zero as possible and to see the competitiveness of districts increase. Also

another way to take the politics out of this process, when the maps come out and are approved I believe it's for the committee to explain why a certain line was drawn the way it was.

Currently, just for example, the 133rd in Fairfield and I believe the 146th in Stamford are in a slightly, you know, they're not nice shapes. And if the committee needs to draw lines that don't look nice or are not, you know, contingent to something that's not gerrymandered, perhaps explaining why that happened would be a good way for the public to know what's going on behind the scenes.

In the long-term prisoners should be not be counted where they reside in correctional facilities and hopefully an independent commission can be formed to once and for all taking the politicking out of an apolitical matter.

Finally I hope when the maps are made public and approved to Reapportionment Committee can say it was a truly fair and truly bipartisan effort. At a time of stark political polarization in our country I hope our State can be a shining beacon and leader of teamwork and true bipartisanship.

Thank you.

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr. Kapoor.

Is there a question by --

Senator McKinney has a question.

SENATOR MCKINNEY: Thank you.

Actually I just wanted to make a comment. And

not relative to your argument, but we had heard this I think at least once, perhaps in Norwalk and maybe in New Haven with respect to the counting of the prison population.

Either -- at least one or two speakers previous to you had talked about the need to do that in light of the fact that we had an increasing prison population. It still may be good or bad policy, but actually the prison population in Connecticut is decreasing and decreasing quite dramatically, which I think we would all agree is a good thing.

So obviously we as a State and a Legislature haven't done a good job of educating people that our prison population diversion programs are working and our population number is coming down. So I just wanted to get that out on the record.

Thank you.

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Thank you, Senator McKinney.

Are there other questions?

Thanks very much for your testimony.

Next is Don Trinks from Windsor.

DONALD S. TRINKS: Good afternoon.

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Good afternoon.

DONALD S. TRINKS: First of all, thank you for taking the time to hear us. I was hoping I could, as the others today, would give you a little input on how the average citizenry feels about what you're about to undertake.

I wanted to jump right into it and just say,

look, I'm here to request your consideration during your charge that Windsor's lines be redrawn to include a single majority district within our town.

Currently the town has about 28,000 people and is carved into three separate districts. All of our districts are the minority piece of those legislative districts, 15, 16, 61. This causes a great amount of confusion among our constituents as to who their representatives are. It creates a feeling of distance and isolation among the residents from the state level government and arguably it creates the apathy and the low turnout that we've all seen in the last elections on the state level.

Having a single majority district within the boundaries is not new -- is not a new concept. It existed until the early eighties when we were redistricted out and carved into the three districts that we have today.

Windsor is very unique in this current situation of representation. No other town of its size is carved up the way we are, that there's no majority within its -- of legislative seats within our borders. There are towns that are obviously, as you know, separated by several different representatives. However in the boundaries of Windsor there is not a single piece that is a majority.

While we're grateful for the work of our current legislators this issue is not a knock on the job that they do, but it is about empowering our citizens, to break the feeling of being disengaged and disenfranchised from state government, to break the feeling of being powerless in the representation and to break the spiral of low voter turnout to

engage the citizens of Connecticut's oldest town in their state government.

Windsor's population is well within the guidelines set for single representation. Please allow the current representatives to be able to focus on the critical mass of constituents. By doing this they'll be able to focus on delivering service to their towns and not being forced to choose between concurrent events in each town.

Please help restore the faith of the Windsor citizens that their votes do matter, their voices are being heard and they're given the representation afforded to them under the Constitution.

Lastly, please consider in your deliberations redrawing the district lines to allow Windsor our own representation at the state capitol and legislators.

Thank you so much.

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Thank you.

Are there questions?

Senator McKinney.

SENATOR MCKINNEY: Just can I challenge you a little bit on the idea that the fact that Windsor doesn't have its own state rep contributes to low voter turnout by Windsor citizens? Do we have any evidence of that? I mean, you still have a vote for president, a vote for governor, a vote for the United States Senator, a vote for a state senator, a vote for a congressman. I think we would all love to think that state representative candidates or state senators drive the vote

out, but I tend to think it's the opposite.

So I'm not disagreeing with the argument that Windsor should have its own state rep seat, but I just -- I have a hard time believing that the fact that Windsor is redistricted the way it is, is the reason for low voter turnout, say, in a presidential year.

DONALD S. TRINKS: I would not -- I'm sorry, Mr. Chair. I didn't know if it was a question or strictly a comment.

SENATOR WILLIAMS: No. No. No. We'd love to have a response.

SENATOR MCKINNEY: I guess the question is, can you explain why you think redistricting contributes to low voter turnout?

DONALD S. TRINKS: Well, I think it's not totally the redistricting. I think it's the fact we're cut up into three pieces and that Windsor voters know that part of our district is -- or a small part of our district is Windsor. A large part is Bloomfield.

Bloomfield, if they come out in the same percentage the Windsor voter is just not going to count.

SENATOR MCKINNEY: And so do you think not having your own state representative is why someone wouldn't come vote for president? Because you're saying they're not going to come out and vote.

DONALD S. TRINKS: For president?

SENATOR MCKINNEY: Well, sure. Every four years we have a presidential election. You have a state rep running that year as well. Every

other -- every two years there's a state rep running. There's usually -- there's always a congressman running. There's usually either a president, a governor or a United States Senator running too.

So look, I'm not against the idea of Windsor having its own seat. I think it probably is unfair that a town of 30,000 doesn't have its own state rep. I just -- I'm just challenging the notion that Windsor people don't vote because they don't have a state rep.

DONALD S. TRINKS: I appreciate and I respect that.

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Other thoughts or questions?

Thanks very much.

Next Jeff Bridges from Wethersfield.

JEFF BRIDGES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and committee members for this opportunity this afternoon to talk about a redistricting issue of the town of Wethersfield.

My name is Jeff Bridges. I'm the town manager for the Town and I believe you have a copy of my written comments with the small map attached on what we're going to talk about this afternoon.

Currently Wethersfield has ten voting districts, which due to their particular configurations require four different ballots each general election. As you can imagine, it's quite costly to the Town to prepare these four ballots. Each election can cost upwards of \$20,000.

In addition, due to the limited number of facilities in town large enough to handle

election operations that are also ADA compliant, voters in some districts cannot vote within their own districts. And some, we have even a polling place in a residential facility where those residents can't even vote in that residential facility. So it gets quite confusing and logistically difficult for some voters.

District 3 voters, which is the small district we're talking about this afternoon, vote in District 6 which has an entirely different ballot. There's two ballots in that one polling place. This requires one facility to have two separate voting locations and can be confusing for many voters.

The Town of Wethersfield is requesting that a small voting district, District 3 which has only 520 voters in it compared to over 1500 to 2,000 to the other nine districts in Wethersfield. Showing the attached map -- should be abolished.

This would allow the number of ballots to drop to three town wide and the number of polling places to be reduced to seven and perhaps five. This small change could save the Town of Wethersfield an estimated 5 to 7 thousand dollars per election and lessen the logistical issues with the conduct of the general election for the town and the voters of the community.

I'd be happy to answer any questions.

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Thank you for your testimony. And the math is very helpful in terms of illustrating the complexity that you just referred to.

Are there questions or comments?

Speaker Donovan.

REP. DONOVAN: I'm just trying to understand what the districts are in terms of -- I see you have ten different districts. And I guess there are, I guess, in the case, probably, we're talking about state representatives as opposed to state senators. You have one state Senator?

JEFF BRIDGES: We have two.

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Two state senators.

JEFF BRIDGES: Two state senators and two state reps.

REP. DONOVAN: Okay. And so they split the town some way.

JEFF BRIDGES: Right. District 3 is a combination of Senator Doyle and Representative Guerrera. And we believe with the increased populations with our neighboring towns those lines could be shifted enough where this district could go away and those voters, those evened up, the one person, one vote requirement could be met through a combination --

REP. DONOVAN: Is everybody else -- the other districts except for 6, are they one other state rep or not?

JEFF BRIDGES: There's a mixture between Russ Morin and Doyle and Fonfara. (Inaudible.)

REP. DONOVAN: But the state rep, it would be just be Russ Morin for the reps, just for the (inaudible).

JEFF BRIDGES: No. Representative Guerrera

represents other portions of this.

REP. DONOVAN: Okay.

JEFF BRIDGES: It's just that this voting this little piece, we believe that we'd get great representation. That's not the issue. The issue is having this one voting district, we have to have a polling place representing that voting district is the issue.

REP. DONOVAN: I understand. Oh, I see what you're saying. Otherwise 6 and 3 would be combined in your usual -- the usual method.

JEFF BRIDGES: Yeah. That would be fine.

REP. DONOVAN: All right. Thanks.

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Other questions? Thanks very much.

JEFF BRIDGES: Thank you.

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Next we have Syd Schulman from the town of Bloomfield.

Good afternoon.

SYDNEY T. SCHULMAN: Good morning.

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Well, afternoon.

SYDNEY T. SCHULMAN: My name is Sydney T. Schulman. I have the honor of serving as the mayor of the Town of Bloomfield.

I have a proposal for you which I think you'll enjoy. And that is that I think we should change the laws of the State of Connecticut so that we have 169 representatives and 169 senators. And that way every town in the

state of Connecticut will be assured of one state senator and one state representative. And my notes say here I'm supposed to hesitate while you're laughing.

Everybody would like one state representative and/or one state senator. There's a lot of reasons why we don't have them. I'm not going to go into that, but I want to express an opinion as to why I think it is beneficial for the towns that have more than one state rep, more than one state representative.

Bloomfield has at this time two state senators, neither of which live in Bloomfield, and two state representatives, one of which lives in Bloomfield.

But I don't think that's the real issue because when you have several state representatives, state senators within a community, where they happen to hang their hat at night; the fact of the matter is that they communicate together, they work together, hopefully they work together as a team for the benefit of the jurisdictions that they represent.

I have not seen -- and there may be in some parts of the state. I don't know -- apparently there is some issues in some parts of the state whether legislators cooperate with each other or don't or work together or don't work together or have disputes. And you know, there may be some areas of the state where you have to massage some districts and either for population purpose, or reason or because there's some issues that go on that you deal with. However that is not true, I believe, in the majority of the jurisdictions.

And as a matter of fact, in our jurisdiction

we have -- we share with West Hartford, we share with Windsor, we share with Hartford. And I think -- personally my opinion is that the legislators all work very well together. They work for the benefit of the you know, the public -- not their community, but all the communities they represent.

And as a matter of fact, you know, I can go into detail, but I don't think you want me to spend the next six hours delving into details with the individual things which the representatives have done on behalf of communities that they don't hang their hat in, but which they do represent and do have an interest in and do participate in. And the legislators, as a matter of fact, have spent a lot of time in their respective communities, in all the communities that they represent.

The other thing is that I think that maybe it's overdue in the State of Connecticut, and that's the idea of regionalization. There's been some discussion on this on the state level and there's certainly been a lot of discussion of this on the federal level, not only discussion, but requirements for regionalization coming from the federal government in order to get efficiencies, services that would give our communities, that we give our clientele.

And I don't think there's any way around this. We're already talking about why the two communities that sit next to each other need two of a particular type of official. Why can't they share an official? And the answer is they can, except everybody likes to know that their official comes from their own community and hangs their hat in their own community.

And whether you're talking about, you know, maybe this applies to mayors, too. I don't know. But whether you're talking about a dog catcher, whether you're talking about the planner or anything else there's a lot of things that communities can cooperate on and, in fact, are starting to and do cooperate on now.

And this, I think, is a microcosm of what's going on with the representatives and the senators which commonly cooperate together in order to get legislation passed. They commonly cooperate in order to get legislation passed for the benefit of the communities they represent.

So I know from the standpoint of the Bloomfield, Windsor, Hartford and West Hartford, I would urge that you pretty much leave it as it is and permit the individuals to continue working together for the benefit of the community as they have. I haven't seen any significant issues that have arisen in one town that has not had the joinder of all of the representatives and senators within that town in an attempt to solve the problem, at least in our area. And if you have problems in other areas, well, you know you've got to address those problems.

Gee, I think I extemporaneously may have covered almost everything on my agenda. I think I did.

I want to thank you very much for your cooperation and attention. And if there's any questions (inaudible).

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Thanks very much for your testimony.

Are there questions or comments?

Representative O'Neill.

REP. O'NEILL: The reason I didn't laugh at your 169 proposal for, especially the state representatives, is that I've often thought that if we could figure out a way to do it in terms of proportional voting on the floor of the House, that that would solve a lot of the problems that we have in terms of redistricting.

It would make redistricting the House a very quick job since the town lines wouldn't have to change and everybody -- you're right, everybody does feel some sense of an attachment. They want to have a state representative at least -- I haven't heard this last with Senators -- but they like the idea having a state representative who is in their town.

And representing multiple towns for all the time that I've been Legislature, I'd like to believe that what you've said is true, that those of us who have towns that we don't live in as part of our districts work just as hard, if not harder, to represent those people outside of our hometowns and to make sure that we're aware of what the issues are and work cooperatively with the other people who may represent those towns as well.

So -- but I still would like to see -- wish I could figure out a way to constitutionally do it so that every town had its own representative and when I cast my vote 20,000 votes are cast. And when a fellow from Bridgeport casts a vote, 140,000 votes are cast. And so the proportionality is represented by the votes on the floor, not by

the way we represent, you know, elected from these equal sized districts.

But now I noticed that my colleagues are starting to laugh. So you can see why I've never formally proposed this idea.

SYDNEY T. SCHULMAN: Well, if I could just comment.

You know what the real answer is? The real answer is -- I venture a guess that somebody, if you ask somebody in my town what my address is, they wouldn't know even though I publicize it all over the place.

And I'll bet you that if you ask somebody in your towns where your living address is, they probably wouldn't know. And so the real answer is that the voters have to know how much time you spend in each of the jurisdictions, in each of the communities that you represent. What events do you go to? What issues do you take up within those communities?

And then this is really a voters issue, because if you don't then the voters ought to vote the legislator out. And as a matter of fact that has happened on a number of occasions around the state.

Where I can think of one instance, which I won't mention, where a legislator sort of absented him or herself from one of the communities. And the next time around the party that the legislator was a member of didn't support the legislator. The voters didn't support the legislator and he was out. And that's really the answer if people are concerned about the legislators adequately and properly representing the communities that they're supposed to represent. And so I think

that really becomes a voters issue.

And I just wanted to add that in Bloomfield we found no reduction whatsoever in the number of voters voting, either in state elections, federal elections or local elections with respect to whether we have a representative or don't have a representative from our town.

In fact, I said the senatorial and senatorial districts -- who don't have a senator and the vote hasn't reduced one iota.

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Anything further?

Senator McKinney.

SENATOR MCKINNEY: I can think of two people who don't want 169 senators. That's the Senate President and the Minority Leader.

But I guess part of the issue -- maybe I was tough on the guy from Windsor. I wasn't trying to be, but part of the issue is maybe a creation of the past reapportionment committees.

One of the public handouts -- I don't know if you've seen it yet -- is the population of each town in the state of Connecticut. And I may be missing a town or two, but I think -- I know most of my fellow state representatives -- and if you look at towns anywhere from 24, 25 thousand in population to say as much as 32 thousand, my quick review shows that Windsor is the only town that doesn't have a state rep.

So I think if you were the, you know, mayor or first selectman of Windsor you would say, hey -- you know, I represent a small town, Weston. They have two state senators. I

think it's a plus, but I think from a town's perspective, when they tend to be the only one I certainly think you would understand what their position is vis-a-vis, you know, why did you divide us up when every other town in the state of similar population has their own state rep?

I think -- so I guess it just sort of depends on where you sit. Right?

SYDNEY T. SCHULMAN: I just got this and I haven't had the time to look at it to do the numbers. And as a matter of fact, you did hear, just a couple prior to me, from the Mayor of Windsor Don Trinks.

But every time that you try to deal with a problem like that, the problem is that you have to massage other things in order to make it work.

And the problem then becomes one that will be useful at gerrymandering where, you know, you solve this problem so you now you've got a district over here that goes like this and which is not really appropriate either. It's very difficult.

I remember 20, 32 years ago or something I was running with somebody else who was running for state senate and I said, where is your district? And his district wondered all the way from Bloomfield to West Hartford and, I think, it seemed to me, all the way up to the Canadian border. And I said, you know, this is crazy, because the kind of geographical distance that you have to cover is just impossible.

So the concern that I would have, you know, it would be nice to go through there and say,

okay. All towns over 20,000 can have their own state senator or their own representative. But then reconfiguring the towns with lesser than 20,000 might prove to be very difficult to pass and that's my only concern.

I have no ax to grind one way or the other. As I said when I started, if every town could have their own state rep, you know, and senator that would be wonderful, however I don't think things ought to get out of hand in order to accomplish that. If it can be accomplished simply, fine.

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Thanks very much for you testimony.

Next, Mr. Joe Washington from Bloomfield.

Good afternoon.

JOSEPH WASHINGTON: Good afternoon, Representatives and Senators. My name is Joe Washington. I live at 6 Essex Lane in Bloomfield. And I would like to briefly talk about the redistrictings.

The reality of creating legislative districts requires most towns to have multiple representatives. Towns that have too few representatives acquired the necessary numbers from residents of other towns. And those with too many residents must give residents to other districts with too few people. And I believe that more is better.

Towns divided into several districts with multiple representatives can benefit in the following ways. Residents have more legislators to appeal to when issues or concerns arise. Legislators representing the same town customarily, they collaborate and

work together to get results or advocate for the other town.

Chances are that one of your legislators, either by way of committee assignments, professional background or experience will be better at addressing your particular issues. So multiple legislators and the particular alliances or networks that each may have among other legislators creates far more clout and power than a single representative.

Given limited time and many demands, a team of representatives can divide responsibilities in achieving targeted results for their common town constituents. So representing multiple towns is better for the representatives, too. It gives legislators a broader perspective and more diverse input or opinions. It helps create new ideas by comparing communities and their approaches to issues and challenges.

Representing several towns is no different than that of state senators who customarily represent many towns; congressional legislators who represent large geographical areas with numerous towns.

A good representative will provide necessary access and make a presence in each town regardless of where he or she lives. For instance, in my district, our town of Bloomfield and Windsor nobody can say that we, our representatives don't attend major community functions. And in today's society there is deeply -- involvement in the representative that is most important, not the artificial definition of one's residence.

I would like to say that the current district for towns Bloomfield and Windsor with whatever adjustments are necessary to meet the district

size requirements should be preserved. These districts have served the residents well for over 20 years and there's no need to make significant changes.

Most issues today are not limited to one town. Issues of the budget, environment, transportation, social services, public safety are typically the same for most towns, if not the entire state. District lines have little to do with these global issues which attract the main attention of legislators.

And every town would like its own state representative, but it's not likely given the population differences in the greater Hartford region. Hartford and the towns make up the population shortages by giving into other towns, therefore if Bloomfield and Windsor must share their residents with other districts I believe that the current district makeup is the best.

And I would like to conclude by thanking you for your time, to this commission for its time and your commitment to this situation, to state redistricting.

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr. Washington.

Are there questions or comments?

Thanks very much.

Next we have Leo Canty from Windsor.

LEO CANTY: Good afternoon.

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Good afternoon.

LEO CANTY: Way more pleasant in here than outside.
It must be (inaudible) out there.

Glad I have the opportunity to speak with you about the redistricting issue. Thank you for holding a hearing. We'll do what we can to try to offer you some insight.

As you've heard before, I think you know that Windsor with over 29,000 people is actually the largest town without its own state representative. Within the framework of our 5th, we have three house districts and two Senate districts. That means we too, like Wethersfield, have four ballots.

The difference between us and some other towns like Bloomfield is that we have no state reps or state senators who live in our town. Bloomfield has a state representative and a state senator that lives in Bloomfield, unless Senator Coleman moved and I didn't know about it.

And so what happens is, is if I was here and I wanted to talk about redistricting I had at least one state rep or one state senator, I would love the status quo. I would really love to have everything stay the same because Windsor would then have someone that's represented there.

I don't -- there's no question -- I'm not saying anything about the quality, quantity. I have no objection at all to have a multi town districts, especially since if you divide Windsor by the number of population that will be going into the state rep, we would actually have two, which is fine. No argument there. So that would be great if you could do that for us.

But the fact is Windsor -- and I think there's something else. When people come out of their

towns -- and actually if we had a representative we'd be fighting real hard to preserve it just like the towns who are out now making the case about that. So everybody says it's okay not to have a state rep, but they all fight like heck to make sure they keep theirs. so I think there's a little bit of a difference in terms of how that works.

Let's just say that, okay. People do want to have representatives from their towns. It's inherent in our blood. It's inherent in our history going all the way back to when Windsor invented Connecticut in 1633. We have had representation in state government ever since government was started or whatever form it was before that, since 2009. From 1633 to 2009 someone who came from Windsor participated in state government.

And in 1980 in this same kind of redistricting process there was a coincident thing that happened. Our state rep at the time, when we had a majority district prior to 1981, happened to go against the Governor at the time and just miraculously we were carved into three districts. We don't want to say -- because in the court case that ensued after that there was no testimony that actually said that that's what happened, but that is the process and the power of the Redistricting Committee.

So for 30 years we've actually kind of actually had the process that shut us out. We did have an incumbent and there is a lot of power in incumbency. There's no question. We've challenged some of that incumbency issue in the last round and some primaries. Windsor, having 29,000 people, could not get enough support to overturn the incumbency of two candidates who actually came from smaller

towns than Windsor was, one of them by half the size of Windsor.

So within this district, okay. In the 15th House District there's 22,000 people right -- or 23,300, 13 come from Bloomfield, 10 thousand from Windsor, minority population in a bigger town.

In the 60th House District, 12,498. From Windsor Locks, which is their entire population and Windsor has 10,000. So the smaller town has a bigger majority than the much -- the town that has twice the size of the population. 61st District, Suffield has 15,735, which is half the size of Windsor. They have the majority of that district, 24,000 total votes.

We're shut out. We've tried. Actually part of our process to make the case for this was to do the primary and the primary proved that if you want to try to get someone in that system, that the power of the incumbent process is there and because of the numbers, even if there was a turnover within that framework --

Because someone from Windsor was in the 61st. When Ruth Fahrbach actually resigned from the Legislature she came from Windsor. When she resigned someone from the larger town actually won. So there's just no way as the numbers work out that that process can happen.

So not being any -- and there's no opposition from me from having multiple town -- multiple house districts in our town. We'd love to have two. I think that would be great because a lot of the other folks that are speaking here have two also. We'd love to be like them. And that -- and it's pretty easy to do.

And I think with the population shift -- and I'll offer as soon as I can get in on the computer our views of how we can start remapping.

Hartford lost some. Hartford lost a good chunk of population. Suffield grew a good chunk of population. Windsor and Bloomfield and Windsor Locks have nominal increases. I think there's a way to work those numbers so we can get our district in there.

Now we all know that the big problem that that's going to pose is that there will be someone who is currently an incumbent who needs to be protected. And we'll have a challenge and if we have more population we'll have a better shot of actually trying to find somebody to Windsor -- to get Windsor in there.

But for all these people who think that is a good idea, let's see if they can come to the plate and say, yeah. I really like that. I challenge the state representative. Say, you know what? I think it would be very fair for Windsor to actually have someone from that town who may grow up in the town, go to the schools, run for elected office, be the mayor, be something and have somewhere to go to use all that talent and energy and enthusiasm that our town has actually used in state government for 375 years.

So I'd like to see you do that. I hope you can consider our issues and I will provide something in writing since I was kind of over at another meeting right now that I had to run out of to come here.

Any questions? Be glad to answer them.

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Any questions from the committee?

LEO CANTY: He said it all.

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Thanks very much.

Next, Maria Ayala from Hartford.

MARIA AYALA: Good afternoon.

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Good afternoon.

MARIA AYALA: My name is Maria Ayala from the city of Hartford. I live in the state of Connecticut in the United States.

Education is the key to success and there's a lot of lack of unity when canvassing. When canvassing we put our trust in our leaders who are dumping everything in the city of Hartford in our backyards. We have no trust. The reason people are being charged with fraud when living in different districts is because there is still no equality in education.

Our leaders do not organize enough. Our leaders need to listen when our trust has been put in the people.

When canvassing door to door you need to show respect of the promises being made and relax while you're putting your mind together and strive for intellectual freedom, if that's what you want. But you need to come forward with a plan to achieve a better understanding between the people and our leaders.

Any questions? That's my question.

Any answers?

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Have you completed your testimony? Are you asking for questions.

MARIA AYALA: Yes, sir.

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Are there any questions or comments from the committee?

Well then, I want to thank you very much for coming in and providing your testimony. Thank you very much.

MARIA AYALA: I appreciate your time.

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Thank you.

That concludes the list of speakers who had signed up. Is there anyone in the room who wishes to testify who did not have a chance to sign up? If so, please come forward now. If not, you know, you can come back to this air-conditioned room at seven o'clock this evening. We'll have another public hearing at that time.

But again, you can continue to follow the reapportionment process through the website. If you haven't had a chance to pick up the handouts and any other material I would ask that you do that.

Otherwise, thank you very much for coming out and participating in our public hearing today. Thank you.