

**Maryland Citizens Redistricting Commission
Public Listening Tour for Prince George's County
July 28, 2021**

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Perfect.

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Now we have five so you're going to probably want to go live. Rob is not a commissioner, There's Kate now. Yep, we're going live now. All right.

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Good evening everyone. Good evening, Kate.

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All right, ready, ready, I am, I talked to Kristin earlier so we're good to go.

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Yep, we just went live.

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So that yes.

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All right, Mr. Secretary. How are you, I'm well Thank you. All right, great, great already.

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And I think I saw Maria. Thank you I am here judge Williams How are you, oh I'm okay. Yeah, so a long week, you know, got to keep moving.

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Absolutely.

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Said judge yeah and Kate last Friday I was out, you all scheduling a short call with Kristin yeah I just wasn't on my computer, I just couldn't get there and I did find out that you always had a brief conversation, until that evening.

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Oh, alright, no worries judge. Yeah, no problem, but I could catch up later. That's no problem. Alright, sounds good.

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Yeah. All right.

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Well, the way we live and we have a quorum yet.

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We have a quorum, and we are live section.

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Oh, great. Thank you. And the stream, and the interpretation of set, and the closed captioning is on.

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Thank you.

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Hello everyone.

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Good evening everyone.

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Good evening.

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Hi.

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All right, Great. Good to see you. Thank you.

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How many people have signed up for this evening? 16.

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All right. Thank you. No problem.

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John, Do you want to get ready and put the instructions on the screen?

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All right, John, we're ready.

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Dr Hetherington Are you ready. Yes, I am Maria. All right, I'll get started then.

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Good evening, and welcome to the eighth and final regional round one public meeting of the Maryland citizens redistricting commission. My name is Maria Sofia and I am in for Kristin Fleckenstein tonight.

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This meeting is being recorded. As we begin, there are a few matters to share regarding the rules and policies for this evening's meeting, as well as some tips about the platform that will assist in our understanding of how the zoom platform will work.

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This meeting offers Spanish interpretation to listen in Spanish, you will note that there is a box on the zoom control panel at the bottom of your screen for interpretation.

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Please click on that box and select Spanish. We also ask that speaker speak slowly and clearly the facilitate this, there will be a three-minute allotment for speakers, so that everyone who wants to speak may speak when there is 20 seconds left of your

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speaking time is your screen will come on, with a countdown timer inappropriate speaking attire behavior or background will result in removal from the meeting, without an option to rejoin anyone registered to speak after 5pm today should ask to join as

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a speaker in the chat section as your name will not be on the list of pre-registered speakers. If you did not register to speak, but want to, you can request to do so in a message to the panelists via the chat feature.

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There is a control bar at the bottom of your screen. Select the chat box and then send a message to the panelists, indicating your name and the county in which you reside, the raise hand option should not be used to request the speaker.

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Speakers should ensure their name is listed properly, and if not, please change it to reflect your current name.

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This is because we have to move each speaker from attendee status to a panelist, so that they may speak.

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Please note the participant list is not public to protect the privacy of those calling in due to their phone numbers being listed pre-registered speakers will go first, then the chat request speakers will be called an order of request speakers providing

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testimony should be aware that they will be made a panelist when it is their turn to speak, which one enables them to unmute and turn on their camera.

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There may be a short delay, while the speaker screen goes from attendee to a panelist, this is normal. The speaker will see a screen message indicating that the host would like to promote you to be a panelist, the speaker needs to accept by clicking the

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join as a panelist button. We will wait five seconds for the speaker to go live the speaker does not join, we will move on to the next speaker, and come back at the end the call on any person who missed the chance to speak.

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Once speakers are finished, we must move them back to being an attendee. This may result in a speaker.

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This may result in a speaker seeing a spinning wheel or message on their screen, indicating they are joining the meeting. The speaker is not being removed from the meeting.

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The Zoom platform is simply changing screens. We know this is a lot of information, but want to assist you in understanding how this meeting will operate so it can go as smoothly as possible, that I would like to introduce you to the host for these evenings

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meeting, Dr. Kate Hetherington who serves as one of the co-chairs to the Maryland Citizens Redistricting Commission Hetherington.

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Thank you, Maria, thank you for all your preparation for this meeting and thanks to John who's operating behind the scenes. Welcome everyone, I am Kate Hetherington I, one of the co-chairs of the Maryland citizens redistricting commission.

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And I am president of our community college, and a resident of Howard County. With that I like the other members of the commission to introduce themselves and we'll begin with the other co-chairs.

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Walter.

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Walter Olson. I'm a senior fellow at a think tank in Washington DC, I live in Frederick County.

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Thank you judge Williams Yes So, good afternoon, I am Alex Williams. I'm a retired United States district court judge and I reside in Prince George's County, Maryland.

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Thank you judge and now the members of the Commission - Jay.

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Good evening. My name is Jay Amin, I'm a resident of animal county and I am a land development and land brokerage services consultant in Ellicott City.

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Thank you. Good evening I'm Cheryl Brooks elementary school principal and resident of Baltimore County.

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Thank you, Mary.

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Oh, I'm Mary Clawson and I'm a retired federal employee and a resident of Anne Arundel County.

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Thank you.

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Kim.

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Kim, Hi. My name is Kimberly Cummings, a long-term resident of the Eastern Shore currently residing in Dorchester county from Easton in Dorchester County Circuit circuit court supervising Land Records in licensing.

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Thank you, Jonathan.

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Jonathan Fusfield, I'm a communications manager for a research firm, and I live in Montgomery county.

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Thank you and William. Hello everyone my name is William Thomas, a systems engineer for the department of defense and I'm a grassroots organizer, living in Baltimore City.

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All right, thank you to all of our members of the Commission.

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At this time I like to read you.

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What's next for the commission. And for the public. And as Maria mentioned this is the eighth meeting of round one where we've had the pleasure of listening to the citizens of Maryland give their opinions about redistricting.

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Let me talk to you about the next two rounds.

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So round two will begin on August 25, and it will be held virtually. This round will focus primarily on the 2020 census data that's being released on August 16 by the U.S. Census Bureau.

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We should stress here that the purpose of the second round is to hear from the public as to the data and the ways in which it impacts district boundaries speakers and written testimony during this round shift focus on specific data from the Census Bureau,

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rather than general opinions on the redistricting process. That's what we've been doing during the process around one, and we welcome additional input tonight, and in the coming weeks, via written submissions.

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Those submissions can be given to redistricting.commission@maryland.gov.

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So we have a very busy agenda tonight but more information was specifics as to the round two public meetings and how the public can submit their own map recommendations that will soon be posted to register redistricting that Maryland died.

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At the end of round two the commission will enter a working session period to construct our recommended maps.

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Once the maps are drawn by the Commission. Round three will serve as a means of public presentation of them and an opportunity for public feedback.

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round three is tentatively scheduled to begin on October 28, so stay tuned to more information but please keep checking redistricting.commission@maryland.gov, for updated information.

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And with that, we will begin tonight's public commentary and Maria, would you please invite the first member.

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I sure will.

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Our first speaker tonight is to Tamara Davis Brown, Tamara you are now a panelist,

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Ms.Brown you're up there you go you're on mute. We can't see if you want us to see us you want to put your camera on.

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If not you can just go ahead and speak.

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Good evening. Thank you. Yes, good evening to you. I did have a brief opportunity to speak before the commission during the hearing for Charles Calvert and St Mary's County and I indicated that I would speak more during Prince George's County My name

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is again Tamara Davis Brown. I live in Clinton Maryland, which is in the southern most portion of Prince George's County.

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As you know and are already aware that the Maryland law requires our districts to be contiguous compact and closely align with communities of interests with respect political boundaries.

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And I want to kind of focus on the third community of impact Clinton is a community of interest. Actually, such that we probably could be our own and this ability if we so desire.

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We have a hospital. We have a regional park, high school, middle school for elementary schools, our own library post office.

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In, yet we are divided into three legislative districts District 25 District 26, and District 27, our

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former senator for district 27 picked his voters as opposed to, allowing the voters to pick him. And as a result, because he lived in Calvert county off the Chesapeake, he basically dragged district 27 all the way down to Calvert County.

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And we actually, I'm here to say that I think that Clinton should be contiguous and be represented by.

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We have enough residents where we should have our own senator as well as our three legislative delegates. And so my comments are pretty much that simple that we should not be allowing our

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political officials, select their voters but that the voters vote for who they would like. And we want to continue to keep our districts together here and Clinton 25 and 26 were created out of political to avoid political rivalry and so obviously

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that is violated, of any fairness, and I see my time is running out. I do still plan to present some maps once we get the census data and I appreciate your time.

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Thank you. All right, thank you Miss Davis Brown, Maria our next speaker.

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Next speaker is Nicole Williams from Prince George's County, Nicole you are now a panelist.

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Okay, great. thank you so much. I really appreciate the opportunity. My name is Nicole Williams. I'm actually a state delegate here in Prince George's County, Maryland, representing district 22, and just wanted to provide comments I've heard a lot of

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chatter, with regards to kind of some of the thoughts around redistricting, and what the districts would look like, especially with regards to the state legislative districts and just from the things that I've read and my own personal research.

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I actually am a proponent of the multi member district concept. I feel like the multi member district concept actually benefits, people of color, as well as women in order in terms of having a greater ability in terms of getting elected to public office,

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and you know studies have shown that when you do single member districts, it has a tendency to negatively affect candidates of color as well as women candidates.

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And so for those reasons, I am a proponent of maintaining the multi member districts that we currently have and I'm speaking on behalf of myself as an individual.

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So I just want to make that very clear.

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Thank you. Right, Thank you,

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Maria. So our next speakers. So we actually have a couple that have not shown up yet. Richard Elliot, Linda Dorsey Walker and Tom brown or Matthew silver gate if you are on, please, please let us know.

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So right now, our next speaker at this point will be Monica Roebuck from Prince George's County. Monica. You are now a panelist.

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Okay, good evening to the redistricting committee and Prince George's County residents. Thank you so much for this opportunity to talk on this very important topic.

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My name is Monica Roebuck and I'm a resident in Prince George's County where I reside. I'm a teacher, a former member of the board of elections and a voting rights advocate redistricting or redrawing the boundaries for our congressional and legislative

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districts is an essential step in the voting process.

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It is the first step to ensure that voters are organized in a way that they can use their collective voice to make a difference. This process will also determine where voters can vote and who they can vote for it is critical that the process is accurately

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and fairly done as we prepare for the upcoming 22 election boundary lines should be drawn in a contiguous manner and districts that share similar interests and needs boundaries should be drawn to empower the voter, not for political party or an elected

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official, for the upcoming election cycle we need to make sure that our districts are drawn with an equal population.

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This will help to ensure that every area has an equal number of representatives, or the power is equally distributed. With this in mind legislative district should have equal populations as it currently stands, Some are much larger than others for example

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23 A is much smaller than 23 B. There are also districts such as 27, that encompasses Prince George's County and Calvert County.

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These areas have two distinct demographics and needs. I recommend that these districts be drawn differently in any other that are similar to this. Prince George's County has close to 1 million people in over 500,000 registered voters, and I recommend

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that we have two congressmen for Prince George's County. St Mary's and Prince George's are all different and I don't see, if we apply the rules to make it contiguous how we would have one congressional district and three different counties

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and closing and I believe that since our population data has increased in the last 10 years we have to ensure that lines are drawn fairly and equally.

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We are less than a year away from the 22 primary and voters deserve to know which area they will be in. It is important to complete the process in a timely way voters may have a new polling place to learn.

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There are congressional and legislative districts but voters may also have councilmaticdistricts, and some of these areas may not overlap. I think would be great to inform the public of a timeline as you finalize your work again thank you for your

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time and I look forward to the new changes.

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Thank you so much, Miss Roebuck.

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Should I email this to you as well would you like that? Yes you can email it sure yes. Okay. Thank you.

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Our next panelist is George Gluck from Montgomery County, George, you are now a panelist.

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I don't seem as there is, OK, OK, Mr. Gluck, just need to unmute.

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Good.

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Okay.

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Oh, my name is George Gluck I reside in Rockville.

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And as you can see I'm a member of the Maryland Green Party.

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And we like to give kudos to Governor Hogan for establishing a multi partisan commission for redistricting. Green Party members are part of the 20% of Maryland voters who are not represented by bipartisan conditions, and we appreciate having three commissioners

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one third of you represent us.

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The Maryland Green party platform stands upon four pillars, and the redistricting process speaks to two of them - grassroots democracy and social justice.

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There is no democracy, without an open political system that works for every member of society, and commissions like this put the people first and politicians second to secure an inclusive equitable society.

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Those with little or no political voice need to be heard, not just listened to carefully considering all community of interest maps that are submitted to you by such groups will further social justice.

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By engaging citizens in the decisions that affect their daily lives.

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We strongly support multi district legislature, but only if it is combined with ranked choice voting.

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I live in a highly gerrymandered sixth congressional district before the state redistricting a decade ago, about one quarter of the registered voters and

registered Republican, and two of the eight Maryland representatives to Congress with Republican acquires

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a proportional representation of Maryland tours throughout the state.

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It's a quite as I because even before republican so one of their representatives gerrymandered out of office by a Democratic Party dominated redistricting committee.

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There was another underrepresented group in Congress, everybody else.

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Aside from the four minor parties, working class Bread and Roses libertarian agreeing plus other unaffiliated, which comprise more than 20% of Maryland's registered voters, a proportion redistricting must somehow take into account,

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and encourage the remaining group of Maryland citizens, approximately one quarter of those eligible to register, who have not.

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Thank you for the opportunity to shed light on a process that in Maryland has been historically shrouded in secrecy.

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Thank you Mr. Gluck. Thank you, Maria our next. Our next panelist is Heather Olsen from Prince George's County, Heather.

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Oh sorry I think Mr. Moore accidentally did let him apologize. Heather Olsen, you are now a panelist.

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Can you hear me.

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Yes, we can hear you.

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Thanks some technical issues can hear you now.

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You're on mute.

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There you go.

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Sorry about that. Um. Good evening.

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My name is Heather Olson, I live in Hyattsville, and I have been active in local politics here in Prince George's County in various capacities over the years.

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I currently serve as the Maryland State leader for Stand Up Republic, a national grassroots organization that advocates for

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government reform.

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As Governor Hogan stated in his executive order voters should choose their elected representatives, and not the other way around. Unfortunately, that has not been the case in the past here in Prince George's County, a powerful long standing congressman

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has invariably used his influence to ensure that his district is drawn in such a way as to minimize the possibility he will face a serious challenge in either the primary or the general election.

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In the past, hundreds of sometimes use the redistricting process to reward allies and punish enemies, for example, in the last redistricting local delegate with his own party would pass Governor O'Malley found himself

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punished by having his house in new district would even his neighbors across the street, after his old district.

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You have been charged with growing districts that are compact and respect county and municipal boundaries, I want to emphasize the importance of this. I live in Hyattsville about a mile from the district line.

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My neighbors and I have very different priorities and concerns and the residents of rural and Arundel County, yet we are currently thrown together in the fourth congressional district is still currently includes to congressional

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districts, for the 2010 redistricting. It actually included three districts in my home what was it was in what Ben congressman In called the premise of Hyattsville a four block wide strip connecting Southern Prince George's County, Montgomery county.

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You could, you could throw a stone and hit either the eighth district or the fifth district at that time.

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When districts are drawn this way citizens often don't don't know which district they live in, or who represents them. The representatives are just as uncertain.

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Several years ago I called my congressional office with a problem I needed constituent service help with. I was already extremely frustrated by the problem and found it doubly frustrating that I had to wait while a staff member looked up my address and

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a computer to determine if I did in fact live in the district.

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Before she could attempt to help me with my problem. I also want to speak in favor of single member districts and three member districts an outsider candidate whether challenging and comments in the primary are running as an independent or minor party

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candidate in the general election. Is that a severe disadvantage becomes income is almost invariably a form of slate and run together. Multiplying the advantages of incumbency this offseason, I'm sorry you're out of time.

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Sorry.

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Right, thank you for your testimony tonight. You can submit written testimony if you have more that you'd like us to see.

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Alright, our next panelist is Tammie Norman from Prince George's County, Tammie you are now a panelist

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TaMMIE if you would unmute yourself please.

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We cannot hear you.

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them.

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Yes.

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All right, Here you see me. Yes, both. Thank you.

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Good evening commission members, and Maryland residents My name is Tammie Norman and I'm speaking one behalf of the League of Women Voters of Prince George's County, the League of Women Voters is the oldest nonpartisan voting education and

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advocacy group. And I thank you for the opportunity to speak this evening.

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We would like to commend Governor Hogan for establishing the commission as a keystone of the 2021 state redistricting. It is our hope and expectation that this is a nonpartisan approach will help to promote fair and effective representation in the Maryland

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General Assembly. We also deeply appreciate your commitment to taking on the difficult task and time-consuming responsibility of creating fair and impartial district maps, Prince George's County has evolved over the last 30 to 40 years, and according

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to the 2010 US Census, less the second most populated county in Maryland includes a very diverse group of communities and residents who spanned a wide range of education, social, and economic differences, Prince George's County is the largest and

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most affluent African American majority county in the United States. And unfortunately, we also have residents who struggle to provide their families, people, provide for their family's people working two and three jobs and still yearning for success

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Safely safely (?) has created a map that overlays hard to count tracks for the 2020 census with communities that rank high on the Center of Disease Control social vulnerability index.

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These maps show that all too often, under counter communities are also underserved. While all voices must be heard some must be amplified. For the sake of equality, as the new maps are drawn, we must all work together to encourage these communities, Prince

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George's County District likes me to be door to benefit all county residents. We firmly believe in our county motto Prince George's proud, part of it, proud of it.

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We anticipate this commission will ensure that we have district lines that make sure all Prince George's County residents are part of it, district lines that we can all be proud of.

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Finally we are grateful that you are hosting these listening sessions. We, the members of the League of Women Voters or Prince George's County stand with you and are willing to assist you in creating and implementing a fair, equitable redistricting plan.

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We hope that our great state of Maryland can be a shining example of how to go through the redistricting process. Thank you.

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Thank you, Miss Norman.

00:36:27.000 --> 00:36:48.000

Our next panelist is Zalee Harris from Charles County. Zalee, you are now a panelist.

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yes we can hear you.

00:36:51.000 --> 00:37:11.000

I appreciate everything that you guys have gone through to listen to all of the virtual redistricting said, Prince George's County is the place to live, last 40 years before moving to Charles County.

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And I still have Prince George's County.

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One senator and one delegate.

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Whereas, 27.

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Miss Harris we're having some difficulties hearing you tonight.

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My concern is that Prince George's County needs to be fixed, just just fixed.

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It needs to be contiguous Charles challenging needs to have its own demographics and culture and it needs to be fixed.

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Please make one district for the largest county and one district for Charles county and keep them stable member districts. That's my speech for the night.

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I look forward to round two. And I certainly look forward to round three so we can see the maps and have discussion and dialogue about the maps, I prayed.

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And I'm sure I've joined by others, that we do not have to go through a very negative legislative session over these maps over these districts and over who's going to vote for who and who want to live where so that they can determine who they want to vote

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for them. Thank you very much for your time and enjoy your, your time off to on the break between the two rounds. Thank you.

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Thank you, Miss Harris.

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Our next panelist is Tess Morrison from Prince George's County Tess, you are now a panelist.

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I hope you can see me.

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Not yet.

00:39:21.000 --> 00:39:27.000

We can hear you. All right, well then I'll just I'll just start speaking. All right.

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I'm going to miss Martin. I'm going to be short and sweet. All right, start my video Here we go.

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Yeah, we can see you. Hi, I'm going to be short and sweet. I live in Silver Spring.

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in the Riderwood retirement community. I'm a registered Democrat, and I strongly believe in not having gerrymandered districts. I think if we're going to talk about other states being gerrymandered, we need to walk our talk.

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And I think that we have strong enough policies that we can stand on our own. So I'm hoping very much looking forward to.

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Number three, round to see the maps and hope that we are strong in being equitable to all the winner. Thank you.

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Thank you, Miss Morrison.

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Our next panelist is Jerry Feith, from Charles County, Jerry, you are now a panelist,

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Jerry and you

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can see you. Now, you're good now.

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Okay, thank you.

00:40:49.000 --> 00:40:53.000

My name is Jerry Feith.

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I'm an associate member of the Charles County Central Committee, a member of the associate member republican women of Charles County. On the member of the republican Jewish coalition.

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And I'm confident that the Commission will be fair.

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I'm trying to focus on the single member concept, rather than the Prime member concept. And the reason for that is

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the single member concept benefits smaller is beneficial.

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Small single delegate districts allow a delegate to get to know constituents, and the community's needs by living side by side with the people they represent the intimate knowledge that a delegate has of their own surroundings.

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Manage because that knowledge is the basis for their decisions. That is not possible in large districts, a delegate can be more responsive to issues of all consistency when fewer constituents are living in a smaller geographical area.

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Creating smaller districts will provide some intimacy, to the relationship between voters and their delegate whom they are held accountable, a smaller compact district with your constituents will encourage a healthy competition of candidates, representing

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diverse interests in the community, a candidate for a single district she can run a successful grassroots campaign on a more modest budget.

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And I would like to emphasize that the existence of multi member districts has been denounced by prominent supreme court justices across the political spectrum Thurgood Marshall, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Sandra Day O'Connor, and Scalia , Justice

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wrote that the Motown member district inherently submerges the votes of the minority. So when these people say the motor I member benefits, people of color,

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or women and this kind of concept. There's no evidence for their articulation, which is a problem.

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If you're going to make a statement of that you should have the evidence.

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They would just like to keep the status quo in the particular areas, the multi member areas in which they get reelected. So, I'm confident that this commission will do the right thing.

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Thank you, Mr. Feith, appreciate your testimony. Next, Maria. Our next panelist is Nicole Drew from McHenry County.

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Nicole, you just need to unmute.

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Okay, thank you. I didn't realize I was up no problem.

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I just saw that my computer went up, beyond just a second.

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Good evening. My name is Nicole Drew, and I am a Maryland resident of Montgomery county, but my testimony today is on behalf of Rosie Allen herring a Prince George's County resident and the Regional Director of the 25, Maryland chapters of Delta Sigma

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Theta Sorority Incorporated. We urge this commission to one ensure a fair and transparent process to that you consider and respect any community of interest maps, and three ensure that the voting power of participation is not diluted and communities of

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color. Delta Sigma Theta sorority is a nonpartisan organization of 1000 chapters in the US and abroad in Maryland, there are total a total of 25 chapters 10 chapters are the student members at Maryland undergraduate institutions, and the other 15 chapters

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are members who have graduated from various colleges and universities, and many of the chapters have membership rosters totally upwards of 900 plus members,

each of whom are registered and active voters in every congressional district in the state with

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our collective chapter members community partners, and the public communities that we serve, we are able to have a strong collaborative impact in the state of Maryland, which is why we are here to provide a voice to the communities that we serve the manner

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in which districts are drawn affects every political issue from the economy to health care to public education, and therefore we urge you to continue to be transparent and ensure a fair process.

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We want to ensure that our districts are represented by politicians that understand and will respect the wishes of the communities that they serve. And when politicians manipulate maps for personal a political gain, it prevents residents from having our

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voices heard on policies that affect us. We also ask that this commission consider and respect any community interest maps that are submitted from advocacy organizations such as ours.

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a good redistricting process will be open and transparent, allowing communities to give input. And prior testimony we heard a request that you provide the rationale to explain why the maps would run.

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We also support this suggestion, which ensures that this process remains transparent and fair. And additionally, in order to build trust that the mass, have not been unfairly manipulated we asked this commission for natural maps that favor partisanship.

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And finally, any maps that are drawn should be mindful not to dilute the voting power and political representation of communities of color, Maryland has had a share of critique about the last redistricting process, but we want to ensure that our voice

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is considered to ensure fair congressional maps, and that there's no racial gerrymandering that wants to loot the voting strength of African Americans and other communities of color.

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Thank you.

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Thank you, Miss Drew.

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Our next panelist is Sia Finoh I apologize if I butchered your last name from Prince George's County, Sia, you are now a panelist,

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just need to unmute.

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All right. Thank you.

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Hello, can you hear you, we can see you.

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Thank you so much you pronounced my name perfect , no worries. I want to thank each and every one of you for having me, giving me this time to speak.

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This is my first time on the panel to speak, so please forgive me.

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I am actually a Prince Georgian I've been living in Prince George's County since I was 13. I came to the United States. In 1991, and I've been in Prince George's County since then, part of the African immigrant community.

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and I'm actually a candidate for Prince George's County Council District three.

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To me, redistricting means manipulation of our elections. And this is very un-American. And on democratic. As I see it, redistricting encouraged manipulation of our of our elections by allowing politicians to help their allies, and to destroy the political

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enemies, instead of the citizens, choosing them, they, they redistricting draw the lines where they can pick those that they want them to vote for them.

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And I think about this process.

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These processes are a means of furthering political goals by redrawing the district to protect incumbents and reduce competition, rather than ensuring equal voting power of representation.

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I am a member of this redistricting group. I'm not for the multi, multi, multi member redistricting. I believe that we should be able to give our residents, the power, the voting rights to vote for whomever they want.

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thank you so much and have a great evening.

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Thank you Miss Finoh you too.

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Thank you.

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Our next speaker is Richard Elliott from Prince George's County.

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Richard, you are now a panelist.

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Okay, am I audible? Yes, you are. We can't see you.

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That's fine I'm at the Top Golf outside so I would look kind of strange anyway. So, hello everybody thank you to the panel for giving us the opportunity to speak on redistricting.

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You all probably remember I spoke with the Baltimore City and the Baltimore metropolitan area. I want to stick with the same message that in the redistricting at both the County Council and the state legislative district levels that municipalities and

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neighborhoods must be kept whole. As an example, I live in the fifth council manic district, but all of my neighbors live in the sixth and up the street less than a quarter of a mile starts district three.

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If the maps can follow naturally existing major roads, municipalities and neighborhoods, it can be much more easy for people to understand who they're voting for.

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Excuse me, and to maintain proper representation for communities in the upcoming legislative redistricting as a resident of Glendale, I request that the maps the community of Glendale, comprising over 13,000 people, and being hundreds of acres thousands

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of acres of land, be placed into one legislative district.

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I thank you all for your time, and I hope that during the upcoming redistricting that it's kept fair for Prince George's and fair for our voters as well.

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Thank you.

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Thank you Mr. Elliott next panelist is Linda Dorsey-Walker from Baltimore County, Linda, you are now a panelist.

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Hello.

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Hello, Miss Dorsey-Walker, we can hear you, we cannot see you. Okay, well, I just want to reiterate what I've previously said that this is an opportunity for those individuals who have gotten used to the kind of lifestyle that we have, have to offer in

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Maryland, to revisit the notion of whether we want that to change. We have had and enjoyed a lot of successes here in Maryland, with things as they are we currently have multi member districts.

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And it has given opportunities to women to get elected minorities to get elected, and there are individuals who are saying now.

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No we want only single member districts because it will give our team as if we had teams, a turn it that we need to revisit the notion of, do we really want to have those kinds of criteria, be what we move forward on do we really want to elect individuals

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who may or may not have the best interest of the state in mind. We currently have a lot of successes here. There is no reason to feel like something is going wrong work harder at getting your party established and elected, rather than try to change things

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that are working so well for the citizenry. Now, yes there are things that need to be fixed. Yes, the gerrymandering has to end. But in terms of the multi member district format.

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I've laid out cases before, in the last two times I testified why it is legal, why the very fact that we have to be one of the few states that still have it does not mean that we must end it all together.

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I think that we need to go with what's working and multi member districts are working for us just by, and it's keeping some of the worst instincts that we see presented in some of the other states that's around us and throughout the country from creeping

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into Maryland, and we need to keep that in mind, do we really want that to become our new reality here in Maryland. So thank you very much for the opportunities that you've given me to testify, and I wish you the best as you move forward and hope that

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everyone will have an opportunity to participate in the training exercise with a map drawing. Thank you.

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All right. Thank you Miss Dorsey-Walker , so we have a couple of people that have not gotten on that we're if you are on, please let us know. Vontasha Simms, and Antoine Brown, Matthew Silvergate.

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If they do not get on or let us know that they're here our last speaker will be Councilwoman Deni Taveras. So, Councilwoman, you are now a panelist.

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Councilwoman Taveras you're on.

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Hi everyone, thank you for this time and thank you for this opportunity, based on what I'm seeing right now, I am the only Latina speaking before you tonight to me that should be a red flag that should be concerning, just as equally as I looked before

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you and I don't see one individual in this commission that reflects the interest of the community that I represent, or that is reflective of this community as a role model.

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So it's hard for me in that I hear that we should return to multi-level districts, when the reality is that

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I've had literally in the fact that I've had, mostly in during my time living here in Prince George's County, a multi, multi member district, we've had a school.

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We've had schools in my, we have the most of our credit schools that I would say in the state. And I would say that definitely in the county, and I've had temporary trailers that are over, 50, years old, and we've been highly neglected as a Latino community

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that's reflected here in this area. And I do believe that I am advocating for single member districts, because we do need that specialized care and touch that is highly required by by somebody that actually reflects the community, and that is

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And that is, is close to the community to reflect those interests and those needs. And in at this time I just feel that it's a challenge. When we have individuals that are not only trying to eliminate all Latino representation, are running for office,

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but at the same time, individuals that have done nothing, even when they were sitting there. Now also running for office, and now trying to, to, to,

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to say that they've made a difference. and it's hard. It's hard to see that.

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So what I want to say is that proportional representation is ideal.

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Because it eliminates a lot of the problems with gerrymandering.

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But the issue is that we do not live in. In an ideal world, if we were doing this nationwide, I would say yes, it allows for us to, to allow for us to have all the representation and address all the needs, the income bracket, the, The, the diversity,

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etc.

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But that's not the reality we live in. And so with that I want to highlight the fact that we do need at least remit maintain the multi-level districts in the areas that are proportionately, African American, and create a single member districts of the

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areas that are highly Latino. Thank you. Okay. Thank you.

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So we have a couple more that have signed up through the chat feature LaVerne Scott from Prince George's County. You are now a panelist.

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LaVerne you just need to unmute.

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Okay, go ahead. Scott, I'm in Fort Washington and then Prince George's County. I'm in district, eight, and hopefully we could keep district eight separate from district nine that we only be two separate districts and not be combined with Waldorf

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and St Mary's County, each district has their own issues to present with the county. So hopefully district eight was standalone, as well as district nine.

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Thank you for the opportunity to speak this evening.

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Thank you Miss Scott.

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Maria. Yes, so it appears.

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Margaret Metzler is signed up to speak, and she is sitting next to Ms. Morrison's so just see if we can get her on again.

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Thank you. I'm Tess Morrison and I'm here to speak on behalf of my neighbor, Margaret Peggy Mentzer who has low vision.

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We live in grace field road Silver Spring, Maryland, which is part of Prince George's County.

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Peggy and her husband have lived in Prince George's County for over 50 years, and she has run for public office in the county, four times. She was elected to delegate to the Maryland constitutional convention of 1967, which led to the creation of our

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state government. This is Peggy's testimony.

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I very disappointed with the boundaries of many present Maryland's congressional districts which are more gerrymandered then compact, the effect has been democratic politicians choosing their constituents, rather than the voters choosing

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their congressional representatives.

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In addition, compact areas would benefit candidates by being easier and less expensive, in which to run the basis of fair maps, is the US Census of course, but the 2020 census is likely to be less accurate than hoped for less emphasis should be placed

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on districts being based on equal population, and perhaps a 5% variance would be acceptable.

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The overall results should take into account minority representation lacks about 31% fights of 58% Republican voters are about 38% and deserve at least two districts.

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Drawing fair maps is not Child's Play but it's not rocket science either you're dealing primarily with 23 counties in the city of Baltimore, Maryland, natural geography and population centers are Western Maryland Southern Maryland Eastern Shore city of

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Baltimore minority majority about 828,000 McHenry County and about a million Prince George's County minority majority proximate 900,000 in Baltimore County approximately 609,000 with the state's overall population of 6.2 million divided by eight would

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be approximately 772,000 for each congressional district.

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When these categories need to be added to or subtracted from the additional voters should come from a compact area of an adjoining county and or preserve communities of interest, my retirement community Riderwood village of 2500 residents' voters is a

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prime example of a community of interest. We are split almost equally between Montgomery and Prince George's counties. Grace field road is our only address and used only for our community with the higher numbers being in Prince George's County and the

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lower numbers in Montgomery county.

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Our local management has learned to deal with two jurisdictions, but one Congress person would be desirable, submission should carefully evaluate and a draft map should be released in a timely fashion so citizen feedback can be taken into account.

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We appreciate your provision for citizen input and look forward to a fair map. Thank you.

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Thank you, Miss Mentzer sir and thank you Miss Morrison for providing assistance.

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Our last speaker, if no one else has signed up to the chat, is Michael Wein. I apologize, I butchered that from Prince George's County. Michael, you are now a panelist.

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Hi, good afternoon.

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Um, I actually did sign up I don't know why that did not go through.

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I do want to I'm that Can y'all hear me. Yes, we can see you. We can hear you.

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I'm a trial attorney out of Greenbelt, Maryland, I live in Bowie, and I have actually worked on redistricting for a couple decades, including going back through college and I've written on the topic, I do want to go and just talk on

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two points because I know that our time is limited to one is, I do want to go in, dress to this commission that back in 2009 2010, there were people within the Democratic Party democratic activists that were not in favor of what happened in Maryland.

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It was not something that was uniform, that it was accepted and the people who were against it were also very concerned of how it would look to go in and have these two sort of maps myself I was going in.

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I believe on Election Day 2009 helping Frank Kratovil, who ended up being the congressman from the first district.

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is to adopt Maryland's constitutional requirements on continuity continuity and compactness make sure that's applied to congressional districts, that is something that unfortunately does not exist on the federal level, but should be applied in Maryland,

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regardless of any sort of commission, whether or not independent or whatnot. Secondly, I want to let this commission know that there's an upcoming issue and I think that this commission should consider this in terms of electoral college reform, it's not

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been something that's been addressed, but I've actually written articles that have been published related to the issue of winner take all versus the congressional district method that Maine and Nebraska use.

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And if we're going to have reform on Electoral College and and I wrote this before the 2020 elections that Biden won, if we're going to do that. It's something to consider in conjunction, Maryland was actually the last one state that back in 1836, actually

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had a congressional district, it was not winner take all, and there's an opportunity. If this commission is serious about going into having reform in a nonpartisan or bipartisan method to also incorporate Electoral College reform.

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Unfortunately I wasn't able to figure out how to go and submit written testimony, but I'm happy to do so. I thank this commission for its time, and if anyone has any questions feel free.

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Thank you.

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Thank you, Mr., Wein,

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right, we do not appear to have any more people that have signed up to testify but it just like to remind everyone that if they do want to we can give a couple more minutes if they want to put it in the chat, but we also do have a Hispanic advisor to

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the redistricting commission.

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Gloria Blackwell is an advisor so I know it was brought up earlier about having that representation and the Commission has taken that into account as well.

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I also like to remind, some of the presenters tonight who didn't have maybe as much time as they like that they could put a written testimony to us via redistricting commission@maryland.gov right we'll wait a couple minutes, see if we get any more folks

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coming through.

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Alright, Maria I'm not seeing anybody so I am not as well. Alright, well I like to thank everyone for your participation tonight to the speakers and to at one point I saw at three participants online so thank you so much for your interest and I want to

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a special thanks to Maria for stepping in tonight. So Christine could take a well deserved vacation, and to John, as always, thank you for your help.

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So for everyone a recording of the proceedings will be posted to redistricting website, which is at redistricting.commission@maryland.com within two business days, a transcript of these proceedings will be posted as well.

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The YouTube video of this meeting will be posted within two business days. And again, anyone wishing to provide testimony after the means conclusion should send written testimony to redistricting.commission@maryland.gov.

01:08:19.000 --> 01:08:32.000

And a reminder that round two starts on August 25 and so check the website for more information specifics about what you are able to testify on.

01:08:32.000 --> 01:08:40.000

Do we have any additional business from members of the Commission,

01:08:40.000 --> 01:08:43.000

right, seeing none.

01:08:43.000 --> 01:08:50.000

I will ask for a motion to adjourn.

01:08:50.000 --> 01:09:20.000

Also, Judge Williams, can I have a second please. Thank you, Cheryl.