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STATE OF MINNESOTA

SPECIAL REDISTRICTING PANEL

A21-0243  
A21-0546

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Peter S. Wattson, Joseph Mansky,  
Nancy B. Greenwood, Mary E. Kupper,  
Douglas W. Backstrom, and  
James E. Hougas, III, individually  
and on behalf of all citizens and  
voting residents of Minnesota similarly  
situated, and League of Women Voters  
Minnesota,

Plaintiffs,

and

Paul Anderson, Ida Lano, Chuck Brusven,  
Karen Lane, Joel Hineman, Carol Wegner,  
and Daniel Schonhardt,

Plaintiff-Intervenors,

vs.

Steve Simon, Secretary of State of  
Minnesota; and Kendra Olson, Carver  
County Elections and Licensing Manager,  
individually and on behalf of all  
Minnesota county chief election officers,

Defendants,

and

Frank Sachs, Dagny Heimisdottir, Michael  
Arulfo, Tanwi Prigge, Jennifer Guertin,  
Garrison O'Keith McMurtrey, Mara Lee Glubka,  
Jeffrey Strand, Danielle Main, and  
Wayne Grimmer,

Plaintiffs,

and

1 Dr. Bruce Corrie, Shelly Diaz,  
2 Alberder Gillespie, Xiongpaoo Lee,  
3 Abdirazak Mahboub, Aida Simon,  
4 Beatriz Winters, Common Cause,  
5 OneMinnesota.org, and Voices for  
6 Racial Justice,

7 **Plaintiff-Intervenors,**

8 **vs.**

9 **Steve Simon, Secretary of State of**  
10 **Minnesota,**

11 **Defendant.**

12 -----

13 On October 14, 2021, at 6:30 p.m., this matter  
14 was duly before the Special Redistricting Panel: Judge  
15 Louise Dovre Bjorkman, Judge Diane Bratvold, Judge Jay  
16 Carlson, Judge Juanita Freeman, and Judge Jodi  
17 Williamson, for hearing at the Stearns County Service  
18 Center, 3301 County Road 138, Waite Park, Minnesota  
19 56387.

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APPEARANCES and INDEX

Karina Lira (No Appearance).....	--
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Del Moen.....	12
Warner Luoma (No Appearance).....	--
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Chris Erickson.....	18
Barry Belknap (No Appearance).....	--
Zaynab Mohamed (No Appearance).....	--
Joseph Field (No Appearance).....	--
Cindi Dahlstedt.....	20
Linda Kotschuvar.....	23

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1 (The following proceedings were held:)

2 - - -

3 THE CLERK: Please rise. This special  
4 session of the Minnesota Special Redistricting Panel  
5 will now come to order. Judge Bjorkman, Judge Bratvold,  
6 Judge Carlson, Judge Freeman, and Judge Williamson; the  
7 Honorable Louise Dovre Bjorkman presiding.

8 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Good evening. Thank you  
9 for being here. I apologize for the delay in getting  
10 started. Our technology is wonderful, but, you know,  
11 it's a blessing and a curse; right? But I'm glad we  
12 have everything working now.

13 I want to welcome you here. We are pleased  
14 to be in Waite Park this evening. We recognize you've  
15 taken time out of your busy lives to be here and we  
16 really appreciate that. I also want to welcome and  
17 thank those of you who are observing this public hearing  
18 this evening by Zoom. We are glad the technology will  
19 work to allow you to view this remotely.

20 The redistricting process occurs only once  
21 every ten years and is important to all Minnesotans, so  
22 we appreciate your participation.

23 My name is Louise Dovre Bjorkman. I'm a  
24 judge on the Minnesota Court of Appeals, and I'm the  
25 presiding judge of this Special Redistricting Panel.

1 I will now ask my colleagues, the other  
2 judges on the panel, to introduce themselves, starting  
3 to my left.

4 JUDGE BRATVOLD: Good evening. My name is  
5 Diane Bratvold, and I'm a judge with the Minnesota Court  
6 of Appeals, sitting in St. Paul.

7 JUDGE CARLSON: Judge Jay Carlson, Seventh  
8 Judicial District, and chambered in Becker County,  
9 Minnesota.

10 JUDGE WILLIAMSON: Judge Jodi Williamson,  
11 Third Judicial District, in southeastern Minnesota, and  
12 I am chambered in Dodge County. And I apologize for the  
13 delay and the technology problems, folks.

14 JUDGE FREEMAN: Good evening. Juanita  
15 Freeman, Tenth Judicial District, chambered in  
16 Stillwater, Washington County.

17 JUDGE BJORKMAN: The Chief Justice of the  
18 Minnesota Supreme Court appointed this panel to adopt  
19 congressional and legislative redistricting plans only  
20 in the event that the Minnesota Legislature does not do  
21 so by the statutory deadline of February 15th, 2022.

22 We recognize that the legislature has been  
23 delayed in starting the work of redistricting because of  
24 delays in the release of the final 2020 census data, and  
25 we find ourselves in the unusual situation of conducting

1 parallel redistricting processes. We do intend to give  
2 the legislature every opportunity to complete  
3 redistricting, but we must also move forward with our  
4 work so that we will be prepared to act, if necessary,  
5 by February 15th.

6           The redrawing of Minnesota's congressional  
7 and legislative districts involves many considerations,  
8 not the least of which is the effects of the  
9 redistricting on the people who have a stake in this  
10 process, and that is all the people of this state.

11           Public hearings like this one are central to  
12 the redistricting process. Our legislature, like  
13 legislatures across the country, has conducted hearings  
14 to receive information from the public, and prior  
15 redistricting panels like this have done the same.  
16 These hearings enable members of the public to directly  
17 voice their opinions and concerns and to share local  
18 perspectives that will enhance our understanding of the  
19 communities in this state. This participation is truly  
20 democracy in action.

21           We are particularly grateful for this  
22 participation during this challenging time. We have  
23 taken various precautions to create safe opportunities  
24 for broad and diverse public engagement. For those  
25 attending public hearings in person like this evening's

1 hearing, masks are required at all times, except when  
2 you're making an oral presentation up at the podium.

3           This hearing and all other in-person  
4 hearings are being streamed live via Zoom so that  
5 interested members of the public can watch remotely.  
6 And the panel will receive and give full consideration  
7 to written statements from the public. Written  
8 statements must be submitted by October 29th of this  
9 year. For details on how to submit written statements,  
10 please see our web page.

11           We welcome the comments of those who have  
12 registered to speak this evening. We will call the  
13 speakers one at a time, in the order in which they  
14 appear on the list of confirmed speakers. In the event  
15 these speakers complete their presentations before 8:30,  
16 we may allow others to speak.

17           Our marshal will display a clock to assist  
18 us in staying within the five-minute time limit for each  
19 speaker. And the clock is over there (indicating),  
20 which I think you'll be able to see from the podium.

21           My fellow judges and I will be listening  
22 carefully to each speaker. We may ask questions to  
23 clarify or better understand a speaker's comments, but  
24 we are mostly here to listen.

25           When speakers describe particular

1 communities, we encourage them to use the maps on  
2 display. You will see these better when you're closer,  
3 when you come up to make your comments. There is a  
4 laser pointer also at the podium for your use. And we  
5 also encourage speakers to reference geographic markers,  
6 such as political subdivisions; landmarks, like rivers  
7 and lakes and/or streets, so that we can understand  
8 where those communities are relative to the district  
9 lines.

10 Our court reporter will take down each  
11 speaker's comments and a transcript will be available on  
12 our website at a later time.

13 Please be mindful that this is a court  
14 proceeding. With many thanks to Stearns County, this is  
15 our courtroom for the evening.

16 If you have not done so already, please turn  
17 off your cell phone. Cell phones and private recording  
18 devices must be turned off during the entire hearing.  
19 If you need to leave the proceeding, please try to do so  
20 in between speakers. Please be respectful of the  
21 speakers and the listeners by not talking, adding  
22 commentary, or applauding during or after a  
23 presentation. And please respect and protect each other  
24 by wearing your mask over your mouth and nose throughout  
25 this session.

1           Again, on behalf of the panel, thank you so  
2 much for your interest in this important matter. We are  
3 very pleased to be with you this evening.

4           We will begin with the statement of Karina  
5 Lira.

6           UNIDENTIFIED VOICE:    She's not here.

7           JUDGE BJORKMAN:    All right.

8           The next person on our list is Blanca  
9 Sanchez. It appears there is an interpreter with  
10 Ms. Sanchez. Could you please state your name, identify  
11 the language you are interpreting for the record?

12          THE INTERPRETER:    Anna Maria Studer,  
13 Spanish.

14          JUDGE BJORKMAN:    And are you certified as  
15 an interpreter?

16          THE INTERPRETER:    Not legally, but I'm  
17 halfway through... Like, I did the reading; not the  
18 oral.

19          JUDGE WILLIAMSON:   I need you to raise your  
20 right hand, please. You do swear that you will  
21 accurately interpreter from Spanish to English all  
22 statements made for the person you are interpreting, so  
23 help you God?

24          THE INTERPRETER:    I do.

25          JUDGE WILLIAMSON:   Okay. You can proceed.

1 JUDGE BJORKMAN: All right. Thank you.

2 And, Ms. Sanchez, please proceed with your comments.

3 BLANCA SANCHEZ: Dear members of the  
4 Special Redistricting Panel in Minnesota:

5 My name is Blanca Sanchez, and I've been  
6 working more than 20 years in this state. I have lived  
7 for the last 10 years in the community of the mobile  
8 homes Dayton, in the city Osseo, Minnesota.

9 I'm writing this, I'm talking to you to ask  
10 you to please keep our community intact. This is a  
11 community that I belong to. Our park is on the Highway  
12 81 north and Brockton Lane, 18 minutes from Anoka and 16  
13 minutes from Brooklyn Park.

14 This community of Dayton, it's very  
15 significant to us. More than 90 percent of the  
16 residents of this place are Latinos. We are working  
17 people. We speak the same language, we share our  
18 customs, culture, and the same food. And the most  
19 important thing is that we know how to help each other  
20 in hard situations. We like the place where we're  
21 living because our children and us, the adults, we can  
22 go out and walk and we feel -- we feel ourselves safe  
23 with our own neighbors.

24 Unfortunately, this park has been sold to  
25 new owners. They don't even belong to this state. We

1 have had a lot of problems with the new owners, and this  
2 has helped our community to get more united. We need  
3 these problems to be resolved, and we have been trying  
4 to work with the new owners. But up till now, it has  
5 been very hard. They have been raising the rent. This  
6 month we're going to start paying \$650 to rent the lot.  
7 Out of all the parks around us, we are the ones with the  
8 higher rent. We also have problems with electric power.  
9 The places where we work and where we go for shopping  
10 are really far and we don't have any public  
11 transportation.

12           With the pandemic, a lot of our families  
13 have lost their jobs and they also lost a lot of their  
14 family members. We have talked with our representative,  
15 Eric Lucero and Christine Johnson, but we have not  
16 received the help or any -- any help that we need. We  
17 know that these maps are going to determine who is going  
18 to be representing us in the congress and on this state.  
19 We believe that we need to be represented by persons  
20 that are fighting for the wellness of all of us.

21           And that's what we're asking for you to  
22 please hear us, that the interest of our communities are  
23 based in the maps that you are trying to make now.

24           Thank you for listening to me.

25           JUDGE BJORKMAN:    And thank you. Your

1 comments are submitted.

2 BLANCA SANCHEZ: Do I have to put something  
3 on the map?

4 JUDGE BJORKMAN: You do not, no. They're  
5 simply available if you wanted to use them for  
6 reference. Thank you.

7 Our next presenter is Del Moen. Good  
8 evening. Welcome.

9 DEL MOEN: Good evening, Your Honors.  
10 Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of my  
11 community.

12 Del Moen. And I've lived in Wadena for 28  
13 years. I'm a parish pastor for three Lutheran churches  
14 and one Episcopal church in Todd and Wadena Counties. I  
15 was born and raised in the Bemidji area and I lived  
16 there for 26 years. I still have access to a lake cabin  
17 up there and so we're up there regularly. I'm going to  
18 talk about the Bemidji area.

19 I have family and friends on all three of  
20 the Indian reservations that surround Bemidji: White  
21 Earth Reservation to the west and the Red Lake  
22 Reservation to the north and Leach Lake Reservation to  
23 the east. Over the years, I've learned, just because of  
24 the friends as well as my family, to listen to their  
25 witness. And their witness is a powerful witness about

1 change and poverty and pain. These people have been  
2 ignored for far too long and they struggle to survive  
3 and maintain and improve their communities.

4 I sit on my regional churches' Commission  
5 for Racial Equity and Justice. And one of the projects  
6 that we've worked on these last years is to walk  
7 alongside the people of these reservations. The church  
8 encompasses those reservations. And it's been a process  
9 of hearing in a very determined and slow way, lots of  
10 stories about the history of the people in this  
11 community. And we've listened to stories of pain and  
12 poverty, as well as their dreams for a better future and  
13 a better way of life.

14 People in these reservations have suffered  
15 systematic oppression for over 150 years from their  
16 White neighbors. They're just beginning to recover some  
17 of their culture and their language and their economic  
18 well-being. They'll make their communities healthier  
19 and stronger.

20 It's important that each one of these  
21 federally recognized reservations remain within their  
22 individual political districts so they can speak from  
23 one shared voice and experience. Their power would be  
24 diluted by splintering them into different political  
25 districts. Gerrymandering for these vulnerable citizens

1 would only weaken their ability to build a healthy  
2 community. Gerrymandering for all of us only causes  
3 further partisanship and weakens our ability to  
4 compromise.

5 Thank you again for the opportunity to  
6 speak.

7 JUDGE WILLIAMSON: Thank you.

8 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments  
9 are submitted.

10 We will next hear from Warner Luoma.

11 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Warner is unable to be  
12 here tonight. He'll submit his testimony in writing.

13 JUDGE BJORKMAN: All right. Thank you.

14 So the next registered speaker is Anson  
15 Amberson. Good evening. Welcome.

16 ANSON AMBERSON: Thank you. Your Honors,  
17 thank you very much for letting me speak tonight. I  
18 really wrestled with what to say, you know, trying to  
19 wonder what important things I might say as a common  
20 person that could influence your judgment in  
21 redistricting.

22 But first let me introduce myself. My name  
23 is Anson Amberson, and I reside in the SD-14B over in  
24 Minden Township, close to Sauk Rapids. We live on a  
25 20-acre agricultural homestead. We grow hay as our

1 primary crop; however, I also work in the area as well.  
2 I've worked in both 14A and 14B. My most recent  
3 employment has been as a pharmacy technician. I'm  
4 currently transitioning into a position with more direct  
5 patient care.

6 I decided to speak tonight because, in  
7 general, I am very concerned about preserving equality  
8 in this current highly charged political landscape  
9 that's characterized by extreme political division. And  
10 I want to share my perspective first as a resident of  
11 rural Minden Township, and I also want to share my  
12 perspective as -- well, on the vulnerable populations  
13 that I've served, especially in health care.

14 So, first, you know, in general, I feel like  
15 it's very important, as I'm sure you're all aware,  
16 hopefully, that we ensure that citizens across Minnesota  
17 remain in districts where they feel that their vote  
18 truly counts.

19 You know, in the past political cycles, I've  
20 heard about constant efforts by political parties to  
21 disenfranchise people from their vote, even using  
22 marketing techniques just to convince them to stay home  
23 so that their political party can have an unfair  
24 advantage. I think that, you know, redrawing the maps  
25 may or may not convince political parties not to use

1 these targeting strategies, but we need to start from an  
2 even playing field.

3           You know, in this general consideration, I  
4 would consider, you know, even redrawing the entire  
5 political map here in Minnesota in a randomized manner,  
6 if it would be necessary, to ensure that no political  
7 party has an unfair advantage over another.

8           However, I do see great value in ensuring  
9 that minorities -- you know, as a party -- well, what's  
10 the word I'm liking for? A group of common interest,  
11 you know, it's important to protect these minorities to  
12 be sure that their voices are heard, you know, that  
13 they're not oppressed or diluted out in their political  
14 district. I feel this is a very important aspect of  
15 democracy.

16           And then to transition in my own view as a  
17 resident of Minden Township. We live right across the  
18 road from a planned annexation area for Sauk Rapids as  
19 it will expand into Minden Township. And I think it's  
20 important to consider areas of growth when redrawing the  
21 districting map to ensure that these districts will  
22 remain balanced throughout the next ten years, until the  
23 next census. And I ask you to consider that sort of  
24 consideration.

25           JUDGE BJORKMAN: Can you tell me what road

1 you're referring to when you talked about annexation  
2 across the road?

3 ANSON AMBERSON: Yes. I live on 45th  
4 Street Northeast in Minden Township. And on the south  
5 side of that road -- I don't know the full extent of the  
6 planned annexation area. But south of there, that's a  
7 large area that is planned for being turned over to the  
8 Sauk Rapids political boundary, so...

9 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you.

10 ANSON AMBERSON: You're welcome.

11 Now, at work, we see all sorts of patients.  
12 I've mainly worked in the pharmacy as a pharmacy  
13 technician. I'm going to be moving into the emergency  
14 room in the coming weeks here. And we see a lot of  
15 people that are low income, elderly, people of racial  
16 minorities. And all of these people have a large stake  
17 in having a voice in the legislation that will affect  
18 their health care, for their medications and for direct  
19 access to care. These things can truly save their  
20 lives. You know, we have refugees, we have  
21 Native-American people and other minorities in the area  
22 that need this care; people who are diabetics, organ  
23 transplant recipients and cancer patients. So please  
24 consider all these things.

25 Again, I appreciate your willingness to

1 listen to my voice.

2 Thank you.

3 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments  
4 are submitted.

5 We will next hear from Chris Erickson. Good  
6 evening. Welcome.

7 CHRIS ERICKSON: Welcome. Thank you for,  
8 you know, letting me have this opportunity to speak to  
9 you today.

10 My name is Chris Erickson, and I've been a  
11 teacher for 29 years: in South Dakota for five years and  
12 then 24 years now in Minnesota. I grew up in northern  
13 Minnesota, in the small town of Bovey, but I've lived  
14 here in St. Cloud for now 22 years.

15 Currently, I serve as the President of the  
16 St. Cloud Education Association, and I'm testifying  
17 today in support of a transparent and fair process.

18 As a teacher, I can tell you our city's  
19 changing. The students in the St. Cloud schools speak  
20 more languages and represent more backgrounds than ten  
21 years ago. Our community is changing, and this needs to  
22 be reflected in redistricting.

23 Communities of interest must include  
24 communities of color and multilingual communities. Our  
25 maps must not be drawn to correct the power of these

1 communities of interest. I strongly believe in the  
2 principle of one man and one vote.

3           Based on our most recent census, our Senate  
4 District 14 should not need an overly huge change. As  
5 we reapportion the rest of the state in our own House  
6 District 14A, where I live, and 14B, we must establish  
7 districts that are equal in population to provide every  
8 Minnesotan equal representation.

9           We cannot allow districts to vary in  
10 population any more than necessary. Our last round of  
11 redistricting had a deviation of less than one percent.  
12 That seems like an achievable goal as we do this round.

13           Lastly, I strongly believe that we must  
14 prevent politics from entering the redistricting  
15 process. Map drawers should not pay attention to where  
16 incumbents live or which lines give which party power.  
17 Instead, districts must be convenient for the voters,  
18 including easily accessible voting sites across the  
19 district.

20           The maps you draw will decide federal  
21 funding for schools, roads, and bridges for the next ten  
22 years. Please keep students that I cherish deeply in  
23 mind. Please keep the families in mind as well, the  
24 St. Cloud families. I have a daughter who teaches right  
25 here in St. Cloud, a graduate of St. Cloud School

1 District, and I'm proud that she became a teacher here  
2 in St. Cloud. My wife teaches in St. Cloud, and my son  
3 plans to be a teacher. He's going to school in Morris  
4 right now; he's a junior there. So education to us and  
5 serving children is in our blood, and we want to see  
6 that represented in the people who represent us.

7 So, again, thank you for your time and for  
8 your attention to this matter. I really appreciate it.

9 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments  
10 are submitted.

11 Our next speaker is Barry Belknap. Is there  
12 a Barry Belknap? (No response.)

13 Okay. And do we have a Zaynab Mohamed?  
14 Zaynab Mohamed? (No response.)

15 All right. The next listed speaker is  
16 Joseph Field. Joseph Field? (No response.)

17 And the next or last registered speaker is  
18 Cindi Dahlstedt.

19 CINDI DAHLSTEDT: I'm here.

20 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Great. I thought it was  
21 something I said. Welcome.

22 CINDI DAHLSTEDT: Thank you.

23 My name is Cindi Dahlstedt. I live just  
24 south of Princeton, in Baldwin Township. Retired  
25 process manager. Moved up here out of the cities about

1 14, 15 years ago.

2           What made me want to come and testify to you  
3 all today is the fact that last year I worked as a  
4 census enumerator. It was an extremely encouraging  
5 process in that you come across people of all walks of  
6 life. Of course, these are only the ones that didn't  
7 respond to the original document.

8           What I found was a concern: That the small  
9 "D" democratic process is being checked out of by a lot  
10 of people, particularly young people. I know that part  
11 of the process in redrawing the districts is to try to  
12 keep communities, like communities, together, meaning  
13 colleges, ethnicity, whatever. I want to stress that I  
14 think that's very important. I know we have no  
15 responsibility in educating in a civics lesson, but I  
16 don't like to see people checking out of the small "D"  
17 democratic process because they thought that everything  
18 is too confusing.

19           So when I got done, I thought about: Why is  
20 this possibly confusing? So I went back and I pulled up  
21 my senate district map. And I'm in Senate District 15  
22 (indicating). It has an A and B. It covers nine  
23 counties, two congressional districts. So I know that  
24 it was redrawn ten years ago and that that caused  
25 confusion for people who showed up or didn't show up for

1 caucuses.

2           So I don't know, when you only have two  
3 townships from the Morrison County part of it versus all  
4 of Mille Lacs County, I don't know how or what we look  
5 at for population centers to determine that. Is it just  
6 merely 169? I don't know. That's up to you all because  
7 I don't know what the process is.

8           But I just have two things. Just be mindful  
9 and -- like everybody else has said tonight, be mindful  
10 of the people that live in Minnesota, that we really do  
11 want to participate. And also -- and I don't know if  
12 you all have any funds allocated so that when this is  
13 all over we get more than the little 3 x 5 manila  
14 preprinted card that says this is your new congressional  
15 district, senate district, and your polling place.  
16 Let's do a nice mailer that kind of says, Hooray, we're  
17 done, we finished; this is what went into the process  
18 and this is where you're going to be participating.  
19 Something flashy. I mean, this is a whole new deal  
20 we're dealing with now. We need to grab people in a  
21 different way.

22           Thank you.

23           JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments  
24 are submitted.

25           This concludes then the comments of the

1 people who were preregistered to speak this evening.

2 We do have time remaining for comments by  
3 others in attendance, so if you wish to make a  
4 presentation, I would invite you to come forward. We  
5 will continue to observe the five-minute time limit.  
6 But we are here and the floor is yours if you would like  
7 to share comments with us this evening.

8 Good evening. Welcome.

9 LINDA KOTSCHUVAR: Good evening.

10 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Could you state your name,  
11 please?

12 LINDA KOTSCHUVAR: Oh. Yes. My name is  
13 Linda Kotschuvar.

14 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Can you spell that last  
15 name, please?

16 LINDA KOTSCHUVAR: How many times have I  
17 done that? K-o-t-s-c-h-u-v-a-r.

18 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you.

19 LINDA KOTSCHUVAR: I am going to read my  
20 statement off my phone tonight. This was supposed to be  
21 a written submission; I did not get signed up in time to  
22 speak tonight. And so my submission is on my phone and  
23 hopefully I will be able to read this.

24 I'm trying to see what's on the maps up  
25 here. Let's see...

1                   JUDGE WILLIAMSON:    Ms. Kotschuvar, you  
2    can't talk away from the microphones, so take your time  
3    looking.

4                   LINDA KOTSCHUVAR:    Oh, okay.

5                   JUDGE WILLIAMSON:    Take your time.

6                   LINDA KOTSCHUVAR:    These are all...

7    (Pause.)    Well, I think I'll just explain where I'm  
8    from.

9                   JUDGE BJORKMAN:    Okay.    Good.

10                  LINDA KOTSCHUVAR:    In fact, I'm from Waite  
11    Park, where you are sitting right now.    And we are in  
12    the Sixth Congressional District.    I am in district --  
13    Legislative District 14B, and I live in the St. Cloud  
14    Area School District 742.    I have lived in the school  
15    district for 52 years, when I came here in 1969 to go to  
16    college.    So it's been a long time.    I am the parent of  
17    two adult children who were educated in the district and  
18    two grandchildren who are currently attending school  
19    here.    And I have regularly observed District 742 School  
20    Board meetings for the past three years and I am  
21    familiar with the school board members.

22                  The St. Cloud Area School District 742 is  
23    the 17th largest district in Minnesota, serving a  
24    population of over 100,000 residents, and it covers a  
25    250-square-mile area, which is, it's quite large.    It

1 encompasses four counties, which includes Stearns,  
2 Benton, Sherburne, and Wright County; and nine  
3 communities, which are St. Cloud, Clear Lake,  
4 Clearwater, Collegeville, Luxemburg, Pleasant Lake,  
5 St. Augusta, St. Joseph, and Waite Park.

6           District 742 is exceedingly different from  
7 the surrounding school districts. Students of color  
8 make up 60 percent of the population, representing a 15  
9 percent increase over recent years. This is drastically  
10 different than our neighboring school districts that  
11 range from 7 to 16 percent students of color. English  
12 language learners make up 23 percent of the district  
13 student population, which compares to 1 percent in two  
14 of our neighboring districts. At present, all of  
15 District 742 sits in Congressional District 6. And I  
16 don't know if you can see on the map, but in the upper,  
17 close to the upper --

18           JUDGE BJORKMAN: I think there is a laser  
19 pointer up at the podium. That might help you show us  
20 where you are talking about.

21           LINDA KOTSCHUVAR: Right up in this area  
22 that I'm pointing to (indicating) is around where  
23 St. Cloud is. We're right on the Mississippi River that  
24 cuts through here. So you can see we are very close to  
25 Congressional District 7 and Congressional District 8.

1                   And the reason that I am concerned about  
2 this is that we sit in Congressional District 6. But  
3 because of our geography, the school district is  
4 particularly vulnerable to being divided up when new  
5 congressional and legislative maps are drawn. It also  
6 sits near the boundaries of three congressional  
7 districts.

8                   Based on 2020 population changes, the  
9 district could easily be apportioned into two or three  
10 of these districts. Neighboring Congressional Districts  
11 7 and 8 cover extremely large, as you can see up there  
12 (indicating), extremely large, predominantly rural  
13 areas.

14                   District 742 aligns more closely with the  
15 urban nature of District 6, rather than that of greater  
16 Minnesota. And you can see where District 6 curls  
17 around and goes down in the northern part of the Twin  
18 Cities area. (Indicating.)

19                   St. Cloud Area School District 742 should be  
20 kept together in Congressional District 6. Because of  
21 its uniqueness and diverse population, it needs to  
22 remain intact to prevent losing representation in a  
23 cohesive voice in congress.

24                   Thank you for the opportunity to present my  
25 concerns.



1 we've witnessed here this evening and in our prior  
2 public hearings. We greatly appreciate you taking time  
3 out of your busy schedules and under these unusual  
4 circumstances to participate in this important work.

5                   With that, I wish you all a good evening.  
6 And we are adjourned.

7                   THE CLERK: All rise.

8   - - -

9                   (At 7:29 p.m., the Special Redistricting Panel of  
10 judges left the courtroom and this special session of  
11 the court stood adjourned.)

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