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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, Xiongpaο 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 19, 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 St. Louis County  
18 Courthouse, 100 North 5th Avenue West, Duluth, Minnesota  
19 55802.

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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. Please be  
9 seated.

10 Thank you for being here. We are pleased to  
11 be in Duluth this evening, and a special welcome and  
12 thanks to those of you who are observing this evening's  
13 hearing by Zoom. We are glad this technology affords  
14 you the opportunity to view this hearing remotely.

15 We recognize that all of you have taken time  
16 out of your busy lives to attend this hearing. The  
17 redistricting process occurs only once every ten years  
18 and is important to all Minnesotans, so we appreciate  
19 your participation.

20 My name is Louise Dovre Bjorkman. I'm a  
21 judge on the Minnesota Court of Appeals and the  
22 presiding judge of this Special Redistricting Panel.

23 I will now ask my colleagues, the other  
24 judges on the redistricting panel, to introduce  
25 themselves.

1                   JUDGE BRATVOLD:    Good evening.  My name is  
2 Diane Bratvold.  I'm a judge on the Minnesota Court of  
3 Appeals, and I sit in St. Paul.

4                   JUDGE CARLSON:     Judge Jay Carlson, Seventh  
5 Judicial District.  I'm chambered in Becker County,  
6 Minnesota.

7                   JUDGE WILLIAMSON:    Good evening.  Judge  
8 Jodi Williamson, Third Judicial District in southeastern  
9 Minnesota, chambered in Dodge County.

10                  JUDGE FREEMAN:     Good evening.  Juanita  
11 Freeman, Tenth Judicial District, chambered in  
12 Stillwater, Washington County.

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

18                  We recognize that the legislature has been  
19 delayed in starting the work of redistricting because of  
20 delays in the release of the final 2020 census data, so  
21 we find ourselves in the unusual situation of conducting  
22 parallel redistricting processes.  We intend to give the  
23 legislature every opportunity to complete redistricting,  
24 but we also must move forward with our work so that we  
25 are prepared to act, if necessary, by February 15th.

1           The redrawing of Minnesota's congressional  
2 and legislative districts involves many considerations,  
3 not the least of which is the effects of redistricting  
4 on the people who have a stake in this process, and that  
5 is all the people of this state.

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

16           We are particularly grateful for this  
17 participation during this challenging time. We have  
18 taken various precautions to create safe opportunities  
19 for broad and diverse public engagement. For those  
20 attending public hearings in person, masks are required  
21 at all times, except when you are up at the podium  
22 making a presentation.

23           This hearing and all other in-person  
24 hearings are being streamed live via Zoom so that  
25 interested members of the public can watch remotely.

1 And the panel will receive and give full consideration  
2 to written statements from the public. Written  
3 statements must be submitted by October 29th of this  
4 year. For details on how to submit written statements,  
5 please see the panel's web page.

6 We welcome the comments of those who have  
7 registered to speak at this hearing. We will call  
8 speakers one at a time, in the order in which they  
9 appear on the list of confirmed speakers. In the event  
10 these speakers complete their presentations before 8:30,  
11 which I suspect is the case, we may allow others to  
12 speak.

13 Our marshal will display a clock to assist  
14 us in staying within the five-minute time limit for each  
15 speaker, and that's visible to you from the podium when  
16 you're speaking.

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

21 When speakers describe particular  
22 communities, we encourage them to use the maps on  
23 display, and there is a laser pointer at the podium for  
24 your use. We also encourage speakers to reference  
25 geographic markers, such as political subdivisions,

1 landmarks or streets, so that we can understand where  
2 those communities are relative to the district lines.

3 Our court reporter will take down each  
4 speaker's comments and a transcript will be available on  
5 our website at a later time.

6 Please be mindful that this is a court  
7 proceeding. And with many thanks to the county board,  
8 this is our courtroom for the evening.

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

19 Again, on behalf of the panel, thank you so  
20 much for your interest in this important matter.

21 We will begin tonight with Megan Bond. Good  
22 evening and welcome.

23 MEGAN BOND: Good evening. This is the  
24 laser pointer, I presume? Okay.

25 Good evening, Your Honors. Thank you for



1 taking the time to listen to my statement this evening  
2 regarding your likely upcoming decision on how the  
3 congressional and legislative districts in Minnesota  
4 will change.

5           Specifically, I will like to speak to you  
6 this evening about how keeping communities of interest  
7 together is an incredibly important factor in the  
8 fairness of redistricting, especially pertaining to my  
9 community and my county.

10           My name is Megan Bond, and I am a resident  
11 on Rainy Lake, a property owner in the fun and  
12 burgeoning community of Ranier; a solo practitioner  
13 attorney in International Falls and a contract assistant  
14 public defender in the Ninth District. I'm also on the  
15 boards of directors for the Falls Hunger Coalition and  
16 Voyageurs Conservancy.

17           I am a resident of Koochiching County, which  
18 I will try to find... Right there. (Indicating.)  
19 Koochiching County is the second largest county by area  
20 in Minnesota that also holds a population of just over  
21 12,000 people.

22           When making the decision to change the lines  
23 on legislative and congressional districts, it is easier  
24 to keep smaller, rural counties together versus  
25 separating them into different legislative districts due

1 to the increased costs on the county as well as the  
2 added complication for poll workers for election day  
3 operations. It makes the most sense and fairness to our  
4 county and our county civil servants to keep our county  
5 together when you consider the different redistricting  
6 maps.

7                   So if you can see, this is our entire  
8 county. The population center is approximately right  
9 there, and then there's a few more down there. The  
10 legislative line currently does follow the county  
11 boundary. (Indicating.)

12                   I worked for a Registrar of Voters after  
13 college, and I understand the difficulty in determining  
14 which ballots go where. I'm trying to train poll  
15 workers on different districts in large counties.

16                   Koochiching County is a great example of  
17 this because of its size, its remoteness, and its small  
18 population. Dividing the county into multiple districts  
19 would put increased pressure and complications on our  
20 already hard-working civil servants.

21                   In greater Minnesota, it is also imperative  
22 to keep communities of interest together versus what's  
23 just the easiest way to draw a map. Therefore, I ask  
24 that when the court ultimately ends up drawing the new  
25 map, that the new redistricting map is drawn in the

1 fairest possible way to assure our communities'  
2 similarities and interests and economies are grouped  
3 together.

4           The communities to the west of Koochiching  
5 County rely substantially on agriculture as their  
6 economic driver. So you see Lake of the Woods, Roseau,  
7 Kittson, and down through Marshall, Pennington.  
8 (Indicating.) There's a lot of agricultural area in  
9 there, and they are currently in a different district  
10 than us.

11           To the south and the southeast is the Iron  
12 Range, and that's where you get into District 6 right  
13 here and even over into 5 right next to it.  
14 (Indicating.)

15           Koochiching County does not have very much  
16 agriculture that contributes to the economy, and we  
17 haven't seen mining in the area since the very  
18 unsuccessful two-year gold rush on Rainy Lake started by  
19 E.W. Backus in the last years of the 19th century.

20           What Koochiching County does have is a lot  
21 of outdoor spaces and a lot of trees. Our two largest  
22 industries currently are, and have been for quite some  
23 time, wood products and outdoor recreation.

24           Wood products has been part of our community  
25 for a couple of centuries and is probably the larger

1 industry of the two. The forest our loggers are in  
2 every winter extend to the east from Koochiching county,  
3 even through some of our state forests and U.S. forests.  
4 And so you've got the Boundary Waters up through here,  
5 but they do log all through here, where it's not the  
6 Boundary Waters. (Indicating.)

7 In the communities of International Falls,  
8 Ranier, and Rainy Lake and the other communities in  
9 Koochiching County, we are bolstering our wood products  
10 community with the year-round outdoor recreation and  
11 tourism. Our area is, and has been for almost a century  
12 now, an excellent recreation destination, especially in  
13 Voyageurs National Park, founded in the 1970s, which has  
14 seen an incredible increase in visitation and,  
15 therefore, an increase in the interest in outdoor  
16 recreation.

17 These two industries make the economic  
18 interests of our communities more similar to those  
19 communities to the east of us: northwest St. Louis  
20 County, Ely, and the other gateway communities to the  
21 Boundary Waters; and the north shore of Lake Superior,  
22 even including some areas in and around Duluth, which  
23 would be all through here. (Indicating.)

24 So when you consider the different  
25 redistricting maps presented to you, please consider

1 what makes the most sense and group our similar  
2 communities and economies together.

3 Even though it isn't the intention for this  
4 to happen in Minnesota, having the politically neutral  
5 third branch of government ultimately decide how our  
6 congressional and legislative districts will be redrawn  
7 makes certain assurances in fairness.

8 Redistricting should not be about assuring  
9 certain elected officials can stay in office or trying  
10 to flip a district from one party's control to another.  
11 It can assure that the fairness that we will be grouped  
12 with communities with similar interests and economies.

13 Thank you for the time this evening. It's  
14 been an honor and a privilege to speak to you. (Timer  
15 sounded.)

16 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Your timing was perfect.  
17 Thank you. Your comments are submitted.

18 MEGAN BOND: Thank you so much. Have a  
19 great evening.

20 JUDGE BJORKMAN: We will next hear from  
21 Leah Rogne.

22 LEAH ROGNE: Hello.

23 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Good evening. Welcome.

24 LEAH ROGNE: My name is Leah Rogne, and I  
25 live near Orr, Minnesota. Thanks for the opportunity to

1 testify today.

2 I live 110 miles north of here, in far  
3 northern St. Louis County, an area referred to locally  
4 as "north of the range" or "south of the divide." This  
5 means north of the Laurentian Divide. I'm looking for  
6 this thing... Okay. The Divide divides right through  
7 here. Right in here (indicating), you can see that it  
8 is a divide that follows generally the lines of current  
9 districts. The Laurentian Divide, that long, ancient  
10 mountain range you cross as you go north of Virginia.

11 My concerns are largely about redistricting  
12 criteria and the calls on us to try to maintain  
13 communities of interest. It's important to understand  
14 the special characteristics of the area north of the  
15 range.

16 Contrary to what we often hear from people  
17 in other parts of the state, the arrowhead region, or  
18 northeastern Minnesota, is not a homogeneous area with  
19 shared economic and cultural interests. It is very big  
20 and very diverse.

21 As a young person growing up in North  
22 Dakota, I looked in awe at the Iron Range, the Mesabi  
23 Range -- a stripe of heavy industry in the north woods  
24 with its strong labor union movement, its unique  
25 history, and the famous investment it made: its public

1 schools. My father always talked about the  
2 million-dollar high school built in Hibbing in 1920.

3           Until I moved to northern Minnesota, I  
4 didn't know the other communities in this region. There  
5 were other communities in this region with a different  
6 history and different concerns. I lived for two years  
7 in Eveleth and then moved 42 miles north to near Orr.

8           I asked a woman at church in Cook, 25 miles  
9 north of Virginia, if she was "from here." She said,  
10 No, I grew up on the range. So I learned quickly about  
11 the history of logging in the rural part of the region,  
12 the importance of Bois Forte and Grand Portage  
13 Reservations and band members who live throughout the  
14 area off the reservation; about descendants of Finnish  
15 and Slovenian farmers who still live in the community  
16 and today make a living in various occupations,  
17 including health care, education, construction, logging  
18 and related enterprises, farming, small business, and  
19 recreation.

20           Our small towns north of the range have  
21 different concerns than range cities, such as Hoyt  
22 Lakes, Aurora, Virginia, and Hibbing.

23           With demographic changes in the region,  
24 we've had to adapt and change. We've adapted to having  
25 the largest senate district in the state, Senate

1 District 3 -- Megan talked about that -- one that  
2 stretches from Grand Portage in Cook County here  
3 (indicating) to the far corner of Koochiching. Do I got  
4 it? Is that Koochiching? (Indicating.) My eyes aren't  
5 telling me right. Three-hundred-twenty miles by road.

6 In the last redistricting process, our  
7 senate district gained some residents of the Duluth  
8 area. We've adapted to that change and we recognize the  
9 logic of it since there's a strong affinity in Duluth  
10 for the north shore and vice versa.

11 I hope these brief remarks help decision  
12 makers understand something about the varied communities  
13 of interest in this area and the extent to which the  
14 designation of "Iron Range" is not an entirely useful  
15 way to describe the entire region.

16 As large and diverse as the area north of  
17 the range is, there are elements of commonality that  
18 distinguish it from the Iron Range. Indeed, its diverse  
19 economy and unique culture and history are its main  
20 distinguishing characteristics.

21 I hope the redistricting plan considers the  
22 special characteristics of Senate District 3 and  
23 maintains the communities of interest that have  
24 developed in the region. I know this is challenging  
25 since adjoining districts also have to add population.



1           Also considering the already huge size of  
2 Senate District 3, I hope we can do this without forcing  
3 people to go even further than they do now to be active  
4 in district affairs. I believe it's possible that with  
5 some adjustments at the margins we will be able to  
6 maintain the essential character of this district as  
7 well as the integrity of the surrounding districts, such  
8 as the Iron Range itself.

9           Thank you very much.

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

12           We will next hear from Lee Cutler. Welcome.

13           LEE CUTLER: Thank you, Your Honors. Thank  
14 you so much for coming up to our area today.

15           My name is Lee Cutler. I am a lifelong  
16 resident of the Eighth District, born and raised here in  
17 Duluth, Minnesota. Moved away for college and saved  
18 away for a couple years, but then moved back to make  
19 this my home again.

20           Something with Duluth I love to say, of  
21 course, is that Duluth has the highest voter turnout in  
22 the state of Minnesota and, of course, Minnesota has the  
23 highest voter turnout in the country. So I always like  
24 to say that Duluth has the highest voter turnout in the  
25 country.

1           We know that our voices are strong because  
2 our voices matter here, because we have been fortunate  
3 enough for the past, you know, two redistrictings that  
4 we have not had to deal with gerrymandering issues and  
5 things like that. We've had fair districts. And I  
6 believe because of that, people turn out because they  
7 know their voice will be heard and matter.

8           With the Eighth District itself, we are very  
9 fortunate where we have urban and rural; with urban, of  
10 course, Duluth being the fourth largest city in  
11 Minnesota; and rural, where we have all the way from  
12 Head of the Waters area from the Mississippi and the  
13 Boundary Waters area, all the way to the Iron Range and  
14 up to the border.

15           With Duluth I want to kind of speak  
16 specifically here for a little bit. Currently, Duluth  
17 incorporates pretty much all of Senate District 7,  
18 except for two precincts, which, of course, I can't  
19 quite get there. (Indicating.) But the northern  
20 precincts 11 and 23 for Duluth are currently part of  
21 Senate District 3, which Leah spoke previously about,  
22 and the large area with that.

23           With the incorporation of these two  
24 precincts into SD-7, that would bring our number to  
25 86,694, which would bring us just to one percent over

1 what the current -- current ideal senate district would  
2 be.

3           For the Eighth District itself, we currently  
4 need to grow around 50,000 or so. With that, an area  
5 that I propose at least is to have us incorporate the  
6 Lake of the Woods area and the rest of Beltrami County.  
7 Currently, Beltrami County is cut in half. With that  
8 incorporation, we would have then the Bemidji area and  
9 that county can stay whole as one whole area in the  
10 Eighth District.

11           Those are just my brief, short comments  
12 there.

13           I thank you, Your Honors, for hearing me  
14 today. Thank you for your decision and the hard work  
15 you guys are doing.

16           JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments  
17 are submitted.

18           The next speaker on our list is Jocelyn  
19 Heid.

20           UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: She's not here.

21           JUDGE BJORKMAN: All right. Bill Pick. Do  
22 we have Bill Pick present? (No response.)

23           All right. I've gone through the list now  
24 of the people who had preregistered. We do have,  
25 obviously, time remaining for comments by others in

1 attendance. If you wish to make a presentation and have  
2 not had an opportunity to do so here or at another  
3 public hearing, we would welcome your comments. And so  
4 please come forward.

5 Good evening. Could you please state your  
6 name, please, and spell your last name?

7 DEBRA TAYLOR: Debra L. Taylor,  
8 T-a-y-l-o-r. Thank you, Your Honors, for this  
9 opportunity. I sent written commentary to your email  
10 address, so you should have largely the same statement  
11 that I'm giving tonight already in writing.

12 First, some general things that I want you  
13 to do when you think statewide for this redistricting  
14 process.

15 Keep the districts, whether it's a  
16 congressional district or a legislative district, as  
17 compact as possible. You need a good reason to draw a  
18 district that's shaped like a pair of eyeglasses with  
19 two big blobs and a little connecting piece in the  
20 middle one block wide.

21 Protecting an incumbent or favoring one  
22 political party over another is not sufficient reason to  
23 draw a district that's shaped like a snake. Okay.

24 Keep medium-sized cities in one legislative  
25 district as much as possible. If a smaller- to

1 medium-size city is the economic/medical/educational  
2 center for a surrounding area, please try to keep that  
3 in one district. Make it easy for people to conduct  
4 their lives.

5           Communities of color did account for a lot  
6 of the gain in Minnesota's population over the last ten  
7 years. Communities of color are indeed the reason why  
8 we hung on to that Eighth Congressional District seat.  
9 Both greater Minnesota and the metro area did increase  
10 in ethnic diversity. Please be sure that the power of  
11 communities of color is not diminished as you draw these  
12 lines. The terms that you always hear are "packing" and  
13 "cracking." And I ask you to avoid packing and avoid  
14 cracking. Okay.

15           Don't intentionally draw lines that pit  
16 incumbents against each other. Especially avoid pitting  
17 incumbents for one party against each other and not the  
18 other party. You're judges. You're supposed to be in  
19 the business of justice. Don't stoop to petty political  
20 things.

21           And I ask that you, as you draw districts --  
22 and I know this is a challenge, okay -- that you keep  
23 them within one percent of the population deviation.  
24 I've heard some plans that say two percent or even five  
25 percent. I think those larger population deviations

1 make gerrymandering to benefit one incumbent or one  
2 political candidate or party just that much easier, and  
3 I'd like to see that one-percent line. Okay.

4           A little bit about specific to northeastern  
5 Minnesota, assuming I can figure out how this works...  
6 Okay. Do not draw a congressional district across the  
7 whole northern part of the state. For 125 years -- the  
8 speakers mentioned this already -- we've had two very  
9 distinct economies in the northern part of the state.  
10 Over here, the Red River Valley (indicating), is  
11 primarily agricultural. Most of the rest of the state,  
12 the north central and the northeastern part of the  
13 state, is tourism, forestry -- woods and water -- and,  
14 yeah, mining too.

15           So don't do a line like this (indicating)  
16 across the northern part of the state. That doesn't  
17 recognize how different the economies are in those  
18 areas.

19           I realize that the Eighth Congressional  
20 District has to get bigger. I suggest that you consider  
21 getting it bigger by adding in -- again, another speaker  
22 mentioned this earlier -- adding in Lake of the Woods  
23 County, the rest of Beltrami County, which is now  
24 divided between Seven and Eight; Clearwater, Mahnomen,  
25 and the little part of Benton County that is part of the

1 Red Earth -- or White Earth, excuse me, Anishinaabe  
2 nation. This would put all of the Ojibwe nations in  
3 Minnesota in one congressional district. And as someone  
4 who is part native, I would like to see that because,  
5 again, it gives a community of color a little more clout  
6 in electing a representative.

7 I know that if we take up that area over  
8 there, Lake of the Woods down to Benton, that means  
9 Seven has lost territory and Seven's gotta pick up  
10 territory too. So I think -- and I've got the wrong  
11 glasses on for this distance so just... I think the  
12 best way to fix Seven then is to give Seven St. Cloud, a  
13 good chunk of Stearns County, and a chunk of Benton --  
14 or the bulk of Benton County. That should bring them  
15 up -- I'm a recently retired scientist. I ran the  
16 numbers on all of this. I played with all the additions  
17 and subtractions. That should basically bring Seven up  
18 to where it needs to be (timer sounded) by giving them  
19 St. Cloud. Okay.

20 JUDGE BJORKMAN: You can --

21 DEBRA TAYLOR: When you do that, you can  
22 squish Six and Three closer to the metro. They need to  
23 get smaller. It'll work.

24 Thank you.

25 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments

1 are submitted.

2 Is there anyone else here who would like to  
3 provide comment? Please come forward. Welcome.

4 GRANT HAUSCHILD: Hello.

5 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Please state your name,  
6 spelling your last name.

7 GRANT HAUSCHILD: Grant Hauschild,  
8 H-a-u-s-c-h-i-l-d. And do I -- Need my address?

9 JUDGE BJORKMAN: No, that's fine.

10 GRANT HAUSCHILD: Okay. Thank you so much.

11 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Unless you'd like to tell  
12 us your address, if that's --

13 GRANT HAUSCHILD: (Laughing.)

14 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Well, it might be germane  
15 to your testimony.

16 GRANT HAUSCHILD: Thank you, Your Honors,  
17 for taking the time and for the work that you're doing.  
18 This is important stuff.

19 And I want to first say that I agree with  
20 many things that have already been said. But I am here  
21 in my capacity as a city counselor in Hermantown, and so  
22 I'm advocating for that community specifically. I did  
23 some written testimony on behalf of the mayor and the  
24 full city council so you'll have that as well.

25 We testify as a city that we would like the



1 judge panel to consider the principle of preserving  
2 political subdivisions and preserving communities of  
3 interest.

4 Hermantown, as you know, is on the border  
5 with Duluth, and Senate District 7 will need to gain  
6 approximately 5,500 people in the redistricting process.  
7 That means that because District 3 encompasses most of  
8 District 7, that they will have to most likely expand  
9 into District 3.

10 It is our hope as the city of Hermantown  
11 that our three precincts maintain themselves in a  
12 separate district from Duluth. And given the 5,500  
13 approximate population needs for District 7, there are  
14 actually two precincts in Duluth currently that are part  
15 of District 3.

16 So our ask is that you consider those  
17 precincts before breaking up a political subdivision of  
18 Hermantown because it would actually not take up the  
19 entire city; it would split our city in two and do us a  
20 disservice for our voices in the state legislature.

21 The second principle is preserving  
22 communities of interest. For those of you that don't  
23 know, Hermantown was once a township. And when Duluth  
24 looked to annex portions of our community, the citizens  
25 decided to create their own community and that is how

1 Hermantown came to be. So we have a history of  
2 distinguishing ourselves from Duluth. And that is  
3 absolutely nothing against Duluth. I work in Duluth, I  
4 love Duluth. I moved here for a reason. But given the  
5 uniqueness of our character in Hermantown, it is our  
6 hope that you all would also consider the principle of  
7 preserving communities of interest for Hermantown in  
8 that regard as well.

9                   If you have any questions, I'm happy to take  
10 them.

11                   But thank you again so much for this great  
12 work and for your time.

13                   JUDGE WILLIAMSON: Mr. Hauschild, I do have  
14 a question.

15                   GRANT HAUSCHILD: Yes.

16                   JUDGE WILLIAMSON: How large is Hermantown?

17                   GRANT HAUSCHILD: It just passed 10,000  
18 people, which is a big milestone. Maybe it's more  
19 psychological than not, but I feel like 10,000, we're  
20 kind of starting to be really considered a major city in  
21 the northland as compared to places like Virginia and  
22 others.

23                   JUDGE WILLIAMSON: Thank you.

24                   GRANT HAUSCHILD: Uh-huh.

25                   JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your

1 comments --

2 GRANT HAUSCHILD: Thank you so much.

3 JUDGE BJORKMAN: -- are submitted.

4 Is there anyone else here who would like to  
5 make a presentation who has not had the opportunity to  
6 do so? Please come forward and state your name,  
7 spelling your last name, please.

8 NATHAN BARTA: My name is Nathan Barta,  
9 B-a-r-t-a.

10 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Welcome.

11 NATHAN BARTA: Okay. Thank you, Your  
12 Honors.

13 As I said, my name is Nathan Barta, and I  
14 live in Esko, Minnesota. I am a senior at Esko High  
15 School, and I have lived in Esko for all 17 years of my  
16 life.

17 And today I'm testifying to ensure proper  
18 representation in my community of Cloquet-Esko-Carlton  
19 within Carlton County as a whole, along with the Fond du  
20 Lac Reservation for the next ten years.

21 Carlton County is this main portion of House  
22 District 11A. (Indicating.) So the  
23 Cloquet-Esko-Carlton community within Carlton County  
24 consists of the cities of Cloquet, Scanlon, Carlton and  
25 Wrenshall; and the townships of Thomson, which is Esko,

1 Twin Lakes and Silver Brook. With a population of  
2 23,103, this community recreates, works, educates and  
3 competes together. Cloquet, Esko, and Carlton Public  
4 Schools share Nordic and Alpine ski teams -- and I am on  
5 the Nordic ski team -- hockey teams, girls swimming,  
6 wrestling and soccer. Carlton and Wrenshall schools  
7 share a cross-country team and football teams. Many  
8 students from across the community attend school in a  
9 district that does not include their residence, thanks  
10 to open enrollment. For example, many students living  
11 in Cloquet and Carlton attend Esko public schools and  
12 vice versa.

13                 This community also shares many outdoor  
14 activities. Skiing is popular at Pine Valley Park and  
15 Spring Lake Trails in Cloquet and at Jay Cooke State  
16 Park. Pine Valley also hosts mountain biking, hiking,  
17 and two ice arenas. People enjoy running, biking, and  
18 snowmobiling on the Munger Trail that runs throughout  
19 our community.

20                 The Cloquet-Esko-Carlton area is also home  
21 to popular small businesses patronized by people from  
22 all around the community, including but not limited to  
23 Gordy's Hi-Hat and Warming House, the Magnolia Cafe, and  
24 Mike's Cafe and Pizzeria.

25                 This community should be kept whole in

1 redistricting, and no part of it should be split and  
2 included with areas of southeastern St. Louis County,  
3 such as Midway, Proctor, Hermantown, or Duluth. And as  
4 the councilman from Hermantown stated, I have nothing  
5 against those communities, but they are just very  
6 different when compared to the area that I live. And in  
7 the past, the very northeastern portion of Carlton  
8 County, which is Esko, where I live, has been split from  
9 the rest of the community and included with Senate  
10 District 3.

11           Carlton County itself has a population of  
12 36,207, meaning that the Cloquet-Esko-Carlton area  
13 accounts for over 60 percent of our county's population.  
14 Residents share Moose Lake and Jay Cooke State Park, the  
15 latter being one of the most popular in Minnesota with  
16 over 300,000 visitors each year. Visitors to these  
17 parks enjoy its beautiful bodies of water, hiking, fall  
18 foliage and much more.

19           Carlton County is a mostly rural and  
20 small-town county. And although many residents of  
21 Carlton County spend a significant amount of time in  
22 St. Louis County, especially the Duluth area, as I said,  
23 Carlton County is its own and a very different entity.  
24 The rural and small-town aesthetic is a stark contrast  
25 to the suburban and urban population center of St. Louis

1 County, and Carlton County should not be split when it  
2 comes to redistricting.

3           The current configuration of state House  
4 District 11A, which keeps Carlton County whole, works  
5 well for its residents. Similarly, the current  
6 configuration of state Senate District 11, which keeps  
7 Carlton County whole and pairs it with Pine County here  
8 and parts of Kanabec County here (indicating), works  
9 well for its residents. It allows our legislators to  
10 effectively address issues like broadband access.  
11 According to the U.S. Census Bureau, close to 25 percent  
12 of Carlton County residents do not have access to  
13 high-speed internet. That number is similar in Kanabec  
14 County and is over 25 percent in Pine County.

15           It also allows our legislators to represent  
16 the residents of the Fond du Lac Reservation. And  
17 although I believe Carlton and St. Louis Counties are  
18 best left separate at the state level, Brevator, Stoney  
19 Brook, Arrowhead and Culver Townships, which is this  
20 small area in southern St. Louis County (indicating),  
21 should be included with Carlton County as a whole in  
22 order to preserve the Fond du Lac Reservation.

23           The Fond du Lac Band of Ojibwe rests in  
24 northern Carlton County and southern St. Louis County.  
25 The area that includes the reservation has a population

1 of 6,666 people, 25 percent of whom are indigenous.

2           The section of the reservation in St. Louis  
3 County should be included with Carlton County in order  
4 to keep the reservation whole and provide its residents  
5 an opportunity to vote together towards electing a  
6 representative of their choice.

7           These communities of interest in Carlton  
8 County should be kept whole and together both in the  
9 state legislative and congressional maps.

10           Thank you for allowing me this opportunity  
11 to come speak to you today and for your consideration.

12           JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments  
13 are submitted.

14           Is there anyone else who wishes to make a  
15 presentation who has not had the opportunity to do so?  
16 (No response.)

17           All right then. I guess this will conclude  
18 our hearing in Duluth.

19           On behalf of the panel, I want to thank you  
20 all for coming, for participating and for providing  
21 information and ideas about your community. Your  
22 contributions will aid us in the work we do in this  
23 redistricting process.

24           We are heartened by the civic engagement we  
25 witnessed this evening and over the last two weeks in

1 other venues. We greatly appreciate you taking the time  
2 out of your busy schedules and under these unusual  
3 circumstances to participate in this important work.

4 So with that, I thank you again. I wish you  
5 a good evening. And this session will adjourn.

6 THE CLERK: All rise.

7 - - -

8 (At 7:05 p.m., the Special Redistricting Panel of  
9 judges left the courtroom and this special session of  
10 the court stood adjourned.)

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1 STATE OF MINNESOTA )  
 )  
2 COUNTY OF DODGE )

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4 CERTIFICATE

5

6 I, Lane T. Knutson, Registered Professional Reporter  
7 and Official Court Reporter in and for the State of  
8 Minnesota, County of Dodge, Third Judicial District, do  
9 hereby certify that I reported and transcribed the  
10 proceedings herein; and that the transcript contained  
11 on the foregoing pages is a true and correct  
12 transcription of my shorthand notes as reported by me  
13 at the said time and place herein noted.

14

15

16 /s/Lane T. Knutson  
17 Lane T. Knutson, RPR  
18 Official Court Reporter  
19 Dodge County Courthouse  
20 Mantorville, Minnesota 55955  
21 (507) 624-7007

Dated: November 30, 2021.

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