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STATE OF ILLINOIS  
SENATE REDISTRICTING SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING  
LAKE AND McHENRY COUNTIES

Wednesday, April 7, 2021  
3:15 p.m.

Via Zoom videoconference

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PRESENT:

(Via Zoom videoconference)

ILLINOIS REDISTRICTING SUBCOMMITTEE:

- SENATOR JULIE A. MORRISON, Sub-Chair
- SENATOR MELINDA BUSH, Sub-Vice-Chair
- SENATOR ADRIANE JOHNSON, Sub-Vice-Chair
- SENATOR DAN McCONCHIE, Sub-Minority Spokesperson
- SENATOR CRAIG WILCOX, Member

WITNESSES:

- MARY MATHEWS (League of Women Voters of Lake County)
- CELESTE FLORES (Mano a Mano Family Resource Center)
- DEENA HABBAL (Illinois Muslim Civic Coalition)
- ROBERT MONTGOMERY (Urban Muslim Minority Alliance)
- GRISELDA VEGA SAMUEL (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund)
- MARKO SUKOVIC
- MICHAEL BUEHLER (McHenry County Board)

ALSO PRESENT:

- SENATE STAFF
- MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

1 CHAIR MORRISON: This meeting of the  
2 Senate Redistricting Subcommittee on Lake and  
3 McHenry Counties is called to order.

4 Will the clerk please take the  
5 roll.

6 THE CLERK: Senator Wilcox.

7 SENATOR WILCOX: Present.

8 THE CLERK: Leader McConchie.

9 SENATOR McCONCHIE: Present.

10 THE CLERK: Senator Johnson.

11 SENATOR JOHNSON: Here.

12 THE CLERK: Senator Bush.

13 SENATOR BUSH: Here.

14 THE CLERK: Subchair Morrison.

15 CHAIR MORRISON: Here.

16 There are five members present.  
17 That's a quorum. And the following entities are  
18 seeking leave for photography and to video the  
19 proceedings, BlueRoomStream and Steve Sadin  
20 representing the News Sun.

21 Is there leave?

22 Steve, is there some way you can  
23 get that, please?

24 Is there leave? Leave is

1 granted. Senator Bush for a motion.

2 Senator Bush moves that this  
3 hearing be transcribed by the court reporter so  
4 that the committee can have a full transcript of  
5 this hearing which the Redistricting Committee  
6 can approve at a future hearing once members and  
7 staff have had an opportunity to review the  
8 transcript and make any needed corrections.

9 Leave is granted. The court  
10 reporter will be allowed to transcribe the  
11 hearing. The subcommittee has received a  
12 written testimony from Rhett Taylor, the mayor  
13 of Grayslake. If the committee receives any  
14 additional testimony, that testimony will be  
15 made part of the committee record and posted on  
16 the Redistricting Committee ILGA website.

17 This subcommittee covers the Lake  
18 and McHenry Counties. I'm going to begin with  
19 an opening statement. I know that Vice Chairs  
20 Bush and Johnson have made -- will make comments  
21 as well. If Senator McConchie and Senator  
22 Wilcox would like to make opening remarks, we  
23 will go to those, and then we will be turning to  
24 the testimony for today.

1 My name is Senator Julie  
2 Morrison. I want to welcome you all to the Lake  
3 and McHenry Counties Redistricting Committee. I  
4 want to thank all those who took time out of  
5 their day to be with us today whether they are  
6 here in person or virtually. I also would like  
7 to extend a special thank you to the College of  
8 Lake County for hosting us this afternoon.

9 This is the latest in a series of  
10 regional hearings the Senate Redistricting  
11 Committee is holding to get input from  
12 communities of interest across Illinois as we  
13 work to create a fair map that reflects the  
14 diversity of our state. It is the  
15 constitutional duty of the legislature to  
16 undergo this process every 10 years to make sure  
17 our communities receive fair and equal  
18 representation. We know that our communities  
19 are very different than they were a decade ago,  
20 and it's important we take time to understand  
21 those changes.

22 For those unable to provide  
23 testimony today, I encourage you to visit our  
24 website, [www.ilsenateredistricting.com](http://www.ilsenateredistricting.com) or

1 ilsenatedistricting.com where you can submit  
2 your comments and concerns and find more  
3 detailed information about the redistricting  
4 process. We are focused on encouraging as much  
5 public participation as possible, and on that  
6 site, you can even draft and submit your own  
7 proposed legislative boundary maps which will be  
8 reviewed as part of the public record.

9 I've long called for the public  
10 to have more to say in this process, and my  
11 commitment to that belief has not wavered, but  
12 we cannot ignore the unique set of circumstances  
13 we are facing this year. The pandemic has  
14 created delays and data from the U.S. Census  
15 Bureau which will not get redistricting data to  
16 the states until late August or September, way  
17 past our June 30th constitutional deadline to  
18 complete this process.

19 We cannot abandon our  
20 constitutional deadline because of the delay in  
21 census data. If we fail to meet the deadline,  
22 mapmaking will be turned over to a committee of  
23 political insiders, and that's no way to  
24 increase public participation in this process,

1 just the opposite. It would result in the wants  
2 of a very few political power brokers  
3 overshadowing the needs of the people. To craft  
4 a fair map, we need more people involved in this  
5 process, not fewer, and that's why we are  
6 holding these hearings and are here today.

7 Thank you. I'll turn the mike  
8 over to Vice Chair Bush for a few remarks.

9 SENATOR BUSH: I apologize. Thank you,  
10 Chair Morrison, and thank you to those of you  
11 who are here with us today to share your  
12 perspectives.

13 This is not a perfect process,  
14 and I've also advocated for changes to give the  
15 public more say in redistricting, including  
16 policies on the federal level to ensure fair  
17 mapmaking across the country, but we must  
18 recognize the stark choices we are faced with  
19 today. Either we meet our constitutional  
20 deadline and give communities an opportunity to  
21 provide input, or we turn the process over to a  
22 group of political appointees and cut the public  
23 out entirely. I know which side I'm falling on,  
24 more input, more public participation. It's

1 always better. Thank you to those of you that  
2 are here today.

3 And, Senator Johnson, would you  
4 like to make a few remarks?

5 SENATOR JOHNSON: Yes. Thanks -- thank  
6 you, Chair Morrison and Vice Chair Bush. I  
7 think you both clearly laid out what's at stake  
8 and why it is so important that we hold these  
9 hearings to gather perspectives from across our  
10 communities. I look forward to listening and  
11 learning.

12 Thank you.

13 CHAIR MORRISON: Senator McConchie, I  
14 would call on you for opening remarks.

15 SENATOR McCONCHIE: Thank you, Madam  
16 Chairwoman. My name is Senator Dan McConchie  
17 from the 26th District. And again, I want to  
18 also extend my thank you to everyone who has  
19 showed up here today or is participating online.

20 This is our 11th redistricting  
21 hearing in the last three weeks, and while  
22 participation has been limited, we are hearing  
23 from the witnesses that there needs to be  
24 significantly more transparency in this process.

1 The witnesses have requested that there be a  
2 robust public engagement that includes slowing  
3 the process to ensure greater participation.

4           Despite what some of my  
5 colleagues have claimed in many of the  
6 redistricting hearings to date, we do not have  
7 to pass a map by June 30th. That is the  
8 deadline for a partisan process where the  
9 legislature is in charge. That is the last day  
10 that politicians get to draw the map, which is  
11 June 30. The real constitutional deadline is  
12 October 5th, and I think we need to make that  
13 more clear to the public.

14           Extending the time period will  
15 allow us to use actual census data, not the  
16 proposed American Community Survey data which is  
17 just a small sampling of the population. Use of  
18 the ACS data has the potential to disenfranchise  
19 voters and communities of color that have  
20 changed over the past 10 years. This would be  
21 like basing our election results on a poll  
22 rather than actually counting the votes on  
23 election day.

24           In these hearings, some have

1 falsely claimed that Republicans actually want  
2 these hearings stopped. That has absolutely no  
3 basis in truth. In fact, we along with the  
4 independent groups across the state have asked  
5 for even more hearings than are currently  
6 planned, but we should stop cramming them all  
7 into a few weeks, and instead, ensure that the  
8 public has ample time to arrange their schedules  
9 and participate in a meaningful manner.

10                   Voters want this process to lead  
11 to more choices at the ballot box. They want  
12 there to be more competition in our elections  
13 and instead of politicians using this process to  
14 protect their own interest. Several members  
15 have -- understand this, which is why in the  
16 last legislative session they introduced and  
17 supported SJRCA4, a constitutional amendment for  
18 an independent redistricting commission.

19                   Back in 2019, that resolution  
20 garnered 37 cosponsors in the Senate, including  
21 18 democrats. A substantially similar  
22 independent commission amendment cosponsored by  
23 current Speaker Welch passed the House in 2016  
24 with 105 yes votes. These Senate Republicans

1 are committed to obtaining a bipartisan solution  
2 to the problem of politicians picking their  
3 voters.

4                   And so last week we introduced  
5 the People's Independent Maps Act, Senate Bill  
6 1325, which uses identical language from the  
7 2019 amendment that had so much bipartisan  
8 support. This act would take the politicians  
9 like us out of the map drawing process, and  
10 instead, an independent redistricting  
11 commission, for example, that has been long  
12 supported by Governor Pritzker and more than 75  
13 members of the other side of the aisle,  
14 including members of this committee.

15                   We took care to introduce this  
16 legislation exactly as it had been when it had  
17 so much support from Democrats to ensure that it  
18 would be a bipartisan solution to the problems  
19 of politicians picking their voters. This is  
20 something that we continue to advocate is having  
21 everyone involved because we do not believe it  
22 is only a process of legislators choosing or  
23 political insiders as has been to date.

24                   We look forward to the further

1 testimony of the witnesses and discussions of  
2 this committee on how can we bring real change  
3 and transparency to the process.

4 Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

5 CHAIR MORRISON: Senator Wilcox, would you  
6 like to make opening remarks?

7 SENATOR WILCOX: Absolutely. Thank you,  
8 Madam Chair. Thank you, Leader McConchie, for  
9 laying out the difference between the 30th of  
10 June deadline and the October deadline.

11 I hope that we'll hear in this  
12 testimony as we've heard in others concerns of  
13 municipalities being split in half or split in  
14 thirds during the remap process, or as we found  
15 when we looked at the 2010 redistricting, where  
16 all of a sudden former political opponents of  
17 members of the general assembly are no longer in  
18 the same district. We know that that's not what  
19 the public is looking for with the transparency  
20 request and certainly support the request we've  
21 heard in many committees for any drawn maps to  
22 have a robust period of public input and debate  
23 prior to any votes on it.

24 Thank you for the time.

1 CHAIR MORRISON: Thank you, Senator.

2 For our witnesses, we are now  
3 going to begin your testimony which is what  
4 today is about. Please start your testimony by  
5 stating your name and organization clearly for  
6 the record. Our first witness today is Mary  
7 Mathews with the League of Women Voters of Lake  
8 County.

9 Mary, would you please proceed?

10 MS. MATHEWS: Yes. Thank you very much.  
11 My name is Mary Mathews. I am a director on the  
12 board of the League of Women Voters of Lake  
13 County, and I'd like to thank both Chair Aquino  
14 and the subcommittee of the Lake and McHenry  
15 Counties committee for hosting this event.

16 The League of Women Voters of  
17 Lake County is a nonpartisan, nonprofit  
18 political organization which encourages informed  
19 and active participation in government, works to  
20 increase understanding of major public policy  
21 issues and influences public policy through  
22 education and advocacy.

23 Throughout the county the League  
24 of Women Voters attracts members. It acts on

1 behalf of all residents of economically,  
2 racially, culturally and politically diverse  
3 Lake County. The League of Women Voters of Lake  
4 County has been involved with redistricting  
5 reform for decades and advocates for a  
6 transparent and independent process.

7           The League supports what has been  
8 referred to as fair maps, the districts that are  
9 compact and contiguous with practically equal  
10 populations. Additionally, a remapping process  
11 must recognize communities of interest and  
12 enable representation of minority populations.  
13 A number of Lake County districts do not appear  
14 to meet all the criteria.

15           The League proposes -- opposes  
16 partisan and racial gerrymandering. To avoid  
17 such manipulation and to better serve the  
18 public, the League believes an independent  
19 commission would provide more transparency and  
20 encourage meaningful community input.

21           Additionally, the League supports  
22 Senate Bill 2554, legislation introduced by one  
23 of our elected officials, Senator Melinda Bush.  
24 Legislative initiatives should include 35 or

1 more public redistricting hearings throughout  
2 Illinois with ample notice and detailed  
3 information, a website both for map submissions  
4 from the public and for posting relevant records  
5 from the general assembly's work on the remap, a  
6 public hearing after the introduction of a final  
7 map that will allow for adjustments to be made  
8 before the Illinois General Assembly or a backup  
9 commission votes and written evidence that the  
10 final proposed map meets the Federal Voting  
11 Rights Act and Illinois Voting Rights Act's  
12 standards, ensures effective representation of  
13 racial and linguistic minorities and provides  
14 for preservation and protection of community  
15 stakeholders.

16                               The League of Women Voters of  
17 Lake County believes the remapping process  
18 requires reforms leading to competitive  
19 elections. Residents would be empowered to  
20 elect legislators to represent the interest of  
21 the people and community and could be held  
22 accountable.

23                               Thank you for considering my  
24 comments.

1 CHAIR MORRISON: Thank you, Ms. Mathews.

2 Do we have any discussion or  
3 comments from members?

4 Before we move to our next  
5 witness, I'd like to let everyone know that we  
6 have received additional written testimony from  
7 CHANGE Illinois, and that will be also added to  
8 the permanent record today.

9 Our next witness is Celeste  
10 Flores with Mano a Mano Family Resource Center.

11 MS. FLORES: Celeste -- Celeste Flores.  
12 Can you hear me?

13 CHAIR MORRISON: Yes.

14 MS. FLORES: Celeste Flores,  
15 C-E-L-E-S-T-E, F-L-O-R-E-S. I just want to  
16 thank everyone for this opportunity. I know  
17 y'all have been working a lot, and it sounds  
18 like these hearings have been very interesting.  
19 Maybe I'll tune in. Probably won't, though,  
20 because of work, but I am digressing.

21 I am the director of community  
22 building with Mano a Mano Family Resource  
23 Center. Our mission is to empower immigrant  
24 families to becoming full participants in their

1 community. Our vision is to integrate  
2 communities where everyone has access to  
3 opportunities and pathways to success.

4                   Mano a Mano has been in existence  
5 for over 20 years surveying Lake and McHenry  
6 Counties. Our main office is located around  
7 Lake Park, its satellite office in North  
8 Chicago, and pre-pandemic we had community sites  
9 in Wauconda, Mundelein and Highland Park. As I  
10 stated earlier, our mission is to empower our  
11 immigrant communities, and without a doubt, the  
12 redistricting in our communities will have a  
13 long-standing effect if it's done in a  
14 transparent and equitable way.

15                   As an organization that is on the  
16 ground and sees everyday needs for our community  
17 members, it's extremely important for Illinois  
18 legislators to properly educate the public on  
19 the redistricting process. I have seen  
20 newsletters come out with information, and I  
21 really appreciate that. I have seen the  
22 website, and I did -- I do recognize that some  
23 of it is available in Spanish, but I think a lot  
24 more can be done, and I will go into more

1 details on that. And I recognize that y'all are  
2 hosting more of these virtual public hearings in  
3 person than are required, but I think more is  
4 needed.

5                   You know, I think this body  
6 really needs to hold themselves to true  
7 transparency, and I don't feel like there has  
8 been adequate time given for community members  
9 to have all the information they need to  
10 participate in this process. I understand there  
11 is several meetings that are scheduled. I know  
12 there's 11:00, a 3:00 and a 5:00, but those  
13 times are not conducive to working-class  
14 families, so I would challenge, you know, for  
15 y'all to be able to host some of these in the  
16 evening. I mean, I think to the opening  
17 remarks, specifically as Senator McConchie was  
18 talking about, you know, making this work for  
19 the community, well, you know, I wonder if y'all  
20 are willing to host some of these in the  
21 evening.

22                   I know there's other  
23 opportunities for the community members to  
24 engage through email, through the website, but

1 specifically, you know, I'm wondering about  
2 these public hearings, if it's -- if there  
3 really is an expectation to gather community  
4 input or if this is just a part of checking off  
5 a box in the process. So as y'all continue to  
6 think about scheduling the future meetings -- I  
7 know there's some that have not been  
8 scheduled -- I would really try to push for more  
9 time, like more notice. And I know that y'all  
10 are working with different deadlines, and it  
11 sounds like different people have different  
12 deadlines in mind, and I understand the nuances  
13 of that as well, but we want to do this in a way  
14 that is working for both the community and for  
15 the legislators.

16                   You know, y'all represent us, and  
17 we trust that y'all are doing your best work  
18 moving forward. So I think, you know, I want to  
19 know how is this body going to ensure that  
20 community members that are working from 9:00 to  
21 5:00 will have adequate time to review and  
22 provide feedback for the proposed maps before  
23 they're being voted on. It's equally important  
24 that all the map proposals should be included in

1 a compliance report that details how lawmakers  
2 have incorporated public feedback and adhere to  
3 the Federal Voting Rights Act and the Illinois  
4 Voting Rights Act.

5                   And I know a lot of this  
6 information has already been shared, but like I  
7 said, we work with community members, we work  
8 with working-class families, and they're getting  
9 inundated with so much information. Everyone  
10 right now is thinking about the vaccine, and I  
11 knew redistricting was coming. And this is my  
12 job, right, to know what's happening and to  
13 educate the community on it, but there's a lot  
14 that needs to be read, and I know y'all take  
15 your time to read everything. I know your staff  
16 takes their time to read everything, but  
17 sometimes the community needs a little more time  
18 to be able to get to the same level as y'all  
19 are.

20                   So I know the information is out  
21 there, but, you know, how can we actually break  
22 this down? How can we use social media? I know  
23 I've seen -- I received several newsletters from  
24 several senators that are here present, and I

1 have seen this information in your newsletter.  
2 I appreciate that, but how can we make this even  
3 more digestible? How can we work with  
4 nonprofits? How can we work with other  
5 stakeholders to get people to send those  
6 e-mails, right, with the public input? How can  
7 we make sure that they know they can review the  
8 proposed maps that y'all are going to be  
9 creating and provide that feedback?

10                   Community members, we are ready.  
11 We have answers to our problems. We are just  
12 waiting for people to listen to them and work  
13 with us to implement solutions. And I think,  
14 when we're looking at the redistricting, it's  
15 also really important to acknowledge  
16 accessibility in several languages. And all the  
17 information, right, for the public should be  
18 available and shared in several languages. Lake  
19 County and McHenry County have -- there's a lot  
20 of different communities, and English is not  
21 everyone's first language.

22                   I do recognize that there is a  
23 significant Spanish-speaking community, and I do  
24 appreciate the website. I don't think it goes

1 as far as it should, but it's definitely better  
2 than our ILGA website, which is very difficult  
3 to navigate and does not have anything, and it  
4 only has English, but even, you know, going  
5 through the process of getting ready to testify  
6 here today, right, like thinking through how can  
7 we work with nonprofits and how can we work with  
8 other stakeholders to make sure that people  
9 where English is not their first language have  
10 an opportunity to engage in this process.

11           And at Mano a Mano, our main  
12 focus is with the immigrant community, but I  
13 would be remiss if I did not bring up the  
14 growing population that we have seen as well of  
15 our Asian brothers and sisters and all the  
16 different languages that it encompasses as well.  
17 And I think, when we're looking at this, it's  
18 just so important to be engaging people where  
19 the first language is not English because they  
20 will be also affected by this.

21           Now, oftentimes, you know, I have  
22 seen communities of color being left behind with  
23 outdated processes that don't work for them, and  
24 I think this is a perfect opportunity to empower

1 our communities by having a transparent and  
2 equitable redistricting process. And I know  
3 that can be done, and I know there are  
4 deadlines, but I think we can be creative and  
5 work together to accomplish all of this within  
6 the deadlines that we have and not feel we have  
7 to be rushed, but knowing that we have a set  
8 time.

9                   So let's be creative and think  
10 through other ways to really get this  
11 information out to our community, so that, when  
12 we do see those maps, we know y'all took our  
13 input and were thinking about the smallest  
14 community populations we have to the biggest  
15 ones we have both in Lake County and McHenry  
16 County.

17                   So thank you so much for your  
18 time.

19                   CHAIR MORRISON: Well, first, thank you  
20 very much for your testimony, and you're  
21 providing exactly the kind of information and  
22 feedback I know that we're looking for. So if  
23 you have -- let's begin with the concept of  
24 different languages. If you have some ideas

1 that you could share with us now on better ways  
2 to do this, please share that now, or you know,  
3 if you would like to take some time and actually  
4 put it on paper or on your screen and send it to  
5 us, I mean, that would be incredibly helpful.

6 We are still in the beginning  
7 stages of this process, so -- but thank you for  
8 being an ambassador to the immigrant community  
9 and by participating today and by being  
10 informed, as you obviously are, to be able to go  
11 back into your community and share this  
12 information with -- you know, this is a website.  
13 These are some options that we have. So I would  
14 just -- I want to thank you for being, you know,  
15 being engaged at this point.

16 I think Senator Bush would like  
17 to make a point.

18 SENATOR BUSH: Hi, Celeste. I thank you  
19 so much for being here today. I know your  
20 organization is one that I reached out to and  
21 asked you to be here, so I'm really happy that  
22 you're here, but I don't know that everyone  
23 that's listening knows who you are, what Mano a  
24 Mano is and where you live.

1                   So -- you know, so we know a  
2 little bit more about you -- I know the answer  
3 to that, but I don't know that everyone does  
4 that's listening, so if you would provide that,  
5 I would deeply appreciate it.

6                   MS. FLORES: Yeah, of course.

7                   And Chair Morrison, I can  
8 definitely follow up with some information, I  
9 think, but, yeah, the website, I think there's  
10 several ways where we can make it accessible to  
11 several languages. I know Google Translate is  
12 not always the most-- not always the best  
13 translation, but it seems to be what we have at  
14 the moment, but I think there's other ways as  
15 well, even having an additional website, right.

16                   And, Senator Bush, yeah, thank  
17 you so much for informing us about this. And  
18 for those that don't know, so I am -- I was born  
19 and raised in Lake County. This is home, so it  
20 will always be home, you know, family. I'm  
21 first generation -- I'm a child of immigrant  
22 parents. I'm a first generation student. I  
23 left to do my undergrad, and I came back in 2014  
24 and got involved with the community.

1 I'm a person of faith, and that's  
2 what drove me to doing this kind of social  
3 justice work, and my background is actually in  
4 organizing the community around environmental  
5 justice. I'm pretty new to the immigration  
6 space professionally. That's just how it  
7 started this year, but, you know, as I said, I'm  
8 a child of immigrant parents. I grew up in a  
9 mixed-status family household. And, you know,  
10 this is what drives me, empowering the community  
11 and educating them.

12 I think the community -- once  
13 people -- I think once someone is educated, you  
14 can't take that away from them. You can try to  
15 belittle them or tell them that they don't have  
16 the appropriate knowledge, but when someone is  
17 educated, I think that they can make decisions  
18 on their own and really use their voice.

19 I believe that there's people  
20 power and money power, and I think that all the  
21 senators here know that, and, you know, feel  
22 that tension, but I'm someone that truly  
23 believes in advocating and educating and really  
24 committed to self-transformation work. And I am

1 super excited to be able to continue to now  
2 professionally organize within the immigrant  
3 community and really get them to be a part of  
4 this process because, even though some of the  
5 community members may not be able to vote, they  
6 are still being represented. They still have  
7 rights, and they should be able to be a part of  
8 this process.

9 We have seen the Lake County  
10 community Latino population increase  
11 significantly, but like I said, it's also been  
12 increased for other minorities. So I think it's  
13 very important to keep those communities in mind  
14 and to know that we're not all fighting to have  
15 one whole pie, but that there's multiple pies  
16 available, and you know, that's some of the work  
17 that I do and some of my background in what I've  
18 done.

19 CHAIR MORRISON: Any other questions?

20 Senator McConchie.

21 SENATOR McCONCHIE: Thank you.

22 Thank you, Ms. Flores. It's a  
23 pleasure to be able to meet you, at least  
24 virtually here. I appreciate the work and so

1 forth that you do.

2                   My question -- I was on the  
3 census commission, and we oversaw the  
4 distribution of over \$30 million in state  
5 resources to help count hard-to-count  
6 communities. Do you know or to what degree can  
7 you tell us about your organization's  
8 participation in that?

9                   MS. FLORES: Yeah. Mano a Mano was a part  
10 of that. It is before my time officially, but I  
11 do know that we have a whole program that's  
12 called Democracy in Action, and part of that was  
13 the census work. And we have what we call  
14 census ambassadors, so we worked with young  
15 adults and the community members where we  
16 empowered them to be that voice, and voz  
17 (phonetic), I would say in Spanish, to be that  
18 voice to go into the community and really  
19 encourage community members to fill out the  
20 census.

21                   And there was a lot of education  
22 that needs to be done specifically because for  
23 some time period there was a question if  
24 immigration status was going to be asked, and

1 how it would definitely deter community members  
2 from filling it out. That was not on the  
3 official census at the end, and there was a lot  
4 of education that Mano a Mano staff had to do  
5 around that and our volunteers.

6                   So I don't know the exact number,  
7 but I want to say we probably had at least a  
8 dozen people in the field contacting them, using  
9 their personal social media as well to make sure  
10 that those hard-to-count communities in Lake  
11 County and McHenry County were accounted for.

12                SENATOR McCONCHIE: And do you feel that  
13 you were successful in that effort?

14                MS. FLORES: So it was before my time, so  
15 I can definitely get back to you on our numbers,  
16 but from the work that I have seen from my  
17 colleagues thus far, I would say yes.

18                SENATOR McCONCHIE: One of the things that  
19 has been brought up as potentially a concern is  
20 that there's been talk that the legislature may  
21 draw a map not using actual census data, but  
22 using the American Community Survey data, which  
23 as I mentioned in my opening statement is a  
24 survey -- a very small survey or sampling, if

1 you will, a snapshot of the broader population.

2                   One of the concerns that I have  
3 about the potential use of ACS data is that it  
4 actually does include an immigration question  
5 upon that where the actual census as you  
6 mentioned does not. Have you -- do you have any  
7 thoughts in regards to that, and if not now,  
8 maybe you could get back to us if you wish to  
9 later?

10           MS. FLORES: Yeah, I can get back. I'm  
11 not as familiar with the process that I know  
12 that -- the acronym -- with what y'all are using  
13 or looking at. It did catch my eye. I haven't  
14 had time to read it fully myself.

15           SENATOR McCONCHIE: Okay. Thank you very  
16 much. Thank you, Madam Chair.

17           SENATOR BUSH: Actually, Celeste, I want  
18 to point out that there has been no  
19 determination about what data is being used.  
20 The commission is looking at a variety of  
21 different options, but I was hoping you could  
22 get a little bit more at, Celeste, so the  
23 communities that Mano a Mano represents, where  
24 are they? Maybe you could describe those

1 communities a bit.

2                   You know, I realize that, you  
3 know, we've become a very, very diverse county,  
4 but we still have -- there are communities that  
5 are -- that really -- that Mano a Mano does some  
6 amazing work in, and I would like, if you would,  
7 just kind of describe where they are, and  
8 describe those communities for us a bit and why  
9 redistricting is really important for them.

10               MS. FLORES: Yeah. So like I said, our  
11 main office is located in Round Lake Park, and  
12 this is a working-class community. It has  
13 definitely seen an increase in the Latino  
14 community, but, you know, low income, working  
15 class. And I think Lake County is very diverse  
16 when it comes to race, to language, to culture,  
17 but I think -- but also income. And I think we  
18 have some of the most wealthy, affluent  
19 communities and some of the poorest.

20                   I know that when I -- I grew up  
21 with free lunch, right, so I think that was in  
22 Park City. So I think our communities are very  
23 diverse, and Mano a Mano, our biggest imprint or  
24 footprint has been the Round Lake Park, but we

1 have -- like I said, before the pandemic, we had  
2 community sites in Wauconda and Mundelein and  
3 Highland Park.

4                   And our focus is with the  
5 immigrant community which happens in Lake County  
6 to be predominantly from Latin America -- Latin  
7 American countries, but that's not the case in  
8 the whole state, I know. And you know, I think,  
9 for us, we have --- most of our needs are in  
10 community members that speak Spanish. That is  
11 most of our population, and one of the main  
12 reasons for moving -- opening a satellite office  
13 in North Chicago is because we've seen the  
14 increase in the Latino community.

15                   I don't know the numbers off the  
16 top of my head. I'm not a brilliant numbers  
17 person. I'm more of a storyteller, but we saw  
18 those numbers, we saw those trends increasing in  
19 North Chicago, and we wanted to make sure that  
20 that community had access to the resources that  
21 Mano a Mano provides.

22                   We have many programs and many  
23 workshops, anything from GED to ESL to  
24 kindergarten prep, and I can go on with the many

1 things, but our main focus is with the immigrant  
2 community that in Lake County happens to be  
3 Latino. It's mostly Spanish speaking, working-  
4 class communities, community members that are  
5 working more than one job, you know, community  
6 members that are low income, you know. I know  
7 in Waukegan the whole school district, right,  
8 has free lunch, so there has to be some kind of  
9 threshold and number for those stuff, so those  
10 are some of the communities that Mano a Mano is  
11 in.

12 SENATOR BUSH: Thanks. I appreciate that  
13 very much.

14 CHAIR MORRISON: Could I ask a follow-up  
15 question? And so, as we're talking about  
16 communities of interest, Ms. Flores, can you  
17 help us sort of -- you've described, I think, in  
18 some -- you know, in some detail some of the  
19 communities, but what makes that a community?

20 Is it the language that is  
21 shared? Is it a cultural bond? Can you kind of  
22 talk about what makes a community of interest in  
23 your mind?

24 MS. FLORES: Yeah. That's one of the

1 tasks y'all have, defining community, and I  
2 think community can be defined in a lot of  
3 different ways. I think definitely just shared  
4 experience. For me, I think neighbors talking  
5 to one another. I mean, everyone says it takes  
6 a village, right, to grow a child, to raise a  
7 child, and I think that's true. It's about  
8 being able to communicate.

9                   Obviously, we see communities  
10 that are segregated. Most of my family lives in  
11 Waukegan, and there was a very big difference  
12 from what the community looked like where there  
13 was a lot of Latinos and African-Americans, and  
14 there's still parts of Waukegan where I don't  
15 feel comfortable going or walking or being in a  
16 car just because of houses and people that don't  
17 look like me.

18                   So I think there's a lot of  
19 different ways that community can be defined. I  
20 don't think it has to be particularly just based  
21 on race or language. I think people like to be  
22 around people that they're comfortable with, and  
23 sometimes it helps to see a familiar face, but I  
24 think, once you have a conversation and are able

1 to make someone your friend, you realize you  
2 have a lot more in common than you otherwise  
3 would have assumed.

4           So I think we also have a lot of  
5 communities in Lake County where it's very  
6 multicultural, where there's different races,  
7 where different languages are spoken, and it's  
8 something that's also beautiful. And those are  
9 communities, right, and I think they're defined  
10 more by shared experiences as well. So I do not  
11 envy the task of having to define community as  
12 you continue doing this work.

13           CHAIR MORRISON: I'd also like to  
14 recognize the work that you and other  
15 organizations have done to reach out to the  
16 immigrant community, to encourage them to  
17 participate in the census. You understand the  
18 importance of that, but it should not have been  
19 so difficult.

20           Unfortunately, the census was to  
21 be done, but the Trump administration did a lot  
22 to discourage immigrants from wanting to  
23 participate, so I am grateful for the work that  
24 you have done and your organization, and we've

1 seen this throughout the county and actually  
2 across the state.

3 Are there other questions for  
4 this witness? Other comments?

5 Senator Wilcox, I can't see you,  
6 but if you speak up, I'll recognize you. I  
7 guess not.

8 SENATOR WILCOX: I'll raise my hand.  
9 You'll see the hand go up if I've got a  
10 question. Thanks.

11 CHAIR MORRISON: Okay. Thanks, Senator.

12 Thank you, Ms. Flores, for your  
13 testimony. We really appreciate it.

14 Our next witnesses -- or, it's a  
15 group of representatives from the Illinois  
16 Muslim Civic Coalition, Dilara Sayeed, Hamas  
17 Ibrahim and Reema Syeda Kamran. And I apologize  
18 if I misspoke any of your names. I understand  
19 testimony will start with Dilara who will then  
20 recognize the other witnesses, so please begin.  
21 Thanks for being with us.

22 MS. HABBAL: I apologize. Dilara couldn't  
23 make it, but I'm going to fill in for her if  
24 that's okay.

1 CHAIR MORRISON: Would you introduce  
2 yourself?

3 MS. HABBAL: Yes. My name is Deena  
4 Habbal, so D-E-E-N-A. Last name is H-A-B-B-A-L.  
5 And I'm here with the Illinois Muslim Civic  
6 Coalition, and if it's okay, can I share my  
7 screen?

8 CHAIR MORRISON: Please.

9 MS. HABBAL: Okay. We are a coalition of  
10 over 150 partners and allies of all races,  
11 ethnicities, classes and backgrounds. Our focus  
12 is ensuring policies made for us are made with  
13 us, and we believe redistricting is one critical  
14 piece of this. Now, we don't believe any -- no  
15 one data represents our minority communities  
16 accurately, but we recommend that legislators  
17 make sure census data plus community  
18 organizations' input and other data, such as  
19 ACS, is all used in the redistricting process.  
20 We would like the process to be transparent,  
21 inclusive and clear.

22 In Illinois, we have communities  
23 that did not exist in 2010, others that were  
24 never vocal about their needs and others that

1 have grown in the past 10 years. The American  
2 Muslim story is diverse. We are one of the most  
3 diverse faith groups. Though we are not a  
4 religious organization, we want to highlight  
5 that race, class and faith all connect, and when  
6 redistricting, we ask that these are critical  
7 aspects of the community to consider.

8           Those who identify as Muslim also  
9 identify as African-American at almost 30  
10 percent, Asian at almost 25 percent, white,  
11 Arab, Latino, African immigrant. And this is a  
12 story many of us do not know because they're  
13 often invisible communities. Myself, I'm -- in  
14 my family and my husband's family together, we  
15 are Arab, we are white, Irish, Cherokee, Arab,  
16 and when I say "Arab," we are Syrian and  
17 Jordanian, so you can see the diversity in just  
18 two families.

19           Illinois is one of the most  
20 diverse states in the U.S. It ranks in the top  
21 25 percent in racial diversity and in the top 10  
22 percent in religious diversity. Illinois has  
23 some of the largest numbers of Polish, Irish,  
24 African immigrants, Latino, Catholic, Hindu

1 residents in the nation, and I got to see this  
2 firsthand as I was a community organizer with my  
3 husband working on the census and getting  
4 minority communities to fill it out.

5 I even got my dad to fill out the  
6 census, which he's been here since college, and  
7 has never filled out the census and said  
8 something about some conspiracy theories -- I  
9 don't know -- the FBI -- I don't know. And my  
10 husband and I also filled out the census for the  
11 first time as a family.

12 Illinois has the largest per  
13 capita American Muslim population in America.  
14 The residents live, work, play, pray, serve and  
15 serve our cities and our counties. They work  
16 for a better Illinois, but we have zero  
17 representation in Illinois, and we believe  
18 representation matters. Elected officials  
19 should understand their constituents and should  
20 look like them.

21 We will provide maps of diverse  
22 Muslim communities across the state by April  
23 30th, and I have three asks: Do not push our  
24 responsibility back to 2030 to ensure



1 director for UMMA, which is the Urban Muslim  
2 Minority Alliance. We basically have four  
3 programs at UMMA. We have -- We're a text  
4 center. We have two computers labs where we  
5 teach GED and other classes as well.

6 We also have a workforce  
7 development program where we help people to find  
8 jobs and get ready for jobs. And we have a food  
9 pantry that has exploded in the last year where  
10 we give away probably about 200 bags of food  
11 either through people coming to pick them up, or  
12 we drop them off at their homes. And then we  
13 have a brand new program which is affordable  
14 housing where we purchase homes, rehab them and  
15 rent them out to low income individuals -- low  
16 income families.

17 So our focus is to help families  
18 of -- in the downtown area or anyone who is able  
19 to get to UMMA to live a better quality of life  
20 and to gain some sense of self-sufficiency  
21 through education and housing.

22 And just to reiterate what Deena  
23 shared, we do feel -- because most of the people  
24 who come into UMMA represent the downtown

1 Waukegan area, which is mostly Hispanic and  
2 black -- we don't collect any data on religious  
3 preferences, so we don't know what their  
4 religion is, but we do know that it's important  
5 that our representatives that we vote for and  
6 who are elected, that they represent our  
7 community.

8 Thank you.

9 SENATOR BUSH: Madam Chair, can I ask a  
10 question?

11 CHAIR MORRISON: Please do, Senator.

12 SENATOR BUSH: Thank you so much.

13 Deena, when I was listening to  
14 your testimony, you know, I heard you say that  
15 most Arabs identify as white when we're asking  
16 those questions for census data, so can you  
17 maybe help us understand how we can better  
18 identify your community of interest?

19 MS. HABBAL: Yeah. So currently we are  
20 considered white on the census, but as a  
21 community, we believe that we should be called  
22 MENA, so Middle Eastern, North African, because  
23 although we are, you know, considered white, we  
24 don't get the perks of all white communities.

1                   So like this summer, when I would  
2 go into the Syrian refugee communities, they're  
3 definitely not getting the same perks as, let's  
4 say, someone like in Naperville or, you know.  
5 So we believe that, to represent us correctly,  
6 we need to have our own category, just like  
7 Hispanic and Latino and stuff.

8                   And like, I personally look  
9 white, but then my father who has an accent and  
10 doesn't look white doesn't get the same perks as  
11 I do, so that's kind of our thought process  
12 behind that.

13                  SENATOR BUSH: So I guess -- I understand  
14 that, and that's wonderful for us to hear. I'm  
15 wondering, though, for our purposes -- sorry.  
16 I'm hearing myself. I hope it's not horrible.

17                         For our purposes, just, if there  
18 are ways -- and maybe you can submit this  
19 later -- any thoughts you have as to how we can  
20 help to identify those areas, those communities  
21 as we are looking at, you know, the process of  
22 remapping.

23                  MS. HABBAL: So currently our organization  
24 is teaming up with other organizations and

1 community leaders, and we're creating maps that  
2 we are going to submit on April 30th. So that  
3 will show you where the Arab communities are  
4 clustered and just where the high population is  
5 so you have a better idea.

6 SENATOR BUSH: Great. That's really  
7 helpful. Thank you.

8 CHAIR MORRISON: Other questions? Anyone  
9 else have another question for this -- for the  
10 coalition?

11 All right. Well, thank you both  
12 so much for your testimony this afternoon. We  
13 appreciate that, and we look forward to seeing  
14 those maps at the end of the month. Thanks.

15 MS. HABBAL: Thank you.

16 CHAIR MORRISON: Our next witness will  
17 be -- and please forgive me for mispronouncing  
18 your name in advance -- Griselda Vega Samuel. I  
19 hope that was reasonably close.

20 Are you -- are you on? Can you  
21 hear me okay.

22 MS. SAMUEL: I think that was me. I'm  
23 with the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund.

24 CHAIR MORRISON: Yes. I'm so sorry. I'm

1 so sorry.

2 MS. SAMUEL: It's okay.

3 CHAIR MORRISON: Thank you. Would you  
4 identify yourself properly and tell us the  
5 organization you're with? Thanks.

6 MS. SAMUEL: Sure. Of course. Well,  
7 thank you and good afternoon, Madam Chair and  
8 members of the committee. My name is Griselda  
9 Vega Samuel, and it's Griselda, G-R-I-S-E-L-D-A,  
10 Vega Samuel, V, as in Victor, E-G-A, Samuel,  
11 S-A-M-U-E-L. And I'm the Midwest regional  
12 counsel for the Mexican American Legal Defense  
13 and Educational Fund also known as MALDEF.

14 MALDEF is a national civil rights  
15 law firm that works to protect the rights of  
16 Latinos throughout community education, advocacy  
17 and litigation. Our organization has been  
18 involved in the Illinois redistricting since the  
19 1980s. We've partnered with stakeholders  
20 representing diverse communities. We've  
21 developed model maps, and we've monitored the  
22 state's compliance with minority voting rights.

23 We would like to recognize the  
24 hard work and dedication of all the

1 organizations, elected officials and community  
2 leaders who completed an historic get out the  
3 count campaign for the 2020 census in Lake  
4 County. We also thank every resident who has  
5 responded to this census.

6 We have testified at several  
7 hearings of this committee and the House  
8 Redistricting Committee on the importance of  
9 creating districts that provide Latino community  
10 members with a fair opportunity to elect  
11 candidates of their choice as required by the  
12 Federal Voting Rights Act.

13 The Federal Voting Rights Act  
14 requires states to draw majority-minority  
15 districts that provide specified racial minority  
16 community groups with the opportunity to elect  
17 candidates of their choice. The best way to  
18 accomplish this is by creating districts with  
19 Latino majority voting age population.

20 We expect that the 2020 census  
21 will show that the Latino population in Lake  
22 County, particularly in Waukegan, has grown over  
23 the last 10 years. We urge the committee to  
24 consider whether a Latino majority house

1 district can be drawn in that area to be the  
2 second Latino majority house district outside of  
3 Cook County following the existing Latino  
4 minority district in Aurora.

5           The Illinois Voting Rights Act of  
6 2011 has been broadly discussed in past  
7 hearings, but we wish to raise questions about  
8 the implementation of that law. The Illinois  
9 Voting Rights Act of 2011 was passed during the  
10 last redistricting cycle, and it is different  
11 from the Federal Voting Rights Act. The federal  
12 law has comprehensive requirements and has a  
13 detailed compliance process developed by decades  
14 of litigation.

15           When a minority group is not  
16 large enough to comprise a majority-minority  
17 district, then the Illinois Voting Rights Act of  
18 2011 requires the state to draw a district that  
19 provides the minority group the opportunity to  
20 elect candidates of choice together with other  
21 groups.

22           We applaud that the state is  
23 guided by these goals, but the law itself does  
24 not contain meaningful standards for analyzing

1 compliance. In order to understand the  
2 legislative intent behind proposed maps, we urge  
3 the committee to include a compliance report  
4 with all map proposals that details how the maps  
5 adhere to the Federal Voting Rights Act and the  
6 Illinois Voting Rights Act.

7 To conclude, we offer the  
8 following recommendations: The final map must  
9 account for voting age populations, that the  
10 committee consider whether a Latino majority  
11 house district can be drawn in the Waukegan area  
12 and that the committee publish a compliance  
13 report with all map proposals that detail how  
14 the maps will comply with the Federal Voting  
15 Rights Act and the Illinois Voting Rights Act.

16 I thank you for your time -- oh,  
17 I'm sorry. One more. That the committee  
18 provide at least two weeks between releasing a  
19 plan and holding a hearing to consider the plan,  
20 and this is particularly important for us  
21 because, as my colleague, Celeste Flores,  
22 mentioned, we really want the community to be  
23 able to provide their voice and give comment on  
24 how these maps will affect their community. So

1 providing and allowing for sufficient public  
2 comment is really critical to this process.

3 I thank you for the opportunity  
4 to allow me to testify, and I look forward to  
5 any questions.

6 CHAIR MORRISON: Thank you for your  
7 testimony this afternoon. Are there questions  
8 from any of the members this afternoon?

9 No, I guess not, but thank you.  
10 Thank you for being very succinct and for  
11 providing your testimony to us today.

12 Our next witness is Marko Sukovic  
13 who is representing himself.

14 MR. SUKOVIC: Okay. Thank you so much.  
15 Well, good afternoon. Thank you, guys, for  
16 allowing me the chance to testify.

17 My name is Marko Sukovic. I'm 26  
18 years old. I live in Lincolnshire. I graduated  
19 from Stevenson High School, and that's where I  
20 learned that civics is a lifestyle, so I  
21 appreciate the opportunity to continue to be a  
22 part of this process.

23 I also graduated from the  
24 University of Illinois and studied political

1 science. In that time, it was kind of one of  
2 the cues that you pick up on is that partisan  
3 gerrymandering undermines the faith and  
4 confidence that voters have in our democratic  
5 institutions.

6                   It should come as no surprise  
7 then when asked Illinoisans overwhelming favor  
8 the independent redistricting solution.  
9 Realizing this, Illinois legislators, especially  
10 those running in relatively competitive  
11 districts, have made public proclamations  
12 voicing their support for redistricting reform  
13 that puts an end to partisan gerrymandering and  
14 maps drawn with the sole purpose of protecting  
15 incumbents. At no point, however, have these  
16 legislators accomplished the goal of reforming  
17 this process. We cannot continue to confuse  
18 activity with achievement in Lake County. Let's  
19 do better.

20                   As a resident of Lake County, I'm  
21 sharing some learnings about the redistricting  
22 process currently underway in Illinois and how  
23 it will affect our representation here at home.  
24 First, some important context. The census

1 bureau's most accurate data is provided at the  
2 block level through the decennial census, and  
3 redistricting has historically followed the  
4 release of this information.

5           A fair map can only be drawn with  
6 this level of detail at hand. No other dataset  
7 can come close to preserving the public's trust  
8 and ensuring minority representation is  
9 protected. The ACS data that has been mentioned  
10 does not provide the same level of detail and  
11 only provides data at the group block level, a  
12 larger geographic area that is not able to  
13 capture block level changes that the census  
14 will.

15           To rely on this data alone would  
16 be to forego providing the level of specificity  
17 required to make the most informed decisions  
18 about the dynamics of our local communities. It  
19 would also be a decision to ignore the fact,  
20 something that Leader McConchie alluded to, that  
21 historic funding has been allocated and spent on  
22 ensuring a fair and accurate count through the  
23 Illinois census.

24           Protracted legal battles were

1 fought over ensuring the integrity of this data  
2 to supply the needed information for this very  
3 purpose. Beyond the substantive argument of  
4 whether or not Illinois will use the most  
5 accurate data available to redistrict  
6 congressional, state legislative and other  
7 boundaries, the process currently underway  
8 should itself be extremely discouraging for good  
9 government reformers.

10                   Public participation in the  
11 Senate hearings has been weak and sporadic.  
12 Excuse me. I've asked the Senate Redistricting  
13 Committee to provide a number for how many  
14 people have participated in their hearings thus  
15 far and for how many people have submitted their  
16 own maps through the committee's draw your own  
17 maps portal.

18                   The update I received from the  
19 Senate Redistricting Committee just yesterday  
20 revealed that only 46 people have submitted  
21 testimony, and zero have submitted their own  
22 maps using this portal. This means at this  
23 point in the process, halfway through the  
24 scheduled hearings, there are more state

1 senators than there are residents that have  
2 participated in the redistricting process.

3           The Senate's draw your own maps  
4 portal itself was delayed in its launch, and now  
5 that it is live, it is cumbersome to use and  
6 comes with no supporting documentation. A call  
7 into Citygate GIS, the vendor providing this  
8 tool, also went unanswered.

9           It is revealing that the house  
10 hearing schedule, which was produced weeks after  
11 the Senate schedule, and yet, its Lake County  
12 hearing was held just an hour before this one in  
13 a virtual format. The timing and sequencing of  
14 these hearings suggests that this process was  
15 designed not to maximize public participation  
16 and awareness, but to limit it. And again, we  
17 had some important municipal elections  
18 yesterday, and that might have gotten into some  
19 people's minds as well. We must do better.

20           The good news is there are  
21 alternatives. As described, there is a process  
22 that leads to the formation of an independent  
23 commission. The prospects of a 50 percent  
24 chance that either party could be given

1 exclusive control of redistricting through a  
2 ninth member is a reality akin to Mutually  
3 Assured Destruction or MAD that kept Cold War  
4 powers at bay and away from triggering the  
5 nuclear option.

6                   A legislative proposal, Senate  
7 Bill 1325, should also warrant the serious  
8 consideration of our state legislatures, and  
9 this language has garnered the past support of  
10 18 democratic members in the State Senate,  
11 including senators organizing this hearing.  
12 That proposal would also lead to the formation  
13 of an independent committee, but this proposal  
14 calls for 16 citizen commissioners appointed by  
15 the chief justice of the Illinois Supreme Court.  
16 The parties in affiliation of these  
17 commissioners would be equally weighted, and  
18 legislators and lobbyists would be barred from  
19 serving on the committee.

20                   Thank you for your consideration  
21 of my testimony, and I'm happy to make all of my  
22 sourcing available for the record upon request.  
23 Respectfully submitted April 7, 2021. Thank  
24 you.

1 CHAIR MORRISON: Any comments or questions  
2 from any of the members?

3 Senator Bush.

4 SENATOR BUSH: I just have one question  
5 because certainly I agree with you on fair maps.  
6 So do you support a national amendment? Do you  
7 support fair maps across the United States?  
8 Here are my concerns: And I just wanted to know  
9 how you would address this.

10 There are maps -- although I'm  
11 supportive, you know, legislation -- currently I  
12 have legislation that has not been bipartisan  
13 frankly that I've worked with with CHANGE  
14 Illinois to try and move this year.

15 So my question to you, though, is  
16 the legislation currently, if we do this state  
17 by state, what we're looking at is congressional  
18 and state maps. I really believe -- and I'd  
19 just like to hear your opinion -- why we're not  
20 doing this at a federal level, why we're not  
21 passing it across the country, perhaps, in the  
22 same way we tried to do the ERA with the  
23 constitutional amendment with a sign-on for  
24 that, and it should really be topped out. It

1 should be Congress. It should be State.

2 Frankly, our county elections,  
3 there's no fair map process there as you are  
4 speaking of and also in our aldermanic and, you  
5 know, city races. So I'd just really like to  
6 hear -- because you obviously have some pretty  
7 strong opinions on this, I would like to hear  
8 your thoughts on why we're not doing this  
9 nationally and how you feel about that.

10 MR. SUKOVIC: Well, Senator, are you  
11 alluding to H.R. 1 that is being proposed  
12 currently by Speaker Pelosi?

13 SENATOR BUSH: You're talking about the  
14 People -- yeah, I've read some about that, The  
15 People Act -- The People's Act, I believe it's  
16 called, that did get passed. I'm not asking  
17 about that specifically.

18 MR. SUKOVIC: Okay.

19 SENATOR BUSH: I mean, I know that is  
20 happening, that did pass out of the house and  
21 has a variety of things that are in there in  
22 addition to this. I just want to know  
23 specifically, since you are, you know, obviously  
24 someone who is a big supporter of fair maps, how

1 do you feel about it happening at a national  
2 level and why aren't we really working there?

3 MR. SUKOVIC: I think there's certainly an  
4 appetite for it, and I think that a proposal  
5 like that, it's for members of Congress to make  
6 the case and make a compelling case for it. I'm  
7 pretty -- fairly confident -- and obviously, you  
8 need to refer to the Constitution to see to what  
9 extent this redistricting does not underline any  
10 particular provisions. I'm not aware of one off  
11 the top of my head. I would be supportive of  
12 it, certainly.

13 I think here we're talk about the  
14 State of Illinois and our process, and one of  
15 our favorite sons, former President Barack  
16 Obama, I think, provides kind of a perspective  
17 that I think maybe we can lean on when we think  
18 about the decisions that we make with our  
19 current reality here in the State of Illinois.  
20 And I would just be mindful of that and just  
21 recognize that there is large public support for  
22 a solution that removes, I think, a lot of the  
23 partisan gesturing that's involved in this  
24 process.

1           SENATOR BUSH: Thanks for your thoughts on  
2 that.

3           CHAIR MORRISON: Senator McConchie.

4           SENATOR McCONCHIE: Thank you, Madam  
5 Chair. Thank you, Marko, for this.

6                         Earlier it was stated that -- you  
7 know, some concerns about the census you talked  
8 about, you know, waiting for the actual census,  
9 and there was discussion about suppression of  
10 the census. One of the things that I'll just  
11 mention is that Illinois did remarkably well in  
12 this census as far as our results. We had  
13 higher results than we did in 2010. We were  
14 number seven in the nation as far as response  
15 and actually number one of all the most populous  
16 states. So I think that our doing something  
17 that would actually rely upon the real census  
18 data is something that's important for us to do.

19                         And then, secondly, you know, I  
20 support fair maps wherever they are. In fact, I  
21 signed onto an amicus brief on behalf of  
22 Wisconsin Democrats who were fighting on behalf  
23 of the Supreme Court case that went up there to  
24 overturn the maps in Wisconsin that were

1 gerrymandered to benefit Republicans.

2                   And so, you know, this is why  
3 we've put forward Senate Bill 1325, which you've  
4 referenced, and this is why, you know, we think  
5 that this is a golden opportunity for us to  
6 really champion something that a majority of the  
7 legislature in both the house and the Senate  
8 have historically said that they support.

9                   Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

10                  CHAIR MORRISON: Any other questions from  
11 members?

12                   I guess I would just like to  
13 respond to a couple of the remarks that you  
14 made, one in being the ACS data. So while it is  
15 not -- may not be perfect, and we're not sure  
16 that the census data is -- the last time it was  
17 done and compared to the census, it was 1.1  
18 percent different. It is extraordinarily close  
19 and a very accurate tool. That's actually the  
20 tool we're using right now.

21                   Could I ask people who are not  
22 speaking to mute, please? It's really -- there.  
23 Thank you. Okay. The feedback is crazy.

24                   That is the tool we're using on

1 the portal to assist residents in trying to draw  
2 these initial maps. Both Senator Bush and  
3 myself separately and together have introduced  
4 and were chief sponsors of a constitutional  
5 amendment which you're referencing that has the  
6 same language as the current Senate bill that's  
7 being discussed, the difference being this was a  
8 constitutional amendment to change the  
9 Constitution.

10                   It's unfortunate. I worked hard  
11 to try to pass it. Senator Bush did. It didn't  
12 happen. That's correct, it did not get across  
13 the finish line. However, this is a false  
14 choice to say that passing the Senate bill will  
15 get us where we need to be. To change the  
16 Constitution -- and you studied political  
17 science at U of I. You know this. To change  
18 the Constitution, it takes more than just a  
19 bill, otherwise we could go to Springfield next  
20 week and say, we'd like to have the governor  
21 serve a six-year term instead of a four-year, or  
22 that fair map -- or, that fair tax thing that we  
23 talked about, yeah, we're just going to do that  
24 on our own volition.

1                   There's a reason the Constitution  
2 requires a constitutional amendment. This  
3 should be decided by the voters. They should  
4 have their voice expressed in a voting on the  
5 ballots for this kind of significant change.  
6 And this bill, again, I think is just a false  
7 choice.

8                   And are there any other comments  
9 or questions?

10                   Senator McConchie.

11                   SENATOR McCONCHIE: Thank you. Thank you,  
12 Senator Morrison.

13                   You know, one of things that I  
14 would just say in response, because I appreciate  
15 your engagement on this, our bill does not  
16 attempt to change the Constitution. It actually  
17 works within the constitutional structure that  
18 has been established.

19                   You know, one of the things that  
20 we know is that poll after poll has shown that  
21 75 percent plus of people want a system like  
22 this to be done. We know that -- given that  
23 overwhelming support, we also know that back in  
24 2015, when this was put to a referendum for

1 people to be able to sign signatures, over  
2 600,000 signatures were gathered in order to put  
3 it on the ballot in which we had a four-three  
4 decision by the State Supreme Court, tossing it  
5 out on a technicality. We know that  
6 overwhelming support both in polls as well as  
7 from their engagement there.

8                   And one of the things I would say  
9 is that, you know, I have made a commitment --  
10 I make a commitment publically here on the  
11 record -- that, if we were to pass Senate Bill  
12 1325 and it went into this particular -- you  
13 know, this section afterward of the bipartisan  
14 commission, that I would only appoint the  
15 members that I have power to appoint as the  
16 Senate Republican leader, I would only appoint  
17 people to that who would take the map that was  
18 provided by that independent commission. That  
19 would be the only map that they would vote to  
20 support.

21                   SENATOR WILCOX: If I could just --

22                   CHAIR MORRISON: Would you like to make  
23 additional comments?

24                   SENATOR WILCOX: Yeah.

1 CHAIR MORRISON: Senator Wilcox. Senator  
2 Wilcox.

3 SENATOR WILCOX: Yeah. Marko, you talked  
4 about the benefits and the extent that we went  
5 through to garner a top rating census response.  
6 I was wondering if you could talk through how  
7 you see transparency, public involvement and  
8 kind of that open forum occurring given the late  
9 data coming from the census and meeting the  
10 October requirement.

11 MR. SUKOVIC: Yeah. So I'll respond to  
12 that and just a follow-up as well. I think that  
13 this is the opportunity to pass some type of  
14 meaningful reform or to have some type of  
15 energy. Certainly, a lot of people that I'm  
16 engaging with and people in my age demographic  
17 and really any age demographic -- this is not  
18 limited to people that are 26 -- there is a very  
19 clear premium to be put on a fair process, a  
20 transparent process, one that is well-known, one  
21 that people can participate in with tools that  
22 have been vetted and tested and well-thought  
23 out, not kind of ready for prime time kind of  
24 things as maybe we've seen here.

1                   But, Senator Wilcox, I think  
2 that's a great point, and I think that it would  
3 be difficult to try to, on the merits, to say  
4 that this is the best process we could possibly  
5 have, the most transparent process we could  
6 possibly have if we're not using, again, this  
7 data that we've fought these protracted legal  
8 arguments over to preserve its integrity and  
9 that we recognize is the best data, so...

10           CHAIR MORRISON: Senator Bush.

11           SENATOR BUSH: Yes. Thank you very much.

12                   So I just want to point out,  
13 though, Senator McConchie, that nothing in  
14 Senator Barickman's bill requires the backup  
15 commission to wait for the work product of an  
16 independent council. Nothing in that bill does  
17 that. And the Constitution would prevail and  
18 supersede, so there's actually nothing in that  
19 bill that waits for an independent council.  
20 That's not correct. If you want to amend the  
21 bill, it would include that, but it doesn't  
22 today.

23                   Thank you.

24           CHAIR MORRISON: Sure. And after June

1 30th, this goes to a committee of eight  
2 politically charged, politically appointed and  
3 selected people, and when they can't come up  
4 with a resolution as we've seen in, I think,  
5 '81, '91 and 2001, it goes to a ninth person who  
6 is pulled out of a hat. That's not democracy.  
7 And you talk about doing better, that's not  
8 doing better, and there's no opportunity for  
9 public input in that arena either.

10 So I appreciate your testimony  
11 this afternoon. I'm glad you're participating  
12 with us. Do you have anything -- do you have a  
13 closing comment you would like to make?

14 MR. SUKOVIC: No. I think that's fine. I  
15 think now is the opportunity to pass those  
16 reforms. Thank you.

17 CHAIR MORRISON: Senator Bush.

18 SENATOR BUSH: Since, you know, I believe  
19 Senator McConchie made his comments for the  
20 record, I would like to know for the record if  
21 he would pick a name out of a hat for his  
22 appointee should we get there.

23 SENATOR McCONCHIE: I'm sorry. If I would  
24 pick a name out of a hat?

1           SENATOR BUSH: Yeah, for the people that  
2 you would appoint, would you pick those out of a  
3 hat, or would they be political picks?

4           SENATOR McCONCHIE: So as I indicated,  
5 my -- sorry. We're getting feedback. My  
6 commitment is to only appoint people to that who  
7 would embrace what the result is from the  
8 independent commission.

9           SENATOR BUSH: But you wouldn't have the  
10 independent commission's report then. Anyway,  
11 my question is -- so my question is just would  
12 you -- the people that you were selecting, would  
13 you -- well, would you pick them out of a hat,  
14 not that they totally -- would you pick them  
15 independently, or would they not be picked by  
16 yourself as a leader?

17           SENATOR McCONCHIE: Okay. Let me -- I'm  
18 not entirely sure I understand the question, so  
19 are we talking about the people who are on the  
20 independent commission?

21           SENATOR BUSH: Yes.

22           SENATOR McCONCHIE: Okay. So the bill  
23 states those are chosen by the Supreme Court.

24           SENATOR BUSH: Okay. So then --

1           SENATOR McCONCHIE: It's exactly the  
2 process that Senator Morrison introduced and  
3 that I signed on as a cosponsor and stood up in  
4 support of at a press conference at the Thompson  
5 Center two years ago.

6           SENATOR BUSH: No, I'm sorry. Your  
7 appointees after.

8           SENATOR McCONCHIE: I'm sorry. Say that  
9 again.

10          SENATOR BUSH: No, your appointees, your  
11 appointees under the Constitution.

12          SENATOR McCONCHIE: Um-hmm. So my  
13 appointees under the Constitution would be  
14 people who would commit to only adopting a map  
15 that the independent commission drew. If you're  
16 asking about the ninth member, I -- that is --  
17 those names are put in by the State Supreme  
18 Court.

19          SENATOR BUSH: Okay.

20          CHAIR MORRISON: On the recommendation or  
21 suggestion of the leader. Those aren't just  
22 pulled out of a phonebook.

23          SENATOR McCONCHIE: What I'm making a  
24 public statement to is that, if 1325 is adopted,

1 the only people that I would put forward as far  
2 as names are people whose wholesale public  
3 commitment is to embrace whatever map is drawn  
4 by the independent commission.

5 SENATOR BUSH: So again --

6 MR. SUKOVIC: I think we're picking up on  
7 some of the partisan rancor from our --

8 SENATOR BUSH: Well, I think we picked up  
9 on some of that a little earlier on when you  
10 identified --

11 MR. SUKOVIC: I think it would only be  
12 fair to ask that of the opposing counsel.

13 SENATOR BUSH: Okay. Thank you.

14 CHAIR MORRISON: We actually have another  
15 person who would like to provide testimony this  
16 afternoon, Michael Buehler, who is representing  
17 the McHenry County Board.

18 Michael, thank you for your  
19 patience. If you're still with us, would you  
20 introduce yourself and provide your testimony?

21 MR. BUEHLER: I'm still with you. Thank  
22 you so much, and good afternoon, Chair Morrison  
23 and members of the Senate Redistricting  
24 Committee.

1                   In the interest of brevity, I'd  
2 like to just touch on some points that haven't  
3 been talked about already. Currently, the  
4 county board chairmen are required by statute to  
5 present their reapportionment plans to the  
6 county boards for approval by the third  
7 Wednesday of May after the results of the  
8 decennial census are received. I think this is  
9 an important distinction, but we don't have a  
10 choice. We have to use decennial census data.

11                   Unless the census bureau delivers  
12 information prior to this, the county leaders  
13 will not be able to meet their statutory  
14 requirement to ensure equal representation among  
15 all of our districts, and clearly, the general  
16 assembly needs to either enact legislation to  
17 alter current statutory deadlines for approval  
18 of reapportionment maps to align with delivery  
19 of the U.S. Census data, or if in the absence of  
20 current data, that we be allowed to use 2000  
21 census -- 2010 census results.

22                   Another major problem with the  
23 delay in decennial data is that it makes it  
24 nearly impossible for potential candidates who

1 wish to be on the ballot for 2022 primary  
2 elections to know which district they would need  
3 to file in. Currently, candidates can begin  
4 circulating petitions to be placed on the ballot  
5 in mid-September, which is before the data will  
6 even be available for reapportionment.

7                   So I would encourage the  
8 committee to consider whether or not we can move  
9 forward with the March 22 primary election based  
10 on the absence of the census data, and I would  
11 respectfully request consideration to allow for  
12 independent maps versus fair maps. This would  
13 facilitate the desire of many to take the  
14 politics out of creating the new maps by  
15 removing those from the process who would have a  
16 vested interest in the outcome of the  
17 reapportionment.

18                   In addition, McHenry County, some  
19 of our municipalities have multiple senators,  
20 representatives and congressmen all within the  
21 same community or municipality, and I feel this  
22 creates confusion on the part of the voter and  
23 does not support continuity within the  
24 community. Boundaries of districts should have

1 clear and transparent delineation to avoid these  
2 types of situations.

3                   And finally, I believe that the  
4 independent creation of more accurate and  
5 transparent maps would allow for a more  
6 equitable process, which in turn would lead to  
7 better representation for all constituents in  
8 McHenry County and most likely across the state.

9                   So I appreciate the Senate is  
10 having a dialogue on this issue and would  
11 encourage all parties to work together to  
12 develop a realistic, sensible timeline for the  
13 reapportionment for all districts in the 2022  
14 election timelines.

15                   And I thank you for your  
16 consideration.

17                   CHAIR MORRISON: Senator.

18                   SENATOR BUSH: Yeah, I do have a question.  
19 It's something that came up of this being an  
20 issue that should be handled maybe nationally.

21                   I would like to know what you're  
22 doing at your county board. Are you drawing  
23 county board maps using an independent  
24 commission, or what -- how are you handling that

1 process in McHenry?

2 MR. BUEHLER: In McHenry, currently, we  
3 have several board members that are looking at  
4 the redistricting, and the only thing we really  
5 have to go on is 2010 census data in addition to  
6 our zoning department where we know where  
7 certain subdivisions have been put in since  
8 2010, so we know there will be increases in  
9 population there.

10 SENATOR BUSH: So you are using your board  
11 members, however. You're not using an  
12 independent commission to draw your county maps;  
13 is that correct?

14 MR. BUEHLER: Correct. And those maps  
15 will be presented through committee to myself so  
16 I can make an informed decision on how I will  
17 submit or what maps I will submit to the county  
18 board for approval.

19 SENATOR BUSH: Okay. So just to clarify,  
20 your county board is drawing your county map.  
21 So I just wanted to make sure to clarify that as  
22 we're talking about all the different maps that  
23 are not just at stake in the Congress level.  
24 Again, aldermen, alderwomen and our county maps

1 are drawn by their boards.

2 Thank you. Just wanted to  
3 clarify.

4 MR. BUEHLER: Thank you. And I think it's  
5 an important distinction that the statute does  
6 require that the counties in particular use the  
7 most current decennial census data, and in the  
8 absence of that, it really puts us in an awkward  
9 position.

10 SENATOR BUSH: Thank you. Thanks very  
11 much. And thanks very much, Senator Morrison,  
12 Chairwoman.

13 CHAIR MORRISON: Mr. Buehler, do you have  
14 a backup process in McHenry County if your board  
15 fails to draw its district maps by July 1st?

16 What's your backup plan?

17 MR. BUEHLER: Well, if it's not approved  
18 by the board, should I submit this to the board  
19 and it's not approved, I believe it goes to a  
20 commission comprised of the county clerk.

21 CHAIR MORRISON: Is that something that's  
22 in statute now?

23 MR. BUEHLER: I believe so, in my  
24 conversations with the clerk, yes.

1 CHAIR MORRISON: And you would be -- if  
2 you're using the 2010 census information and  
3 then you are -- you said you're aware of  
4 subdivisions that have been added in the last 10  
5 years, so there doesn't sound like there is a  
6 real lot of attention to what we have been  
7 trying to do, which is a community of interest.  
8 It's just people, right? It's just people?

9 MR. BUEHLER: Well, yes and no. I mean,  
10 we know where community of interests are, where  
11 the larger or more dense population of those  
12 communities are within the county, so we do try  
13 to take that into account.

14 CHAIR MORRISON: Senator Wilcox, you have  
15 your hand up.

16 SENATOR WILCOX: Thank you, Madam Chair.

17 I thought what I heard in your  
18 request that, while the state and congressional  
19 maps are dictated by Constitution, county maps  
20 are dictated by legislative statute. And were  
21 you asking for some type of legislature action  
22 to allow counties to wait for the 2020 census?

23 And I think you were implying  
24 that without legislative action you would be

1 required to use the 2010 census data as the  
2 baseline based on the way the legislature is  
3 written today, and I think you acknowledged how  
4 that data is certainly not indicative of the  
5 current population in any county.

6                   And then, while we're asking, for  
7 the record, I heard nothing out of Lake County  
8 Board other than that they will adopt the exact  
9 same process that you were being asked about; is  
10 that correct?

11                   MR. BUEHLER: Yes, either or. Either we  
12 extend the deadline so that we can get the most  
13 current census data, or it would need to be made  
14 clear that in the absence of the most current  
15 census data that we would be allowed to use 2010  
16 data.

17                   SENATOR WILCOX: Be allowed to or maybe be  
18 required to the way the current legislature --

19                   MR. BUEHLER: My guess would be to be  
20 required to, yes.

21                   SENATOR WILCOX: And I think that's the  
22 importance from the difference between maps  
23 being drawn at the county and municipal levels  
24 as opposed to the general assembly and

1 congressional is, without some legislative  
2 action giving the county some direction, we may  
3 find a big mix of how different counties intend  
4 to try and meet the requirement to have their  
5 maps drawn by July 1st. Some may look at 2010.  
6 Some may have to default to the current  
7 boundaries that have been in existence because  
8 they don't have data to validate changes.

9                   And that's what I took from your  
10 testimony, was asking to us look at the  
11 predicament that counties are in; correct?

12                   MR. BUEHLER: Exactly, yes.

13                   CHAIR MORRISON: Thank you, Senator.

14                   Senator McConchie.

15                   SENATOR McCONCHIE: Thank you. I just  
16 wanted to point out the fact that we copied  
17 the -- in Senate Bill 1325, we just copied what  
18 the latest proposal was. That one did not apply  
19 to counties. We are very happy to amend that  
20 and have it apply to counties to require that  
21 every county as well in drawing maps would have  
22 to use an independent commission process. And  
23 we can establish that as part of that if that is  
24 a concern to the majority.

1 Thank you.

2 CHAIR MORRISON: Mr. Buehler, would you  
3 want to have an independent commission such as  
4 that draw your map?

5 MR. BUEHLER: I would not be opposed to  
6 that, no. I think that would possibly be a very  
7 good idea. I mean, the ones that are drawing  
8 the maps, myself included now, I mean, we have a  
9 vested interest in the outcomes of the election;  
10 right?

11 CHAIR MORRISON: Correct.

12 We have come to the -- thank you  
13 for your testimony this afternoon. We have come  
14 to the end of our testimony this afternoon. I  
15 want to thank everyone who participated.

16 Ladies and gentlemen, as a  
17 reminder, the Senate Subcommittee will have the  
18 following hearings posted: For redistricting  
19 the City of Chicago Northwest Subcommittee,  
20 which will be virtual, on Thursday, April 8th at  
21 5:00 p.m.; Redistricting East Central and  
22 Southeastern Illinois Subcommittee, virtual, on  
23 Friday, April 9th at 3:00 p.m.; Redistricting  
24 Southwestern Illinois Subcommittee, this will be

1 in person and virtual on Monday, April 12th at  
2 11:00 a.m.; and Redistricting for Kane and  
3 Kendall Counties Subcommittee, which will be  
4 only virtual on Thursday, April 15th at 3:00  
5 p.m.; Redistricting for Chicago West, Cook  
6 County West Subcommittee, in person and virtual,  
7 on Friday, April 16th at 3:00 p.m.

8 We're going to continue our  
9 discussions on redistricting, and I ask those  
10 that testified today and those listening to  
11 please engage with the committee as we work to  
12 make sure community voices are heard. If you  
13 have further documents, ideas, slides,  
14 information or questions, please send them to  
15 Redistricting Committee at [senatedem.ilga.gov](http://senatedem.ilga.gov).

16 And if you're interested in  
17 drawing one of those legislative maps, please  
18 just go to our website,  
19 [ilsenateredistricting.com](http://ilsenateredistricting.com), where you can draw a  
20 House and Senate maps and then submit those to  
21 the committees as your ideas.

22 There is no further business to  
23 come before the committee. This meeting of the  
24 Senate Redistricting Subcommittee of Lake and

1 McHenry Counties stands adjourned.

2 (Meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.)

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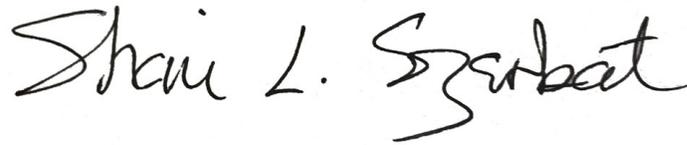
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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

I, Shari L. Szerbat, a Registered Professional Reporter doing business in the State of Illinois, do hereby certify that I reported in shorthand the proceedings of said hearing as appears from my stenographic notes so taken and transcribed under my direction.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 16th day of April, 2021.



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Shari L. Szerbat  
No. 24037

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| <hr/>                 | 76:5                  | <b>5:00</b> 18:12    | <b>accomplish</b>     | 58:8                 |
| <b>\$</b>             | <b>2011</b> 47:6,9,18 | 19:21 77:21          | 23:5 46:18            | <b>added</b> 16:7    |
| <hr/>                 | <b>2014</b> 25:23     | <b>5th</b> 9:12      | <b>accomplished</b>   | 74:4                 |
| <b>\$30</b> 28:4      | <b>2015</b> 61:24     | <hr/>                | 50:16                 | <b>addition</b>      |
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