

From: applications.administrator@capitol.local
To: [Senate Redistricting](#)
Subject: INETMAIL: Redistricting Public Input
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Attachments: [CC Transcript of Testimonials.pdf](#)

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Regarding: Senate

Message:

As the 87th (3) Special Legislative Session gaveled in on Monday morning, a diverse group of Texans demanded that the Legislature draw fair electoral maps that accurately reflect Texas's diverse population. At the virtual press conference, hosted by the Fair Maps Texas Coalition, 21 community leaders, business owners, students, teachers, doctors, and concerned citizens from across the state urged lawmakers to stop gerrymandering and start listening to the communities most impacted by the maps used for the next ten years. These Texans all live in communities that have previously been impacted by racial gerrymandering in 2011.

Here is a link to a recording of that press conference: <https://youtu.be/5K7ZNhcqqI>

I have attached a file of the Closed Captioning from this press conference.

For the list of community leaders that spoke:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/17wAe5lnJL3hctHkYl_qjSkZzhq_SrX8qy_HK5OfYdrA/edit?usp=sharing

[REDACTED]

WEBVTT

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I am actually going to show a video for the rest of the press conference and this video has been edited together. We have all the folks across Texas have pre recorded their testimonial.

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And so that's what you guys will be watching for the rest of the press conference at the end of the press conference, please feel free to drop questions into the chat.

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Also I.

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If you'd like to be connected to the folks that are going to be featured on the press conference, I will drop my email in the chat. It was also provided on the press release all of our contact information, and we can get you connected with the folks that

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are speaking. All right.

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My name is Amatullah Contractor, and I'm the Deputy Executive Director of Engage, Texas. I'm speaking today on behalf of myself, my Muslim and Asian communities and the millions of Texans who are undoubtedly going to lose their electoral power in this upcoming

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redistricting session.

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Voices of this state silenced because some people in positions of power will decide that their seats are more valuable to them than their oath of public service, these voices are people of color, low income voters differently abled voters and more.

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We are witnessing a crusade against morality, and I urge our legislators to be considered their chosen path.

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Reverend Barber said it best, and I want to convey his reminder to you all. When you uphold the Constitution. You don't swear to be liberal, you don't swear to be conservative, you don't swear to be independent.

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You swear to uphold you swear to establish justice, you ensure that no one denies or a bridges are right to vote. You swear to protect equal protection under the law and maps we see today, presented by the Texas Legislature are a direct contradiction

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of your oath of office, and these lines that you are securing today will hold for the next 10 years and with ramifications to be felt. Decades after I should not have to plead with you to not dilute my voting power.

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And yet, historical racial gerrymandering has forced me to testify here in 2010, the Department of Justice contended the Texas state legislators redistricting plan that eluded the voting power of Asian Americans and other people of color, Asians are the

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fastest growing ethnic group in the United States, and yet our voices are continually silenced. And our needs unmet by those elected to serve us. We need community district thing, we cannot have legislators draw lines and simply color them in as they

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please. Because those lines hold our lives in the balance lines drawn with surgical precision to dilute the voices of working class and people of color, or what has allowed for egregious voter suppression anti women anti health care bills to become a

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law in the state.

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What if our elected officials, continue to ignore our commands, we will simply get louder.

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We cannot defeat extremism with moderation and sacrifice. We will continue to speak up. Stand up and march on because the power of the people will not be ignored.

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My name is Shirley Ronquillo, and I am the co founder of the Houston department of transformation. We are resonant group that strives to engage residents of civic action to create safe and beautiful communities.

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I live in the Aldine community in northeast Houston, Texas, my community is an unincorporated Harris County because of one imaginary line.

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This line prevents my community from having regulated drinking water access to adequate health care and updated drainage and infrastructure to protect flooding since I live outside the city jurisdiction by one street, my community is facing mandatory

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violence and breaking up six generations of family because of gerrymandering that separates the predominant Latino and African American families along greens file and halt by you.

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Texas district 140 lines were drawn to exclude my community from having any say and what flood mitigation funding efforts occur in neighboring Texas House District 141 historically African American American district.

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I also realize my district excluded from the economic growth of our airport system located in Texas House District 141 industrial sector which surrounds it adequate health services my district does not have a hospital, and the employment opportunities

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it offers you see gerrymandering by race has given us a perception that we should drive 30 to 60 minutes south, rather than seek employment or health care, on the other side of beltway eight only eight to 10 minutes away.

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When I heard of the Texas Senate redistricting committee hearings and the opportunity to impact district maps. I don't many of our neighbors were unaware of the opportunity to provide the input.

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We sought support from the committee for Spanish interpreters, only to find there were none.

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I don't understand why language justice was not a priority in a predominant Latino state. We're not Venus makeup 41.4% of the total population in Texas.

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According to the 2020 census data.

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As usual, our community pulled together to give my Spanish speaking neighbors a voice, the League of Women Voters hired an interpreter for us, and Baker ebley starting allow us to user conference room so we could safely social distance and give testimonies.

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We soon found other communities with other languages such as Vietnamese or Arabic did not have any support either in partnership with many organizations across Texas, the League of Women Voters launch a language justice campaign to close a language gap

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and give a voice to many Texas cannot continue to exclude community members like myself from giving input and providing feedback on the final maps redistricting will set the foundation for the next 10 years, and give our community a chance at equal and

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fair representation.

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I hope our like the officials will listen to us fight for us and meet the needs of our community. Thank you.

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Members of the committee. My name is Judson Robinson the third.

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I serve as president of the use of the affiliate of the Urban League.

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90 National Urban League's affiliate across the country.

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represent this organization.

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But generations, we have working under resourced communities striving for a shot of the American dream.

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While living in their communities, paying their taxes, in return for safe and stable economic living environments.

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We have worked on these communities, on behalf of Houston. Since 1968, creating jobs and encouraging small business to develop and affordable housing in the neighborhoods where they already live.

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Maintaining a diverse community with people, reflective of multiple backgrounds incomes interest and historical perspectives. Build a rich, vibrant culture of different people, all enjoying the fruits of an economically sustainable living environment,

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preserving the delicacy of these human ecosystems takes conscientious leadership, capable of display encourage and fairness to protect those in need of quality representation, willing to listen.

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We worked with historically black communities such as Sunnyside his home. The Third Ward. And the fifth Ward, where people are experiencing massive shifts in population, since the last census.

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Third Ward in particular is gone from a 70% black population, put a little over 40%. In just the past decade, people moving, not because they want to, but because they're being forced out.

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You have to incorporate this dilemma into the redistricting process.

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Community Preservation must work hand in hand with community identification and citizen engagement, draw the lines to simply hold, like minded bodies of people together.

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It's not courageous packing less influential members of a given group into under resourced areas marginalizing their access to safe and affordable housing or limiting the access to jobs is not leadership and encouraging line to be drawn between people

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that must learn to live with each other.

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drawn lines to simply hold like minded groups together is not courageous packing less influential people, and members of given groups into under resourced areas marginalizing their access to safe and affordable housing or limiting their access to jobs,

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it's not leadership and encouraging lines, be drawn between people that must learn to live with each other while saying there are differences is a benefit of diversity, versus a system of us versus them.

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This is not a sustainable light for American democracy as leaders in this redistricting effort. You have an obligation to rise above the chatter of division and ensure redistricting does not further redistribute inequality.

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But instead, increase it.

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Let's listen to the needs of all in this process and seek fairness, and that's simply winners and losers.

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Thank you for your time

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this morning, my name is Marlon Lopez and I'm a Houston coordinator me familia.

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When I first began my work at MSP was around the census 2020.

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And at that point, we were fighting against an administration that wanted to deny the fact that Latinos and our allies are driving population growth and change in Texas and in parts across the nation.

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The 2020 census showed us what we already knew to be true that Texas is diverse, it's young and changing every single day.

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Over 50% of growth in Texas alone comes from the Latino population comes from immigrants and it comes from our allies, but these numbers only tell you, part of the story of how the population is changed, where communities are growing and moving and where

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resources or money needs to go, including political representation in the form of district lines that are going to be moving this redistricting cycle.

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The people in Houston and across Harris County could tell you what that really looks like though, because they've lived it. They are the experts in what it means to be marginalized and have their voices and issues ignored, and the consequences of being

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pushed aside for partisan political power, the problems that we faced in the last 10 years, and even the past two years, with the pandemic chemical explosions, and even the winter storm, our direct consequences of how state legislators drew our maps in

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2010.

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They were designed to minimize voters of color and ruin our representation as constituents in Harris County in Houston, and even across the state.

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This is a moral issue, because it has cost us our lives, it's cost us our families, our homes or communities.

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And it could cost us or futures to.

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But in order to break this vicious cycle, we must center community voices in the process of redrawing the maps in ways that are fair. Open accessible and accountable to everyday people.

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It's our chance to make sure that we get things right. and we get ready for the next 10 years.

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We must have our voices heard and our neighborhoods and futures kept whole and united.

[LilyTrieu is up next]

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Over the last 10 years I've lived in Travis County Harris County and Fort Bend county where my parents and sister still reside.

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As an Asian American and lifelong Texan I am testifying on the importance of consideration of the Asian American and Pacific Islander or API community, a census data is considered a new district lines are drawn the API communities.

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Now make up 6.6 of the Texas population according to the 2020 senses. That's more than a 66% increase since the last census. We are the fastest growing racial group across Texas and have historically been unfairly divided into multiple legislative districts

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in Fort Bend county. We are 23.6% of the population and Travis County 9.5% in a neighboring Williamson County, 10.6%. Despite this Texas has never sent an API member to the US Congress in 2020, my family voted for an API candidate treacle Carney, who

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lost by less than seven points in the gerrymandered Congressional District of Texas 22 congressional district 22 is the fastest growing district in our state, with more than 39% increase in total population.

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This consists of a 46% growth of Hispanics and Latinos 64% growth in African Americans 46% growth in native Pacific Islander, and a whopping 78.5% growth amongst Asians, while only a 9% increase in the white population.

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The communities of color in Fort Bend, they deserve an additional minority opportunity district drawn, so that their boats can matter, so that they have the power to finally elect the candidate of their choice, like treacle Harney, who my parents voted

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for. And by the way, Rico Carney speaks six different languages and ran his campaign with volunteers who spoke 16 different languages. That's the kind of representation and access that my community needs language access is a major issue in the API communities

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that will not be addressed without fair representation and for maps redistricting is ultimately tied to voting rights, type the type of representation we get, and type the type of resources that come into our communities.

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According to a nonpartisan nonprofit API a vote 79% of Asian Americans in Texas, speak a language other than English at home and have those more than 40% speak English listen very well.

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After English and Spanish Vietnamese Mandarin Hindi and to go log or the most next most common language is spoken in the state.

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Lack of language access has real world and life and death ramifications. Just this past May my father a bit enemies refugee, and a Texan have over 30 years turn 65.

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Only two days after his birthday, he was diagnosed with stage four terminal lung cancer.

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the Social Security Administration, with translation translation services was estimated to take months for a man with a terminal diagnosis, he didn't have to wait.

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Luckily my sister and I were able to be his translator and advocates, but thousands of Texans, do not have this option. The ability to access public services and healthcare should not be determined by luck language access is critical to the safety and

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welfare of Texans like my father. So I urge this committee to establish a fair and open process.

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Hi, my name is Dr. Jennifer Cantu, and today we'll be discussing redistricting, and how it impacts our everyday daily lives, but first I want to start with some history.

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You see, I'm standing on warehouse district 27 used to be, but due to gerrymandering one census ago houses to 27 shifted further north, creating a new house district 85, which would now include a portion of Fort Bend county and 100% of Wharton county

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and 100% of Jackson County. You see, our needs are not changing, but have continued to be compound, but are continually being ignored. So follow me as I show you these different needs and scenarios.

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And at the end, I can tell you what you can do about it.

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We are standing here in front of the WPA and RG parish Copeland. For those that do not know this is the largest coal plant in the United States of America.

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The first and the second coal plant they have been shut down. This is a coal plant that continues to burn. So to sulfur dioxide, and we have zero monitors.

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This is a coal plant that is five miles less than five miles away then a high school and middle school and elementary school. This is a coal plant where the air will push out echo effect, greater than 100,000, families, and why redistricting is very important.

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I stand here in the heart of Pendleton Pendleton is both a health desert and a food desert. I am 22 minutes away from the closest emergency services, 22 minutes is a difference between life and death.

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If you're having a heart attack, life and death. if you're having a stroke. I asked you if you lived here. Would you permit. this to continue to happen.

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And we draw lines, we must be fair, and I'm here standing between our two beautiful cities of Rosenberg and Richard we will be talking about flooding infrastructure drainage and how they have continued to be ignored.

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And yet we have no resources, and this is where we draw lines, we must make sure these lines are fair, but I want to show you this so can we get

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this area marks all three of why it's important, drain it out if you can see but it's yet to be clean, get our communities are paying tax dollars, infrastructure, because that we've seen in this ditch, we continue to have flooding that even with the smallest

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of storms, we're hitting those two feet and three feet markers that we've done nothing to elevate and flooding because the mission rescue missions that continue to ongoing and continue to happen.

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Hi. Thank you for following us to do. You see, we've talked about air quality food deserts health deserts, flooding outside our homes, and drainage. You see these issues did not just occur today, but they have continued to be compact it but more importantly

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has been ignored. You see when drawing of lines are done fairly, they must include our communities of interest. More importantly, our state representative must live here.

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So I asked that you call your state representative demanded the drawing of mass pigeon fairly and transparent. Thank you.

[Cameron Samuels is up next.]

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As a student organizer in Fort Bend County. I consistently hear the voices of my peers who are marching in pursuit of justice.

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One thing I can say is that our representatives, do not adequately reflect our values.

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Fort Bend County, which encompasses the diverse cities of Sugar Land and Katie has rapidly grown over the past decade, mostly driven through the population increase of ethnic minorities, because of the nature of redistricting.

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We remain represented essentially by a single congressional district. The people of our country also continue to be inadequately represented in the Board of Education, the Texas Senate, and depending on where you live inside the labyrinth of district

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lines, the Texas House Kerry picks, its Fort Bend voters as well.

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If the new districts drawn by and passed by the 87 legislature, do not reflect the increase in population and the changing demographics of our community, we can call it out for what it is, gerrymandering.

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Furthermore, if the new districts do not reflect the diverse culture of our community.

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And we can call it out for what it is, gerrymandering, we know of the mini, mini, mini districts in Texas that have consistently been gerrymandered to support one political party over the other, whether it be cracking and packing or ignoring community

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lines, the districts we have do not reflect our community. There should be no reason that the ethnic and cultural minorities of congressional district 22 can be represented in the way that we are the same can be said of the mini districts in the state

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of Texas and Fort Bend County, as their voices continue to be suppressed and our concerns continue to be left unheard. The covid 19 pandemic has not stopped ravaging our nation.

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And the only action that has been taken by the legislature, and the governor were measures that made it worse. The Texas power grid continues to be a problem yet to be solved by the legislature, more than 200 people died during winter storm Uri, and others

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were expected to pay thousands and electricity bills. The Texas legislature is attacking the dignity of racial minorities censoring education and stripping away virtually all reproductive rights.

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Our communities are suffering, and it is because of the shortcomings of the 87, Texas Legislature politics has historically how the poor reputation and I have no reason to disagree.

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After looking at the past several years, especially in Texas. It is clear that our politicians do not represent us any more than they represent themselves.

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I love what our state can be, but I am disappointed in what our state is, if we want to create a Texas, where all people are valued uplifted and given justice, we must protect democracy, and fight back against partisan gerrymandering.

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Let us pursue a redistricting process that is open, transparent and fair to all Texans.

[Up next is Iris Cheng.]

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Honestly, I see redistricting as an issue of representation as an issue of certain communities of color being under represented in the legislature, and we can see that it's reflected in who's representing us.

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And every step of our life politically, and we can see that a lot of our elected officials just aren't paying attention to these communities of color because of this unfair disrupting, and we need to amend that issue because community destructing is really

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the only way in which all of our communities can come together and be harmonious and achieve the same goals that we intended in having a political representation, the first place.

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Hello, my name is Jesus Valdez. I live in El Paso, Texas.

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I am sure that many of you like me see the myriad of issues affecting our communities, and are dismayed by the lack of positive actions by our legislators.

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Let me bring up issues that affect us to you know pass so number one.

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The government shot and killed 23 people, and enter 23 others.

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We have an over militarized police that is too quick to use force against peaceful demonstrators.

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We have a county judge to had to fight the imposition by our governor against common sense covert protocols.

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We have school districts, afraid to protect the health of our children, because of a threat from our governor to defend them.

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We have an abusive border patrol in ice, who routinely mistreat asylum seekers.

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We have a new wave of human civil and voting rights laws that disproportionately negatively impact people of color. El Paso is 98.05%, Hispanic, and I could go on as a retired business person who ran his own company for over 25 years, with a focus on

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quality.

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I learned that to fix browns, would need to analyze the root causes.

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One approach to do this is to ask quite multiple times.

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Why are those.

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Why are there not last mitigate these problems.

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The answer is because they're either not proposed are not connected.

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Why is this, because party is more important than state or country.

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And why is this, because personal interest is more important than common good.

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And why is this, because the party control, Gary Manders jurisdiction boundaries for the sole purpose of maintaining power by choosing their constituents.

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Thus, slowly destroying our democracy.

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If there were no gerrymandering candidates that focus on the needs of the people, not the needs of the party would have a better chance of being elected.

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If elected, they would propose and enact laws that begin mitigating common problems.

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If more solutions are inactive, our state and country would flourish.

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If we flourish, our democracy would slowly be restored to what we always, it would be.

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Bottom line, the practice of gerrymandering must be eliminated and fair maps must be adopted.

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Thank you.

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My name is Lamont Taylor, and I am a 50 year resident of the Hillcrest community, which is bounded by subtract four and five in Corpus Christi, Texas.

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The first 20 years in the Hillcrest community.

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I grew up and attended Washington elementary then we moved into Hillcrest proper, and attended cross elementary school, junior high school and attended and graduated from high school, and 1900 and 71.

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During that time, the community was a thriving community.

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Historically, African Americans. Within the last eight years were allowed to go and move in a live in the Hillcrest residents area.

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Previous and that was next door to, oh Park which was, at that time, part of the country to another edition, which is right over in the old Park and West Chester area was near the country, old country in Corpus Christi.

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However, funny thing happened in the 70s 80s and 90s. We had an encroachment in by the refineries in Corpus Christi.

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And the individuals started moving out that NGO started moving out and going to other parts of the city, opening up and providing opportunities for African Americans to move into the Hillcrest area from the Washington at TC as projects.

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So as we moved in refineries moved in, as well, and encroachment began in early 80s systems change, and therefore the population of Hillcrest was probably added near its zenith at that particular time.

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However, also the proliferation of refineries inside of refinery row as we know it today, began to matriculating in there and at that time was Southwestern batteries.

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Now for the heels and said co Ed come into the area, say go west Cisco East they had our circle which was the leading lead contaminant in the area that we know now that that live will never be out of them enter in a harbor, how however they tried to dredge

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it, you will still have that part of the harbor contaminated with their contamination and also the houses around that particular area and creating what the doctor out of tissue cause the toxic soup from Brownsville, up to Lake Charles, Louisiana.

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That's another story. But all of those areas are teamed up with African Americans and Hispanics and Vietnamese in these particular areas in the state of Texas, and in particular resumes zooming back into Hillcrest USA, where now you have majority of them

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all coming in from the Midland Odessa area coming into that particular area and causing additional depleting of that other residents in that area between the two, the last decade between 2000 and 2021.

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Right now, to this day, you still have a depopulation ization and isolating of African Americans in this particular area, where.

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Now, if you look at it since substrate wise. We were the largest of African Americans in the city, and now we are the least because of the disbursement of the population via the environmental external, and the other internal environmental aspects that

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are causing grace havoc for individuals living in Hillcrest area and up to too low so midway area now, you will see that that population has decreased, and you still have the proliferation of refineries coming into that area.

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And is it easy, picking for individual who is creating maps to cherry pick and get the individuals that they need in order to not have a fair representation of anybody of ebony Hugh, in this particular area or the resources that can come into the area,

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because the unfair district to our say I would say to reduce the deficit unfettered cherry picking a favorable favorable

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political opportunities for those individuals in the far right, again, Hillcrest community was was a thriving area in the City of Corpus Christi, and because of the policies of the city, and of the port and of the county.

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Now, we are left to fend for ourselves, once thriving neighborhood is now has been decimated and is systematically systematically did been done by the City of Corpus Christi, and back on the far right shoulder is the city where Hillcrest admin pick the

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park, and I will provide that is evident in my next.

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Again, my name is Lamont Taylor, and I lived in the Hillcrest area for the last 50 years, and I am advocating for fair district team for the Hillcrest area as well as citizens of every hue in Corpus Christi, Texas.

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Thank you for your consideration. Again, my name is Lamont Taylor, and I will be pleased to ask any questions that you may have.

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Thank you very much. God bless you.

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We are the League of Women Voters Corpus Christi area. My name is Katherine Oler, president. In 2016 the Flint, Michigan water crisis erupted and sent waves across the nation, including Corpus Christi.

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At the time Corpus Christi had a history of water issues bacterial contamination low disinfectant levels. Could we have led problems to our leaders familiar with the issues, they are the basis for our advocacy.

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So members voted to make this issue the focus of the grassroots community starting potential for lead contamination in our communities drinking water.

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Late Study Committee gathered information for several years on lead poisoning, looking at sources of lighting homes at water quality regulations and incidents of like poison.

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What they discovered was that overall the city's water system was in pretty good shape.

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However, there are data gaps that impede further investigation analysis and remediation of loading drinking water.

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For instance, there are not serving records for all the water service ones, particularly in older neighborhoods. They also learned that the API based level of lead in water, which most water systems news is three times higher than the FDA standard for

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bottom drinking water through open records request, they discovered which zip codes had the highest number of cases and focused on those within devices County.

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They found during the study group that there were elevated blood levels over 50 children preview.

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Recent updated data told them that the county continues to have important cases at a at a rate of 40 to 50 per year.

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There is no safe level of land and blood, and those most at risk or infants young children and women of childbearing age. Legs cognitive effect on infants and children are devastating and irreversible.

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Many of the identified zip codes have older subdivisions built before the law that bans lights and drinking water pipes and mines was enacted. Many of these older neighborhoods are home to people of color, and global economic status and the elderly communities

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historically overlooked and disenfranchised. It is critical to keep these communities most effective Barbara contamination intent is vital for their health and well being.

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It is critical that they receive information about lead exposure and simple, inexpensive steps for lessening their risk of exposure. It is critical that existing water codes are enforced and we once implemented to protect children and women, and it is

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vital to see government support in addressing this issue.

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Last month, the United States Senate passed its bipartisan infrastructure bill that includes a \$15 billion allocation to fund the pipeline meaningful, how this funding spread out across the nation is in the hands of the people we elected to represent

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us, the people who are now drawing our Maps is critical, but this issue is not lost and bureaucrats shuffle between districts within the same county lines.

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We need our legislators to draw fair maps that keep our county intact so that our efforts to address this issue locally or not Delta losing hand.

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It is imperative that the voices of women and children are courage, not needed, not overworked, not left on the table because of unfair and unjust district.

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My name is Denita Jones, and I reside in Dallas, Texas, within Dallas County.

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I'm a Tri-Chair of the Texas Poor People's Campaign and also a co president of the lake Highland area moms and more against racism and also a precinct chair.

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I'm here today to testify to let you know that my community should be kept together because of the progress has been made in recent years to improving safety and proven our public parks and becoming a community of individuals who value community over

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self, community leaders such as myself have worked long and hard to preserve the community in which we live, to enhance it, we have done so by working with our representatives and across racial lines, the ease of continuing to work started will be jeopardized

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by split on our community and have our by adding another representative.

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We are a community of beautiful people of different nationalities ethnicities and religions, but we are a community.

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My communities in northern part of 635 of the Lake County area we're far as you know daily interstate.

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We have been unjustly left out of economic development due to the previous gerrymandered districts. And now that we have representations and our officials are hearing and working for us, the people you want to redraw the lines again to drown out the voices

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of black and brown Texas because we want and deserve.

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does not fit your narrative.

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We want fair district that was set the foundation for the next two years and give our community a chance at equal and fair representation that we are elected officials will listen to us and fight for us, working people communities of color, our immigrant

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brothers and sisters are the ones who are hurt the most with this, this map drawing doesn't go the way it should.

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Let's be clear.

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Racism has driven the maps that we currently have, and 2011 Texas drew maps that intentionally discriminated against people of color.

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And in closing I have one question for you I asked you which side are you on.

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Thank you,

[Up next is Randall Bryant]

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Through the efforts of scope, and a strong motorized feel we are confident and breaking the shackles which are so long crippled the Negroes invested in South, about a cry is let my people vote.

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Hi, I'm Randall Bryant, founder of the North Texas municipal redistricting project this profound quote was painted by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. 12 days before the house approval of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the voting rights at a bill that followed

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the most infamous buddy Sunday on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, was the second of three pillars gained by minorities in the 1960s between the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Fair Housing Act of 1968, or Keystone legislation that not only

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Our Keystone legislation that not only prohibiting racial discrimination and voting, but more importantly to redistricting granted us pro action with the section five preclearance requiring new redistricting plans gain pre approval from the Attorney General,

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and our reaction with section to granting us access to the course, if new mouse were drawn in a manner that embrace the rights of minorities to elect the representatives of our choice.

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But as the old saying goes, the more things change, the more they remain the same.

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In 2013, a US Supreme Court decision in the case of Shelby County versus holder struck down section five from the voting rights act by five four votes, which remove preclearance from the redistricting process and texts.

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So what does this mean for our texts and statewide redistricting strategy, and in particular for North Texas.

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We see that Dallas and terrine counties have naturally game population on the past decade, doing Part Two this year size, but percentage wise for other top 10 fastest growing counties across the state, or Kaufman rock wall, Denton, and comment.

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And we look back in history, and understand that by way of a portion of it, and through the protections of the Voting Rights Act minorities in North Texas were able to gain congressional district 13 and 1991, and district 33 and 2011.

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Now more than ever. It is time that we fight to maintain and expand minority electrical districts, for our congressional state senate and state house maps.

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So I asked you to join me and fair maps Texas on Monday September 20 for the opening gavel of our third suppressing session of this 87th legislature and rally with Texans from every corner of our great state.

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As we fight to maintain the Voting Rights Act and demand a fair and open redistricting process. I'll see you on the Battlefield.

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Hello, my name is Hasani Burton.

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I wanted to take a little time to share with you some thoughts on mapping our futures.

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All across North Texas, where I reside.

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We have seen the addicts of gerrymandered districts that deteriorates the power of communities to choose who represents us.

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We have seen this in education, with less resources are hardworking teachers to guys students two options to live their best lives.

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We have seen this in our economics. We're working parents have to spend more hours, or sometimes take on second or third jobs just to make ends meet and provide for their families.

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We have seen this in our healthcare, where billions of dollars are left on the table, leaving millions without access and reducing their quality of life.

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We have seen this in the most fundamentals of our democracy, with voting rights systemically under attack.

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gerrymandering is cheating, plain and simple.

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It allows legislators, a pass into office without having to earn a single new beau.

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It doesn't matter if you were red, yellow, black white or brown woman or man, Democrat, Republican or independent gerrymandering destroys community employee gerrymandering diminishes democracy.

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I don't want that for my future. I don't want that for my child's future.

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I don't want that for your future.

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Under the current political climate that we allow gerrymander maps to stand. During the redistricting special session, we will spend the next 30 years following.

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So I'm asking you to join the League of Women Voters and advocate for bear match list in gerrymandering and 2021.

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Stay safe and God Bless.

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Hello, my name is Dr. Michelle Cohen, and I am the founder of a community organization called Hays Latinos united. My organization was founded as a direct response to the racial disparities of Kobe 19 against Latinos in Hays County.

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As a community member, I witnessed a significant lack of resources, and a response to the Latino population. Before the organization was formed. I would set up small tables and give away free mask, two individuals coming to sites for covert testing.

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I did this because our county was not organizing free PP resources to our community like Travis County had, it was through frustration, anger and data that prompted the formation of haze Latinos united.

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We started small with donated items such as sanitizer in mass, and he'll drive through PP events in East Hayes County, through my own personal knowledge and research.

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I know a large portion of our Latino community lives in east of high 35 in Ace County, as more events took place, the evidence of what the community did not have was very apparent our Latino population is 96,000 strong in Hays County, and currently only

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26% have had one dose of the vaccine and 25% are fully vaccinated. Throughout the pandemic Latinos has had the highest number of coda deaths hospitalizations confirmed cases, and a high positivity rate.

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And now we are one of the groups in Hays County least vaccinated, many mistakes and barriers were created for our Latino population from the testing rollout, to the vaccination efforts.

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Our group has been able to survive by developing partnerships with Hayes emergency management, local community health clinics, small and large businesses, other nonprofits and community donations.

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One of the biggest barriers we face was the lack of community space to hold events, between North East Hayes county to South East Hayes County, the availability for community resources is limited.

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In the last 12 months since it has united its inception, we have helped over 70 events focused on providing PP water, food coma testing and now vaccinations.

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And yes, food and water because of the February freeze that happened this year. Many of our Eastside residents were without water and hot meals. We work diligently to stop the misinformation of coded to Latinos, the outreach is tiresome but necessary.

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We demand true representation for our Latino community for those who truly understand the needs, both in English and Spanish.

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Thank you.

[Teresa Carbajal Ravet is up next. Some of her testimonial is in Spanish.]

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Hello, I'm Teresa Carbajal Ravet, and I'm here along with Macone the beginning way, my fellow Spanish speaking at minus, minus, I'm an immigrant from Mexico.

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Misty sad by blood and make it kinda Americana by political boundaries.

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I live in Dripping Springs just southwest of Austin, and my community is in large part of white affluent community seen them battle.

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It has a community that contributed to its founding and growing pockets of immigrant this evening granted the handles and Spanish speaking communities that have sustain the growth of the gateway to the Texas Hill Country.

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The population of my area in haste county has exploded.

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And one of the most overpopulated overpopulated state senate district district 25.

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The Hispanic population in Texas grew by over 1.9 million.

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Now comprising 39, and a quarter percent of the population.

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And the Hispanic population is one that grew at the fastest rate growing over 20%. Over the course of the last decade.

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No one has been harmed more by map manipulation and voter suppression than the black in the Latino communities whose voices have been minimized at the ballot box, and in Congress.

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I own a small business in Dripping Springs, rather, it's Etj one central comunidad to a community center that provides me the opportunity to meet a diversity of community members.

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It is my experience that such an extensive district has not allowed candidates, and current leaders to experience the diverse history of the Texas Hill Country meeting and growing Hispanic population, and address such diverse names.

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I continue to ask the redistricting committees to allow all the handouts to give virtual input.

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At every step of the process. Most importantly, on the map proposals and to drum maps that are fair competitive and represent the tables that go those close the handles, as well as work to end map manipulation and gerrymandering, the gaseous for la porte

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parties me commentary. I thank you for the opportunity of sharing my statement.

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My name is if Aya Eneli, and I live in Belton in Bell County, Texas, and I am here to speak up against the racial gerrymandering that is occurring in my community,

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my community is a very racially diverse community, the school district that serves us clean ISD currently boasts in excess of 70% of students of color.

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That is right, the demographics of the school district indicate that over 70% of the students attending our school district are students of color.

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And yet. In all my years of living in this county.

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Although we come out to vote, black and brown people have largely had their voices silenced. As a result of racial gerrymandering at the inception of this nation patriots fought against taxation without representation.

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But that is exactly what black and brown communities are experiencing in my community, we vote.

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We pay taxes. And yet, our boats are essentially cancelled out, because majority white communities have been grafted into our voting bloc so to speak, which dilutes our own voices, year after year.

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We come out, and whoever is representing us and our needs, gets the boats to win and our community. And then those boats are immediately erased by the all white predominantly white rural areas that have been grafted into our building block, and it's time

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for that to stop.

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It is time that we have the representation that we should have as taxpayers as Julie taxpaying citizens of this community.

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And so we are asking you to stop destroying this nation by redistricting in such a way that ensures that certain parties or certain individuals can win elections, but to rather give the power back to the people to choose their own representatives and

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what happens when we don't have the representation that we deserve. We see things like the food deserts that we're experiencing in North clean, and nothing has been done about it.

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We see the rise of urban area issues including crime. That is not being adequately addressed, while areas such as life passes that are largely rural and largely white have their issues address, we see Fort Hood carved out of our voting bloc.

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Even though, Fort Hood is part of our school district and makes absolutely no sense for you to claim to be representing us while you are systematically ensuring that our voices are silenced.

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And we won't stand for it anymore.

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And we're asking nicely, that the redistricting that occurs, take into consideration the voices of every citizen.

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And that you stop gerrymandering by race, you stop gerrymandering period, but certainly that you stop racial Jerry man free, so that we again can take control of our communities, and have representatives who care about us who live in our communities who

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work in our communities who have offices in our communities, and who serve our needs, and not the needs of others. Thank you.

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Hello. My name is Rick Galvan. My pronouns are he/him. I'm a student at UT Austin and I am the central Texas Canvas organizer for Texas rising Texas rising is a project of the Texas June network that focuses on building the political power the rising generation

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of young texans particularly young texting of color LGBT q plus you young texans are paying attention to the special session.

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And people, young people know full well, the power they wield, which engines in Texas every day are plugging into our communities and building power on issues like reproductive freedom.

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As far as the quality climate justice, and of course, voting rights.

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So we fully understand what this special session means for our communities, and for our political power.

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And we're not going to let our next 10 years be defined without our input.

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Young people like myself, are not blind to the corrupt practices politicians us to stay in power.

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When I moved from my hometown of San Antonio to Austin for college. I found it quite interesting but the first familiar name. I saw and exiting I 35 representative Lloyd Doggett.

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My dad's congressman back in San Antonio. now also represented me. Anyone miles away, here in Austin.

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Further I founded more on when my cousin, a student at Texas State University, living in San Marcos to me representative Lloyd Doggett was also his congressman.

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That's one congressional district for three very different communities.

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My uneasy feeling didn't end there.

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as 2018 election neared and candidates campaign around my university.

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I learned that the moment I stepped off campus at UT and cross one of the history to go to work.

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That's also crossing congressional districts and not even Lloyd's to other congressional districts.

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Congressional District 25 encapsulates all of UT Austin, but then weaves through Austin, and out towards Fort Worth 21 Meanwhile, the district right across the street from UT covers bits of Boston and stretches down identified through San Marcos, and

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back to my hometown of San Antonio, meaning representative chip Roy represent some of my friends from high school San Antonio.

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Many of my cousins peers in San Marcos, and many of my friends at UT who live just west of campus.

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It makes no sense for us to be carved up into multiple congressional districts to the point that every day when I go from my apartment in one part of town to campus, and it'll work just a few blocks away that I caught that I cross through three congressional

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districts.

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And it makes no sense that to the district, Snake through San Marcos and San Antonio, and one of those districts, nearly touches Fort Worth.

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All representing young people in Austin.

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So, what do young people think we learned about these districts.

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It's obvious.

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These district lines are drawn to dilute our political power, while unfairly favoring one party over another.

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We demand that this redistricting process is transparent and provides the people of Texas with fair maps that no longer cut up communities and shrink the power of voters to the Texas Legislature, I leave you with the same as not those long stuck with

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me and seems to fit the energy of young texans right now.

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If you do not respect us. you must expect us. See you soon.

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My name is Dave Cortez I'm speaking on behalf of the Sierra Club and are more than 25,000 members across Texas. I speak to you today from congressional district 21 state house, 49, and Senate District 14 in South Boston, but I come to you with concerns

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about the greater Austin area at large.

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Especially communities we organize with, who are disproportionately impacted by this process that we're here today talking about like climate change by covered by 19.

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And by environmental racism.

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Historically, the impacts of these issues have landed harder on East Austin. But as we've seen with the rain bomb floods in Halloween on Halloween of 2013 then again in 2015, and with the Blanco River flooding down in Wimberley in Hays County, just south

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of where I am, and foot with flooding elsewhere climate changes here in our communities face connected to our neighbors upstream and downstream via watersheds floodplains and creeks systems.

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When 20 inches of rain dumps on upstream communities around where I live on any Creek watershed in city 21 weather sprawl and previous cover that overwhelms, our infrastructure systems ability to manage that runoff.

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When that rain falls up here, it is the downstream communities along onion in Williamson Creek and into some of the poorest communities of Austin communities that are majority black and Latino poor and working class families.

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Not all, but most of the east of 35. It is these communities that have and will continue to bear the greatest burden of these climate disasters, a burden of loss tones of lost wages and work of loss culture of lost community in friendships and in many

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cases unfortunately lost loved ones.

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Whereas, upstream communities and my district and city 21 have more modern stormwater management systems Arroyo's ditches and retention ponds and all this very wonderful stuff now.

01:17:36.000 --> 01:17:52.000
It's the people of color downstream and Eastern Travis County, have infrastructure that's a relic of the 1980s and like the stuff I used to play in as a kid in skateboard and run around that stuff can't handle these new storms and infrastructure can't

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handle these new storms, and there's those folks who will continue to suffer because of that lack of infrastructure. This is injustice. This plainly is environmental racism, and it is upheld by a charade of a process that allows politicians to choose

01:18:11.000 --> 01:18:30.000

their constituents, and not the other way around, politicians who don't believe in climate change, representing Austin, those folks out number, those who try to address this issue believe in climate change and are trying to write these wrongs and solve

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these inequities. The people of Central Texas living within and along shared watersheds and floodplains.

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They represent a shared community of interest, several shared communities of interest, and they must be considered accordingly with maps, new maps that are drawn the Sierra Club.

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we will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with our friends and neighbors, not because we all wanted to speak up for the environment, but because we believe in.

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In, the power and potential of our unity of our shared interest in the greater good, and will walk with everyone here today and everyone out there listening in defending these lands in our rights to fair and accessible democracy, our rights to healthy

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life for families and neighbors. Thank you very much.

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My name is Shellie Hayes McMahon, and I'm in Texas coven survivor. I am currently fighting long coded.

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So every day is a challenge, and I'm still fighting to get back to my full health because of the people that I love, and the work that I do the work that I do is to ensure that future leaders of Texas are diverse responsible responsive and women come

01:19:49.000 --> 01:20:08.000

landed on a state in my family like a ton of bricks. I was in the hospital for almost two weeks, and was released from the hospital, the day our grid failed. So coming home to a cold house in a fragile condition, having survived what has been the worst

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experience of my life.

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It's, it's unbelievable to me that we are still hearing disinformation ignoring the public good, and ignoring science.

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Clearly, the priorities and policies at the Texas Legislature are out of step with millions of Texans, just like me and gerrymandering and ensures that virtually none of them can or will be held accountable for what their neglect, and mismanagement has

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done to my family and my community. The census is very clear, Texas has grown by millions of people and the 90 and 95% of the growth was in the Latino, African American, an API communities.

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The proposed senate maps dilute the voices and books of the people of my city, and my community.

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And that is the last of the testimonials. Um, I wanted to open it up to any questions right now. And if anyone does have questions. I'm also going to drop my email in the chat so if you would like to get connected with any of the folks that were featured

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during the press conference, you have the ability to do so.

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If anyone has a question, if you could raise your hand.

01:22:04.000 --> 01:22:22.000

Hey, sit near you there.

01:22:22.000 --> 01:22:28.000

Sydney Can you hear me

01:22:28.000 --> 01:22:31.000

now. No. Okay. Um.

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Does anyone else have any other questions.

01:22:38.000 --> 01:22:40.000

Shannon.

01:22:40.000 --> 01:22:41.000

Can you hear me.

01:22:41.000 --> 01:22:55.000

Yes. Can I don't know if you can hear me. Yes. Good.

01:22:55.000 --> 01:23:01.000

Is there a way to get a hold of it, so that we can show it in the future.

01:23:01.000 --> 01:23:12.000

Yeah, so we are recording this right now I also will be posting the full length version of everyone's testimonials on YouTube later today and I'll be sure to share that out with everyone.

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Thank you.

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I didn't want to say thank you to everyone that did participate and submitted a testimonial that this was amazing and we really thank you for everyone's time and efforts on on this

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Donny, are you there.

01:23:33.000 --> 01:23:52.000

Yes, I'm here How are you good how are you good thank you for letting us all come together in this way I think this was a very powerful platform. And my question is where do we as a group, go next from here, how can we build on this momentum and keep

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the progress going.

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And we will be inviting everyone that participated on to those weekly calls that we have for the big tent coalition, but most importantly now that the legislators started drawing the maps and over the weekend they released their proposed senate draft

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maps. We want to encourage everyone to participate in the upcoming committee hearings that they will be holding hopefully they will be allowing the public to provide input on the maps will have to wait and see what their plan is and what their strategy

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is, but that our voices in this process are going to be absolutely instrumental to getting maps that reflect our communities, so please be on the lookout for notices, not only from the League of Women Voters but from all of the groups on the format's

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Texas coalition and in that that big tech call that we have will be alerting folks in the community for upcoming opportunities to participate in those committee hearings.

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Deal. Thanks again, stay safe everybody.

01:24:54.000 --> 01:25:07.000

You too. Thanks so much for participating. We appreciate you.

01:25:07.000 --> 01:25:10.000

Okay if no one else has any other questions.

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I have dropped my email in the chat Sydney are you raising your hand to get Let me try one more time. Did you have a question,

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not sure what's happening. Okay. If anyone else has questions so I see Lisa asked.

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Hey Lisa How are you, I'm fine Stephanie this has been quite fantastic.

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I do have a question, a couple of questions are in the chat, by the way.

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But what are our options. If, and I might say, when the majority of maps are drawn to be unfair.

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How can we, what can we continue to do as your, you know basic participant activist.

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So as his master being drawn so the Senate, as I mentioned earlier did really serve draft maps, and there are some changes from the last decade, but a lot of the districts.

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Still looking very heavily gerrymandered.

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And so this is an very crucial part, a crucial time of the redistricting process. So the fair maps Texas coalition and members of this big 10 group remember we pushed really hard to see, to get the legislature to make improvements in that redistricting

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process this time around to include the public more. And so now, during this upcoming week or two when they're going to be actually holding committee hearings on the maps, we need to show up and we need to participate in those hearings and we need to

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provide input on how those maps are impacting our community.

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A lot of them still crack and Packer communities significantly. And it does the current maps does ensure that the Republican majority maintains controls of legislator, even though that's not what our most recent elections have shown, where Democrats are

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inching up closer to the 45 to 50% mark as far as the election, turnout and results go. So what we need is we need folks to show up and provide that testimony because that testimony becomes very important and cases for future litigation, where we.

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If the legislator does intentionally discriminated against voters the color and the maps, we can turn around and file litigation.

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To protect those voters of color. Stephanie.

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There is a question from Liz Wally in the chat. What do you think about the freedom to vote at in relations to redistricting.

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The freedom to vote act as the mansion proposal is that correct.

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Because if your hero is going to take you off mute, are you here. Still,

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if I can find her.

01:28:20.000 --> 01:28:24.000

Those are you still here

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might not want to talk.

01:28:26.000 --> 01:28:30.000

We can How are you doing this morning. Okay.

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So, the freedom to vote act is what was for the people act. And it is excellent. And it does include redistricting.

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What was it for the people act or is it the mansion compromise that you're talking about now.

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It's confusing, but the mansion one is the freedom to vote Act, which was HR one, but everyone who was behind HR one is now behind the freedom that I wouldn't see everyone.

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I wouldn't see everyone. It's the way to go at this point.

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and hopefully it will.

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Well actually be put up, and the filibustered, which supposedly will then convince mansion, to do something about the filibuster, and then we will be able to pass this, but most of them can have redistricting in it which would affect ours, and could affect

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it. even if our built in already passed.

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Right, major deal.

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I'll speak on the redistricting component, speak on whether or not I like one over the other, because I, I really liked the original.

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Yes, but, but the mansion act i saw that they would apply the parts about redistricting retro actively however, the compromise bill does not include any provisions about creating an independent commission.

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It does outlook partisan Jan gerrymandering, but it only applies to this decade of redistricting litigation. I don't know if I mentioned but that would also apply to map so retro actively so if the legislature does pass maps, and this new US congressional

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bill does pass then they would have to go back and fix the maps once more. And the for the people act, though was way more comprehensive, it would allow for independent commissions for our congressional districts here in Texas, which will be a huge improvement.

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I believe it also outlined practice partisan gerrymandering and the BOA has such a rich plethora of reforms to really clean up our democracy and make it work for the people.

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And that's what a lot of folks are still, I know, at least for the poor people's campaign, we are still pushing for the full entirety of the for the people act to pass or also pushing for an end to the filibuster.

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But I understand that folks do you want to make those compromises, because at this point. Something would be better than nothing at all, I guess. Yeah, it's realistic.

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Well, we have yet you have to have it, we have to have it and we have to have it sooner we lose our democracy, so we'll have to wait and see though there are, I think 10 republicans that are willing to sign on to that as well so I guess time will tell.

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I don't think anyone expects that, and then I think what is expected is that mansion will have to then do something with the filibuster, because there is no other option.

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Did anyone else have any other questions.

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No. Okay, so we will be circulating a recording of this event. And like I mentioned, I'll be sharing it out as a press advisory So, Any members of the press can go back and pick out quotes if you'd like to use those.

01:32:24.000 --> 01:32:37.000

And also connect you with the folks that were included in the press conference will also be posting this on our website and on YouTube as well. All right, all right thank you guys so much for participating really appreciate everyone, thanks so much.

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Steph.

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Yeah. Could you put your email in the chat.

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I did let me do it one more time.

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Thank you.

01:32:49.000 --> 01:33:01.000

Thank you for everything. Thanks you guys for being here, really appreciate all of you.

01:33:01.000 --> 01:33:18.000
We go.