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BEFORE THE OHIO APPORTIONMENT BOARD

- - -

In the Matter of the :
Establishment of the Ohio :
General Assembly District :
Lines in the State of :
Ohio. :

- - -

PROCEEDINGS

before Auditor David Yost, Vice Chair; Mr. Troy Judy,
President Niehaus's Designee; Ms. Diane Brey,
Governor's Designee; Mr. Matt Damschroder, Secretary
of State's Designee; and Senator Michael Skindell,
Leader Budish's Designee, the Ohio Apportionment
Board, at The Ohio State University-Newark, Reese
Center-Alfred Performing Arts Hall, RS110, 1209
University Drive, Newark, Ohio, called at 9 a.m. on
Friday, August 26, 2011.

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1 Friday Morning Session,

2 August 26, 2011.

3 - - -

4 MS. MANN: We now call to order the
5 Newark regional hearing of the Ohio Apportionment
6 Board. As people arrive who would like to testify,
7 we would ask that you please fill out a witness slip
8 on the table and please provide them to our staff
9 Kylie.

10 The 2011 Apportionment Board which is
11 responsible for drawing districts of the Ohio Senate
12 and Ohio House of Representatives held its initial
13 meeting on August 4, 2011. At that meeting the Board
14 adopted rules which require a series of public
15 hearings throughout the state to gather public input
16 and comment and appointed myself, Heather Mann, and
17 Ray DiRossi as joint secretaries of the Board.

18 Seeing that the Vice Chair of the
19 Apportionment Board State Auditor Dave Yost is here
20 with us today, we will ask Auditor Yost if he would
21 please preside over this regional hearing.

22 AUDITOR YOST: Thank you, Madam
23 Secretary. If you would call the roll, please.

24 MS. MANN: Troy Judy.

25 MR. JUDY: Present representing President

1 of the Senate Tom Niehaus.

2 MS. MANN: Diane Brey.

3 MS. BREY: Present representing Governor
4 John Kasich.

5 MS. MANN: Auditor Yost.

6 AUDITOR YOST: Present.

7 MS. MANN: Matt Damschroder.

8 MR. DAMSCHRODER: Present representing
9 Secretary of State Jon Husted.

10 MS. MANN: Senator Skindell.

11 SENATOR SKINDELL: Present and I am the
12 designee for Representative Armond Budish who is also
13 the Minority Leader in the House.

14 AUDITOR YOST: Thank you. All officers
15 are present or represented. I would like to remind
16 everything we are here to gather information about
17 the Ohio redistricting process for the Ohio Senate
18 and Ohio House. This panel is not responsible for
19 drawing the Congressional district lines. That is
20 the function of the Ohio General Assembly and then
21 the bill will be sent to the Governor for veto or
22 signature.

23 We are here to listen, not to debate you
24 or each other. And we ask that you keep your
25 comments to the business at hand which is the drawing

1 of the districts for the Ohio House and Ohio Senate.
2 The federal census shows that Ohio has a population
3 of 11,536,504 people so House districts ideally would
4 contain 116,530 people and each of the 33 Senate
5 districts would have 349,590 people.

6 Our work is governed by a fairly complex
7 set of rules and standards set out in the Ohio
8 Constitution Article XI as well as applicable federal
9 law and other rules, especially the federal Voting
10 Rights Act. Sometimes these districts are -- excuse
11 me, these standards are complex and even in
12 contention with each other.

13 The process is complicated, and I would
14 like to call on Matt Damschroder to present a program
15 that the Secretary of State is offering to allow
16 individual citizens to undertake this task
17 themselves.

18 MR. DAMSCHRODER: Thank you,
19 Mr. Chairman.

20 On behalf of Secretary Husted I am
21 pleased to present information about reshapeohio.org
22 which is a joint venture sponsored by the Secretary
23 of State's Office, the Legislative Task Force on
24 Redistricting, and the Apportionment Board.

25 This website allows the public to

1 participate in the redistricting process with an open
2 and interactive website where they can learn more
3 about the process of redistricting including the
4 rules as Auditor Yost talked about which can be very
5 complicated, as well as follow the hearings and the
6 proceedings of the Apportionment Board, and perhaps
7 most excitingly draw their own maps.

8 It's not an easy process, but the
9 reshapeohio.org website does make it a little bit
10 more user friendly so the public can try their own
11 hand at map making -- map making and experience
12 firsthand the frustrations of what happens when you
13 move a single ward to a different district, all of a
14 sudden the population is out of balance, and you have
15 to go back and try again.

16 There have been over 380 individuals so
17 far in Ohio who have registered at reshapeohio.org
18 and tried map making and we would encourage the
19 public to take advantage of this opportunity between
20 now and the end of the process. So go today, if you
21 have not already, to reshapeohio.org.

22 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 AUDITOR YOST: Thank you,
24 Mr. Damschroder.

25 We would also like to thank the Ohio

1 State University Newark Campus for hosting us here
2 today, President Gordon Gee, Board of Trustees, Kathy
3 Cope, and Barb Gassin, also our own Lisa Griffin who
4 has helped with the logistical arrangements all
5 through this process and done a flawless job, so well
6 done, a matter of a privilege to Chair. I would like
7 to thank Senator Steve Douk whose district is up in
8 Cleveland. He has traveled extensively with the
9 Board over the last few days to be here and that's
10 quite a commitment for an official. We appreciate
11 him participating and making that effort. Also my
12 former colleague on the Ohio Board -- the Ohio
13 Prosecuting Attorneys Association Jim Slagle is in
14 the audience. I don't know if Jim will be
15 testifying. He has already testified once, but I did
16 want to note this is the third hearing he has
17 attended. I appreciate your interest in the process.

18 A few housekeeping matters. We have
19 information available about the standards. We have a
20 copy of our Article XI, population demographics,
21 rules of the Board, and some information available in
22 the lobby on the table, and we encourage everybody to
23 take advantage of that.

24 We are transcribing the proceedings today
25 via court reporter. We ask that you keep your voice

1 up as you testify, speak clearly so the court
2 reporter can hear you. That testimony will be
3 transcribed for the benefit of the Board to use in
4 their deliberations. It will also be published on
5 the Secretary of State's website reshapeohio.org.

6 With that we will turn to the witness
7 testimony. Our first witness this morning is Anne
8 Nelson representing the League of Women Voters of
9 Ohio. She has certainly been an active participant
10 in these hearings across the state.

11 Welcome and you may proceed.

12 MS. NELSON: Thank you. I am Anne Nelson
13 representing the League of Women Voters of Ohio, and
14 I thank you for this opportunity to talk about
15 redistricting. We believe the responsibility for
16 good government rests on the shoulders of its
17 citizens and participation in the democratic process
18 builds better government. As manager of our IMpact
19 project, I spent four years traveling Ohio holding
20 nearly 60 town hall meetings hosted by the local
21 Leagues about political reform issues including
22 redistricting. I've heard folks from all corners of
23 our state discussing the way Ohio has drawn
24 historically the boundaries of our political
25 districts always favoring the political party in

1 power at the time, basically choosing their voters.
2 Ohioans want to believe in our democracy as defined
3 by Abraham Lincoln "of, by and for the people."
4 Ohioans want change in this process.

5 Our Secretary of State Jon Husted has
6 said, "Ohio has used a hyper-partisan process of
7 drawing districts for far too long, the time is now
8 for Ohio to adopt a proposal to end the partisan
9 gerrymandering that serves political parties over the
10 public."

11 Licking County has been kept whole for
12 the Ohio Senate District 31, is split horizontally
13 for the Ohio House Districts 71 and 91, and has two
14 Congressional districts, 12 and 18. Licking County,
15 you're lucky. Some municipalities are split into
16 thirds to "crack" a party majority. Look at Akron
17 and Dayton. Some areas are "packed" to keep a
18 political majority in one district so surrounding
19 districts can be manipulated to favor the other
20 party. Look at Cleveland.

21 In Ohio, 61 of our 99 state House
22 districts favor the Republicans even though our state
23 is about 50/50, 49/51, Democratic/Republican. Nearly
24 two-thirds of our current House, Senate, and
25 Congressional districts favor one political party

1 over the other by over 15 percent, thus practically
2 ensuring who will be elected long before the
3 election. This discourages accountability and
4 results in political apathy.

5 The League of Women Voters, along with
6 other good government groups, conducted a competition
7 in 2009, it was kind of a trial run, based on the
8 same information the legislature of the Apportionment
9 Board used to draw the districts. The contest showed
10 that districts can be drawn to comply with the Voting
11 Rights Act, be compact, competitive, respectful of
12 political subdivisions, and fairly represent the
13 political values of the voters of Ohio. Even the
14 worst scoring plan submitted in that competition was
15 quantitatively fairer than the actual 2009
16 redistricting plan. A similar competition has been
17 conducted this year and the public has submitted maps
18 based on the same data that is available to the
19 legislature. Winning maps have been announced for
20 the House and Senate and -- they now have been
21 announced for both. And I have copies for your
22 consideration. I think they are on your desk.
23 Congressional map winners will be announced soon, and
24 those maps will be available.

25 The internet has made the process so much

1 more accessible and manageable. We can and should
2 use the ideas of these imaginative and innovative
3 citizens who have the ability to draw unbiased,
4 nonpartisan boundaries. Laws do not have to be
5 changed to take advantage of the ideas people have.
6 You just have to be, Apportionment Board, willing to
7 consider the recommendations that will come through
8 this process and to evaluate them in a way that will
9 enable Ohio voters to choose their legislators and
10 not the other way around. And I'm thrilled that our
11 contests are being held and made available to the
12 public.

13 The League asks that the process be
14 transparent, that the discussions be held in public,
15 and decisions be made public throughout the process
16 with opportunity for public input. We suggest that
17 the proposed maps be published on the internet at
18 least two weeks before they are voted on to allow the
19 public input. This will take the process out of the
20 backrooms.

21 The League of Women Voters has a long
22 history of favoring redistricting and reapportionment
23 practices that put the citizens in the forefront. We
24 believe that voters should pick their legislators,
25 not the other way around.

1 Thank you for your attention. Any
2 questions?

3 AUDITOR YOST: Thank you for your
4 testimony. Are there any questions by the members of
5 the Board?

6 Senator Skindell.

7 SENATOR SKINDELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
8 Ms. Nelson, all I wanted to say is to
9 express our appreciation for you coming out today to
10 provide the testimony. As we travel around the
11 state, it's been wonderful to see the League
12 participation, having various local members come out
13 and provide testimony on this important topic. Thank
14 you.

15 MS. NELSON: Thank you. I appreciate
16 that pat on the back for the League of Women Voters
17 and we don't have a chapter here but we have people
18 here, I think. Thank you so much.

19 AUDITOR YOST: And I only can speak for
20 myself, not for the Board in this matter, but I
21 assure you I will consider the -- in fact, have
22 already begun to take a look at the two winning maps
23 in your competition. We too want a fair and open
24 process which is why we are having 11 hearings all
25 over the state. I think I can speak for the Board

1 and say this, it's been a long week.

2 I have a question for you, however, and I
3 am just curious as to your thoughts on this, I've
4 heard it asserted over and over again this week by
5 the League of Women Voters' representatives that this
6 is a burning issue that people want to change, and
7 we're sitting once again in a nearly empty room,
8 subtracting staff would be very close to empty. I
9 wonder what conclusions you think this Board should
10 draw from the lack of interest in these hearings
11 statewide.

12 MS. NELSON: Well, thank you for that
13 question. And as I mentioned before, we don't have a
14 League here in Newark or we would probably have more
15 people here. That's one of the things we do and that
16 was the purpose of the town hall meetings that we
17 held for four years. And as far as what we can do,
18 just educate, install civic programs back in our
19 school curriculum, make sure that kids coming up
20 learn about this process, go home and talk to their
21 folks, get them involved, and just market it to the
22 people, I think it's a lack of information quite
23 frankly, and engage the media so that people really
24 know that they do have an opportunity to take part in
25 this.

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CERTIFICATE

I do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the proceedings taken by me in this matter on Friday, August 26, 2011, and carefully compared with my original stenographic notes.

Karen Sue Gibson, Registered
Merit Reporter.

(KSG-5403a)

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