

CHAIRPERSON: Senator Kevin Kelly

SENATORS: McCrory, Daugherty Abrams,
Formica

REPRESENTATIVES: Haddad, Exum, Candelora,
Perillo

SENATOR KELLY (21ST): And welcome to Shelton City Hall and the 21st State Senate District. This is the public hearing on Reapportionment for Greater Bridgeport, and we do thank Mayor Lauretti from the City of Shelton and the people of Shelton who have opened up their City Hall for this hearing. Before we call anybody to come up and testify, are there any members who would like to make any comments or remarks? Representative Perillo.

REP. PERILLO (113TH): Thank you, Senator. And just very simply welcome to the 113th District. We are happy to have everybody here. Thanks.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST): Thank you.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): And I will also just express my gratitude to the City of Shelton for hosting us today. We thought it was important for this Committee to ensure that we were doing regional public hearings, one in Southeastern Connecticut, one in Southwestern Connecticut, and one in North Central Connecticut to make sure that folks had an opportunity to address the Committee in person. Tomorrow, we will be doing our first Zoom hearing for the Committee and Commission ever.

And so tomorrow a testimony can be submitted to the Committee over via Zoom, and you can sign up by going to the Reapportionment Committee's website. A signup has already begun, and my understanding is that we have about 45 people already signed up for tomorrow's public hearing by Zoom. And then last thing I will just say prior to this is that even

after our public hearings have concluded, the Committee and the subsequent Commission will accept input from members of the public in terms of what the map should look like.

You can do that by submitting through the email address that's set up on our website. And you can use a lot of these third party tools that are available now davesredistricting.org is one, redistrictr.org is another, take out the ER just put an R at the end, it's, you know, very trendy. And you can use those tools to draw maps that you can then subsequently submit to the Committee or the Commission for their consideration and we welcome that kind of input.

So, thank you very much for being here today. And we look forward to hearing your testimony today. And we look forward to people testifying tomorrow and receiving your submissions if you so choose.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST): Thank you. The first speaker this afternoon is Marc Garofalo.

MARC GAROFALO: Good morning or good afternoon, members of the Committee, especially to Representative Perillo, hope you caught the same amount of traffic that I did on the way over here. So, thank you very much for your consideration Senator and the Representatives. My name is Marc Garofalo, I am the Town Clerk of the City of Derby. I am here before you to present a testimony of the resolution that was adopted by the Board of Aldermen and Alderwomen in November of 2020.

Whereas the City of Derby is the smallest city in terms of area in this entire state of Connecticut. And whereas since the implementation of one person, one vote for equal representation after the 1965 Connecticut Constitutional Convention, the City of Derby has been split into at least two or three different State Representative and State Senate Districts. And whereas being a small part of

several districts does not serve the citizens of Derby well as their voice is diluted by the number of districts of which we are a part.

And whereas the State of Connecticut will redraw the state legislative district lines in 2021 following the decennial census. And whereas the citizens of Derby deserve a unified voice with clarity of vision on the issues that are important to the Connecticut's smallest city.

Now therefore the Board of Aldermen, Alderwomen of the City of Derby hereby resolves the following: That the city of Derby with enthusiastic bipartisan support request the State of Connecticut Redistricting Committee adopt a 2021 Redistricting Plan to include the City of Derby in only one state representative district and only one state senate district.

2.) That the City of Derby strongly urges are newly elected and reelected state legislative delegation to support this request and encourages them to work in a bipartisan effort to affect this much needed change for the fair and equitable representation of the City of Derby and its residents and,

3.) That the legislative delegation who will represent us in the 2021-2023 General Assembly will keep the City of Derby updated as to the status of this initiative. It was adopted on the 19th day of November 2020.

So, I present that, and I have provided copies for the Committee. I also have submitted the testimony of the Chair of the Derby Democratic Town Committee who was on vacation Aniello Malerba, where the Derby Democratic Town Committee did unanimously endorse the support of this resolution by the Board of Aldermen and Alderwomen and I did present my own presentation as Town Clerk, because this also impacts our elections, it increases the cost of our elections to have three legislative districts,

including the absentee ballots. So, we appreciate your consideration in this most difficult project. And thank you very much for your time.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST): Thank you very much, Marc. Are there any questions?

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Not a question, but just a comment. I just wanted to make sure that if you have written testimony that you haven't submitted through the Committee email address, please provide it to the clerk, we will make sure that it becomes part of the public record that's publicly available in our website. And I appreciate that consideration. That would be -- it's helpful to the Committee and to the subsequent Commission.

MARC GAROFALO: I have done that, with all three. Thank you very much, members of the Committee.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): And just because he mentioned traffic, I realized I may mention the fact that Representative Exum is on her way. She said -- emailed -- texted me and said that she would be a few minutes late, but she will be arriving shortly, thank you.

MARC GAROFALO: Thank you.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST): Thank you. Next person, Sujata Gadkar-Wilcox.

SUJATA GADKAR-WILCOX: Thank you. Good afternoon. Dear members of the Reapportionment Committee, I am Sujata Gadkar-Wilcox. I am Director of Large for the League of Women Voters of Connecticut and Associate Professor of Legal Studies at Quinnipiac University. I appreciate very much the opportunity to make comments at a public hearing about the important issue of Reapportionment. Our democracy is fragile and what puts our democratic ideals most in danger is public apathy, which comes from cynicism about the political process.

A recent Pew Research poll found that only a bare majority of Americans, 55%, believe that ordinary citizens can influence our government. That was down seven percentage points from 2016. Pew also found that 67% of Americans believe that most politicians are corrupt. This cynicism is dangerous, and it erodes the pillars of our democracy. As a teacher and scholar of constitutional law, I frequently hear concerns about the integrity of our political system in the voices of my students.

If voters believe that the political system lacks transparency and they cannot raise their voices to affect meaningful change, they will not become educated on the key issues facing our state and will not be the active participants in our government that we need them to be to have a healthy democracy. We must restore public trust in government. Reapportionment is a foundational constitutional requirement, but it also gives rise to concerns about the public's ability to have a meaningful voice in their government.

People feel this process with suspicion worried that it may reflect that their representatives are choosing their voters rather than their voters choosing their representatives. Even though Connecticut has a bipartisan process for reapportionment the fact that this process is a political one rather than being handled by an entirely independent Commission already makes it suspect in the minds of voters. Given this fact transparency is critical.

During this period, it's crucial to educate Connecticut citizens on our procedures, and particularly on the Commission's bipartisan character to ensure as much faith in the process as possible. The Commission should educate citizens on the process through mailers and the media, seek meaningful input including after draft maps have

been produced, offer sufficient time for public comment prior to final decisions being made, incorporate substantive aspects of the public comment into the final maps and make all deliberations of the public Commission accessible. Thank you so much for all of your hard work on behalf of Connecticut residents.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST): Thank you. Are there any questions? Comments? Thank you very much. Next is Rhonda Caldwell.

RHONDA CALDWELL: Good afternoon. And thank you for this public comment here in Shelton. I am Rhonda Caldwell from Hamden Action Now. I live in Hamden, Connecticut. We are a group of concerned citizens around voting and making sure everyone is having their votes heard and their voices heard. So, I just wanted to say, I really want -- I really enjoy you are from Quinnipiac, I could just say you're right around the corner from us.

You know, I really agree with the things that you said today, because we are coming here -- Hamden Action Now and myself are coming here to say that we are really concerned about the public comment period process. You know we are standing in a room inside of a building in the middle of a pandemic at 1:00 o'clock in the afternoon on a workday that makes it very hard for people to try to get here. And I understand when you opened up the meeting, you said that this was for the Bridgeport community.

So, I was wondering why it wasn't held in Bridgeport. So, these are the questions that we have to ask ourselves about public comment. And you know we have to start to reimagine what our democracy looks like here in Connecticut and in our country. You know we have to look at public comment as really trying to engage and educate voters on these processes, because they are vitally important to our communities. It cannot continue to be looked at just as a legislative obligation.

You know, over the course of the last 12 or 18 months, our whole world has been changed and uprooted because of this pandemic. We have had to learn how to use Zoom, we have had to learn how to do things virtually and I just want to encourage everyone here today, educating the process, the voters on this process is vitally important. I really didn't even know about these hearings until a friend called me and said, did you understand that you missed the first two hearings, there is one today, and I think there is a virtual one.

We didn't even really know how to sign up mailers, website. Spend the money to educate the people and really engage the public in this process. You know I have a friend who is here today who ran for State Senate in the 17th District. And we thought it was very interesting that I live in Hamden, the 17th District included Hamden, a small portion in New Haven, and then the valley. I mean, again, who made that decision to say that these communities which are very different were being represented in that way those lines were driven and drawn, it was very interesting to us.

I also text my Senator who I think is a good one and the best in Connecticut, no offense Senator Martin Looney, and I asked him, how do I even get on the Reapportionment Commission? And he gave me a really great answer. And again, it was something I wasn't even aware of what the process was. And again, that's troubling, because understanding who your representation is, how the lines are drawn, and how you represent -- and like what is the demographic in those lines, you know, what the economic, the social, the racial makeup.

It's vitally important that people need to know this, you know, apportionment and districting is a very big part of hearing the voices of the people and having the representation, us being able to select our representation. So again, I want to

encourage everybody today, and I don't want to take up too much more time preaching because I know you all hear us. But in closing, I just want to say our legislation and the process has to really, truly, envision engaging the public and don't be afraid of it.

You know, don't try to say we know, we have to do these public hearings, you know, look at it as something that is positive. And in order to really achieve a true democracy, you have to have the people involved. Okay, so I really want to encourage everybody with that today. And I look forward to trying to figure out this process a little bit more myself. Thank you.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST): Any questions or comments?
Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86TH): Thank you. I just wanted to respond. I don't so much have a question and I appreciate the points you have made. We struggled to try to get public hearings put forth and the reason why it's not in Bridgeport is the City Hall. It didn't feel comfortable having it there. But it certainly was an area that we looked to have these hearings. And while ideally having them during the day isn't perfect.

It was the times that we were able to schedule, and we do have the virtual hearings. And just to reiterate, I think as the Chairman said before, we have our website, where you could submit your written -- any type of written testimony that is ongoing. So even though these hearings are ending tomorrow, it doesn't mean that the public cannot submit written testimony at any time and this process will continue on for the next couple of months. Thank you.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST): Yes, I also want to echo. You know, I would have rather had this in the City of Bridgeport. It is the state's largest community.

And we endeavored to do that but unfortunately there weren't any public spaces that were available to the Committee. Be that as it may, people can still participate and use those interactive tools. I think it's very interesting. It's something we haven't had in the past 10 years ago, we had one computer with one printer that would do maps at the state capital.

Now people can actually go in and virtually use the data and those tools, it's davesredistricting.org and redistrictr.org. Those are two interactive tools, and it also allows the individuals to create their own maps. So, they will see how to do it and the challenges that we have as a Committee. But thank you very much for your insight. The next individual is Justin Farmer.

JUSTIN FARMER: Good afternoon, Representatives and Senators. Thank you for putting this on. My name is Justin Farmer. I am a City Councilor in Hamden. I first just want to thank you all for your work on prison gerrymandering and making sure that we as a State are respecting everyone's bodies and everybody's voices in the election process. We do a redistricting every decade, right?

There is going to be demographic changes, there is things that we have to think about traffic, schools, funding, and community members firstly need where their needs need to be met, and what we can do for our limited resources. So first, I just want to thank you all for that. I have lived through two redistrictings the next time, I will be 37 when we do a redistricting. And I just want to stress some of the comments that Ms. Caldwell made before about using us on the local level to really be partners to better educate people, and to share information and to get things out.

A lot of us go through election cycle, not learning these things. And once it comes to us, we are always in a rush, in a panic. I think there could

be a better partnership with this Reapportionment Commission to really think of ways of engaging the local municipalities to really take charge and think about how redistricting should be done. Especially when it comes to regionalization as towns working together and thinking about how they can collaborate or what community members they share so, I just wanted to share that perspective.

Again, Bridgeport is our largest community in our state. And those demographics aren't going to change the top 10 or probably going to be the top 10 as long as Connecticut exists. And I think it's up to us to figure out how we respect the cities, as well as our suburbs and rural communities to really highlight how we as Connecticut can work together. The very last thing I will say is that I appreciate that this is a bipartisan process, that's not true in every state. I think, as the professor said earlier, we need people to buy into our democracy.

We need people to believe that this system actually works. So, I thank you all and look forward to working in partnership with you all so that we really educate and get everybody involved. So, thanks again.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST): Are there -- are there any questions or comments? Thank you very much. The next individual is Vanessa Liles.

DR. VANESSA LILES: Good afternoon, distinguished members of the Reapportionment Committee. My name is Dr. Vanessa Liles, and I am here today to testify as a Bridgeport voter, representing my organization PT Partners, a grassroots resident led community organizing nonprofit that aims to rebuild community and P.T. Barnum Apartments and all housing in Bridgeport -- low income public housing in Bridgeport. So, I am here representing the -- I am also here representing the Unrig Bridgeport Coalition, a broad based coalition working to fix Bridgeport's broken democracy.

Once drawn, our electoral maps determine how we are represented in the government for the next 10 years. This means all state and local decisions on health care, jobs, the environment, education and more must be based on maps that are drawn fairly and accurately with all voices considered and equitably represented. In June of 2019 however, the US Supreme Court ruled in Rucho v. League of Women Voters of North Carolina that no fair test exists for courts to determine when partisan gerrymandering has gone too far.

As a result, Federal Courts will be hands off during this redistricting process even when new district lines are drawn to intentionally decrease the voting power of voters based solely on their political party. Unfortunately, in Bridgeport, we know all too well how it feels to be disenfranchised, as our City's democracy has been hijacked to ensure those with power keep it. We know firsthand that democracy dies when partisan players are allowed to make decisions in the dark.

The General Assembly must establish much better transparency requirements for redistricting. The National Organization represent us, which fights to end corruption and federal government assesses the threat of partisan gerrymandering, and Connecticut as high largely because of the absence of robust transparency measures. Due to this lack of transparency, voters are in the dark about how districts are drawn, state legislative districts must be within 10% of the ideal population average, which is the state population divided by the number of districts for each body, 36 for the State Senate and 151 for the State House.

Some districts exceed the ideal when some are below the ideal, yet no one knows how or why this happens. Finally, when maps are developed the public should know what considerations in addition to federal requirements and geographic contiguity have been

used to create districts. The public should know what conversations have you been having internally about redistricting. What concerns have you all raised among yourselves? Therefore, in solidarity with the League of Women Voters we believe the best way to conduct redistricting is through independent Nonpartisan Special Commissions made up of groups and individuals that are representative of the communities where districts are drawn.

Voters should choose their representatives rather than legislators choosing their voters. On behalf of the Unrig Bridgeport Coalition and Bridgeport voters, we ask you today the following questions. Will you introduce state legislation this year to create greater redistricting transparency? Will you publicly release your decision making process into which districts will be above and which will be lower than the ideal population. And last, will you publicly release what considerations in addition to federal requirements and geographic contiguity you are using to create all districts.

And last, Connecticut's redistricting process is largely game inside a ball. The long term strategy we must amend our constitution to is we must amend our constitution to remove elected officials from the central role they play. However, it is possible for you, the Decennial Connecticut Reapportionment Committee, to lead now on the issues of transparency, accountability, fairness, and equity. Thank you.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST): Thank you. Are there any questions or comments? Seeing none. The next individual is Kim Healy.

KIM HEALY: Okay. Hello. Do I talk into this one or -- okay. So good afternoon, esteemed members of the Reapportionment Committee. My name is Kim Healy, and I am a resident of Wilton, Connecticut. My husband and I moved to Connecticut in 1994 and we moved to the City of Norwalk where we lived for 15

years. We were part of a very residential district called the Sixth Taxing District but for state purposes, the representative's seat was incorporated into the Town of Darien where the representative lives and so I guess -- sorry, the point was that -- you know, we felt well represented being that we were all in similar residential type, village type place.

We moved 2008 and at that time, and until 2018, we had the good fortune to have both our State Senator and our State Representative live right in town. We would meet them often at public events, at church, the grocery store or just around town. They were our neighbors, they shared our state priorities. Well, in surrounding towns of Darien, New Canaan, Westport, Ridgefield all have representatives who live in their town, whose top priority is the interest of the residents of their own towns.

So, Wilton used to have its own town representative, but it was broken up due to typical gerrymandering considerations rather than what is best for the Town of Wilton. And according to the Connecticut Constitution Article 3 Section 4 it states, for the purpose of forming assembly districts no town shall be divided except for the purpose of forming assembly districts wholly within the town. The needs of Wilton and Norwalk are vastly different.

Both municipalities deserve to be served appropriately and with dedicated representation whose job it is to make the Town or City his or her absolute top priority. I ask that you redraw the lines to have Wilton wholly within one representative district with a portion of one of our surrounding towns to make up the difference. Thank you so much for the work you do, and my -- your consideration.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST): Thank you very much. Are there any questions or comments? Seeing none. The next person is Tom O'Dea.

REP. O'DEA (125th): Chairman Kelly, Chairman Haddad, my name is Tom O'Dea -- and members of the Committee, excuse me. My name is Tom O'Dea State Representative for the 125th District which includes part of Wilton and most of New Canaan. I come here to testify on behalf of my constituents, particularly those in Wilton but also in New Canaan, to protect the towns and have them have their own representative.

As Mrs. Healy just testified or spoke, Wilton used to have both its Senator and State Rep. from Wilton, it was about -- it was five years ago. A couple of facts since the last census Wilton's population grew from 18,062 to 18,503. Wilton is the largest Municipality without a resident Senator or State Rep., as I understand it. And Wilton is the largest Municipality split into multiple districts, none of which are 50% or more of the district. Those are two very important stats, I believe that should be given your consideration.

And so, I was going to cite the Connecticut Constitution but since Mrs. Healy already did that I will not restate what the Constitution says. But it is unfair for the residents of Wilton to be split up the way they have been split up. And I would also like to state that New Canaan's democratic -- former Democratic Registrar of Voters said to me at a 9/11 event, make sure New Canaan is not split up like Wilton is.

And so, I wanted to reiterate that for everyone here that both New Canaan and Wilton believe they should have a resident representative up in Hartford and I do love representing Wilton. It's very similar to New Canaan, but I feel compelled to state what my constituents want and it's that is a more local representative. Norwalk is also a fantastic Municipality, but it's very different in makeup than Wilton.

And so, Wilton is represented by a Norwalk resident and a New Canaan resident and hasn't been represented by a Wilton resident in either House or Senate like I said for about five years. So, unless there are any questions, I will submit some written testimony, but happy to answer any questions anybody has here, if there are any.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST): Questions or comments? Thank you very much.

REP. O'DEA (125th): Thank you all very much.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST): The next person is Monica Peterson.

MONICA PETERSON: Good afternoon. Thank you. Okay. Good afternoon. My name is Monica Peterson, and I am a resident of Shelton. And I am here today to ask you to keep the fourth congressional district of Greenwich to Bridgeport intact. As a longtime resident of Shelton, which is also in the fourth district I know the importance of the interdependence of our towns and cities. I go to Bridgeport frequently for medical and business appointments, entertainment, and educational opportunities.

Therefore, Bridgeport's challenges and successes impact my life. In addition, I commuted to work in Stamford every day for 15 years, so I needed to drive through Bridgeport or take a train that went through Bridgeport. I know from direct experience that we need to work as a unit to tackle transportation issues. As you mentioned earlier, one of your members couldn't make it down quite yet because of traffic concerns. So, this is something that needs to have a regional approach. So, I thank you very much for your consideration. Any questions?

SENATOR KELLY (21ST): Thank you. Are there any questions or comments? Seeing none. Thank you very much. The next person is Bette Lynn Paez.

BETTE LYNN PAEZ: I am going lower [laughing]. So, I am a -- when I grew up in Connecticut, graduated from Shelton High School, couldn't wait to get out of here and now I am right back where I started. I lived in Fairfield, I owned a bakery in Bridgeport 30 years ago, it's all part of a unit to Monica's point. But as I am listening to everybody talking, you know, we are asking amateurs to do really what needs to be a professional job.

And I think looking at the redistricting, there are people -- professionals who draw maps without getting into the politics. I think that would go a long way to making people feel more comfortable that we are operating in a bipartisan way in this state. So, I would urge you to look at the viability of doing that. Everybody's got a lot of interests, but we need to bring it together and somebody who is kind of looking at it from 30,000 feet -- bird's don't see all the lines that we draw on a map, you know, we need the bigger picture. Thank you.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST): Thank you. Are there any questions or comments? Seeing none. The next individual is John Szewczyk.

JOHN SZEWCZYK: Hi, good afternoon. My name is John Szewczyk. I am a Selectman in the Town of Durham. But I am speaking here today as an individual, not for our entire board. I've been a Selectman there since 2007 so I do think I have a deep knowledge on this issue. Durham is a small town, 7500 residents bordering North Branford, Madison, Guilford, Middletown, Middlefield, Killingworth, Haddam and Wallingford. Our sister town is Middlefield.

We share a school district, a town planner, transfer station, etc. We were with Middlefield from 2002 to 2012, in the 100th, along with part of Middletown.

We were separated in the last redistricting in 2012. However, more than just that we were split within our own town, so a small town of 7500 was split in two in the house. However, we were also splitting the Senate. So, we were 7500 splitting the house and splitting the Senate after we were taken away from the Town of Middlefield.

We were also -- they were two different districts. So, they weren't split along the same way. So, we had multiple districts, 7500 people. So again, here we are 7500 people, different Senate, different House, different districts within each of them. Here are the results. And I'll go over the pros and the cons. The cons, the cost of these extra voting districts were rather large paying poll workers, 1000s of dollars if not 10s of 1000s of dollars over the decade.

Confusion, many people didn't know what district they were in. I have registrars they did a great job of education, but it was still confusing not knowing exactly what district you are in. Number three, another con, we didn't have any candidates for that whole decade. Not one candidate came out of Durham, not one major party candidate. In the previous -- in 2010 we had a candidate in the House and the Senate before that we had a candidate from the House in every election in 2000 -- in the 2000s.

Furthermore, what's already been talked about, I maintain that for -- it's against Article 15 Section 2 of the State Constitution for the purpose of forming assembly districts, no towns shall be divided except for the purpose of forming assembly districts wholly within that town. Now here are the pros. We have had four different representatives or senators at all times at the capital throughout the last decade. That is huge. And that's been a really -- allows us for a lot of access for a Board of Selectmen for our residents.

And I sincerely thank, you know Representative Candelora, you are one of them, I don't think anybody could have done a better job -- maybe Ray, rest in peace, so Ray Kalinowski some of you may have served with who is from our town he did a great job, but I think Vin you've done a phenomenal job not being from Durham. I don't think we could have gotten a better Representative who, who doesn't live in town, so very receptive. We've also had Representative [inaudible], we had Senator Fasano.

We had really good -- I don't want to be overly partisan Senator Miner did a great job and there is a few others I am forgetting, it's Senator Cohen now. So, we had a very -- I'll be quick, sorry, I'll wrap this up. We did a -- we've had a lot of access. I think it's always having four representatives this year. So there is a really big pro. So, I know I talked a lot about the cons but there is a lot of benefits too. So anyway, those are the pros and cons.

Unlike Congress you have the variance that can be between districts. I am not here to say what's better or worse I simply wanted to bring to your situation what -- bring to your attention what happens when you split up a district so much. And like I said there is a lot of good, there is a lot of bad, I can't tell you if our residents think it's better or worse, you hear different varying viewpoints between what residents should you talked to about it's better to be split up or not.

So, I will just finish up with two final notes. We were split actually in Congress as well, in the 2000s. We are right on the line, I know the population shift is going that way. We are right on the line from the second and the third. We were in the second and the third now we are wholly within the third. If we were split again and remain split in the House and the Senate now, if we were split in Congress, along with the House and the Senate, that could be overly problematic.

So that's something I think we are a little bit worried about is getting split again, in that one. And finally, thank you, all of you for serving. I mean, you are going to take criticism no matter how you do these maps, and just like you do for your votes, but please know, there is a lot of residents out here that really appreciate your service, your willingness to serve, take away time from your families and your careers to serve the state, to serve your fellow residents.

And again, I want to welcome you know, one more time, just thank Representative Candolera, I think you've done a tremendous job. You are in the House, you have four different districts, four different towns in your district but I think not being from town, I can't speak highly enough about how you've been able to represent us over the last decade. So again, those are the pros and cons that I saw serving on the board. If you guys have any questions about any other pros and cons, please feel free to get a hold of me.

And I do think we were a little unique in being split up in both. And maybe not the only town in Connecticut but certainly, you know, under 10,000 that was split but certainly probably one of -- one of a only a few that was split, like I said a small town being split in both. So, thank you very much for your time.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST): Thank you. Are there any questions or comments? Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86TH): I just may -- and I do appreciate, John, your advocacy for the Town of Durham. Certainly I don't take this issue personally. It is -- I know it has been a challenge for Durham having three different voting districts. I think there is one district that has 100 voters in it. So, your comments are well taken and appreciated. Thank you for your advocacy.

JOHN SZEWCZYK: Yeah, I think Representative Candelora, I was -- I think that was 10 years ago, a lot more upset when it first happened, it's like what the heck is going on. But I think like I said, that is a big pro that I think we saw over the course of a decade. So as much as some of the people don't like it there is a pro of having four representatives up there for a small town or two Senators and two Representatives, so. And again, thank you so much for what you've done for our community over the last decade.

REP. CANDELORA (86TH): Okay.

JOHN SZEWCZYK: Okay. Thank you guys very much.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST): The next speaker is Marcus Brown.

MARCUS BROWN: Good afternoon, co-Chairman Kelly, co-Chairman Haddad, members of the Committee my name is Marcus Brown, a lifelong Bridgeport resident, President Pro Temp of the Bridgeport City Council, and I just want to make it known that I am here acting and speaking for myself and not the City Council. I come before you today to provide testimony as you go through the tough process to fairly and impartially reapportion our great state.

I want to speak to you today about Bridgeport and its position in the fourth congressional district. For as long as I can remember, even when Connecticut had six congressional seats Bridgeport has always been a part of the fourth congressional district. Bridgeport remains even with the updated census data the largest city by population in Connecticut. And considering whether Bridgeport should be removed from the fourth congressional district, the Commission should take into account a few important points.

First, as I said before, Bridgeport has been a part of the fourth congressional district even when we had six congressional districts as a result, Congressman Himes has been extremely familiar with the many challenges of the City of Bridgeport and has always been a great representative for us in Washington. Bridgeport being Connecticut's largest city in a city with a lot of issues we need to have someone who knows our City, someone who is familiar with the problems going on in Bridgeport and is ready and willing to address them.

If we are removed from the fourth congressional district, we run the risk of starting fresh with someone who is less familiar with Bridgeport and its challenges. Second, when creating congressional districts, it matters what cities you put together. You inherently are having large cities like Bridgeport and possibly New Haven compete for the attention of your congressional representatives. This affects the money that the cities need back in the district, and we are very concerned about that possibility.

Third, trends from the pandemic have shown an influx of New Yorkers to the state of Connecticut, specifically Fairfield County. The Greater Bridgeport area has been a beneficiary of this changing demographic, and it underscores Bridgeport's Police as part of the Greater New York metropolitan region. I think it is wise that Bridgeport and its leadership focus on Bridgeport's nexus with New York City which includes the Greater Stamford-Norwalk area.

That kind of coordination and regional thinking can be a better facilitated if Bridgeport remains a part of the fourth congressional district with the rest of lower Fairfield County. In some, the success of the State of Connecticut is closely tied with the success of its largest city, Bridgeport. Whatever you do, please be sure to keep the best interests of Bridgeport in mind as you seek to change the lines

for Connecticut's Congressional Districts. Thank you.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST): Are there any questions or comments? Seeing none.

MARCUS BROWN: Thank you.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST): Thank you very much.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: I'd like to -- just like to agree with him, I think he makes some very good points.

MARCUS BROWN: Thank you.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST): Thank you. Is there anyone else in attendance that would like to speak? Sure, come -- step to the microphone and state your name.

REP. BOLINSKY (106TH): Thank you to the co-chairs. Thank you to this whole Committee. My name is Mitch Bolinsky. I am the State Representative for the 106th District which covers Newtown Sandy Hook. I have to tell you that I have not disagreed with a single word that any of all the prior speakers have said. They've all touched on little nuances of the concept of representation of a district in beautiful ways even though there is a little bit -- little bitty differences.

From my perspective, Newtown and I are relatively unique for what I would consider to be a small town. As a small town we are geographically large, so we have a population of about 28,000. I am privileged to serve Newtown as a single town representative, but also to have a partner in Monroe and a partner in Bethel/Danbury that absorb 3000 and 1000 of the residents on the corners of Newtown so that we have a legislative team in addition to our single Senator, Senator Hwang of the 28th.

The perspective I would like to share is one of incredible support for the -- you know, the comments

that have been made about the continuity and the contiguous nature and the need to serve the citizens of the district in a very home based manner. So, I am fortunate enough to live in my district, serve my district and when it comes time for special needs for our district I thank God every day that I am a member of a team of four.

The cloud that that brings with Senator Hwang and I as the glue that holds it all together is unmatched and the key to it is to look at the needs of the community, rather than looking at the political motivations that might or might not go into redistricting. For instance, we are very fortunate to be represented on our southwest side by Representative Allie-Brennan of the 2nd District and therefore we have true bipartisanship in the way we approach things and our contacts within the government, including access to the governor's office and Commissions that allow us to represent the constituency that we were elected to do our best for in the most effective way possible.

So, I have nothing really to add, I just wanted to take an opposite or complimentary view of the first speaker and say that having multiple representation within a Town as long as there is a core that holds it together is a huge-huge advantage for any community. Thank you for the hard work that you guys are doing. It's a thankless job and one that comes with suspicion all the time. But the population has shifted, and we understand that lines will move. But on behalf of Newtown and Sandy Hook, I thank you for allowing the legislature to serve my hometown, as well as it does.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST): Thank you very much. Are there any questions or comments? Are there any further speakers? Anybody wishing to speak and be heard? Seeing none. Any further comments before we close?

REP. HADDAD (54TH): I would just add that, you know, again, tomorrow, our Zoom hearing begins at 7:00 p.m. Like today's hearing, it will be broadcast on CTN, our network and all of these -- all of our hearings are available -- will be available -- linked through our website, but are available at CTN. So, folks can go and see what was said at some our previous hearings as well. That will be part of a public record.

If there is anybody who spoke today who didn't submit their written comments, we welcome you to send those to our Committee, we'll make sure that becomes part of the public record. And then just to reiterate, one last time, I think that you know, many of us who serve here really welcome and in some ways challenged folks to come up with plans of their own that they want to submit to the Committee. We in the Commission, we don't know where inspiration will come from, for the solution that makes sense to everybody.

And it could come from you and so if you go to davesredistricting.org, or districtr.org, these are great tools to use for folks to be able to submit maps to the Commission to consider as deliberations proceed. Thank you very much.

SENATOR KELLY (21ST): Thank you. With that, we will adjourn for today. Thank you.