

May 25. 2011

IN RE: Redistricting Hearing at Arkansas State
University, Student Union Auditorium.

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

PRESENTER:

Joe Woodson, Coordinator of The Arkansas Board of
Apportionments

ALSO PRESENT:

James Miller
Roy Ragland
Alan Gordon

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OPENING REMARKS BY MR. WOODSON:

I am Joe Woodson, I am the Redistricting Coordinator for the Arkansas Board of Apportionment. I appreciate everyone coming out tonight and we have got a lot of material we need to cover and I want to do a couple of things first.

I want to spend a few minutes going over the law and then if I can get my software to act right, I will go ahead and show you how we actually draw the districts.

I think it is important in any discussion to remind ourselves of what the law is and give us some context of what we are talking about.

I want to direct you toward our web site, Arkansas Redistricting.org., The Arkansas Board of Apportionment. We are showing some good information on here and everything that I am going to say tonight in reference to the law is already here for you to access any time you want.

Of course the board consists of the Governor, Secretary of State and Attorney General. All three of those offices are represented here to tonight. James Miller with the Governor's Office, Roy Ragland with the Secretary of State's office, Alan Gordon with the Attorney General's office and they are here, as I am, to listen to what you have to say.

The certain point for redistricting, of course, is the 2010 census, which, according to the census bureau it says that Arkansas has, as of last year, two million, nine hundred

and fifteen thousand, nine hundred and eighteen people. If you divide that number by one hundred we get twenty nine thousand, one hundred and fifty nine people per house district.

If you divide that number by forty five senate districts that means you get eighty three thousand, three hundred and twelve per senate district. That's the target number for each district. Now, of course, we will revisit this in a minute but if you get a plus or minus five percent variance on that number so it doesn't have to be precisely that. As to congressional districts we just got finished (inaudible) a few weeks ago out of general assembly.

We have our events calendar here tonight with apportionment of Jonesboro and if you are interested in any of the other events that are listed there, our target date for completing the redistricting process is August 1st. That's a self-imposed date but the board agreed to that at the most recent meeting so we are going to try to be finished with the maps by August 1st.

Once the board adopts the plan and files that plan with the Secretary of State and then it becomes effective thirty days after that by law.

All resources, all the constitutional offices, web sites, legislative web site, census bureau, et cetera, et cetera, documents, this will become, there will be more and

more documents posted here as we go along with the process.

We have a court reporter here tonight, thank you for being here Dot, and I want to remind you when we get to the discussion phase if you would please identify yourself. You don't have to if you don't want to but it helps the court reporter so she can make a record of who you are when you make your comments.

We have got a public comment page. There is blog and you can e-mail the board. If you do that it goes directly to me in my office and I see that and make a record of it.

Census data here has to load up and we will come back to that in a moment and then all of our maps are here, current maps, draft maps, senate maps.

We will come back to this in just a minute. House maps, etcetera.

Let's talk about the law, first of all, and we are not going to spend a great deal of time on that because that is not why we are here but we do all have to be very conscious of what that is. Now, the left hand column, you can go into each one these pages and read a more detailed explanation of what the law is. If you go to the bottom bullet point here redistricting criteria, this is a summary of what the law is and it is not intended to be a legal, you know, a legal journal or case facts and all that but is a helpful summary, ninety-five to ninety-nine percent of all of the

redistricting law is summarized in these bullet points.

You just have these ten so I guess you can cover it by ten but that is just the way it worked out.

Congressional districts, what is known by equal population between constitutional variances. If there is anything in redistricting that comes close to an absolute, that's it, although not even that is absolute, you know, ninety-nine point nine percent of the time it is theoretically. It might be violated but we certainly have no intention of doing that.

If for, example, your ideal district size, house or senate, let's say one hundred people, the law says that if you adopt a congressional district you have to be right on the money, every district has to be one hundred people or ninety-nine people, for example, less than one percent as sort of a rule of thumb and that is what the legislature just got through doing down in Little Rock a few weeks ago for congressional districts.

What we are doing here tonight, in the board of apportionment we have a different standard. Our variance is larger, we have an overall range of plus/minus five percent for a total range of ten percent so that ideal district size of one hundred people then all of the districts, the smallest district can be composed as low as ninety five people, the largest district can be as high as

one hundred five people, an overall range of ten percent.

Anybody have any questions about that?

That is the starting point for all of these maps that we are going to draw and have drawn.

Next comes the last act of 1965, that's the civil rights federal statute that made it illegal to discriminate against the minority using insular procedure process or, for example, drawing your map in such a way that had discriminatory effect on minority. What does that mean, it means that the minority have an unfair chance of electing a representative of their choice so the reason that's important is when we got through drawing our maps here in Arkansas that we do have some majority/minority districts.

We have four senate districts that are majority/minority, we have thirteen house districts and that all evolved out of the James Clinton (sic) case in 1989 when the federal court said those districts had been in violation of the voter's rights act of 1965 so we are always aware of that as we draw the statewide maps.

Next comes the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment. For our purposes what that means is you have to be careful when you are drawing districts that you don't draw, and this is kind of gets back to 1965 when the Equal Protection Law of the 14th Amendment, those two sort of go

at each other or sort of come in two different directions.

The case that we talk about, the 14th Amendment say that you have to be careful that you don't draw districts based exclusively or primarily on race so it is kind of just the opposite, however the case do cite some exceptions if you are trying to comply with the voter's rights act of 1965 or if you are trying remedy past discrimination then you can sometimes can make race one the primary factors.

Next, continuing, you can't have a district that is on an island unto itself. All of the districts have to be geographically connected somewhere. Compact districts, for example, the best district would be a circle or a square.

It is compact, it symmetrical, it looks pretty. In practice that doesn't happen, however when you start getting into doable darker shapes, you know the classic gerrymander, that is when you start getting into trouble so to the extent you can make your district shapes more uniform you are going to be better off.

As we go down the list we get into several factors that y'all want to keep your eye on when you are drawing these districts. The minimized political subdivisions, counties, cities, voting precincts, to the extent that you can minimize cutting those in half or carving those up. It is better but it is not absolute and in practice it happens all the time and in our most recent congressional map, for

example, there are some counties split whereas before they never had been in the past. You are trying to do these things and you are trying to thread the needle when on all these factors as you go through. What is the historical heart of a district. If you can, if it is reasonable to do so, it is better that you continue to keep that core than not keep it, continuity of representation.

If you can, it's better to not make incumbents run against each other. The rationale for that is if a particular district has elected a particular representative then they ought to get the chance to elect that person again.

That is what the courts talk about. So communities of interest, what do people have in common, what's the community like socially, culturally, what are the school districts like, what's the economy like, where do the roads go and so you are always trying to, to the extent you can, keep those things together when you can.

And last but not least, partisan gerrymanders. You have to be careful about drawing districts based just on Democrats and just on Republicans or Tea Party or Green Party.

The supreme court has said in it's most recent case that addressed this that you can bring a lawsuit to talk about partisan gerrymanders. What they didn't say was what is legal or what is not legal. They didn't articulate any

legal standard to say what you can and can't do so it is an extreme gray area and partisanship should be minimized because no one knows what the supreme court is going to do in the future and it is a much safer course if you can minimize that. So all of this is well and good, we have got these ten factors and in essence what you are trying to do is that all of the districts you draw you are trying to impress the legal on all ten. If you can draw a district that complies with all ten of these then that is a pretty good district.

Obviously in practice that is extremely difficult to do. Does anyone have any questions about the legal part of it?

A picture is worth a thousand words. If you remember, we talked about the ideal population sizes and it is a little bit harder to tell over here but I think these are, all of these are green, all of these are green and these are green and everything green or sort of light green is below the population. In other words, it is outside, it is below the ideal population and these are senate districts and sometimes it is dangerously low so what that means is all of these, I mean you are talking about ten percent of the state here and another, you know, ten or fifteen from all of these.

Sixty or seventy percent of the same, those districts have to grow geographically which will incorporate into

themselves, enough people to get within that plus or minus five percent variance that we talked about earlier.

So that is what is very difficult about this whole process. These in the white, they are already within the five percent variance and theoretically will stay the same shape, however these, all of these have to grow and grab population from somewhere and so, you know, it is highly likely that these maps will split too. The red and the orange and the yellow in central Arkansas and west Arkansas are over populated. They have to shrink geographically to get within that acceptable plus/minus five percent range.

It appears the same thing for the House Districts. You can see the colors, the patterns are still the same primarily.

So to talk about the law, you have seen the maps, the last thing that we were going to do before we started session was show on that Brisbane software and we draw the maps with and before we started it wasn't working right. I don't know what it is. I think it is when I plug in this projector it throws it off but it has never done this before. That is the problem, that little circle there means it is trying to --

On these maps you, we can show you how we can zoom into any particular district, you can either by the county level or at the voting precinct level, or at what we call a block

level, which is below its most specific level, you can assign to a district, or other assigned district certain population so you can add people to and take away people from districts.

Does anyone have any questions about anything so far?

(Unidentified female) Sir, I would like to know who you are?

MR. WOODSON: Joe Woodson. I am the redistricting coordinator of the Arkansas Board of Apportionment.

(Unidentified female - continuing) Could you go back to the map, it looks like the census map of the county and tell us what those different colors mean as far as whether population grew or declined?

MR. WOODSON: Yes, for example, the one that I had highlighted was St. Francis County, which shows the senate district right here, Senate District 16 is a classic example.

It's ideal size for a senate district would be eighty three thousand three hundred and eleven people, however, it currently only contains sixty eight thousand seven hundred and thirty two people so it has got to increase in population, this District Sixteen does, by around fifteen thousand people.

(Unidentified female - continuing) So it seems to me that all green would have to grow toward the yellow one?

MR. WOODSON: That's exactly right. Yes. I think in central Arkansas and northwest Arkansas with the big plants

and solar system they have got their own gravity, all of the districts do and so all of these green districts here have to stretch in some direction geographically to grab enough population so that get within that plus or minus five percent range that we talked about.

(Unidentified male) Would it be possible to have multi-member districts under the new law?

MR. WOODSON: No, the multi-member districts are highly disfavored by the court and we haven't had any them here in Arkansas for quite some time and I don't think there is any intention by the board to create multi-member districts.

(Unidentified individual - continuing) Wasn't there multi-member districts in Hot Springs area?

MR. WOODSON: No, sir.

(Unidentified individual - continuing) There wasn't?

MR. WOODSON: No. It has been at least ten years. Maybe twenty years.

(Unidentified individual - continuing) So there will not be multi-member districts?

MR. WOODSON: Well, the only reason I hesitate is it might theoretically be possibly with that but I don't think there is any real chance that that is going to happen.

This is what I call a heat map and I have got all the other maps in the hallway and they are going to have more

information on them. This map just has district lines and district number and then the population information. I think the reason the ones in the hallway, for example, I just put more information on there. The red lines are the existing districts. The dimmer colors are the possible new districts and then if you zoom in you can see cities with populations, for example, here in District 1, it is busier on here.

(Unidentified Male) The last local multi-member districts were dissolved just ten years ago. At that time they were two and a lot of people in here know that at that time Jonesboro was one of the two areas that had a multi-member district. There was only two here ten years prior to that and at that time they dissolved or divided those up.

(Unidentified female) In District 75 do we have the population we need or less or what?

MR. WOODSON: District 75 right here. Actually I think that Jonesboro is very close to being within range. I don't think the existing District 75 will have to change drastically in terms of population.

That's all I have to say in way of introduction and context and orientation. At this point certainly anyone is free to make any comment or question that they want to.

One way I thought we would do it we would just go here and look at a couple of senate maps. One drawn by the Secretary

of State and then house maps. This is what we call an apit(?) Version. This is drawn by the Secretary of State and I guess I should say, you probably already know this, we are here tonight, myself and the other staff members, to listen to what you have to say, what your comments are, what you like, what you don't like, what you can live with, what you can't live with. None of the maps that are out in the hallway or here on the computer, on the web site, are maps that are composed in the sense that, they are sort of the map that might be adopted. These are early draft maps and are drawn to solicit comment from you. Now when you go back our heat map on how all of these districts have to change, that is why we are doing this and most of them are going to have to change, most of them, so we have got to start talking about this sometime, somewhere, and that's what these maps are. We are not here trying to sell you a map and convince you that this is the right map.

(Elizabeth Stafford) The legislature made the decision lines of the green, is that correct?

MR. WOODSON: Correct.

(Elizabeth Stafford) And the responsibility of the board of apportionment is to redistrict the state house and the state senate, is that correct?

MR. WOODSON: Correct.

(Elizabeth Stafford) Is the board of apportionment the only

body that is going to be responsible for this?

MR. WOODSON: Yes, Article Eight of the Arkansas Constitution, it was amended in 1936 and that amendment created the Board of Apportionment which is the three constitutional officers.

(Elizabeth Stafford) Can you give us an idea of who is participating on the board?

MR. WOODSON: Well, obviously, the governor, the secretary of state and attorney general and then their designated staff people. Many of them are sitting right in front of you and then myself. The people we have in this room are the constitutional officers who are the primary map drawers.

(Elizabeth Stafford) So there are how many people?

MR. WOODSON: I don't know. Two or three with the governor, three or four secretary of state, three or four with the attorney general, myself. Eight to ten people.

(Unidentified male) Would you have the ones that are with you stand up down there?

MR. WOODSON: Yes, they will. (Applause) (All are introduced). This is what we are doing. We are in the process of drawing maps and out of necessity most of them have to change and we want to know what you like and what you don't like. I think we have probably got a fairly good cross section of possibilities together with what has been drawn by the secretary of state's office has drawn.

(Linda Collins-Smith) I am representative from Northeast Arkansas and my district is Randolph and two thirds of Sharp county. There is one thing that I would like for you to consider is putting like counties together whether they are rural, hills in the Ozarks or whether it is the delta. I hope you will consider that and please, please be cautious in splitting those counties. Those people in those counties need to feel whole and they need to feel they have a representative, not two, that they have to go to discuss how to treat those counties. Our judges need that help and I do hope you will consider those provisions.

MR. WOODSON: Let me say this. Consistent with what you are saying, that if you go back to those bullet points on the one the web site, several of those bullet points either directly or indirectly point to that, community interest.

The difficulty, and ideal though, if you look at those senate maps, for example if you have a southeast Arkansas they have lost so much population relative to the rest of the state and they have to grow so much that and it is so sparsely populated that you have got to draw districts that's sometime three or four times as big.

The difficulty is that districts have to get inside that population number and so where most of the districts are stretching out, some are shrinking, like the heavily populated northwest Arkansas.

(Unidentified male) I am from Pocahontas and looking at the map one of your criteria that you went over in the very beginning and this new senate district, school district eleven here will go from Randolph County up to Sharp County, all the way down through Woodruff County, how would they do that to fit your criteria? Number two, if someone lived over at Maynard and they were moved over to Woodruff County, that looks kind of odd to me. That school district would need to pick up about eleven hundred people and I just have reservations about that.

MR. WOODSON: Your point is well taken. The short answer is they may not. They may not be enough of a conglomeration of common interest. On the other hand, it may be, this is, as elongated as it is, it is very very mild in the redistricting world and the reason I say that, is you can look at some districts and they have got the craziest looking gerrymander salamander things on the map. I mean it looks like a spider and so, my limited point in response is, I don't think in Arkansas you are going to see any extreme gerrymander. In the legal world this is not extreme.

(Unidentified male - continuing): I am just contending that it does not seem to represent either Woodruff or Jackson County as well as Randolph or Sharp County adequately.

MR. WOODSON: And I am not saying that it does. This is one map, one version that has been drawn.

(Unidentified male - continuing): Really it is a state house map and it literally splits Randolph County by drawing a box around Pocahontas and would put the city and the eastern third of the county into Clay County and the rest of Randolph County into Lawrence County. I believe it was the May 10th map.

MR. WOODSON: It is one thing to sit in an office in Little Rock and put boundaries on a map and meeting in my office in Little Rock this is very compact and contiguous population drawing and to you out here in the community this doesn't seem to make sense and that is why we are here because you know your district and your area of the state better than we do and we want to hear from you. May 4th. That is the one. This one, and which district?

(Unidentified male) It is thirty four and thirty three.

MR. WOODSON: Well, your point is well taken on this example but thirty four, on the heat map, thirty four is down roughly, well, down about five thousand people so my point is it is stuck up there in the corner and it has got to push out somewhere to get those five thousand people and it has just got to happen so the question is, where do you push out to get them. On this version it pushed out to the west here in Randolph County and I guess the question for you is there another solution, a better solution?

(Unidentified male - continuing) It puts Randolph County

and the whole county and the middle half of Clay County and Clay County is already split and it keeps Sharp County in the district and Randolph County is a lot stronger than both of those areas.

MR. WOODSON: Yes, sir?

(Stan Sellebrandt) I am from Jonesboro. Would you go to the May 19th senate map for northeast Arkansas. The one we were looking at just for Craighead County, maybe it was May 5 where it was looking kind of weird. Look at that.

I do think I know why that was drawn that way and I see some legitimacy for this argument except for the house exhibit and that is that for slow moving areas and slow moving areas and the idea how that will stay equal, the problem is, if you have got different cultures, whatever, there is that slow moving population loses representation and the fast growing part of the district gains that because those other places have no chance of electing anybody. We have a problem with that on our quorum court because we have thirteen members, nine of which are from Jonesboro and four spread out through the rest of the county and I have talked with some of the people in my area and in those outlying areas ought to secede from the county because they don't get much representation.

Now, that seems to be the logic here. It doesn't make any sense. It is putting rural areas in with the City of

Jonesboro so not only will they be dominated on the quorum court by the City of Jonesboro, now they are going to be put on the same legislature also. Now, if you go to the other one, that that will be the fourth which is a map that makes a lot more sense for Craighead County. I will explain why and most of the people here from Craighead County will know this.

Okay, this makes a whole lot more sense for Craighead County. The reason is, Craighead County has two courthouses. We also have three county seats. Craighead County has an eastern district and a western district. The character of these two districts is greatly different. Eastern district is very rural. Western district is basically Jonesboro and the suburbs of Jonesboro and here you are maintaining that division and the people over in each of these two districts are more likely to be better represented by the person that they would want to represent than in the other one where you only have one group and I know the group that is going to have the majority because I live in Jonesboro and I do think this better represents the eastern district of Craighead County.

MR. WOODSON: That is exactly the kind of information we are looking for.

(Donald Haven) I am from Greene County. Did I understand that one of the goals is to be sure no two elected officials

compete each other after we do this?

MR. WOODSON: That is one of the recognized legal criteria.

(Mr. Haven - continuing): My next question. How many will do this, one, two, three, a dozen. What will it look like.

How many will be competing? When we do redistricting, how many of these senators today will be competing against an elected senator that had been in another district?

MR. WOODSON: We don't know that yet. The courts have said that one of the general criteria to look at.

(Ed Haney) I am from the eastern district of Craighead County and I don't disagree with him. This map here puts us in with Blytheville, Harrisburg, Osceola, no representation on our part, zero. In eastern Craighead County we can't get ahold of people in Jonesboro. That is a tremendous area right there. You don't understand what a tremendous area until you get out and drive it. That is an unbelievably large area of ground to cover and if that is a new district, the eastern district of Craighead County is lost as far as a representative on our part.

(Unidentified male) Everyone knows that certain communities in the district will dominate. The senate maps, and this is kind of counter intuitive, because we have got to get so many people in the district and a lot of the districts will disappear and this whole geography is one way to get the districts right.

(Unidentified male): A lot of representation would come from Jonesboro. The roads that divide, 49, can you bring that up?

MR. WOODSON: I am very sorry that this is not working better but we can't get down to city streets and roads.

As I stated earlier, we are going by census numbers and when you change districts it changes spread sheets and numbers and so the software has to chew on that and sometimes it gets fogged up, that's what I call it, and so I have never had a nightmare like this.

(Unidentified male) Does anybody know offhand if that map takes in Terra Hills and Sage Meadows. That is what I am interested in.

MR. WOODSON: I don't know. If you want to e-mail me at my office I can shoot that picture for you and e-mail it to you. At least I can get you the information.

(Jane Holloway) I am from Jonesboro and I am particularly interested in racial district 75 and I just heard that you can't look at the street level so I am interested in street level. I live on West Matthews and so our I am in District 75, the south side of West Matthews and on the north side of West Matthews my neighbors are in District 74. It is really interesting that if the district shifts just one street down from me my districts will no longer be in Jonesboro, per se, mostly I consider myself from Jonesboro

and my house district is going to be all in western Craighead County so I don't guess you know how much that district moves but that will be interesting to see and if you can elaborate on situations like that.

MR. WOODSON: I can't specifically say how much any one district or areas will shift. I don't know street to street how that will happen.

(Unidentified male) The problem in Craighead County is there a fewer number of precincts and we will try not to split precincts when we can. So it just makes it easier for people that will vote and things like that. In Craighead County you have got maybe twenty precincts and you have precincts in and around the Jonesboro area that are very cumbersome to deal with as far as seven or eight thousand people on the eastern side of Jonesboro that has got twelve thousand people in it and on the south side it has got almost thirteen thousand so in an effort to not split precincts it is just sometimes that's the way it goes. Jonesboro is growing so fast that they are going to get more representation but some of us will have to be going to rural parts of Craighead too so.

(Unidentified male) But Jonesboro precincts are going to change too. We see different precincts on the part of City council has to be by population so it is going to be adjusted for population also so what they are now is not what they

are going to be.

(Chuck Qualls) I am the mayor of Monette and I just want to go on record while you fellows are here. You have got an awful good representative, Homer Lenderman, he is a first time representative out there and he works awful hard and he is doing us a lot of good. We are eastern Craighead County. You are going to put us in Mississippi County and we are going to have to cover too much area and so we will go on the record and say all of the eastern district wants to stay where we are or make a different change in what they propose for us so far.

There are four towns there, Monette, Caraway, Lake City and Blytheville. If you do that that will put Homer Lenderman down in this area and it would be hard for him to be elected again according to that and he is doing an excellent job and we don't want to lose him and we don't need to go over here. We want to stay where we are if at all possible.

MR. WOODSON: Thank you for that and, again, that is what we are looking for and sitting in an office in Little Rock that is one thing and then coming in here and talking to you guys and hearing you say, you know, this won't work and here is the reason why. That is what we need to know.

Let me emphasize again, these are draft maps. These are no shape, form or fashion, meant to be a proposed map or a map that the board has passed. This is good feedback.

(Unidentified male) When you get back down there don't forget us.

MR. WOODSON: This board announced this early target date, not early but as soon as possible, August 1st and county clerks have to get voters in the right precincts and just have to figure out which district they are in and all of that will be fine tuned and when we get to the final process where the board adopts a map, the map will tell you how, will be fine tuned and have it down to the smallest detail, every district, every street but we are just not there yet but we are well aware that folks are waiting on us to get that to happen.

(Vicki Harris) I am from Pocahontas also. I appreciate the fact that you are allowing feedback right now but will there be any chance to get feedback once you have the final map.

What's the chance we can see in the attorney general's map for instance, when you have those maps, will we have an opportunity to get feedback on those maps?

MR. WOODSON: Well, I think, they are here and they can speak to that but what my idea of the process is that we go through, we are going to take all this input and process it and up until the very end we will be willing to talk to anybody is my understanding.

(Hugh Harris) I am not from Jonesboro and if you go back to your heat map, all that white area, the Ozarks, that area

that you said is already in the right place, set in the right place, by numbers?

MR. WOODSON: The numbers are currently correct.

(Hugh Harris - continuing) The problem is all the growth is in Little Rock and Fayetteville, Northwest Arkansas so everything is going to have to stretch, like you said, they are all reaching to go toward those areas so as long as this holds, they are going to have to move toward Fayetteville and everything needs to go, you know, towards the northwest.

MR. WOODSON: I would say sometimes it is more of the bottom half of the state, along with the eastern half of the state needs to grow and will split and stretch in some direction.

(Hugh Harris - continuing) So it is almost as they, if you look at this, the ones that are eastern Craighead County their option would be to go with Poinsett County and it is like you could go east or north because it all has to, they all have to stretch to the west or the southwest or north.

MR. WOODSON: You raise a good point. You know if you are on the eastern side of the state or you are in the northeast corner or the southeast corner you are land locked. If your geography has to gravitate and go somewhere and if everyone believed you then you get this pushing effect and I think that we were describing. That is what is happening, all of the southwest, all of southeast, all of, a lot of the

northeast, a lot of east, has to go somewhere.

(Unidentified female) Did I understand that there is going to be an attorney general map and a secretary of state map and a governor's map?

MR. WOODSON: They are here and they can respond to that. I don't know what their plans are.

(Unidentified female - continuing) Can you tell them.

(Unidentified representative) The governor said that a public meetings is very important to him and he had us draw maps until we get through with all of that we hear in these meetings.

(Unidentified female - continuing) I don't think that quite answers my question. Let me rephrase it. The three offices that we heard about today are going to come up with three different maps. Is that true or not?

You are going to work together as a whole after you consider what you hear in these meetings?

(Unidentified representative) That's right.

MR. WOODSON: It's a very slow process. It's not like reaching a gerrymander. Looking at individual maps and I think it is an exercise in looking at all of this information when we go back. It is all of it.

(Unidentified female) When will you finish the public hearings?

MR. WOODSON: This is the first in seven so in six weeks

we will have our last meeting.

(Leroy Burden) I am the mayor of Cash. We are on the other side of the county. On your map for our county that shows that you are going to put us in Lawrence County and we want to remain in Craighead County. We are real happy with our representative and I don't want to say it but it doesn't make sense and it doesn't look right and it needs to be looked at.

(Mark Ryals) I am from Mississippi County and it seems like there are some individuals here maybe that don't have appreciation for Mississippi County. We are going to have to go somewhere to get some additional people involved and I would point out that the western part of Mississippi County, including the northwest part is similar. Very similar to the eastern part of Craighead County. We have a school district in the northwest part of the county that's consolidated with the schools in Monette, it's called Buffalo Island Schools and the culture is very similar, very similar in the two areas. I am a little surprised that there is not someone here from Cross County who is complaining a little bit about being thrown in with Poinsett and Mississippi County.

It may be very simply but I don't understand but it is more compelling, I think, for our senatorial district in that closing eastern Craighead County as to the western two

thirds of Cross County.

One other question. When do you plan to have a final, make a final decision on this?

MR. WOODSON: After the last meeting in six weeks from tonight when we have given ourselves about three weeks to produce a final draft that might be adopted before the August 1st deadline.

I just want to revisit with you. That's, sir, the kind of thing exactly that we are looking for here. We have a court reporter here and we are standing here and we are listening to what you say but we are going to go back and re-read the transcripts and then digest what you have to say and what kind of information that you give us is persuasive information. We want to know, you know, why certain areas should be together and why they shouldn't. What are the school districts like, what's the economy like, what's the culture like. We think we have a general understanding what the different areas of the state are like but we don't know what it is like to live on the ground here and so I think it is vital that you give us more of that information and it is being taken down and we are going to go back and study it and process it and say okay this what they said and this is going to be considered.

(Unidentified male) The senator that represents eastern Craighead County, is that senator term limited?

MR. WOODSON: I would have to look. I don't think so. I think he has another year.

(Dan Johnson) I am from Bono. I don't believe I understood you when you started out describing how you picked numbers, or area, to move. I think it would be really helpful, will you go by a block that has ten houses on it or do you go by a voting district in a county or a city because I see some districts that we are talking about moving when you might be able to go down in one area and up for a certain area. I don't really understand. Can you help me out.

MR. WOODSON: The way I saw it, I think most of the other folks saw it too, if you go to any given district and this could be y'all's maps too and it might be better to use this as y'all's districts. You go in on your software and depending on how many people you need, Turrell is about seven thousand short in southeast Arkansas to get seven thousand people sometimes you have got to go through vast stretches of land to pick up that many people so my answer to your question is you start out big and then you start to fine tune you use this the most efficiently and that is to start grabbing precincts. The software will allow us to look at different voting precincts that might have, you know, a fairly large number of people, fifty to five hundred, whatever it is and so you start adding, you start building in precincts that are adjacent to the district you are working

on and you gather, gather, gather until you get close to right number and then when you get close to the right number you can drill down and fine tune to get your numbers correct and all the while you are trying to keep your eye on does this make sense, do these people have something in common, is this going to be legal, etcetera, etcetera. So, does that answer your question?

(Dan Johnson - continuing) Most of us are thinking.

MR. WOODSON: That is how I am. I think most people do something similar.

(Robert Thompson) I am from Paragould and Greene County and I am state senator for District 11. Would you go through the senate maps real quick. The point I would like to make on the map there what is now District 11 is basically District 12 and it appears to me, my understanding right now is District 11 as is currently constituted is about twenty five hundred people short so it needs to pick up about twenty five hundred people.

MR. WOODSON: Yes, it is currently about eighty thousand eight sixty five so needs to be eighty three three eleven.

(Robert Thompson - continuing) The point I want to make and I am sympathetic to what you are doing because I know how hard it is squeeze that aluminum box without it blowing up and part of it still sticking up. I personally like that map because what you have done there is you have taken Senate

District 11, as it is currently constituted, currently it includes Clay, Greene, Lawrence counties and a little bit of Craighead County in northwest Craighead County which includes Bono, and it looks like there you have add Bono, Brookland and maybe Cash and Egypt over in western Craighead County. That map appears to be, to keep District 11 the way it is currently is. Now if you go to the previous senate map. I don't have my glasses on so I can't see as well but if you look at what that map does to District 11 you pull out Craighead County, you still include Clay, Greene and Lawrence. You actually get into a piece of Randolph County and then you go all the way over into Sharp County and I go now from Paragould, where I live, to western Lawrence County, Ravenden is about an hour and fifteen minutes. You are creating a district from the population center of the district to the outlying point where it will be an hour and a half away and that's more of the district concern for the guy that has to drive and it is also going to be a concern of those constituents because it is going to be more difficult to maintain a community of interest with the legislator who is representing them, and it's also, you know, a concern when you take in a little piece of a county and don't take in, when you take in a little piece of a county that doesn't have a great deal of population, like you are doing in Randolph County, you are creating an issue because those

people, they have got one quorum count in Randolph County for example, that they are going to go to and a county judge because most of the counties is going to have a different legislator so that is just the point I wanted to make with those two maps with respect to that district.

MR. WOODSON: Thank you.

(Unidentified male): We talked about that map earlier and I understand the senator's point but if you drive from the fartherist regions of Randolph County to southern Woodruff County you are going to be driving a couple of hours. If a senator drives two hours from Mountain View to Pocahontas both Democrats and Republicans are representing us so it seems to me that the hard way in Arkansas to draw maps that you are going to have people driving a little farther. I understand his point but it seems to me that sometimes you will have to drive that far. It is a long narrow district that the previous map shows, Randolph, Sharp, Independence, Jackson and part of Woodruff is going to be a long narrow district and you are going to have a long drive in that district too.

(Unidentified female) (reads but inaudible) I am concerned about the partisanship of the apportionment board. Mark Martin is the only republican on the board. Two members on the board are democrats, Attorney General Dustin McDaniel and Governor Beebe. How are you going to assure us that

the Secretary of State's office will have the influence needed and will you follow up on that.

MR. WOODSON: I appreciate the opportunity, and I say that in all sincerity. It would be disingenuous of me or anybody else to say that we are not all acutely aware of the politics involved and it is a highly charged atmosphere that we live in and we are all very aware of that. That said, I would encourage all of us, myself included, to not take a cynical attitude towards, and I am not suggesting all of you are, we have to be careful not to be cynical about the process even though it is highly political and I want go back to my bullet point list of criteria of equal population, contiguous community interest, all ten of those bullet points are legally limitations created by the US supreme court on how you can empower their ability to take unfair advantage of the situation so most specifically to answer your question, it is no secret that there are two democrats on the board and on republican and I was their choice for the job and I was glad to get it.

That said, all of those limitations are there to keep the party in power from taking unfair advantage and so with that, in my mind what I constantly remind people of is, we have got to be careful that we don't over reach and if you over reach and you do something that is illegal or unfair then that is going to be trouble and trouble eventually means

a lawsuit so my goal is for to the extent that I can influence and encourage all of the participants to keep an eye on the ball and at the end of the day you want a map that's legal, that's fair and it's just and doesn't over reach and so I am not on the board and I don't speak for the board. I am a board member but I am actively involved in the process and that is what I encourage myself to do and everyone I talk to, not to rely on the partisanship because that doesn't do anybody any good at the end of the day and I think so far the lines of communication have been open, not only the chain between the officers but also the chain on the public and me and the general assembly and me. I have met with more republican members of the general assembly, that I have with democrats and I haven't met with very many but they are free to come to me and bring their concerns and say, you know, this district should look like this or that and so my door is wide open to anybody.

I am going to speak to the Tea Party in about two weeks in Conway so, you know, partisanship is not what I am after and I don't think that's what the board is after.

(Unidentified female) It is evident to me that there is some conflict going on.

MR. WOODSON: There is no doubt that there are different groups involved and you need to speak to the secretary of state. I am aware that those folks are out there but I don't

sense a big controversy. I think the secretary of state has some very smart people and they have chosen to be very involved and they have come out with a lot of maps that have a lot of cases on them and they are influencing the process and I think that is a good thing.

(David McElvoy) I am glad partisanship of the secretary of state's office has been brought up here because a little while back Deputy Secretary of State, Alice Stewart, was down in Faulkner County and she took a partisan position on the congressional redistricting plan. She talked about how she hoped the redistricting would shore two members of her party, Republican State Representatives David Gregory Meeks, down in Faulkner County. Here is a case where we have a person who is officially a non-partisan official so what is wrong is the folks in this room is paid for our tax payer dollars and she is acting like she is a republican party hack, how can we trust the secretary of state's office to do this job and represent those who are not republicans if we have someone who, you know, there is no guesswork about this part, she is being blatantly obvious in her partisan leaning in her approach to her job. How will the secretary of state's office answer us, how can we trust you to do your jobs.

MR. WOODSON: Let me jump in. You have every right to say what you said and I don't have any right to stop you. In

my mind that is not why I am here tonight. I don't want to touch in any form or fashion a partisan discussion and one of the things you are speaking is, most of you are here because of one party or the other.

The limitations that the courts have put in place, those ten bullet points, are extreme in the sense that this redistricting process, no democrats or republicans, nobody is going to shift the balance of power in Arkansas with the new map. Yes, and I don't mean, again I am not trying to disingenuous, there may be some advantages there but there is not going to be across the board balance of power. That's not up for grabs and what we are after.

(Unidentified male - continuing) I understand that and I don't fault you for doing your job and everything but this is going on public record, right? This is going to be reported. I am not a republican, I want to see a fair, non-partisan process but it is not a non-partisan process with you map. I want it to be a matter of public record that I hope the people in the secretary of state's office take this to heart that it is not always appreciated when people who are supposed to be working in a non-partisan fashion, regardless of their private thinking, and of course they have every right to hold, are acting in this kind of improper fashion and that is all I want to say.

MR. WOODSON: You have made your record.

(Unidentified male) May I speak my biggest concern?

MR. WOODSON: Yes, sir.

(Unidentified male - continuing): My biggest concern is that I live in house representative district 75 and I my representative lives very close to me now. I want him to stay in that district because if he does a good job I will be out there campaigning for his re-election, if he doesn't I plan to be campaigning for somebody else. So I definitely want him there so that he remains accountable to us so we can either support him or not support him.

MR. WOODSON: One of the core principles is all of the case law, supreme court cases and federal cases, they are constantly talking about does the electorate have a fair chance to choose the representative of their choice and that is what one person, one vote, is all about. It is the putting the map, the lines on the map so that everyone has the same shot to elect who they want to and in a way that is fair and legal and makes sense based on the communities, that is one of the core principles.

(Unidentified male - continuing) I want him accountable to me.

MR. WOODSON: I appreciate Arkansas State letting us come here and use their great facility.

(Unidentified female) Mr. Thompson has indicated that his district would be spread out and there are certain elements

of dilution when that kind of thing happens. My concern is Powhatan, I don't live there, I don't have any interest but that little area, the congressional district is huge and it will likely be house district and the legislature are going to be increased in size. And although I adamantly support one person, one vote, the ability of any voter in south Arkansas to be informed on a day to day basis by their particular legislator and I find that an unfortunate situation in Arkansas and other states where resources are less than they would be in smaller populated areas. It is a concern when small districts are pulled into larger districts like Northwest Arkansas or eastern Craighead County would have. I find that unfortunate.

MR. WOODSON: Well we are dismissed unless someone has something else to add. Thank you for coming.

(Thereupon, there being no further proceedings, the meeting is

REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

I, Dorothy Johnson, Certified Court Reporter and Notary Public for the State of Arkansas, hereby state that the foregoing proceeding was taken by me and reduced to typewriting by me and that it is a true and accurate transcription of the proceeding, to the best of my ability and knowledge.

WITNESS MY HAND AND SEAL on this 2nd day of June, 2011.

Dorothy Johnson, CCR
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