

1 Anyway, that's all I had.

2 Thank you so much.

3 MS. VAN HAREN: Next we have John Denico and then
4 Mary Buckman [phonetic].

5 MR. DANTICO: Good evening, Commissioners.

6 My name is John Dantico [phonetic]. I live in
7 unincorporated Pinal County in the San Tan Valley.

8 And my emphasis and my comments tonight are
9 directly related to competitiveness. This district is
10 important, but competitiveness is important. And given
11 the global threats that the U.S. faces -- economically,
12 military, technologically, from near-peer nuclear
13 adversaries, namely China -- the U.S. must transcend petty
14 political rivalries to get the best qualified persons to
15 run from both parties who will be able to win on the basis
16 of having the best ideas and strategies regardless of
17 political affiliations.

18 Therefore, I urge you to create very competitive
19 districts that incentivize candidates from parties to
20 represent the interest of all the people and not just a
21 small partisan segment of the population. And I remind
22 the commission of Abraham Lincoln's quote of Jesus Christ,
23 "A house divided against itself cannot stand."

24 We need the best candidates, and a competitive
25 environment will ensure that.

1 Thank you.

2 MS. VAN HAREN: Next we have Mary Buckman and
3 then Andrea Verella [phonetic].

4 MS. BUCKMAN: Hello. I'm Mary Buckman. I live
5 in Pinal County, and I'm in Coolidge about 20 miles away.
6 And I appreciate this opportunity to talk to the
7 commission about the thoughts on redistricting. I live in
8 LD8 and CD4, and that has been covered quite sufficiently.

9 So my community of Coolidge is rural and made up
10 of agriculture. Also, many people work in the
11 correctional facilities here in this county. And more
12 recently, there's huge increase in manufacturing and
13 housing developments. There's developments just popping
14 up everywhere.

15 So we are changing, and we need to have this
16 representation that attends to our growth but also will
17 still attend to our core values and concerns.

18 And I've really come to appreciate the heart of
19 Pinal County which champions the same spirit of the
20 original creators and the original settlers here, the
21 creators of Casa Grande. And they were connected to the
22 land, they were caring for the family, and committed to
23 the community.

24 So in this redistricting, I ask you to reflect us
25 and our values by forming more compact districts.

1 Thank you very much.

2 MS. VAN HAREN: Next up, we have Andrea Verella
3 and then James Ireland.

4 MS. VERELLA: Hello. And good evening,
5 Commission, and thank you all for being here. I really
6 appreciate all of your efforts and all the work you're
7 doing for our state.

8 My name is Andrea Verella, and I live in Casa
9 Grande, Arizona, which is currently split between
10 Legislative Districts 8 and 11 and is in Congressional
11 District 1. You might know us as a small rural town lying
12 in between the I-8 and the I-10.

13 I am here today to advocate for the city of Casa
14 Grande to be contained into one district instead of being
15 split into two and essentially unsplit the community.

16 My city shares many common characteristics.
17 First, the city is geographically situated in a rural
18 area. This does not group well with some of the more
19 developed areas we are currently districted with but does
20 group well with other towns with rural interests. Casa
21 Grande is a small town with a small-town feel. In Casa
22 Grande, you can find locally owned businesses that are
23 characteristic of the entrepreneurial spirit of our city.

24 But being a rural community, manufacturing and
25 agriculture are major industries for the city, and these

1 industries are bringing growth to the whole community.
2 Furthermore, people from across the city are employed in
3 these industries.

4 Another common thread that unites my community is
5 that the community services are accessed by the entire
6 community, not just certain groups in certain areas.
7 Furthermore, these services are located across the city
8 and span both districts. These services include but are
9 not limited to the parks and rec department, the police
10 department, the fire department, and others.

11 There is also only one elementary school district
12 for the entire city. I do not feel that schools in my
13 community should be split between LD districts when one
14 board represents them. Their state representation should
15 also be reflective of the school district as a whole.

16 Demographically, the highest concentration of the
17 population is white with almost half the population being
18 Latin mix. This and other minority communities are spread
19 out through the city. They are not concentrated within
20 the boundaries of one specific District, 8 or 11. So why
21 should their interest be split? These minority groups
22 share language, culture, traditions, and more and also
23 should be represented as one.

24 By cracking the Casa Grande community as it is
25 now, it has essentially diminished the power of certain

1 communities within the city to advocate for themselves and
2 their shared interests, which makes representation less
3 responsive to the actual community and its interests.

4 Thank you so much again for being here, and thank
5 you for giving me the opportunity to speak.

6 MS. VAN HAREN: Next we have Anthony Ireland and
7 Jesse Bryant [phonetic].

8 MR. IRELAND: Good evening, Commissioners.

9 My name is Tony Ireland, and I live in Apache
10 Junction.

11 And I agree with quite a few of the comments that
12 have made earlier. One of the main ones being the -- the
13 idea of combining SaddleBrooke Ranch with San Tan; it's a
14 good combination.

15 And I -- I'm not gonna take 3 minutes. I don't
16 need that much time. But I -- I would just say that
17 the -- the parameters of the redistricting prospect -- the
18 process are enumerated in the state constitution of the
19 state of Arizona, and I would just urge you guys to stick
20 closely to that. When you stray, you have something akin
21 to district -- Congressional District Number 1, which, in
22 my mind, is a monstrosity. It runs from Four Corners all
23 the way down to almost Tucson. We have more people in the
24 state now. I think we can do a lot better in drawing our
25 districts. So keep that in mind.

1 So thank you.

2 MS. VAN HAREN: Next we have Jesse Bryant, and
3 then after that, we have Nick Meyers.

4 MR. BRYANT: Hello.

5 Thank you for being here this evening. My name
6 is Jesse Bryant. I am from Globe, Arizona. And I am
7 actually very glad to be joining the chorus of voices of
8 speaking about our communities of interest.

9 I want to share with you that after the 2007
10 census, the people of our region asked for a rural
11 district, and they were given one we call the five eastern
12 counties. And that is -- that is Graham, Greenlee, Gila,
13 Navajo, and Apache south of the reservation.

14 In the 2010 census, we hoped to retain that rural
15 status by the addition of the Copper Corridor,
16 Hayden-Winkelman Kearny, as well as the Verde Valley which
17 is the Camp Verde area. And as you can see, you know the
18 results that we ended up with. Poor Gila County is in --
19 60,000 people. The county is three different legislative
20 districts and two different congressional districts.

21 And we'd like very strongly for you to consider,
22 again, restoring our rural voice through a legislature of
23 five eastern counties plus the Copper Corridor, as you've
24 had described here, and, if necessary, the Verde Valley as
25 well.

1 And so that -- once again, our rural issues --
2 we're farmers, miners, ranchers, and so forth. We have
3 recreation and tourism issues. We have water issues. We
4 have a very, very distinct rural culture. Race is not
5 really an issue. And I also would caution you that
6 what -- how -- how people would vote in a presidential
7 election is not necessarily reflective of how they're
8 going to vote in the legislative or lower elections. The
9 rural people, we typically put rural issues ahead of
10 everything else in our local races. Please bear that in
11 mind.

12 During the last -- after the last census, we
13 actually had a quite a popular uprising and we had fifteen
14 of our cities and towns adopt unanimously resolutions to
15 support keeping our rural district together. That's
16 everything from Camp Verde to Holbrook to Safford and
17 Duncan in Greenlee County, down the corridor, Superior,
18 Hayden-Winkelman as well. It was -- it was united voices
19 across race and gender lines and everything else. We
20 would love for our neighbors, the Apaches, to be once
21 again restored with us, not just the San Carlos but also
22 the White Mountain Apaches.

23 Please bear this in mind that you have the
24 opportunity to restore our rural voice, the five eastern
25 counties plus our corridors.

1 MS. VAN HAREN: Next we have Nick Meyers, and
2 then after that, we have Mark Crows.

3 MR. MEYERS: Good evening, Commission.

4 And I wanted to take a moment to say thank you to
5 Chairman -- or Chairwoman Neuberg for making all this
6 happen. I know that was kind of a battle. So thank you
7 for taking our input as constituents here.

8 I'm gonna echo a lot of what was said through the
9 rest of the commentary tonight. So I won't repeat that.
10 I also want to specifically point out what Neil Carter is
11 going to say shortly after me because he lives in a
12 similar situation that I do. I'm gonna say a little less
13 about what I want and more about what probably shouldn't
14 happen in the -- as you're keeping this stuff in mind.

15 I live in San Tan Valley. I live in -- well,
16 it's interesting that Mr. -- I believe it's Herrera over
17 here -- mentioned the -- the proposition text when he was
18 introducing this. And he said that one of the statements
19 on the proposition that got the IRC implemented in our
20 constitution was it had the point of ending
21 gerrymandering.

22 Well, I live in a section of San Tan Valley
23 that -- for about 9 years now -- so right after the last
24 redistricting -- that I have been affectionately calling
25 the gerrymandering portion of LD12. And why do I say

1 that? Well, to get to my neighborhood, we have a couple
2 of ingresses and egresses. The one on the far west side
3 is what defines LD12. It is possible for me to stay in
4 LD12 when I'm going into my neighborhood, but it is
5 impossible for me to stay in LD12 while I'm exiting my
6 neighborhood because three sides of me are LD8. It took
7 the mountain range, San Tan Mountains, they -- they
8 divided that or used that as the dividing line to get to
9 my neighborhood. So they literally created a corridor of
10 LD12 that goes around the mountain range instead of using
11 the range as the dividing line.

12 So I think that's kind of the definition of not
13 being a community of interest when I can't even leave my
14 neighborhood without going into the other LD. It's also,
15 you know, including unincorporated parts of LD8 or San Tan
16 Valley into an incorporated part of Maricopa County. The
17 southern edge of LD12 is largely a straight line with a
18 little bit of a hernia that comes out to include my
19 neighborhood. So it's almost like that was literally set
20 up as a gerrymandering portion.

21 Now, I don't -- I don't envy your jobs at all. I
22 realize you have to keep the data, you know, in line with
23 all six of those rules or eight of those rules making them
24 compact, making them geographically contiguous, all of
25 that good stuff.

1 So I know it's a difficult decision. But I think
2 it's pretty obvious when you literally can't leave your
3 neighborhood without going into another LD.

4 The other thing is whenever I do my shopping or
5 whenever I do my eating out, any of those things, I go
6 into LD8. I don't head up to LD12, which is a great big
7 square; I go into San Tan Valley.

8 All right. It's time. I think I've said my
9 point.

10 Thank you guys very much. And I'll let Neil
11 finish that for me.

12 MS. VAN HAREN: Next we have Mark Crows and then
13 Neil Carter.

14 MR. CROWS: Good evening.

15 Mark Crows. I'm from SaddleBrooke Ranch, which
16 you've heard about. And our mailing address is Oracle and
17 our school district is the Oracle School District. So
18 we're tied to Oracle also. We're also -- by nature of the
19 community, we're tied to SaddleBrooke, which is in Pima
20 Valley -- or, no, it's at the southern end of Pinal
21 valley -- Pinal County.

22 But as noted before, the predominance of all of
23 the things that we use are in Catalina and in Oro Valley.
24 So that's really our -- our focus. That's our world
25 there. We have nothing in common with San Tan Valley or

1 Maricopa way over at the other end. We're about the same
2 distance from both by driving, not by the crow flying.

3 So if that can be taken into consideration with
4 respect to the legislative districts when you're looking
5 at it. The other thing is our section -- or Pinal --
6 Pima -- no, Pinal County is the toe of the boot of
7 Congressional District 1. We just stick out. It has
8 nothing in common with all the rest of the district. So
9 that should be taken a look at. You know, focus it more
10 down towards the areas where we have interest and not
11 towards the areas that are very, extremely rural and not
12 associated with the stuff that we do.

13 Thank you.

14 MS. VAN HAREN: Next we have Neil Carter, and
15 then after that, we have John Thompson.

16 MR. CARTER: Hi. My name is Neil Carter. And I
17 really want to sincerely thank the commissioners because I
18 know it's a thankless job and it involves a lot of travel,
19 and thank you.

20 Nick Meyers alluded to a problem that I have. I
21 live in San Tan Valley. It's the fastest growing
22 community in the country: 120,000 residents. And we're --
23 we have no voice because we've been split between three
24 districts. There is one precinct in LD12, the only Pinal
25 County precinct, and it runs along Gary Road. I own four

1 acres in there, and about a mile from there, I live in my
2 suburban house in LD8. And I'm just going to come out and
3 say it: LD8 is crazy. I think that there was litigation
4 even after the last census on LD8. As you've already
5 heard from others that it split Casa Grande in two, it
6 split Gold Canyon along Peralta Road, it split
7 SaddleBrooke Ranch from SaddleBrooke, it has split
8 Encanterra literally in the middle of the street. I think
9 we should keep San Tan Valley together.

10 I would implore the commissioners, please keep
11 San Tan Valley together. It is divided by county
12 commissioners. It is not incorporated and has no voice of
13 any kind at this moment because it's split between 16,
14 north of Schnepf and part of Encanterra, LD8, which is the
15 rest of it, and part of it in LD12 as Nick Meyers alluded
16 to.

17 So that would be my request for the
18 commissioners.

19 I really appreciate your time.

20 Thank you very much.

21 MS. VAN HAREN: Next we have Gilbert -- I'm
22 sorry -- John Thompson and then Gilbert Lopez.

23 MAYOR THOMPSON: Hi. My name is John Thompson.
24 I live in Coolidge, Arizona. I happen to be the mayor in
25 Coolidge.

1 I wanted to -- it's pretty interesting. I don't
2 envy you guys, but thank you for being here. I appreciate
3 you coming down on a Friday night and listening to
4 everybody's concerns. Mine will be a little different.

5 Coolidge was founded in 1925 and incorporated in
6 1945. So we've been around for quite a while. We
7 currently have, according to the U.S. census estimate,
8 which will change, I hope, 13,500 residents. Of those
9 residents, we have a pretty decent makeup. I think
10 72 percent are considered white, but that contains -- the
11 Hispanics are in with that. So it's about an even split
12 there.

13 So I guess my point is we're in LD8 and CD1, and
14 we're happy where we're at. And so we don't -- we don't
15 want to change. I hear everybody else that's been up here
16 tonight wants to change, and we're just -- we're fine
17 where we're at. We'd like to stay there. And there's a
18 lot of reasons why.

19 When you talk about LD8, we have a lot of miners
20 that work in the Copper Corridor area, especially in
21 Superior or Miami that live in Coolidge. We're
22 predominately a farming community still even though we're
23 getting Nikola and a lot of hydrogen and electric vehicle
24 companies are looking at us. Nikola is already there and
25 will start producing trucks in August. We have a lot of

1 things going on down there, and we are satisfied with
2 where we're at. So we're asking you to leave us there.

3 The one thing I would ask you is, you know, the
4 mayor of Maricopa who's a good friend of mine, Christian
5 Price, tonight mentioned that -- you know, that they group
6 a bunch of us together. And I know Neil that just spoke
7 on behalf of San Tan. I don't disagree with what he said.

8 What I would say is we're a midrange, midsized
9 town for Pinal County. Like I say, 13,500 is our
10 population. We'll do 1,000 single-family home permits
11 this year at 3.75 average per household. So that's still
12 not gonna catch us up to the Casa Grandes and the
13 Maricopas and the San Tan Valleys.

14 So when you take a town like ours or Eloy or
15 Florence for that matter and you throw us in with a San
16 Tan or a Casa Grande or a Maricopa, we're done. There'll
17 never be another -- there will never be a county
18 supervisor from our community, our votes virtually won't
19 count. If you split us -- we're very fortunate. We're in
20 one district in our situation. I think Eloy's in a couple
21 of them. I know Casa Grande's in a couple of them. You
22 know, Florence is in different ones. If you split already
23 a small contingency of votes, you're gonna just, you know,
24 take -- dilute their power -- their voting power as a
25 community even further.

1 And so I'm asking that you leave us whole. Don't
2 split us. But if you throw us in with a big community --
3 I mean, there's ways you can -- we like LD8 in with the
4 mountains. If you have to, go out and put Arizona City in
5 with us.

6 We're gonna grow; Eloy's gonna grow; Florence is
7 gonna go. When you look at the populations, keep in mind
8 that Eloy and Florence are going to count all of their
9 citizens which includes the guys who don't go anywhere and
10 don't vote. So -- but ours, for the most part, can move
11 around. We don't have a -- our jail is not certified, so
12 we don't have anybody on lockdown.

13 So, anyway, I'll leave it at that.

14 Thank you very much for your time.

15 Be safe going home.

16 MS. VAN HAREN: Next we have Gilbert Lopez, and
17 after that, we have Carol Bailey.

18 MR. LOPEZ: Hello, Commissioners, and welcome.
19 Thank you for being here and listening to all of us.

20 My name is Gilbert Lopez. I'm here to speak
21 about Coolidge, Arizona, also, its community of interest.

22 I graduated from Coolidge High School in 1979 as
23 a Coolidge Bear -- proud, you know. And I was also in the
24 Future Farmers of America. So we're a farming community.
25 And, also, I was on the city council for 18 years and the

1 vice mayor of those for 8 years. So I got on the council
2 to help get jobs for young people, and now I'm able to do
3 that as the city's economic development director. So
4 we're working to do that right now.

5 I'm -- just boundary-wise, Coolidge is bound to
6 the north by the Gila River Indian community, and to --
7 Florence to the east, you know, around our airport, Eloy
8 to the south and has a road, and then Casa Grande to the
9 west past Central Arizona Signal Peak Campus. Coolidge is
10 in LD88, Congressional District 1.

11 And our message, just as the Mayor said, is that
12 we want to stay as is in the same LD8, where we're at, and
13 the congressional district. It works for us the way it's
14 going.

15 Our roots are in agriculture. It's still viable
16 and -- but we're much more than that. We're home to the
17 Casa Grande National Monument, and it's in Coolidge, not
18 in Casa Grande. So that's -- people get confused.

19 But we're also evolving into a smart city with a
20 new energy-sufficient Nikola plant. You know, they make
21 hydrogen, electric-powered semis, and they're building
22 over a million-square-foot facility, and they'll be
23 rolling out trucks by the end of the summer. They'll
24 be -- the first ones will be all electric, and later we'll
25 have the hydrogen trucks that are coming.

1 We also have over 2,000 acres of solar that's
2 already in place, and we have room for more. It's in
3 IPAZ, which is bound by Highway 87 and also the future
4 north/south freeway that's coming through from the east
5 valley down to the Eloy area.

6 Coolidge also is home to the Central Arizona
7 Regional Transit which is the CART system that we provide,
8 and it's federally funded and locally funded. The city
9 puts a lot of money into it. It serves central Casa
10 Grande, Eloy, and Florence.

11 And the mayor already talked about the population
12 growth. It's -- it's -- we're growing at a tremendous
13 rate. We will -- we believe we will hit 1,000 permits
14 this year, and it'll take us up quite a bit to about
15 33,800 people in the next census or closer to probably
16 38-.

17 And just a little bit -- I grew up on Kennedy,
18 which is an older part of town. Now we live in Heartland,
19 just to give you about -- little bit about the community.
20 It's a mix of Coolidge people that moved into the area for
21 the newer houses and also people looking for work. They
22 come and say, "We want to work at Nikola. So that's why
23 we moved here." And then we also have some retirees. And
24 it's great.

25 We have a lot of community chat comments. They

1 love Coolidge the way it is and they like the fact that
2 we're growing, but they don't want to be big like the city
3 of Chandler or places like that. So they like the
4 small-town feel.

5 So, again, we'd like to say -- we'd like to stay
6 how it is. We don't want to get split up, absolutely not.

7 And thank you for the opportunity to speak.
8 Thank you.

9 MS. VAN HAREN: Our next speaker is actually Judy
10 Smith. Carol Bailey had to leave. And then after Judy is
11 Peggy Baycos [phonetic], and that will be our final
12 speaker. So there's Judy Smith and Peggy Baycos.

13 Is Judy Smith or Peggy Baycos still present?

14 Okay. And we will give this back to the
15 chairman.

16 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: I want to thank, again, our
17 staff, the public, my commissioners. I thought this was a
18 beautiful display of democracy.

19 Thank you for everybody joining us.

20 With this, we will adjourn our meeting. And we
21 look forward to seeing you at our many upcoming public
22 meetings.

23 Goodnight.

24 (The proceedings concluded at 7:07 p.m.)
25

C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF ARIZONA)

) ss.

COUNTY OF MARICOPA)

BE IT KNOWN that the foregoing proceedings were taken before me, Penny Segundo, Certified Reporter No. 50959; that the foregoing 77 pages are a full, true, and accurate record of the proceedings, all done to the best of my skill and ability; that the proceedings were taken down by me in shorthand and thereafter reduced to print under my direction.

I CERTIFY that I am in no way related to any of the parties hereto nor am I in any way interested in the outcome thereof.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I have complied with the requirements set forth in ACJA 7-206. Dated at Phoenix, Arizona, this 6th day of August, 2021.

Penny Segundo
Penny Segundo, RPR
CERTIFIED REPORTER (AZ50959)

* * *

I CERTIFY that Miller Certified Reporting, LLC, has complied with the requirements set forth in ACJA 7-206. Dated at LITCHFIELD PARK, Arizona, this 6th day of August, 2021.

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