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**Beaufort Redistricting Public Hearing
Summary of Testimony**

The Technical College of the Low Country, Building 12 Auditorium
March 28, 2011 6:30-8:30 p.m. scheduled

The public hearing began at 6:30 p.m. The Redistricting Subcommittee members present were: Senator McConnell, Senator Ford, Senator Malloy, Senator Cleary, and Senator Shoopman. Senators L. Martin and Hutto were absent. The Senate Redistricting staff persons present were: Charlie Terreni, Debbie Hammond, Katherine Wells, and Laurie Traywick.

Senator McConnell introduced members of the subcommittee and explained the redistricting process. He also explained that the ground rules for all of the 10 public hearings would be to ask each speaker to be clear, brief, and civil, so all persons would have the time to present their ideas and concerns clearly and concisely and that all positions would be given respect. He also asked speakers to let the subcommittee know if their remarks referred to Senate or Congressional redistricting concerns or to both.

1. Marilyn P. Caprielian, a citizen from Sun City spoke about Beaufort County's representation in South Carolina. She asked that the subcommittee not split the northern and southern parts of Beaufort County into different senate districts. She noted that the following items all point to a unified Beaufort County: a county-wide transportation system that makes it easy to travel to all parts of the county, a county-wide school district, one major newspaper serving all of the county, economic development based on serving all of the county in its regional economic development groups, and television stations from Savannah and Charleston that serve the entire county. Ms. Caprielian notes that the city of Beaufort is the county seat, and opines that putting the county seat in a different senate district from the majority of county residents (who reside south of the Broad River) would, she believes, be very damaging to the community. She wants the subcommittee to consider a Senate district that has the county seat of Beaufort as the central part of one Senate District.

2. Charles Lucas, a member of Walterboro City Council, spoke to the subcommittee about the need to keep Colleton County whole in a House or Senate district, and not split among three House Districts and three Senate Districts. He believes this is taxation without representation. He wants someone who lives in Colleton County to represent the county in Columbia.

3. Bill Young, Mayor of Walterboro, also spoke of the need to keep Walterboro and Colleton counties wholly within a Senate or House district. He says that Walterboro is split six different ways, between three House Districts and three Senate districts, and these splits mean that there are no communities of interest with any of the legislators, and he does not feel that they are answerable to the citizens of Colleton County. He believes that Colleton County is big enough for one House District, and that the county needs someone who represents the majority of the county. Mayor Young acknowledges that the county is not big enough to make up an entire Senate District, but thinks that it is large enough to make up a substantial portion of one.

4. Gary Hodges, a citizen of Senate District # 45, believes that this district is too spread out and is not based on the guidelines adopted during the 2001 redistricting. Mr. Hodges pointed out to the subcommittee that Senate District #45 wraps around Senate District #46 to include part of Jasper County.

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In comparing how Senate Districts in Greenville are divided and compact to the Senate Districts in the Low Country, he wants to know why so many Senate Districts in the Low Country share portions of Charleston County, and why they cannot be compact like the Greenville Senate Districts. He believes that the new census numbers show that Jasper, Hampton, and Beaufort counties have sufficient population for two full senators. He wants the subcommittee, in their redistricting plans, to limit senators to no more than two to three counties, because he believes when they are so spread out, like the senators for Districts #39 and #45, it is very difficult for the senators to keep up with all of the issues and concerns, such as appointing magistrates. He believes that asking a Senator to be spread so thinly is not right and is not proper representation. He wants the subcommittee to consider all of these issues, especially when redrawing the area between Charleston and the Georgia line.

5. Joseph Flowers, past chairman of Colleton County Council, spoke next. He thinks it is unfathomable how Colleton County has been split among so many Senate and House districts over the past 20 years. He believes that when there are so many splits, and so many people in charge, then no one is in charge. He also believes that no Senate District with a part of Colleton County represents a community of interest, because the county is split. He also believes that the fact that some senators represent as many as portions of five counties is too much, and if lines are redrawn so that Colleton County is not split, it will not be disenfranchised. He also notes that the city of Walterboro is split six different ways, among three House Districts and among three Senate Districts. He believes there is trouble, because of all of the splits, of getting adequate representation, and that better representation is needed for Colleton County and Walterboro. With regard to Congressional redistricting, he wants the subcommittee to remember that Colleton County has historically been in the 1st Congressional District, and that since more people in Colleton County go to Charleston to shop, get their newspapers from Charleston, and get their TV coverage out of Charleston, it makes more sense to put Colleton County back into the 1st District. The subcommittee needs to keep Colleton County together as a community of interest. He feels that the citizens of Colleton County do not feel that their votes count now.

6. Alison Davidow, State Executive Committeewoman of the Beaufort County Democratic Party, spoke about the need for the subcommittee to consider issues other than just the requirements for mathematical equality of each district. She wants the subcommittee to consider communities of interest and diversity when drawing the Senate and Congressional plans. She believes educational issues need to be considered with other common interests. She thinks that the subcommittee should consider civic interests as well as infrastructure interests that communities have in common. She thinks that the 2nd Congressional District should be redrawn because she does not see what common interests Lexington County areas have with Yemassee, SC. She thinks that the current 2nd Congressional District leads citizens within the district to feel that another part of the district has greater interests to be accommodated since constituents are often not part of the discussion that leads to a decision on voting on an issue. She also questioned the wisdom of requiring one safe African-American congressional district in the last redistricting plan, and the wisdom of requiring the same number of black legislative districts as before. She also believes that the redrawn maps should reflect the diversity of the Latino and African-American populations and give them more opportunities to elect their choices. She urges the subcommittee to respect each other's needs and look beyond a party label or skin color.

7. Jocelyn Metzger Staigar, a citizen from Hilton Head Island, spoke on the need to keep the northern and southern parts of Beaufort County together. She says that Beaufort is usually referred to as

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three different areas: Beaufort/Port Royal area, the Bluffton area, and the Hilton Head Island area. She believes that it is all one area and that can be seen by the geographical locations of the areas, and that they all share the same goals for education, environmental, and economic interests, and economic well-being is better sustained when these parts of Beaufort County are in one Senate District.

8. Anne Christianson Pollitzer spoke on the need for the subcommittee to use logic when drawing district lines. She lives on St. Helena Island and is in Senate District #45. She believes that the grouping of minority groups was done on purpose, and she worries that this will not change. She says that since almost half of the population increase in the state this time has come in Jasper and Beaufort counties, she thinks there should be a new representative from the Low Country. She believes that this has led to precincts and counties being split, which is not good. She wants the subcommittee to draw district lines logically so that people who live together are in the same Senate District. She wants her Congressional District member to live among them in Beaufort, and not outside of Columbia, as the present holder of Congressional District #2 does.

9. Rep. Kenneth Hodges, House District #121, spoke to the subcommittee about keeping communities of interest together for the Senate and Congressional Districts. He thinks it is sometimes hard to determine where communities of interest are on a map. He wants the subcommittee to notice that Saint Helena's Island, for example, does have a community of interest that spills over to Colleton County, and some of these same interests are in Charleston County, because many of these people traveled by waterways. Even if it looks odd, there is logic in having parts of Colleton County grouped with parts of Beaufort County. He wants the subcommittee to remember that communities can sometimes be based on a common culture and that compactness in Greenville and in the Low Country are different because of the geographical differences. He wants the subcommittee to continue to consider communities of interest, and make districts compact, when possible, and try not to split precincts. He also asks that the subcommittee adhere to the Voting Rights Act, as amended. He thinks that the new 7th Congressional District should be a coastal district because of the commonality of interests along the coast.

10. Sen. Tom Davis, Senate District #46, was signed up to speak, but withdrew his request to speak.

11. Sen. Clementa Pinckney, Senate District #45, was signed up to speak, but withdrew his request to speak.

12. Lee Shaffer thanked the subcommittee for meeting in Beaufort and was glad for the chance for citizens to have input. She asked the subcommittee about the process, because she came in late to the hearing, and wanted to know what was the next step and would there be more chances for public input. Sen. McConnell explained that these public hearings were being held to solicit public input to assist the subcommittee in determining which criteria or guidelines they should use in drawing up redistricting plans. He told her that by signing up to be on the contact list, she will receive notifications of hearings, meetings, and ways to have input. He also told her that there would be chances to submit alternative redistricting plans or amendments to other plans once the criteria was chosen and the subcommittee had developed a plan. He also explained how the House and Senate work on their own plans and then try to reach a compromise on the Congressional plan. He also reminded her that the subcommittee is accepting written as well as oral comments, and there would be chance for public comments once a draft plan was developed by the subcommittee.

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13. Fred Hamilton, a member of the Bluffton Town Council, thanked the subcommittee for the public hearing. He asks the subcommittee to consider preserving the waterways when drawing the redistricting plans. He wants the subcommittee to preserve historical communities and cultures. He wants them also to keep in mind how aggressively the population of Bluffton is growing, but that it is imperative not to subject the pristine areas to pollution. He wants the subcommittee to preserve the small communities of interest to help maintain these communities that care about the natural resources.

Senator McConnell asked if there was anyone else in the audience who wished to speak.

14. Bobby Bonds, a citizen of Walterboro, who was not signed up to speak, asked if he could speak to the subcommittee, and Senator McConnell said that would be fine. Mr. Bonds wants the subcommittee to keep Colleton County together, for the same reasons that the speakers who talked about the need to keep Beaufort County together gave. He does not believe that Colleton County has a community of interest with Berkeley County, and that the senators who represent Colleton County now have too many counties that they represent. He also believes that Colleton County does not share interests with Jasper County or Sun City in Bluffton. He wants the subcommittee to consider, if more than one senator represents Colleton County, that the senator representing Colleton County not have so many other counties to represent, because it is too much of a burden on the senator. He wants a Senate District drawn that has Colleton County as the main part of the district.

Since no one else wished to speak, Senator McConnell adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:25 pm.