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IN RE: SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE CHICAGO ELECTED  
REPRESENTATIVE SCHOOL BOARD

SENATE HEARING

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October 12, 2023

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APPEARANCES

Senators:

Kimberly A. Lightford

Seth Lewis

Dan McConchie

Celina Villanueva

Ram Villivalam

Elgie R. Sims

Mattie Hunter

Omar Aquino

Robert F. Martwick

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APPEARANCES (continued)

Witnesses:

Brian Metcalf

Hal Woods

Jose Pacas

Eli Brottman

Karl Brinson

Dwayne Truss

Marc Kaplan

Dulce Arroyo

Corrina Demma

Devon Pucciarello

Valerie F. Leonard

Nicole Johnson

Natasha Dunn

Jessica Handy

Also present:

Ashley Jenkins-Jordan (Cerk)

Giovanni Randazzo

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PROCEEDING

2

3

THE RECORDER: Good evening. The time is

4

5:13 p.m. We are now on the record on Thursday,

5

October 12th, 2023.

0:00:10

6

CHAIRPERSON LIGHTFORD: Good evening. Thank

7

you. The Special Committee on the Chicago Elected

8

Representatives School Board shall come to order.

9

Please take the roll.

0:00:23

10

THE CLERK: Senator Lewis. Senator

11

McConchie.

12

SENATOR MCCONCHIE: Here.

13

THE CLERK: Senator Villanueva.

14

SENATOR VILLANUEVA: Here.

0:00:32

15

THE CLERK: Senator Villivalam.

16

SENATOR VILLIVALAM: Here.

17

THE CLERK: Senator Sims.

0:00:38

18

SENATOR SIMS: Present.

19

THE CLERK: Senator Hunter.

20

SENATOR HUNTER: Present.

21

THE CLERK: Vice Chair Aquino.

0:00:44

22

VICE CHAIRPERSON AQUINO: Present.

23

THE CLERK: Vice Chair Martwick.

24

VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: Present.

0:00:49

1 THE CLERK: And Chair Lightford.

2 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Here.

3 THE CLERK: There are eight members present. 0:00:56

4 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Thank you. There are  
5 eight members present. We do have a quorum  
6 established. We will begin to conduct business. 0:01:03

7 Blue Room Stream seeks leaves of the body to  
8 take photos and videos of the proceedings. Leave is  
9 granted. Seeing no objection. 0:01:12

10 I'd like to again thank everyone for  
11 participating in this critical process and thank you  
12 all for joining us tonight as we continue our work to  
13 establish school board boundaries that will provide  
14 equitable representation for all of the City's diverse  
15 populations. 0:01:34

16 Recent hearings have raised questions about a  
17 number of provisions required under existing law,  
18 including the hybrid period, in which some districts  
19 will be represented by members who are elected and  
20 others will be represented by members who are  
21 appointed. 0:01:53

22 We've also heard concerns about the petition  
23 and election process for prospective board candidates.  
24 Tonight's hearing will focus on exploring these

1 procedural issues more in depth. 0:02:09

2 So before we begin, let's review how we got  
3 to this point again. In 2021, the Senate and House  
4 passed House Bill 2908, which required the Chicago  
5 Board of Education to become fully elected by 2027. 0:02:24

6 Under the law, starting January 15th of 2025,  
7 a two-year hybrid period begins, with ten members being  
8 elected to four-year terms, ten members being appointed  
9 to two-year terms, and the board president being  
10 appointed by the mayor for a two-year term. 0:02:47

11 In 2027, when the mayor appointed terms the  
12 ten members and the elected at large members will be  
13 elected to four-year terms. Based on Chicago's  
14 population, the ten districts would be comprised of  
15 approximately 274,601. And the 20 districts will be  
16 comprised at around 137,301 people, according to the  
17 census. 0:03:15

18 The City of Chicago is 35.9 percent white,  
19 29.8 percent Hispanic, 29.2 percent black, 7 percent  
20 Asian, and about 11 percent describes themselves as two  
21 or more races. The school code requires that the  
22 districts be compact, contiguous, and substantially  
23 equal in population and consistent with the Illinois  
24 Voting Rights Act. 0:03:43

1           If you know someone who wants to provide  
2 input but could not make it today, additional  
3 opportunities to provide comment is available for them  
4 if they access [www.ilsenateredistricting.com](http://www.ilsenateredistricting.com), dot I-L,  
5 Senate District -- Redistricting.com.

0:04:06

6           Or via email at Chicago, in all caps, ERSB,  
7 capital C in Committee at [Senatedem.ilga.gov](http://Senatedem.ilga.gov). So  
8 that's Chicago, ERSBC, spell out committee, at  
9 [Senatedem.ilga.gov](http://Senatedem.ilga.gov).

0:04:28

10           Again, thanks so much for your -- taking the  
11 time to join us here this evening. This is a -- again,  
12 a critical issue that I -- I know without a shadow a  
13 doubt deserve community input, and this is -- process  
14 has been driven by community-led input.

0:04:45

15           And so I'd like to now turn this over to our  
16 vice chair, Senator Martwick, for additional comments.

17           VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: Thank you, Madame  
18 Chair. As you noted, we -- we -- we've got a very  
19 complex process and obviously, and thankfully, there  
20 are numerous opinions about what these districts should  
21 look like.

0:05:06

22           And that is a testament to people's  
23 involvement in their communities and their desire for  
24 adequate representation. I am of course looking



1 forward to hearing more about people's opinions on the  
2 elections and the process for selection of the  
3 appointed board members, and this work is -- is  
4 obviously to dive deeper and get into these -- the nuts  
5 and bolts of these important issues.

0:05:35

6 So you know, there -- there will be some  
7 disagreements along the way, and like we said, the good  
8 news is that our goals are the same, and that's  
9 accountability, transparency, and adequate  
10 representation for our diverse and amazing city and  
11 school district.

0:05:54

12 So again, I want to extend my appreciation to  
13 all of you who are here tonight and have worked so hard  
14 to get us to this point. I look forward to tonight's  
15 conversation.

0:06:03

16 Thank you, Madame Chair.

17 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: You're welcome, Senator.

18 One moment, please. I did see Senator  
19 McConchie. I was searching to see if you would like to  
20 speak, or Senator Seth. Oh. Senator McConchie?

0:06:31

21 SENATOR MCCONCHIE: Hi, Leader. I just think  
22 we should go straight to our witnesses tonight.

23 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Great. So thank you to  
24 those who took time again, and I look forward to

1 hearing today's testimonies.

0:06:45

2           And I know for sure that we're all passionate  
3 about this subject, but I'm urging all of us to please  
4 stick to the topic at hand and let's focus on a  
5 successful implementation of this transition.

0:07:02

6           We do have a lot of input tonight, so without  
7 further ado, I'd like to welcome Dulce Arroyo,  
8 Palenique [phonetic] to the microphone from Palenique.

0:07:14

9           How bad did I do?

10           MS. ARROYO: That's all right. It's Dulce  
11 Arroyo from Palenque LSNA. You can say LSNA. Yeah.

12           SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Welcome.

13           MS. ARROYO: Thank -- thank you, thank you.  
14 So again, my name is Dulce Arroyo, and I'm an education  
15 organizer at Palenque LSNA in Logan Square.

0:07:34

16           I support the community map submitted by the  
17 ERSB Community Coalition, who is in coalition with LSNA  
18 and numerous other organizations that fight for all  
19 students in Chicago regardless of their ZIP codes.

0:07:47

20           Although I am from the North Side, tonight  
21 I'm not speaking as a North Sider. Neighborhood  
22 classification doesn't matter to me when it comes to  
23 education.

0:07:56

24           I'm speaking as a -- as a parent, and I'm

1 asking for true representation for all neighborhoods,  
2 because I constantly see low-income, hard-working  
3 constituents of color worry about where they will send  
4 their children to school and worry about who will truly  
5 represent them.

0:08:11

6 Low-income black, brown, indigenous, and  
7 immigrant students continue to be ignored while  
8 predominantly white neighborhoods have access to fully  
9 funded schools. I've come here to speak on behalf of  
10 every marginalized family of color that deserves to  
11 have access to a just, sustainable, and joyful future.

0:08:29

12 I don't have enough time to into detail about  
13 all the cruelties that South and West Side families  
14 endured during the 50 school closings in 2013 nor do I  
15 wish to. However, we do have to remind our legislators  
16 of the education injustices those families experienced,  
17 and ten years later, they're still feeling the big  
18 holes left behind.

0:08:49

19 We must keep this conversation up until the  
20 wrongs that have been done to our babies get addressed  
21 and actions are made in the right direction for them.

22 The constituents from these communities  
23 affected are the very reason that we vote these elected  
24 officials into office, because not only do these

1 communities have faith but they also have the right to  
2 expect that their elected officials will make better  
3 choices to look out for the -- their families'  
4 well-beings.

0:09:13

5 Those elected officials will now include, for  
6 the first time ever in the City of Chicago, an elected  
7 school board. So we have the -- the LSNA support the  
8 community map, because we know its creation was  
9 intentional in best representing marginalized  
10 communities.

0:09:26

11 Our legislators have a profound opportunity  
12 to stand with us now and improve every child's public  
13 education experience in Chicago by supporting our  
14 community map.

15 Thank you for your time.

0:09:38

16 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Thank you. I appreciate  
17 your testimony. So I'm just wondering if you can like  
18 walk us through the numbers of the map that you are in  
19 support of the community.

0:09:54

20 Or if we can provide that support. Have you  
21 had a chance to dive into the numbers?

22 MS. ARROYO: Yes. Is that something that I  
23 can share onscreen momentarily? I was not prepared to  
24 present the actual map.

0:10:13

1 I thought I was just here to give a  
2 testimony. But.

3 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: No, we can -- we can  
4 share those numbers. Just wanted to make sure that you  
5 were aware and abreast of them, so we could put them  
6 up. 0:10:23

7 And then that way, have a -- a -- a  
8 explanation or an -- a full details explaining of -- of  
9 what the numbers are. So we can put them up for you. 0:10:33

10 MS. ARROYO: Absolutely.

11 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Okay.

12 MS. ARROYO: Okay. Do I put it in the chat  
13 or just share it? 0:10:45

14 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: No. Giovanni is going to  
15 -- Randazzo is going to share the numbers and -- and  
16 give us some explanation.

17 MS. ARROYO: Okay. 0:10:58

18 MR. RANDAZZO: Dulce, did you want to go  
19 through the -- the ten-district map or did -- did you  
20 want to go through the 20-district map? That you guys  
21 had submitted. 0:11:10

22 MS. ARROYO: Yeah. I believe the  
23 ten-district map is the first one that we have  
24 submitted or the first one that was submitted. The one

1 that creates -- sorry. 0:11:25

2 MR. RANDAZZO: So --

3 MS. ARROYO: I'm --

4 MR. RANDAZZO: -- I have -- I have the  
5 numbers shared up here for you. 0:11:29

6 MS. ARROYO: Oh, okay. Perfect. Yeah, I'm  
7 just making sure that that's the same one I have here.  
8 Okay. Give me one second, folks. 0:11:46

9 All right. So R- -- ERSB Community Coalition  
10 map creates opportunities for fair representation  
11 across all racial and demographic groups. We do have  
12 at least four -- my apologies -- five predominantly  
13 Latino and brown -- I'm sorry. 0:12:29

14 We have -- we -- we create -- we created only  
15 -- only four majority white districts while the rest  
16 are -- you know, they -- they sought to -- to seek  
17 better representation for black and brown families. 0:12:40

18 So whereas the ILGA map creates those five  
19 majority white districts, we're really just vouching  
20 for our map because we have, you know, less focus again  
21 on the -- on those white communities that have already,  
22 you know, had consistent representation in the past. 0:12:56

23 So I'm not sure what else I -- what else you  
24 all wanted me to present on exactly.

1 MR. RANDAZZO: Would you like me to go to the  
2 20-district map and -- I've got those out in sections  
3 of the City if that works. 0:13:17

4 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: I'd like that, and I see  
5 some thumbs up of members, Giovanni.

6 MR. RANDAZZO: Okay.

7 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Thank you. 0:13:24

8 MR. RANDAZZO: So Dulce, I'm going to go  
9 through and I've got the numbers here in the corner.

10 MS. ARROYO: Sure.

11 MR. RANDAZZO: So the first one is Districts  
12 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, North Side of Chicago. And the  
13 numbers are down there. So if you want to speak to  
14 those districts. 0:13:45

15 MS. ARROYO: Yeah, so I mean, again, we're  
16 just here to -- to -- or to, you know, really pinpoint  
17 the fact that we have seven black majority districts,  
18 as you can see below, and six Latine because, again,  
19 representation is really what I'm here to -- to speak  
20 on, not so much the -- you know, the -- the  
21 nitty-gritty of the mapping. 0:14:11

22 I wasn't a part of creating the map. So I do  
23 appreciate y'all's patience and understanding on that.  
24 But again, those majority black and brown districts

1 create opportunities for fair representation across all  
2 racial and demographic groups, maintains communities of  
3 interest, and -- and it keeps the district as compact  
4 as possible.

0:14:32

5 We try to -- it -- this map adheres to all  
6 federal districting laws, particularly those around  
7 packing and cracking of racial groups. Again, the --  
8 the way that that ILGA map, you know, kind of has that  
9 rundown like -- the -- that split, right?

0:14:45

10 Obviously it's not the map we're looking at  
11 right now. But we -- our map, our community map,  
12 didn't do that. And then the -- our maps creates  
13 opportunities for pro-education representation that  
14 accurately reflects the residents of the City.

0:14:58

15 So again, just really leading back on that  
16 seven majority black and six majority Latine or Latinx  
17 neighborhoods is -- or districts is really what we --  
18 we've been trying to push upon to -- for -- for the  
19 Senate to understand.

0:15:14

20 And that is it for my piece. Thank you very  
21 much.

22 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Okay, Dulce. So I just  
23 want to just verify. I -- I -- is this -- do we have  
24 the accurate numbers?

0:15:28



1           We just want to make sure it's an accurate  
2 map that we're reflecting and they're the accurate  
3 numbers.

4           MR. RANDAZZO: Madame Chair, I was going to  
5 ask that -- that as well, because the -- the numbers we  
6 have only show three Latin --

0:15:42

7           SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Yeah.

8           MR. RANDAZZO: -- districts with a majority.  
9 One's --

10          SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Okay.

11          MR. RANDAZZO: -- 85 percent --

12          SENATOR LIGHTFORD: All right.

13          MR. RANDAZZO: -- one's 78 percent, and one's  
14 50.94. So I -- I -- and you said there were six. I  
15 just want to make sure we have -- we have the right --  
16 the right final submission from you.

0:15:59

17           The -- this is the last one we have. I just  
18 wanted to make sure of that.

19          MS. ARROYO: Yeah. Again, so the first one  
20 that I have mentioned previously was the ten districts,  
21 so apologies. I'm not really looking at the screen.

0:16:13

22           The one that's on the screen is for the  
23 20-district maps -- the 20 -- 20-district. But we will  
24 definitely get you all those accurate numbers for the

1 20 districts and for the ten-district map. 0:16:27

2 So apologies on that. We'll make sure to get  
3 that to you. So again, it's -- the one that we will  
4 update you all with is seven majority black, six  
5 majority Latine/Latinx. Again, we will make sure to  
6 get that to you. 0:16:41

7 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Okay. Thank you. And  
8 thank you for your input tonight. 0:16:46

9 I'll -- I'll move forward now to Brian  
10 Metcalf from Destiny Foundation. Mr. Metcalf?

11 Okay. If Mr. Metcalf shows up and we're --  
12 we'll chime him in. I'll move on to Kids First Chicago  
13 Elected School Board Taskforce. We have two members  
14 seeking to speak. First we'll -- we'll hear from Hal  
15 Woods. 0:17:20

16 MR. WOODS: If it's all right with the  
17 committee members, I'd actually like to tag team this  
18 with my colleague. Dr. Jose Pacas is here with me this  
19 evening. 0:17:29

20 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Yes. He would go next if  
21 you tag team. That's fine.

22 MR. WOODS: Wonderful. Is it all right if I  
23 do a screenshare? 0:17:35

24 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Sure.

1 MR. WOODS: Terrific.

2 Jose, I'll turn over to you. 0:17:43

3 MR. PACAS: Thank you, Hal.

4 Good evening -- good evening, everybody.

5 It's a pleasure, honor to be here with all of you. My  
6 name is Jose Pacas. I am the chief of data science and  
7 research at Kids First Chicago. 0:17:55

8 The insights I'd like to share tonight -- if  
9 you could to -- to the next slide, Hal, please -- is  
10 about a citywide poll that we just ran that I think  
11 will be informative for a successful transition. 0:18:08

12 So in the spring of 2021, we conducted a Kids  
13 First Chicago more than three -- workshops with more  
14 than 300 parents in our network to understand their  
15 perspectives and priorities for pending state  
16 legislation authorizing the elected school board in  
17 Chicago. 0:18:22

18 Following that enactment, we launched a  
19 taskforce, which I'm -- you know, many of you are --  
20 have heard from parents on our taskforce, to identify  
21 and advocate for priorities that parents felt, if  
22 addressed, would help ensure a successful transition to  
23 an elected school board. 0:18:38

24 These priorities included campaign spending

1 limits, parent seats on the board, non-citizen  
2 participation, and fair racial representation in school  
3 board districts. So in the fall of 2023, literally hot  
4 off the press on Monday, we had a citywide poll of  
5 Chicago registered and/or eligible voters.

0:18:59

6 So keep that in mind as I present these  
7 findings. With the objective of assessing whether the  
8 viewpoints and priorities held by these parents, by  
9 Kids First Chicago parents, aligned with those of the  
10 broader Chicago voter population.

0:19:11

11 My background -- I come from the U.S. Census  
12 Bureau, where I studied poverty statistics. Having  
13 surveys that are accurate and reflect the opinions of  
14 those that we are trying to understand is extremely  
15 important to me, so I was very excited to get to do  
16 this and participate in this work.

0:19:29

17 So we conducted a survey between September  
18 26th to October 9th, 2023. The survey was completed by  
19 a total of 723 voting age Chicago residents from across  
20 all of Chicago.

0:19:42

21 We recruited these respondents by Qualtrics,  
22 through Qualtrics, a commercial survey sampling  
23 administration company. They use a random online  
24 sampling that uses multiple sample providers, and we

1 estimate the margin of error to be plus or minus --  
2 plus or minus 5 percentage points.

0:19:59

3 The racial ethnic distribution of the  
4 respondents is 40 percent black, 30 percent white, 19  
5 percent Latine, 4 percent Asian, 3 percent multiple  
6 races, and 4 percent other races. Average age was  
7 about 40.

0:20:12

8 62 percent of our respondents identified  
9 their gender as female, 41 percent of the respondents  
10 are parents, and about 85 percent of those parents have  
11 children in -- enrolled in public schools.

0:20:25

12 So I'm just going to walk you through some of  
13 the top level findings of this poll.

14 First, on the issue of racial and ethnic  
15 composition of the districts, we find that three out of  
16 four Chicago voters believe it's extremely or very  
17 important that Chicago elected school board districts  
18 have a racial ethnic composition that reflects the  
19 diversity of CPS's student population.

0:20:50

20 On this graph, you'd be focusing on the dark  
21 green. That is the eligible to vote population or  
22 registered to vote. So the 75 is the 44 and the 31  
23 percent from the very and extremely.

0:21:02

24 I've broken it down into public school

1 parents versus non-public school parents just so you  
2 can see we don't see a lot of variation in how people  
3 are responding to these questions.

0:21:14

4           The next -- when we asked about parent seats  
5 on the board, we find that nearly seven in ten Chicago  
6 voters believe it is -- it is extremely or very  
7 important that there be board seats reserved only for  
8 CPS parents. That's, again, the 27 percent from  
9 extremely and the 42 percent for very.

0:21:32

10           Final -- second and the -- the next item is  
11 the ability to vote on school board regardless of  
12 immigration status. We found that nearly seven in ten  
13 Chicago voters support any adult, regardless of  
14 immigration status, voting in a -- in a Chicago elected  
15 school board regardless, again, of their immigration  
16 status.

0:21:52

17           That's a majority of respondents. When we  
18 asked about the ability to served on the school board,  
19 regardless of immigration status, we found that that  
20 was not as high -- as highly supported.

0:22:03

21           That is -- however, that is still a nearly  
22 three out of every five Chicago voters support any  
23 Chicago adult serving on the board. Again, regardless  
24 of immigration status.

0:22:12

1           We continued to ask about strict limits on  
2 donations to elected school board candidate campaigns,  
3 and we found that nearly three out of four Chicago  
4 voters believe that there should be strict limits on  
5 donations to these campaigns.

0:22:25

6           Finally, we asked about stipends or salaries  
7 for elected school board members, and we found again  
8 that more than seven in ten Chicago voters support  
9 Chicago's elected school board members receiving a  
10 stipend or salary.

0:22:38

11           Those are the results of the poll. We have a  
12 lot more of our methodology and our -- our -- different  
13 slices of -- of the data on our website.

0:22:47

14           And I'm happy to share any of those documents  
15 with you all. I'd love to pass it off to Hal Woods now  
16 to have some comments on it.

0:22:56

17           MR. WOODS: And so we know that this meeting  
18 this evening is really about how to ensure a successful  
19 transition to elected school board, and we're happy to  
20 answer questions about the maps.

0:23:03

21           I know, Senator Martwick, you've -- you also  
22 want to talk about the ten to 20 transition as well.  
23 We just really think it's important -- we know that  
24 many groups -- and we've very appreciative to the

1 Senate and the House, both the -- this committee, but  
2 also the House working group having those -- those  
3 working group -- or those hearings back in the spring,  
4 and thank you to the Senate for continuing to have  
5 these conversations in the fall.

0:23:24

6 We really urge this committee and we urge the  
7 -- the broader general assembly to -- to think about  
8 some new maps. We think the maps that have been  
9 produced thus far don't go as far as they could.

0:23:33

10 We know that there are limitations election  
11 law at the federal and state level. The new map that  
12 we've submitted really adheres to all those election  
13 laws, and we urge this committee to look at that map.

0:23:44

14 We know that no committee -- that -- that no  
15 single map is going to be adopted by this committee,  
16 but we urge you all to look at those as well. We urge  
17 this committee again to ensure that we have a  
18 significant CPS population that's not disenfranchised  
19 from being able to participate in school board  
20 elections, that -- that this committee look to modify  
21 elected school board law to allow Chicagoan, regardless  
22 of immigration status, to be able to vote or to run in  
23 elected school board election.

0:24:08

24 We encourage this committee to also look at



1 putting spending and donation limits for candidate to  
2 run school board elections, to help keep special  
3 interests out of school board elections in the City of  
4 Chicago.

0:24:20

5 We also urge this committee -- there's a  
6 provision right now that restricts compensation for  
7 school board members. We urge this committee to  
8 reconsider and to strike that provision from the  
9 existing law.

0:24:31

10 We want to make sure that everyday Chicagoans  
11 like parents can participate in these elections for a  
12 -- a -- for a -- a volunteer role that right now would  
13 be about 30 to 35 hours a -- a month of time.

0:24:41

14 That's what we see nationally in terms of  
15 school board time spent. So we urge this committee to  
16 consider that as well. And then also to consider  
17 opportunities for Chicago parents to serve on the  
18 school board as well.

0:24:50

19 And that could come through different  
20 structures, looking at the local school council  
21 structure, where there's parents seats that are  
22 reserved obviously for -- for -- for Chicago parents.  
23 But also to think about if there's campaign spending  
24 limits, if there's opportunities where parents can

1 receive compensation, that could make it more  
2 incentivized and could broaden the pool of candidates  
3 that ultimately run for school board elections.

0:25:13

4 Turn it over to Jose just to -- one thing  
5 that is not in the purview of this committee but to  
6 some -- just a -- I think an important consideration  
7 for all the advocates here this evening.

0:25:23

8 MR. PACAS: Thank you, Hal. I always relish  
9 the opportunity to talk more about data. We asked  
10 about awareness of the transition to elected school  
11 board.

0:25:33

12 And we found that there's a lack of broad  
13 awareness among Chicago voters as the City transitions  
14 to an elected school board. Only half of all of our --  
15 of -- of all of our respondents were aware of the  
16 upcoming transition.

0:25:48

17 Roughly two out of five CPS families are  
18 unaware of the transition. That's the 60 percent that  
19 are aware, 40 percent that are not.

0:25:56

20 And about 50 percent, half of the -- half of  
21 people that are non-parents or have parents in  
22 non-public schools are not aware. So awareness is  
23 something that we are looking to -- that we need to  
24 increase overall. And with that, I'll pass it off to

1 Hal.

0:26:16

2 MR. WOODS: And we can -- happy to take  
3 questions. Again, any of the -- the information we've  
4 presented here vis-à-vis polling, but also happy to  
5 answer any questions about the map, the new map that  
6 we've submitted, or anything about the transition over  
7 the next two years or -- or next fall to the hybrid  
8 board and then moving to the full board in 2027.

0:26:37

9 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Great. Thanks, Hal. So  
10 I guess the question would be if -- if you'd like for  
11 us to put the map up, we could put the map up and kind  
12 of just go through it quickly.

0:26:47

13 MR. WOODS: Sure. I can also pull it up if  
14 that's easier. Yeah, and so we -- I mean, this is  
15 something that our taskforce -- our parent taskforce --  
16 we really presented a whole host of maps to that  
17 taskforce.

0:27:14

18 And we let those parents decide which one was  
19 the one they wanted to ultimately submit to this  
20 committee and, if the House resumes their hearings, to  
21 the House committee as well. We know -- you know,  
22 Chicago segregation unfortunately doesn't allow us to  
23 -- to mirror CPS student demographics.

0:27:29

24 So working with a map- -- mapmaker or giving

1 different prototype options, we've been able to create  
2 a map that we believe gets as close as possible,  
3 provides large pluralities for our Latine and our --  
4 our black population for the districts that are  
5 predominantly black and Latine and minimizes -- reduces  
6 the number of white majority districts as well.

0:27:50

7 MR. RANDAZZO: Hal, do you want me to go to  
8 the sections and you guys can kind of talk about those  
9 individual districts? If that helps.

10 MR. WOODS: I -- I don't -- I mean, it --  
11 it's up to the committee members if they want us to  
12 kind of go deep into -- to -- I think you know our  
13 whole premise behind this and working with our parents  
14 on this -- you know, obviously we -- we -- our parents  
15 recommended this one.

0:28:14

16 We have three different options that we've  
17 submitted. The reason why we chose the most recent  
18 submission was because we'd heard from members -- I  
19 think it was actually the House working group who felt  
20 that our population deviations were a bit too broad.

0:28:27

21 And we know that even though those comport  
22 with our interpretation of local election law and  
23 knowing that the Chicago ward maps also have this kind  
24 of 10 percent differential, 5 percent above and below

1 kind of the largest districts, we've actually submitted  
2 a map now that gets down to like .88 percent population  
3 deviation.

0:28:44

4 And so if we want to go into specific  
5 districts, you know, happy to do so. I -- I -- I want  
6 to respect the other advocates that are here tonight  
7 that want to speak on their maps or some of the issues  
8 that are most important to them.

0:28:54

9 But I just wanted to articulate that, you  
10 know, we heard the feedback about the population  
11 variance from the last map that was submitted by Kids  
12 First Chicago's parent-led taskforce. And so we -- we  
13 went back to our mapmaker.

0:29:06

14 We put a -- a series of options in front of  
15 the parents, and they elected to submit this one.  
16 Parents would be here this evening, but we actually  
17 have a town hall starting in about 18 minutes with  
18 Mikva Challenge, specifically on elected school board  
19 transition for Chicago, so they couldn't be here with  
20 us this evening.

0:29:23

21 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Okay. Great. Thank you.

22 Is there anything else that maybe, Giovanni,  
23 you could share with members from that, or we -- we can  
24 just -- oops -- whoops, I'm sorry -- we can just move

1 on to the next.

0:29:43

2 MR. RANDAZZO: Madame Chair, it'll be online  
3 just like the previous presentation for anybody to have  
4 questions.

5 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Great. Thank you.

6 Any questions of members? Don't see any  
7 hands, so I can thank you to Kids First Chicago Elected  
8 School Board Taskforce for your involvement.

9 Appreciate your work.

0:30:03

10 And now moving on to Educators for  
11 Excellence. There are three individuals seeking to  
12 speak. We can begin with Corrina Demma.

0:30:13

13 MS. DEMMA: Hello. Hi. Hi, Leader  
14 Lightford.

15 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Good to see you.

0:30:22

16 MS. DEMMA: Good to see you too, and Senator  
17 Martwick and the rest of the committee, so happy to  
18 hear -- see you again. I'm going to leave most of the  
19 details of our testimony to the teachers who are going  
20 to speak.

0:30:33

21 So I'll just take a moment to speak briefly  
22 off the cuff. Go, go. I gotta move when I talk. I --  
23 oh. I -- I was reminded so much by Dulce's testamary  
24 [phonetic] -- Dulce's testimony, because I was a part

1 of those school closings in 2013.

0:30:58

2 My school was closed. And it changed the  
3 course of my life. I had committed myself to being an  
4 educator. I was very excited about it. I loved being  
5 a teacher.

0:31:09

6 And that experience was, quite frankly, so  
7 traumatic that it took me out of the classroom, and --  
8 and here I am today. I will say that I know that many,  
9 many lives were changed by that process.

0:31:23

10 And when I think about that and I think about  
11 what's happening now, the potential for greatness and  
12 having a truly representative school board, I am so  
13 nervous about us not taking the time to be reflective  
14 at every potential possible point that we can.

0:31:40

15 So when I think about having a smooth  
16 transition over the course of the next years to this  
17 elected school board, and I think of like what things  
18 we can implement to make sure that happens, I think of  
19 IAAFER's maps, Valerie Leonard's maps, and the -- and  
20 how much it makes sense to me that they would draw ten  
21 maps initially.

0:32:05

22 Because that's what the law says, and it's  
23 manageable. And then we can take the time to pause and  
24 reflect on those maps to see how effective they are.

0:32:17

1           Here we are ten years later after those  
2 schools were closed. WBEZ's reported on it, NPR's  
3 reported on it. We -- we never stopped to see the  
4 damage that was being done before forcing policies  
5 through.

0:32:30

6           So I urge the committee to consider a  
7 ten-district map initially so that we can roll this out  
8 slowly and in a thoughtful manner.

9           Secondly, I would also like to endorse her  
10 committee on -- her advisory committee for black  
11 students so that achievement for black students doesn't  
12 become a campaign promise that falls to the wayside.

0:32:52

13           And finally, I would like to say that I think  
14 that compensation, as stated by my previous Hal -- Hal  
15 Woods -- I'm sorry, I have a five-year-old protesting  
16 in the background. Excuse -- excuse us for our  
17 realness.

0:33:11

18           But I'm very pleased to see the results from  
19 Kids First poll. I think Chicagoans are correct. This  
20 world deserves compensation. And that will bring true  
21 representation.

0:33:23

22           So with that, me and my upset five-year-old  
23 will yield. Thank you for your time. Apologies.

0:33:31

24           SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Oh, you're welcome.



1 Devon Pucciarello?

2 MS. PUCCIARELLO: Pucciarello. Yes.

3 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Yeah. Hi. 0:33:41

4 MS. PUCCIARELLO: Hi. Let me just get myself

5 on the --

6 So good evening, members of the Special

7 Senate Committee and the Chicago Elected

8 Representatives School Board -- Board.

9 My name is Devon Pucciarello, and I'm a  
10 ten-plus-year CPS teacher and a proud member of  
11 Educators for Excellence Elected School Board Teacher  
12 Action Team. 0:34:01

13 Educators for Excellence is a teacher-led  
14 non-profit organization. We work to ensure that CPS  
15 teachers' voices are a powerful presence in every  
16 policy conversation about what's happening in their  
17 schools and classrooms, whether it's in Springfield, at  
18 City Hall, or at the board of ed. 0:34:18

19 We are being asked tonight to offer and  
20 consider ways in which the transition to a fully  
21 elected school board can be implemented more  
22 effectively and smoothly. I would like to address  
23 three ways I see this work being done. 0:34:31

24 First, I believe in endorsing the map

1 submitted by Valerie Leonard and the Illinois  
2 African-Americans for Equitable Redistricts --  
3 Redistricting as a natural and more fair process to  
4 attaining a reflective transition.

0:34:46

5 IAAFER's [sic] map only draws the ten  
6 districts required by law for the first elections in  
7 2024. A ten-district map eliminates the need for  
8 additional laws, amendments, and hearings to determine  
9 which ten of an initial 20-district map is allowed to  
10 vote in 2024.

0:35:05

11 Let's also consider the value of time to  
12 reflect on how effective the initial ten-district map  
13 is before carving up the City into 20 districts for the  
14 second round. Not only does the map keep communities  
15 together, but we know it will pass legal muster as it  
16 falls with aldermanic districts already drawn.

0:35:24

17 Secondly, I think IAAFER's recommendation to  
18 codify into law an advisory committee on the board of  
19 education addressing the achievement gap for black  
20 students is crucial to an effective transition. We  
21 need the board to be accountable to these students in a  
22 concrete way so they don't become a campaign promise  
23 only to fall to the wayside after an election.

0:35:46

24 Finally, I'd like to take the opportunity to

1 highlight the absolute necessity of compensating board  
2 of education members. The entire purpose of making  
3 those seats elected is to bring the board closer to  
4 being a body that is true -- truly a representation of  
5 CPS families and students.

0:36:04

6           How can we expect that crucial work to be  
7 done by parents, teachers, and community members for  
8 free. If -- if we don't, we can't count on -- we can  
9 count on rich people or those backed by special  
10 interest groups taking those seats.

0:36:17

11           As it stands right now, teachers cannot run  
12 without leaving their classrooms. I could not afford  
13 to do that.

14           How we can hope for a meaningful transition  
15 to a representative school board if we aren't willing  
16 to invest the time, energy, and resources that are  
17 necessary to build a governing body that the people can  
18 trust and believe in?

0:36:38

19           I urge members of this committee to support  
20 legislation that allow for board members to be  
21 compensated. I hope that you support and consider this  
22 in the veto session in October.

23           Thank you.

0:36:49

24           SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Thank you. Thank you for

1 your testimony, Devon.

2 And then we would like to hear from Corinne  
3 Lydon. 0:37:00

4 MS. LYDON: Hi. How are you?

5 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Hi. Hi, Corinne.

6 MS. LYDON: Sorry. I'm just trying to get my  
7 -- I'm working with my phone here, so I'm kind of  
8 juggling three things at once. 0:37:09

9 So my name is Corinne Lydon, and I'm a second  
10 year CPS teacher and I'm a 23-year CPS parent and a  
11 proud member of Educators for Excellence. And that --  
12 that -- that's a school board teacher action team. 0:37:24

13 We are being asked tonight to offer ways to  
14 consider how this transition can be done in the most  
15 effective way possible. And I want to echo what  
16 Corinne -- Corrina said as well about the -- endorsing  
17 the map being submitted by Valerie Leonard. 0:37:40

18 I also believe that taking the time to be  
19 reflective of the process and having a map that only  
20 draws ten districts required will allow us the time to  
21 be more thoughtful of this process and take the time to  
22 determine which 20 ultimately will be more effective. 0:38:01

23 I also feel that the map will keep  
24 communities together, but I also know that it will pass

1 legal muster -- aldermanic districts already drawn. I  
2 also think that the IAFF- -- or IAAFER's recommendation  
3 to codify into law the advisory committee will address  
4 the achievement gap for black students.

0:38:24

5 As a West Side teacher and parent, I think  
6 this is really crucial to have this implemented for an  
7 effective transition. I think the board needs to be  
8 accountable to these students in a way that's effective  
9 and accountable, in a way that they can be held to it.

0:38:42

10 And I don't want to see my students that I'm  
11 teaching and I'm surrounded by fall wayside just  
12 because their campaign promises aren't being met. I  
13 also want to take this opportunity to highlight the  
14 necessity of compensating the board.

0:38:55

15 Because again, as a CPS parent for 23 years,  
16 I've seen myself the ineffectiveness of having only a  
17 small portion of the students represented. And I feel  
18 that when we only have the richest and the most  
19 privileged representative of the board because those  
20 are the only ones that can actually work for free, we  
21 are doing a extreme disservice to our students.

0:39:20

22 So if we are only backing the rich people,  
23 the privileged people, and not representing the parents  
24 and teachers who are really reflective of our true

1 student body and community, then we are not being able  
2 to actually serve them and serve their needs.

0:39:38

3 So as it stands right now, teachers cannot  
4 run. If the parents of those community -- communities  
5 that we need to serve can't run because they can't  
6 afford to take that time off, then we won't be having a  
7 meaningful school board in a way that's effective for  
8 those students.

0:39:56

9 I also think that we need to take care of  
10 those communities in a way that truly involves them.  
11 And if we're not compensating, then we can't involve  
12 them in a way that's the most meaningful.

0:40:11

13 Personally, as a teacher, I would love to be  
14 able to serve on these kind of things, but I can't  
15 afford to leave my job to do it. So I urge members of  
16 this committee to support the legislation that will  
17 allow for the board members to be compensated so we can  
18 make sure that this happens.

0:40:24

19 I hope you support and consider this in the  
20 veto session in October. Thank you.

21 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Thank you, Corinne.

22 So before I go on to the next group, just a  
23 couple questions for Educators for Excellent [sic] as  
24 it relates to the -- the districts, the -- the actual

1 -- when would you transition from ten to 20 districts? 0:40:51

2 And that could be for either Corrina, Devon,  
3 or Corinne.

4 MS. DEMMA: Yeah. I'll jump in. I would say  
5 that as a -- as a parent more than as an organizer, I  
6 would want to follow -- as the law stands right now, I  
7 would -- I would take -- I would love for there to some  
8 sort of -- a committee process that is part of  
9 reflecting on that that -- that meets one year after  
10 the first election, says, stop, hold, let's check in  
11 and see how this has gone before we draw anything else. 0:41:25

12 So I guess I'm, you know, maybe informally  
13 suggesting more advisory committees. But I mean, you  
14 know, in this -- in this kind of a process, we're  
15 talking about, you know, the City of Chicago. 0:41:37

16 I don't think we can have too much oversight.  
17 So I guess my long-winded answer would be, you know,  
18 within a year, I think that there should be a formal  
19 reflective process as part of all this. 0:41:52

20 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Okay. So then with the  
21 ten districts, do you think that if it were a  
22 ten-district map, that that would reduce diversity? 0:42:01

23 MS. DEMMA: Not in the way that IAAFER's  
24 created the maps. No, I don't.

1           SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Okay. All right. Well,  
2 thanks so much. Thank you, Educators for Excellence,  
3 for your participation and your advocacy.

0:42:16

4           MS. DEMMA: Oh, absolutely. Thank you for  
5 having us.

6           SENATOR LIGHTFORD: My pleasure.

7           Eli Brottman, on behalf of himself. Mr. Eli.

0:42:25

8           MR. BROTTMAN: Good evening, everyone. Thank  
9 you again, Madame Chair, and the committee for taking  
10 the time to listen to all of the rich feedback that  
11 witnesses are providing and the different opinions on  
12 how to make this happen.

0:42:39

13           So tonight I want to focus on -- as we all  
14 have the process going from ten to 20 districts, I  
15 think before I get into the specifics of my map and how  
16 that's going to look, I want to talk about more of the  
17 procedural how -- what -- how that may work.

0:42:57

18           Couple ideas I have for that. But both  
19 center around using -- having the ten- and 20-district  
20 maps tied to one another, in that the 20-district map  
21 consists of 20 districts, each of which is contained  
22 exactly within two -- each -- two districts on a  
23 20-district map contained as one district on a  
24 ten-district map, much like each Illinois Senate



1 district consists of two House districts, each district  
2 in a ten-district map consists of two districts in a  
3 20-district map.

0:43:27

4 This will help with the transition from  
5 appointed to elected in making sure that we elect from  
6 the 20 districts as well as in making sure that the 20  
7 districts in the long run represent and reflect the  
8 diversity of our city the -- in the best way possible.

0:43:44

9 So with that, I believe starting with the  
10 20-district map is the best approach, because that's  
11 the long-term objective with the transition to an  
12 elected representative school board, and we need to  
13 make sure that, though we want the ten districts to be  
14 representative, I believe I have a configuration which  
15 is, we need to make sure that the long run is as  
16 representative as possible and that we don't lose  
17 representation in the transition from a ten- to a  
18 20-district map later.

0:44:14

19 As for the transition and navigating the  
20 different districts, I have two ideas. One would be  
21 that a lottery is conducted and that the people are  
22 elected in ten of the 20 districts initially and then  
23 the other ten.

0:44:32

24 So ten of the 20 in 2024 and the other ten in

1 2026. However, I don't know that this is compliant  
2 with the current law with -- given that it requires the  
3 City to be in a ten-district map. 0:44:46

4 So what I would suggest is that the  
5 ten-district map covering the whole City be used and  
6 that for the 2026 election, members from whichever  
7 districts of the 20 we did not elect members from in  
8 2024.

9 For instance -- and I'll go through some  
10 examples on my map. 0:45:10

11 For instance, if one district on the  
12 ten-district map consists of Districts 2 and 3 on my  
13 20-district map, and we elect someone from District 2  
14 in 2024, then in 2026, we would be electing someone  
15 from District 3. 0:45:29

16 However, in the 2024 election, people could  
17 run who live in either District 2 or District 3 on the  
18 20-district map. So -- if that makes sense. 0:45:41

19 I know it's a little hard to explain in  
20 words, but I will show it again on the screen. Is it  
21 okay if I share my screen to show the map? 0:45:49

22 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Oh, sure.

23 MR. BROTTMAN: Thank you.

24 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Mm-hmm. And while --

1 MR. BROTTMAN: All right. 0:45:55

2 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: -- and while --

3 MR. BROTTMAN: So --

4 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: -- you're doing that --

5 Eli, while you're doing that, can you -- I don't know

6 if I heard you say when the transition from the ten to

7 the 20 districts should actually happen. Did you -- 0:46:08

8 MR. BROTTMAN: I --

9 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: -- say that and I missed

10 it?

11 MR. BROTTMAN: I believe it should happen in

12 accordance with the way the law's currently written.

13 So electing ten members in 2024 and then ten more in

14 2026, making it fully elected in early 2027, when those

15 --

0:46:26

16 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Thank you.

17 MR. BROTTMAN: So this is the 20-district

18 map. I believe that in a ten-district map, it's

19 critical that we have three plurality or majority

20 Hispanic districts and three plurality or majority

21 black districts. 0:46:41

22 And the pairings I'm about to show reflect

23 that. So I'll go through these pairings one by one and

24 then show some examples of how the transition would

1 look.

0:46:51

2           These pairings ensure diversity, both in the  
3 election for the ten-district map as well as afterward  
4 in the 20-district, by trying to pair districts that  
5 are as similar demographically as possible when  
6 creating the ten-district map.

0:47:08

7           So the first district in the ten-district map  
8 would consist of Districts 2 and 3 right here. On the  
9 20-district map, that district is about 70 percent  
10 Hispanic voting age population and includes the  
11 neighborhoods of Back of the Yards, Brighton Park, and  
12 Archer Heights.

0:47:29

13           The next district on the Northwest Side  
14 consists of Districts 5 and 6 on the 20-district map  
15 right here. That includes the neighborhoods of Irving  
16 Park and Belmont Cragin as well as some other areas  
17 near Logan Square. And that district is about 56  
18 percent Hispanic voting age population.

0:47:56

19           The next district consists of Districts 1 and  
20 13 right here on the 20-district map, including parts  
21 of the Loop, the Medical District, Chinatown, Pilsen,  
22 Bridgeport, Little Village, and McKinley Park. That  
23 district is plurality Hispanic voting age population  
24 about 49 percent and a slight majority Hispanic on the

1 overall population.

0:48:25

2           Next we have a district -- on the 20-district  
3 map that includes the neighborhoods of Englewood,  
4 Auburn Gresham, parts of Roseland, and that district is  
5 about 80 percent black voting age population.

0:48:47

6           Next we have Districts -- trying to get this  
7 to zoom properly -- 9 and 10 on the 20-district map,  
8 including parts of Hyde Park, the East Side, Chatham,  
9 and part of Roseland. This district is 71 percent  
10 black voter age population.

0:49:06

11           And then -- apologies. Technological issue.  
12 Districts 12 and 14 together on the 20-district map,  
13 including the neighborhoods of Garfield Park, Austin,  
14 and Logan Square, as well as Lawndale, and this  
15 district is 52 percent black voting age population.

0:49:28

16           The other four districts, which I'm about to  
17 go through, are majority or plurality white and are  
18 drawn in a way to maximize the number of people of  
19 color elected. That begins with Districts 16 and 17 on  
20 the North Side, including the neighborhoods of Fulton  
21 Market, Lincoln Park, Lakeview, North Center, and  
22 Ravenswood, and that district is about 70 percent white  
23 voting age population.

0:49:58

24           Then on the far Northwest Side, Districts 4

1 and 20, including Edgebrook, Norwood Park, Jefferson  
2 Park, O'Hare, Dunning, and Humboldt Park, which is 52  
3 percent white voter age population. 0:50:14

4 Next, Districts 11 and 15, including much of  
5 the Loop, part of Lincoln Park, Bronzeville, Hyde Park,  
6 which is about 49 percent white voter age population. 0:50:26

7 And then Districts 18 and 19 on the far  
8 Northwest Side, including the neighborhoods of West  
9 Ridge, Andersonville, Edgewater, Rogers Park, and  
10 Uptown, which is about 48 percent white voter age  
11 population. 0:50:41

12 So in the end, there are only two majority  
13 white voting age population districts on this  
14 ten-district map. Once again, I want to illustrate,  
15 using a ten-district map, how we would elect members  
16 from ten districts. 0:50:57

17 Let's look at Districts 18 and 19 on the far  
18 -- far Northwest Side as an example. In the 2024  
19 election, candidates could run in this district who  
20 live in either District 18 or 19 as it's drawn. 0:51:10

21 Whoever wins that would be elected to the  
22 school board, and then in 2026, there would only be a  
23 seat open in whichever of 18 and 19 that individual  
24 does not live in. So if they are elected and live in

1 28, then a seat in 19 would open in -- in 2024, then we  
2 have a seat open in District 18 in 2026.

0:51:43

3 So that goes over the plan going from a ten-  
4 to a 20-district map. I also want to echo what has  
5 been said by many people earlier regarding compensating  
6 school board members.

0:51:58

7 It's important to have a diverse  
8 representative school board. This is volunteer  
9 service. It often has to be done during the typical  
10 work day. And people should be paid for their service.

0:52:09

11 That's the only way to achieve true  
12 diversity. And I urge this body to consider  
13 implementing that as well. That concludes my  
14 presentation on the map, and I welcome any questions  
15 from the committee. Thank you.

0:52:23

16 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: You're welcome. Thank  
17 you. I do. I -- I want to know, do the -- a  
18 ten-district map reduce diversity?

0:52:36

19 MR. BROTTMAN: As a follow-up, are you  
20 referring to my specific ten-district map or more  
21 generically?

22 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: No, to yours.

0:52:44

23 MR. BROTTMAN: Okay. Mine. I do think it  
24 has that potential possibly. There's obviously, you

1 know, about the same proportion of districts that are  
2 majority people of color in my ten- and my 20-district  
3 map.

0:53:00

4 But it definitely decreases the likelihood of  
5 electing as many people of color from the South and  
6 West Sides because just the sheer size of the  
7 districts. The ten-district map was crafted carefully  
8 from the 20-district map to create diverse  
9 representation as best as possible.

0:53:21

10 However, in some of the districts that are  
11 very slim majorities or pluralities Hispanic and black,  
12 it is harder to say what the outcome of an election is  
13 given that there has often been depressed turnout in  
14 communities of color due to historical  
15 disenfranchisement.

0:53:42

16 So I don't want to give a blanket yes or no  
17 that -- in terms of it decreasing diversity, but it  
18 certainly does not increase diversity and it has the  
19 potential to decrease it, as does any ten-district map.  
20 I hope that answers your question.

0:53:57

21 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: It did. Thank you so  
22 much.

23 Further questions from member Senator  
24 Martwick.

0:54:04



1 VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: Thank you, Madame  
2 Chair.

3 Mr. Brottman, I -- just a question. So I --  
4 and I apologize. I'm looking at the screen with bad  
5 eyes and small digits on there. Is that D20 is in the  
6 far left Northwest Side there.

7 Is that correct? 0:54:25

8 MR. BROTTMAN: Yes. That a little bigger?

9 VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: Which one did you  
10 recommend that that one be paired with? Did you say  
11 D4? 0:54:32

12 MR. BROTTMAN: I recommended it be paired  
13 with D4. Yes.

14 VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: Okay. So --

15 MR. BROTTMAN: I --

16 VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: Are -- 0:54:38

17 MR. BROTTMAN: -- and the reason for that --

18 VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: Mm-hmm. Go ahead

19 --

20 MR. BROTTMAN: Yeah.

21 VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: -- sorry. 0:54:42

22 MR. BROTTMAN: The reason for that was to  
23 keep 5 and 6 together to create a district with a  
24 majority substantially more than 50 percent Hispanic

1 voting age population on the Northwest Side.

0:54:56

2 So 5 and 6 together is 56 percent Hispanic.

3 If we had put 4 with 1 or 5 or 6, it would be a smaller  
4 majority.

5 VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: Okay. So when I  
6 look at the D20, D4 -- and I don't have the numbers in  
7 front of me. I just have the map.

0:55:14

8 But I assume D20 is substantially a -- a  
9 majority white voting area and D4 I would think would  
10 at least, by my guess, have a higher Latine population.

11 Is that correct?

0:55:31

12 MR. BROTTMAN: That is. So D20 is 60 -- I'm  
13 sorry -- 70 percent white voting age population, and D4  
14 is 34 percent white voting age and 50 percent Hispanic  
15 voting age.

0:55:44

16 So that combination of districts is majority  
17 white voting age population at 52 percent, but it still  
18 leaves the strong potential to elect a Hispanic  
19 representative.

20 However, there was -- based on the drawing of  
21 the 20-district map and the distribution of Chicago's  
22 population, there was no way to create a map with -- a  
23 ten-district map with four plurality or majority  
24 Hispanic districts.

0:56:09

1           VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: Yeah. So my  
2 question to you is related to the transition from ten  
3 to 20. So your recommendation would be that you  
4 combine D20 and D4 into a single electoral district for  
5 the '24 election.

0:56:25

6           And then depending on who's elected, then  
7 that other district would then have an election.

8           Correct?

9           MR. BROTTMAN: Yes.

0:56:34

10          VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: Okay. So let's  
11 just say for sake of argument, and this is just a  
12 hypothetical, it's not true, but let's say in the 2024  
13 election, that parity happens in this map as presented  
14 by you, and let's just say for sake of argument, again  
15 hypothetical, that a white person from D4 is elected.

0:56:57

16          Then in 2026, there is an election that  
17 occurs in D20 which is 70-plus percent white.

18          Is that correct?

19          MR. BROTTMAN: It is. Yes.

0:57:10

20          VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: So could that  
21 have the potential to, in that sort of scenario, to  
22 then decrease the minority representation that we're  
23 seeking after the '26 map once we've created this,  
24 right?

0:57:27

1           And -- and so -- so this is just something  
2   that I'm wondering aloud what your thoughts are, on  
3   electing -- allowing the whole City to vote where D --  
4   all the voters in D20 and D4 will vote in that first  
5   election, but in the second election, only the voters  
6   who have not elected a representative.

0:57:48

7           So in that hypothetical scenario that I  
8   raised, a white person gets elected in D4, and then in  
9   2026, ostensibly, a white person gets elected from D20,  
10   potentially reducing minority access.

11           Thoughts?

0:58:07

12           MR. BROTTMAN: Absolutely. I think your  
13   comments there are right on. I think that is a concern  
14   with a ten-district map, and you basically just stated  
15   why a ten-district map can decrease diversity of our  
16   representation.

0:58:24

17           As I mentioned at the beginning, one other  
18   option may be to have a lottery of sorts and have  
19   people be elected from all 20 districts. And I think  
20   that is a better plan for diversity and equity.

0:58:39

21           However, that is not a plan that is currently  
22   within the law, from my understanding of the law. I  
23   would urge this body to consider adopting something  
24   with a lottery, just as there are lotteries on the term

1 lengths for Senate members.

0:58:53

2 I think that would lead to better  
3 representation, because as you just said, Senator, if  
4 we elect a white person from District 4 or we elect a  
5 white person from District 14 -- from District 12 and  
6 then we're more likely to elect a white person from  
7 District 14, or we elect a white person from District  
8 11 in this area, and then we're most likely going to  
9 elect a white person from District 15, we end up with a  
10 potentially predominantly white board.

0:59:23

11 And given the distribution of the  
12 demographics of our city when we're pairing districts  
13 is inevitable, or creating ten districts without  
14 pairings, it is inevitable that we'll get some  
15 districts where there are different parts of the  
16 districts that have very different demographics.

0:59:44

17 And to remedy that, a lottery setup would be  
18 much more effective. Does that answer your question?

19 VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: It does. Thank  
20 you very much.

0:59:53

21 MR. BROTTMAN: Thank you.

22 VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: Thank you, Madame  
23 Chair.

24 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: You're welcome, Senator.

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1 Thank you, Mr. Brottman. 0:59:59

2 I will now move on -- well, let's see. Did

3 Brian Metcalf return? Brian?

4 MR. METCALF: Hi, Madame Chair. I'm going to

5 bypass my statement due for the sake of time now. 1:00:13

6 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Okay. Thanks, Brian.

7 MR. METCALF: Thank you, ma'am.

8 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: The Illinois

9 African-Americans for Equitable Redistricting. There's

10 quite a few acts to speak here or called in to speak. 1:00:28

11 We can start with Valerie Leonard, followed

12 by Karl Brinson, Chicago West Side Branch of NAACP,

13 Dwayne Truss, Nicole Johnson -- 1:00:38

14 VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: Pardon me.

15 Pardon me, Madame Chair. Eli, you're still sharing

16 your screen. I don't want you to be sharing personal

17 information, so I just want to give you a chance to --

18 there we go. 1:00:48

19 MR. BROTTMAN: Thank you.

20 VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: Sorry.

21 MR. BROTTMAN: My apologies.

22 VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: No worries. 1:00:52

23 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Thank you, Senator.

24 Nicole Johnson, Nicole Wheatley, and Natasha

1 Dunn. So we will begin with Ms. Valerie Leonard. 1:01:04

2 MS. LEONARD: Awesome. First of all, I want  
3 to say thank you so much for the opportunity to  
4 present. Thank you for serious engagement and  
5 listening. We really, really, really appreciate that. 1:01:17

6 We want to say thank you to E4E for all of  
7 their support. We have mutual goals and, you know, I  
8 just wanted to let them know thank you for your  
9 support. 1:01:27

10 I wanted to share my screen. Just one  
11 moment. And let me move us out of the way so I can  
12 see. All righty. So we're talking about mapping for  
13 educational opportunity. 1:01:55

14 Our approach to this mapping process is not  
15 to look at maps for a power grab, for representation  
16 only, but to look at the mapping as part of the  
17 infrastructure or the support for better educational  
18 outcomes and more efficient use of government. 1:02:18

19 And our guiding question for that today, as I  
20 understand, is how do we transition from the current  
21 appointed board of education to a fully elected board  
22 of education in 2026. 1:02:34

23 First of all, we think that the short answer  
24 and the most immediate answer is to make sure that

1 you're providing equal protection under the law at  
2 every stage, right?

1:02:47

3 So the very first stage is to create a map  
4 that protects voting rights of every Chicago voter. As  
5 our Constitution lets us know, there's one man, one  
6 vote.

1:03:03

7 We also know from the Constitution that  
8 districts should be drawn such that every district is  
9 approximately equal in population and that -- we  
10 naturally drill down to the city level.

1:03:16

11 And our map provides opportunities for every  
12 Chicagoan, regardless of race, regardless of how many  
13 children you have, to elect candidates of choice. And  
14 you can even do that with the ten-district map. And  
15 not dilute minority votes.

1:03:33

16 We also believe under the equal protection  
17 under the law convention that you can introduce a  
18 trailer bill to the enabling legislation for the  
19 elected representative board of education which  
20 provides for this mapping process but some other  
21 things, right?

1:03:52

22 But we want to make sure that you amend it to  
23 create a standing committee to address black student  
24 achievement. You already have such a provision for



1 students who are non-citizens. 1:04:05

2 You want to make sure that they have the  
3 right environment so that they can thrive, so that they  
4 have the right tools, so that they can advance. You  
5 know, that is part of the American dream, right? 1:04:16

6 And black children are part of the American  
7 dream. But Langston Hughes asks us what happens to a  
8 dream deferred, right? We want to make sure that their  
9 dream is not deferred. 1:04:29

10 Particularly not -- not in cases where you  
11 could protect our interests and you choose not to  
12 protect our interests. When it's more important to  
13 make sure that the outcomes for some people are  
14 positive but not our people. 1:04:51

15 You know, that's hurtful. That is very, very  
16 hurtful to me. I -- I take that personally. I -- I  
17 can't speak for the others, but I take it personally. 1:05:01

18 There's no mechanism to make sure that  
19 there's board level accountability for black children  
20 ever. Right? CPS -- we tried to work with CPS to get  
21 them to do such a committee at the board level with  
22 board level accountability. 1:05:17

23 They said yes at first, and I guess they  
24 realized how hard the work is, and they decided not to

1 do it. Right? We can't depend on a fickle Chicago  
2 Public Schools. Right?

1:05:32

3 We cannot depend on electoral whims. We can  
4 depend, however, on you putting that language into  
5 code, so that regardless of who's in charge, there's a  
6 law that says that our black children have to have the  
7 resources that they need to survive, right?

1:05:55

8 And there has to be board level  
9 accountability to make sure that they're progressing  
10 and not constantly left behind. So we're asking you  
11 that you reject any mapping proposal that's based on  
12 numbers of children in CPS.

1:06:14

13 You know, again, that's all within equal  
14 protection under the law. The law says one man, one  
15 vote. When you start putting parents and children and  
16 school buildings into the equation, you know, that is  
17 -- you know, that's a repres- -- bleh -- recipe for  
18 disaster.

1:06:36

19 Some people would be overrepresented  
20 according to their numbers and others would be  
21 underrepresented.

22 And then finally, you know, if you can't add  
23 language for the black student achievement committee,  
24 which really would give them equal protection under the

1 law, I wouldn't normally say this, but I'm -- I'm  
2 looking at equality here.

1:07:01

3 If you can't give us that committee, then I'm  
4 going to ask you respectfully to repeal the language  
5 that creates a non-citizen advisory board. Our  
6 Constitution provides for equal protection under the  
7 law.

1:07:18

8 If non-citizens are being protected and  
9 citizens are not being protected, that's a problem.  
10 And I'm not going to stand for it. I can't speak for  
11 them, but I'm not -- I'm -- I'm not going to stand for  
12 it.

1:07:31

13 It -- it's just that simple. You know, I --  
14 I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired. And bear  
15 with me. For some reason, my computer is stuck here.

1:07:43

16 And I'm trying to advance the slides. I'm  
17 trying with this to -- to advance the slides, because  
18 we're really here to talk about the map. But the law  
19 has so much other stuff in addition to the map that I  
20 -- I just can't ignore.

1:08:00

21 This chart here tells you the impact of using  
22 the CPS population to draw elected school board maps.  
23 As you know, there's a difference between the  
24 population in the schools as well as the City in terms

1 of percentages.

1:08:18

2           The law says one man, one vote. So legally  
3 you should go by the City population. If we go by the  
4 City population, we're looking at about a third white,  
5 29 percent black, 7 percent Asian, 1 percent Native  
6 American, and 29 percent Latino, 2 percent other.

1:08:43

7           There is a movement afoot to draw maps that  
8 reflect the -- the student population, right? And I  
9 guess that reflects equity. If we were to draw the  
10 maps to reflect CPS students, we would only have  
11 representation to our maps, if you can, right, 11  
12 percent white, 35 percent black, 5 Asian, nothing for  
13 Native Americans, 40 percent -- 47 percent Latino, and  
14 2 percent other.

1:09:16

15           But look at what happens when you do that.  
16 You know, there's a differential, right, in terms of  
17 what is legally possible and what people think is  
18 aspirational.

1:09:30

19           But it has a serious impact on our ability to  
20 really comply with the Constitution. White population  
21 -- they would only be able to exercise about 33 percent  
22 of their voting potential.

1:09:44

23           Blacks would exercise 120 percent. Asians  
24 only 66 percent. Native Americans only 60 percent.

1 Latinos 163 percent, and others 135 percent.

1:10:03

2           So there's a real opportunity for outsized  
3 votes, and I'm -- outsized voting power, and I'm just  
4 hoping that you don't draw a map that takes that into  
5 account, because you really don't want to be in a  
6 situation where your map is challenged, and we don't  
7 have that kind of time.

1:10:18

8           So we're encouraging you to adopt the fairest  
9 map of them all. And this is a ten-district map that's  
10 based on City Council's 50 wards, right?

1:10:32

11           So we are nesting five wards each into ten  
12 districts. And what we like about this is it  
13 encourages collaboration between our city elected  
14 officials and the board of elec- -- bleh -- not the  
15 board of election day, elected school board officials.

1:10:53

16           So every one of these districts would  
17 literally have seven elected officials who are  
18 laser-focused on, you know, developing plans, bringing  
19 resources to the schools in their districts.

1:11:07

20           And the way we cluster them, these are  
21 natural -- this is the way people work anyway. Right?  
22 These are natural clusters, racially, geographically.

1:11:19

23           We're not splitting up communities. We keep  
24 communities together. We have created a situation

1 where you have three districts that are majority black,  
2 three that are majority white, three that are majority  
3 Latino. 1:11:34

4 We also provide opportunities for influence  
5 from the Asian community on the North and South Side.  
6 Also opportunity for -- excuse me -- also we kept the  
7 Jewish community together so that they can influence an  
8 election. 1:11:52

9 So this is really we think a -- a win/win for  
10 everybody. It also conforms to the existing  
11 legislation, which says that you start off with ten  
12 districts. 1:12:05

13 We are suggesting that you keep the ten  
14 districts and keep the two representatives in each  
15 districts and not even expand to the 20, but if you  
16 must expand to the 20, we don't have that drawing, but  
17 you would subdivide these districts and, you know, make  
18 sure that the numbers are still keeping in -- in with  
19 the law. 1:12:28

20 You know, the districts are compact, equal,  
21 and everybody has one -- one vote per person. Keeping  
22 communities together and that they're contiguous. 1:12:42

23 We also ask that you promote equity by  
24 leveling the financial playing field. Right? So we

1 support E4E's proposal to level the playing field by  
2 taking the money out of the equation.

1:12:56

3 Or rather, taking it out where it shouldn't  
4 go and putting it where it should. So we believe in  
5 campaign finance so that money is not the sole thing  
6 driving who can win. Right?

1:13:12

7 We want to make sure that people who don't  
8 have, you know, deep pocket supporters have those --  
9 you know, have a good opportunity to win. We want to  
10 make sure that parents have an opportunity.

1:13:24

11 People who are rank and file populace have an  
12 opportunity. We don't want to leave our elections up  
13 to people with multi billions of dollars to put people  
14 in for their proxies.

1:13:39

15 So we're asking you to pass legislation to  
16 allow board member compensation. We're also asking you  
17 to develop a pipeline of well-qualified candidates for  
18 office.

1:13:52

19 And we know that you have to be careful. We  
20 want you to partner with non-profit groups, with the  
21 board of education, and others to hold educational  
22 hearings, let people know what's going on, help them  
23 understand their civic responsibility, let the know  
24 what an election -- what an elected school board does

1 and does not do in comparison to day-to-day operations. 1:14:19

2 They need to understand the timeline. They  
3 also need to understand that, you know, at this point,  
4 the job may not pay, but it really is going to take a  
5 lot of their time. 1:14:30

6 And we want to make sure that we attract  
7 serious candidates to the job. All right?

8 So I don't know if you want to ask me  
9 questions or wait until we all talk before you ask  
10 questions. 1:14:45

11 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Thank you, Ms. Leonard.  
12 Just based on what you shared, I have a couple  
13 questions, and then as questions come about, we'll just  
14 present those questions. 1:14:57

15 So just based on what you said, what about --  
16 what are your deviations in the districts?

17 MS. LEONARD: Yes. I think, one, always --  
18 okay, first of all, they're based on the wards map.  
19 All right? So the way we did it, we clustered -- we --  
20 we clustered five wards. 1:15:15

21 And the number -- we used the numbers that  
22 they have to back up each district. So they range  
23 anywhere from about 1 percent to 4 and some change. So  
24 they're within the -- the DRA variations spread. 1:15:31



1           SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Okay. Great, and then my  
2 other question was, in an alignment with your -- how  
3 would you subdivide the ten districts and -- and when  
4 would you actually do it? 1:15:45

5           MS. LEONARD: Ideally -- okay. And I'll --  
6 I'll tell you, we did not do a map. But conceptually,  
7 we would separate those districts such that the  
8 population is equal. 1:15:58

9           And we would make sure that in so doing, that  
10 we had -- that we maintain a balance racially and not  
11 split up communities. We would do it according to the  
12 law. 1:16:10

13           That would be pursuant to the 2026 election.  
14 And I'm in agreement with Corrina. We would really  
15 need to see how this works. You know, have some  
16 committee of the legislature, maybe the -- even the  
17 board of education's or some combination thereof, do an  
18 evaluation of how this is working the first time. 1:16:33

19           Because the first -- the worst thing you  
20 could do is build on top of chaos. So I think we  
21 should make sure we got the kinks out of the system. 1:16:41

22           SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Okay. Okay. I see  
23 Senator Martwick has a hand up. I'm going to request  
24 --

1 Giovanni, do you have a -- the map that we  
2 could kind of look on and -- 1:16:54

3 MR. RANDAZZO: Yes, ma'am. Yes, ma'am. And  
4 I -- let me share this right now.

5 MS. LEONARD: Okay, thank you. Thank you. 1:17:03

6 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: You're welcome.

7 MR. RANDAZZO: So you want to see the -- the  
8 deviations --

9 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: I -- I do. Yeah.  
10 Mm-hmm. I would like that, please. 1:17:12

11 MR. RANDAZZO: So I think the deviations, if  
12 I have it correct, is one district's at 287,881.  
13 That's the highest end. And the lowest end is 263,015  
14 people. So it's that -- it's the -- 1:17:33

15 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Almost 25,000.

16 MR. RANDAZZO: About a 10 percent -- close to  
17 a 10 percent deviation, yes, ma'am.

18 And -- and I think -- Valerie, this is the --  
19 I want to make sure this is the -- the -- I believe  
20 this is -- 1:17:44

21 MS. LEONARD: That's correct.

22 MR. RANDAZZO: -- what you gave us before. I  
23 just --

24 MS. LEONARD: Mm-hmm.

1 MR. RANDAZZO: -- want to make sure it's --  
2 it's what we have up on -- 1:17:48  
3 MS. LEONARD: That's correct.  
4 MR. RANDAZZO: -- this side. I want to make  
5 sure it's right. Okay.  
6 MS. LEONARD: Yeah. Yeah, we're -- we're  
7 looking at the same thing. 1:17:54  
8 MR. RANDAZZO: Okay.  
9 MS. LEONARD: All right. And bear -- bear  
10 with me. My power is about to go out. I need to -- to  
11 plug in my computer. 1:18:06  
12 Okay. There's a question, though? A  
13 question about the numbers? Question about boundaries?  
14 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: No, I asked you about  
15 deviations. And you described the -- 1:18:16  
16 MS. LEONARD: Mm-hmm.  
17 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: -- ones you represent, so  
18 I just wanted to take a deeper dive into that because  
19 --  
20 MS. LEONARD: Mm-hmm.  
21 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: -- the highest -- 1:18:22  
22 MS. LEONARD: Yeah.  
23 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: -- end versus the lowest  
24 end is about a 10 --

1 MS. LEONARD: Yeah.

2 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: -- percent deviation. So  
3 I just wanted to make sure I understood it properly -- 1:18:28

4 MS. LEONARD: Mm-hmm. Yeah, yeah. And --  
5 and when I spoke, I wasn't talking district-wide. I  
6 was looking at, you know, the individual wards that  
7 make up the districts. 1:18:38

8 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Okay. Okay, great.  
9 Senator Martwick, you had a question, or did  
10 you lower your hand? 1:18:46

11 VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: No, I just was --  
12 since you acknowledged me, I took it down so I didn't  
13 forgot. But I do still have a question. I -- I always  
14 leave my hand up. But thank you -- 1:18:57

15 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: And then that way, I'll  
16 forget about you. So you might want to keep your hand  
17 up.

18 VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: Ms. Leonard,  
19 thank you for your -- your work and your thoughtfulness  
20 on -- on all of this. I -- I had a couple of quick  
21 questions for you, and I guess they're related. I'm --  
22 I'm -- 1:19:14

23 MS. LEONARD: Mm-hmm.

24 VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: -- focusing more

1 on --

2 MS. LEONARD: Okay.

3 VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: -- the process  
4 than on the maps. You had obviously -- I -- I like the  
5 -- I mean, it's an interesting idea to cluster the  
6 wards, because they're pre-drawn. 1:19:26

7 The question that I had is you -- you had  
8 mentioned that you would prefer that we kept ten  
9 districts and then had two --

10 MS. LEONARD: Mm-hmm.

11 VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: --  
12 representatives from each district running at large. 1:19:41

13 MS. LEONARD: Mm-hmm.

14 VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: You also had  
15 mentioned that we should pass some campaign finance  
16 reform. So I guess what my -- my question is, and  
17 forgive me if this is more complex, is that -- 1:19:53

18 MS. LEONARD: Mm-hmm.

19 VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: -- electing  
20 people at large from five wards, you would have  
21 roughly, if my math is right, about 260 to 270,000  
22 people from -- per -- 1:20:06

23 MS. LEONARD: Mm-hmm.

24 VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: -- ward or per

1 district now --

2 MS. LEONARD: Per district, mm-hmm. 1:20:10

3 VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: -- which would  
4 make those campaigns much more expensive in terms of  
5 delivering a message.

6 MS. LEONARD: Mm-hmm.

7 VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: So how -- how  
8 does that jive with spending less money on the  
9 campaigns, number one, so -- 1:20:24

10 MS. LEONARD: Mm-hmm.

11 VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: -- and -- and  
12 number --

13 MS. LEONARD: Right.

14 VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: -- two, do you  
15 have a specific campaign finance reform proposal? Much  
16 has been talked since the very beginnings of this, and  
17 I agree that we should seek to rein in the influence of  
18 outside money. 1:20:42

19 And so I was wondering if you had any  
20 specific proposals as to how we might --

21 MS. LEONARD: Mm-hmm.

22 VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: -- accomplish. 1:20:49

23 MS. LEONARD: All right. I don't have a  
24 specific proposal, but I -- I think 50,000 sounds like

1 a -- a pretty reasonable cap, you know, to make sure  
2 that the election itself doesn't become this magnet for  
3 big money.

1:21:03

4 And when you look at the numbers that you  
5 just cited for the districts, those don't sound that  
6 much different to me. I don't know if -- state Senate  
7 number or state legislator -- ah -- state legislative  
8 district number.

1:21:18

9 We still have a significant number of black  
10 people, right? In fact, our numbers are -- were  
11 overrepresented even with those relatively large  
12 districts. So I -- I don't see where the larger  
13 districts are going to keep us from being competitive.

1:21:35

14 VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: Understood.  
15 Thank you. Yeah, and so just for your reference, I  
16 think we're about 218,000 or --

17 MS. LEONARD: Okay.

18 VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: -- 216,000 as a  
19 state Senate district.

1:21:50

20 MS. LEONARD: Oh, the Senate. Okay, awesome.  
21 All right. So yeah, I don't think we're  
22 underrepresented in the Senate, so I -- I really think  
23 that this is doable.

1:21:57

24 VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: Okay. Thank you

1 very much.

2 MS. LEONARD: Thank -- thank you for that.

3 Mm-hmm.

1:22:00

4 VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: Welcome.

5 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Thank you, Senator.

6 Thank you, Ms. Leonard, for your advocacy and

7 hard work on this.

1:22:11

8 Karl? Karl Brinson, Chicago West Side double

9 -- NAACP?

10 MR. BRINSON: Okay. Thank you also, Senator,

11 for giving us the opportunity. As we're here to stand

12 in support of IAAFER's map.

1:22:26

13 Like you said, it keeps the ten districts and

14 it keeps it compact, so it's likely to satisfy all the

15 voting rights. It keeps us out of court the way it's

16 drawn.

1:22:36

17 And also it keeps us with the opportunity to

18 have full representation and everybody has a fair

19 opportunity, one vote, one man, one. Also it's

20 supportive of the important part of supporting a

21 standing committee for black student achievement,

22 standing committee that was definitely needed because

23 of a population of -- of education as being

24 marginalized over the history of we haven't had a --



1 haven't had a lot of accountability.

1:23:03

2           So that would be very important, that we had  
3 that standing committee put in place to give some  
4 assurances [sic] and some more accountabilities and  
5 some more transparencies, to make sure there's a --  
6 black student achievement is met and so all that's  
7 there could be successful.

1:23:17

8           We stand in support of also this piece of --  
9 campaign finance, because we know these elections can  
10 be very, very expensive, and we know with this being  
11 such an important piece of education and the special  
12 interests that might want to buy any tie into this,  
13 that people might be pouring all kind of monies at this  
14 particular race, and we want to make it -- so let's  
15 make it affordable to the people who are more impacted  
16 by it.

1:23:43

17           At -- at -- for the -- for the -- for the  
18 people of the City of Chicago, who doesn't have a large  
19 pocket and deep pockets, our parents and our student --  
20 people who represent students who don't have those --  
21 those finances to represent, to -- to pour all that  
22 money into it.

1:23:58

23           So that's what we was trying to appeal to, to  
24 the Senate, to you guys, to look very hard and adopt

1 this map and this piece of -- of -- of trailer  
2 legislation that we'd like to have with black student  
3 achievement standing committee. 1:24:11

4 We just want to say we appreciate and --  
5 hopefully that you guys work hard and fast with what  
6 we're -- what we are offering up and that we support it  
7 wholeheartedly, not just only locally but also through  
8 the whole state, that there must be a standard solely  
9 behind this particular piece of legislation that  
10 supports this map, and also that stands in support of  
11 black standing achievement -- standing committee for --  
12 for students, black students. 1:24:35

13 So that's what we just standing here to say  
14 we're here in total support of this and hope that you  
15 guys would accept what we're proposing and -- and  
16 accept it as accordingly as we're accepting it. 1:24:45

17 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: All right. Okay. Good.  
18 Thanks, Karl. Appreciate your testimony and the work  
19 of the NAACP as well. 1:24:54

20 I don't see any hands, so thank you. I'll go  
21 on to Dwayne, Dwayne Truss.

22 MR. TRUSS: Good evening, committee --

23 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Hi.

24 MR. TRUSS: -- oop. Sorry there. I was

1 trying to -- camera. Okay. Good evening, committee.

2 Thank you for the opportunity to testify tonight. 1:25:15

3 Thank you for the time that you spent on it,  
4 and also thank you for the careful consideration that  
5 you -- you -- that you took well from our requests  
6 about adding additional time to really think through  
7 and work through this process, so we thank you all  
8 sincerely for that. 1:25:28

9 We know that it's taking time away from you  
10 all and your family, your duties, which -- to your  
11 constituents. So I just want to just echo that. 1:25:36

12 Off the bat, obviously I support the map  
13 that's presented by IAAFER. We believe that it  
14 definitely can give us, you know, whatever we need. 1:25:45

15 I'm going to center my comments on the  
16 committee for black student achievement. Because you  
17 know, and -- and I -- and I do support a voice from our  
18 citizens. 1:25:58

19 And you know, and -- and when it comes to our  
20 children and their education. Right? When you look at  
21 the law, it really specify some real serious, you know,  
22 actions that's going to be taken to make sure they have  
23 a seat at the table. 1:26:12

24 But I think many of you know the unfortunate

1 history of CPS is that there's been a lot of trauma and  
2 drama done to black families, especially black  
3 children. Whether it be the -- the demolition of  
4 public housing, the lack of affordable housing, as well  
5 as school closings.

1:26:28

6 Like, for instance, I'm going to be losing a  
7 granddaughter to the State of Iowa because  
8 unfortunately, that's where her mother can get  
9 subsidized housing, affordable housing. Because it's  
10 -- it's really tough for a lot of our parents in the  
11 City of Chicago.

1:26:44

12 When it comes to the committee for black  
13 student achievement also, it's that CPS has what they  
14 call community action councils. These are ad hoc  
15 committees organized to go ahead and -- and -- and set  
16 educational policy in particular neighborhoods and  
17 regions.

1:27:00

18 Many of them have completed and presented  
19 plans to various CPS leadership and it's almost like  
20 you're wasting your time and -- and you're really  
21 creating a digital paperweight versus something  
22 substantial.

1:27:15

23 We -- you know, we -- when I was on the board  
24 of education -- Chicago Board of Education, we didn't

1 have a -- a particular committee and because, you know,  
2 we kind of, like, okay, well, it's the CEO, it's up to  
3 that person.

1:27:32

4           So fine. So you're going to hear from  
5 someone else who actually had that -- that experience  
6 firsthand. So once you all can say, well, that sounds  
7 like a good idea, let's get some parents together,  
8 community stakeholders, and come up with a strategy and  
9 plan.

1:27:44

10           You can create a strategy and plan. Then you  
11 get another superintendent. Then that person may say,  
12 well, you know, I want to do something different.

1:27:51

13           Creating a committee and state law -- and we  
14 know the advisory would give some type of consistency  
15 to black families. And that's the most important thing  
16 is -- it's to set up a plan that stakeholders can be  
17 involved in developing, and that plan can be the plan.

1:28:10

18           Just like corporations. They develop  
19 corporate plans, right, or -- or business plans. And  
20 no matter who that CEO of that corporation is, the plan  
21 is the plan.

1:28:21

22           And that's what we're looking for with this  
23 committee for black student achievement being codified  
24 in state law. I do support compensation for board

1 members.

1:28:29

2           Again, I served on the Chicago Board of  
3 Education. And at some point where we had to treat  
4 each other to lunch. Because there was not money in  
5 the budget.

1:28:39

6           But fortunately, you know, all of us are  
7 working, and we sacrificed a lot of time. And you  
8 really have to sacrifice that time and -- and -- and  
9 get people who make great board members, just don't  
10 have that -- that -- that work/life balance where a job  
11 will allow them to do that and -- and pay them.

1:29:01

12           And -- and you really are asking a lot of  
13 people to make a significant sacrifice, so we  
14 definitely should have some type of compensation for  
15 board members. And I do support campaign finance  
16 reform.

1:29:10

17           There should be a cap. To be realistic, I'm  
18 not sure if, you know, state law or federal law would  
19 even allow that. Let's -- let's be realistic.

1:29:20

20           And the last piece is -- is again, getting  
21 back to my comment about the trauma and drama black  
22 students have gone through. Again, you know, you can  
23 look at the student population now.

1:29:28

24           It's -- it's -- it's based on certain

1 population. But what if I wanted to say, hey, let's  
2 make a -- let's -- a map based on historical student  
3 population, right?

1:29:37

4 Now you're either getting the majority black  
5 students being served by the district over the years  
6 versus if we just took a snapshot of right now.

7 So for me, and plus within compliance of the  
8 law, the fairest way we would go about is to go and  
9 create maps based on City population that we already  
10 have.

1:29:55

11 Because there's going to be a lot of nuances  
12 as to why there's X number of students being served,  
13 you know, in the system without, you know, going in --  
14 in history, but if we're going to just say if you're  
15 going to create a map that's going to serve the student  
16 population, then we may just say what's the average or  
17 the race of the student population served for the last  
18 ten years, 20 years.

1:30:16

19 To be able to actively reflect the population  
20 that -- that can be served and potentially be served in  
21 the future. So I ask you to disregard any type of map  
22 that would have school board boundaries based on that,  
23 and that concludes my comments, and then I -- again, I  
24 thank you -- oh, last thing real quick.

1:30:34

1           For the committee for black student  
2 achievement, any persons should be recommended by local  
3 school council and can't -- should not be appointed by  
4 the mayor so we can minimize -- the best way we can to  
5 minimize politics if such committee is created. And  
6 thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

1:30:54

7           SENATOR LIGHTFORD: You're welcome. My  
8 pleasure. Good seeing you, Dwayne.

9           May I have Nicole Johnson next, please?

1:31:01

10          MS. JOHNSON: Good evening, everybody.

11          SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Hi, Nicole.

12          MS. JOHNSON: All right. So tonight we're  
13 here to ensure that there is equity as we approach the  
14 seventieth anniversary of the Brown v. Board of  
15 Education landmark legislation.

1:31:23

16           I want to be mindful, I want us to be mindful  
17 of the impact of that. This law articulated that the  
18 separate education environment for black and white  
19 students was unequal.

1:31:35

20           It mandated integration so that black  
21 students could access more well-resourced schools. The  
22 intention was that black students would be allowed  
23 better opportunities to excel.

1:31:46

24           Fast forward to recent years. In 2021, black



1 students comprised of 36 percent of CPS schools but  
2 accounted to 61 percent of the nearly 20,000 school  
3 suspensions. Today black students only comprise barely  
4 29 percent.

1:32:03

5           Between March 8th and March 12th of 2021,  
6 white students, 89 percent of them, showed up to  
7 in-person class compared to 77 percent of Latino  
8 students, 60 percent of black students, and 83 percent  
9 of Asian students.

1:32:22

10           And approximately 88 percent of the school --  
11 school closings -- school actions, so that's closing,  
12 turnarounds, or removal of principals, have occurred in  
13 a predominantly black schools, and WBEZ, at the  
14 ten-year anniversary in June of this year -- they  
15 reported that of all the promises that were made in  
16 terms of transitioning existing buildings for community  
17 use as well as improvement of students' outcomes, none  
18 of them have been met.

1:32:53

19           As part of this transition, we must ensure  
20 that the needs of black students are not only protected  
21 but that there -- that there is legal responsibility to  
22 support that. This transition will include a standing  
23 committee for black student achievement.

1:33:10

24           And at present, this does not exist. You

1 might ask what are CPS's existing plans. CEO Martinez  
2 will tell you that they -- at the most recent board  
3 member meeting earlier this week -- this month, he  
4 presented a strategic plan that includes a priority for  
5 black student achievement.

1:33:29

6 While we appreciate this designation, the  
7 thing about plans is that they change. And as  
8 mentioned, historically, the only way black people have  
9 had their rights protected is by the law and the  
10 Constitution.

1:33:46

11 As a CPS graduate who grew up in Englewood  
12 and have earned advanced degrees from Ivy League  
13 institutions, I am saddened that I am always the  
14 exception. This must be codified into law.

1:33:58

15 Thurgood Marshall, this country's first black  
16 Supreme Court justice, would have it no other way.  
17 With an emphasis on black student achievement, every  
18 board meeting would require a report out on how we are  
19 offering our black students an equitable and quality  
20 education that is unique to historic disenfranchisement  
21 and present day disenfranchisement that black folks  
22 have faced since 1619. Thank you.

1:34:23

23 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Thank you for your  
24 comments and that historical perspective, Nicole.

1 Thank you.

2 Nicole Wheatley? Nicole Wheatley? Okay.

3 Then Natasha Dunn. Ms. Dunn? 1:34:47

4 MS. DUNN: Hi. How are you?

5 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: I'm --

6 MS. DUNN: Can you hear me?

7 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Mm-hmm. Yes. Please -- 1:34:51

8 MS. DUNN: Yeah.

9 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: -- proceed.

10 MS. DUNN: Yeah. So my name is Natasha Dunn,  
11 and I'm with a -- a black community collaborative, but  
12 I'm also one of the leaders of IAAFER. 1:35:02

13 I met Valerie in 2012 when I was the  
14 president of the Black Star Community PTA. At the  
15 time, I was organizing parents across the City of  
16 Chicago. 1:35:13

17 Because originally, the board of education  
18 proposed closing 120 schools. Then it went down to 90  
19 and ultimately it was 50. At the time, and still am --  
20 I'm a parent as well. 1:35:24

21 At the time, I had just recently before the  
22 school closures had happened, pulled my twin sons out  
23 of Chicago Public Schools. They were in third grade.  
24 And I pulled them out because I recognized that they

1 were actually being miseducated.

1:35:41

2 And the standards were being lowered for  
3 them. Their teachers were okay with deeming one of my  
4 twins a solid average second grader and my other twin a  
5 below average second grader.

1:35:55

6 I was not okay with that. So I abruptly  
7 pulled my children out of CPS around 2011 and  
8 homeschooled them and then put them in a private  
9 African-centered school for the duration of their  
10 elementary years to prepare them so that they can get  
11 into top -- top public high schools.

1:36:14

12 That was my aim, that was my goal, and that  
13 was what I accomplished. But within that timeframe, in  
14 between that timeframe, I also embarked on a journey of  
15 organizing black parents across the City of Chicago, in  
16 helping them elevate their voices to prevent their  
17 schools from closing.

1:36:31

18 So I was on the ground, and that's how I met  
19 Valerie Leonard, on the ground. She was a West Side  
20 organizer, I was a South Side organizer, and we were  
21 coming together around this one issue that was  
22 impacting the entire black community.

1:36:42

23 And the reason why I tell my story is because  
24 my story is the reason why it is imperative that we

1 have a standing committee codified into law to address  
2 this black student achievement gap.

1:36:54

3           Because as a parent of a CPS high school  
4 graduates and now I currently have a student in CPS,  
5 one of the things that I noticed is that had I left my  
6 sons in CPS during their elementary years, they would  
7 not have gotten into Jones College Prep High School or  
8 King College Prep.

1:37:11

9           They would not have gotten into it, because  
10 again, their teachers were okay with them being a solid  
11 average second grader and a -- and a below average  
12 second grader. And I know the black students.

1:37:21

13           I know that their potential is great. But  
14 unfortunately, their lights are being dimmed within the  
15 system. And so we need people at the table who  
16 understand not only the potential of black students,  
17 they also who understand the nuances of the black  
18 community, who understands the historic harm that has  
19 been done perpetually over decades to our community.

1:37:41

20           Because at one point, CPS was predominantly  
21 black. We had a 65 percent black student ratio, and  
22 now we're at 36 percent. Year after year, our children  
23 are being pushed out of the system.

1:37:52

24           Pushed. Really forced out of the system.

1 And the school closures, the massive school closures  
2 that happened in 2013, was one of many reasons why our  
3 schools -- I mean our population has declined over the  
4 years.

1:38:06

5 And so there has to be some system in place  
6 in order to -- to really address that. So when we talk  
7 about transitioning into a fully elected school board,  
8 number one, the map -- let's not making it confusing.

1:38:18

9 We don't need all of these extra layers of  
10 bureaucracies and -- and -- and maps and things that's  
11 going to confuse the population of people. The reason  
12 why I support our map -- number one, it was created by  
13 black people who live in disenfranchised communities  
14 and understand the system, right?

1:38:36

15 But it's also a map that's fair for all.  
16 It's going to make it easier and -- it's going to make  
17 it easier for people to understand how to vote, where  
18 to vote, and what to do, and it's bringing our  
19 community together.

1:38:46

20 But also when we talk about this transition  
21 into the school board, it's important to codify into  
22 law the standing committee for black student  
23 achievement. Because this will provide a transparent  
24 process of accountability.

1:38:58

1           In 2020, my group spearheaded an effort to  
2 push Chicago Public Schools to create a black student  
3 achievement taskforce. We were successful. Dr.  
4 Jackson was like, yes, I'm so glad you guys came in  
5 with this, I agree, black students are struggling,  
6 there's nothing in the system to support them, and I'm  
7 -- and he welcomed myself and my team into the school  
8 to work hand in hand with Dr. -- with the -- with the  
9 -- the -- the executive of the equity department, Dr.  
10 Sweeney.

1:39:28

11           And we worked for a year and a half, laying  
12 the groundwork and the foundation for what we now call  
13 black student success. We drew the -- the blueprint  
14 for that success.

1:39:38

15           And unfortunately, when Dr. Jackson stepped  
16 down, the work had to go by the wayside, because then  
17 there was a new CEO that came into office. So when he  
18 became the -- when Martinez became the CEO, I met with  
19 him in the beginning of his term, and he said okay, but  
20 it never happened.

1:39:55

21           And so now, here we are, almost two years  
22 later, Chicago Public Schools, and I'm -- and I'm happy  
23 that, you know, they are finally picking up the work  
24 that we spearheaded, and saying that they're going to

1 create this strategic plan and include black student  
2 achievement into it, a black student success plan, into  
3 it.

1:40:12

4 But we need this law, because if it's  
5 codified -- if -- if it -- a standing committee is  
6 codified into law where it is inside of the elected  
7 school board, what this -- this board would be doing is  
8 ensuring there's transparency and accountability to  
9 that strategic plan.

1:40:30

10 We need to have monthly reports of how CPS is  
11 doing in closing the gaps. As a parent and as an  
12 activist who've been fighting for over ten years, who  
13 have seen and spoken to parents across the City of  
14 Chicago and understand the system inside and out, we  
15 are all tired.

1:40:48

16 We're tired of sending our children to a  
17 burning building. And no one is giving them water to  
18 put it out. No one is. And so we're looking for a  
19 bold -- we're looking for brave elected officials to  
20 not only champion this but to push this through  
21 legislation.

1:41:04

22 We need this committee yesterday. And so I  
23 -- I'm done. I'm going to stop talking, but I -- I  
24 really want to push you all on this, because this is



1 what we need. Thank you.

1:41:14

2 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Thank you, Natasha.

3 Okay. We have a couple more individuals  
4 seeking to speak before we move on from the Illinois  
5 African-Americans for Equitable Redistricting. Are  
6 there any other questions of Ms. Leonard or any of the  
7 other speakers?

1:41:37

8 Okay. I do not see any hands raised. Thank  
9 you all. So I will now move on to Marc Kaplan with  
10 North Side Action for Justice.

1:41:51

11 MR. KAPLAN: Thank you very much, Majority  
12 Leader Lightford, and I want to thank the Senate  
13 Committee for taking this time. I'd like to say hello  
14 to my -- friend Senator Robert Martwick, who we worked  
15 together for a long time on getting this elected  
16 representative school board bill passed.

1:42:14

17 And you know, it was a long and arduous  
18 struggle that -- our -- our organization was part of  
19 the coalition that -- that initiated and then fought  
20 for ten years really to -- to get the bill passed.

1:42:31

21 So I -- first I'd like to say that it's our  
22 hope that we move as quickly as possible to a fully  
23 elected representative school board. And in that  
24 sense, we're in favor of the current timeline moving

1 from the -- the ten elected, ten appointed districts to  
2 a fully elected 20-district by the -- the timeline as  
3 it's laid out. 1:43:06

4           There's no reason why Chicago should not,  
5 like every other district in the State of Illinois,  
6 have a fully elected school board as soon as possible.  
7 The -- the drawbacks of the larger districts or  
8 ten-district election is that the larger the district  
9 is, the more money you need to run. 1:43:31

10           I'm sure that you as elected officials  
11 certainly know that. You're senators. You have a  
12 larger district. You need to spend more money than  
13 state reps. 1:43:42

14           Similarly, you know, city council people, at  
15 least in theory, because it's smaller districts, should  
16 be spend -- need to spend less. So all of this or all  
17 of our thinking has to do with how do we do what we  
18 initiated this campaign to do. Right? 1:44:05

19           Which is to really allow the residents of the  
20 City of Chicago and the parents of public school  
21 children to have as much of a voice as possible. So  
22 first I'd like to -- I wanted to speak towards that. 1:44:22

23           We do support the -- the ERSB community  
24 coalition map. That's the map that we support. But I

1 think that the main point I want to make in my  
2 presentation is let's get as quickly as possible to 20  
3 elected representative school districts. That's the  
4 first thing. 1:44:44

5           The second thing is other things in the bill  
6 that either consciously or unconsciously disenfranchise  
7 working low-income, particularly parents, from being on  
8 the board. The first of which is that without any  
9 compensation, the parent -- either parents can't do it  
10 or parents do it and they're being funded by outside  
11 special interest groups. 1:45:12

12           Because there's no way -- I've been -- I've  
13 been on local school council since the mid 1990s. And  
14 I know the time that it takes to really dedicate to the  
15 economics and the programs in just one school. 1:45:28

16           I can't imagine how you would have the time  
17 to be on a -- a -- on the school board for the whole  
18 City. And you either have to be independently wealthy,  
19 have to be bought in one way or another by outside  
20 interests, or you win the lottery. 1:45:52

21           You're one of those three things. So I -- we  
22 and I fully support -- we fully support having  
23 compensation and -- that you would have as a full-time  
24 job to allow parents and, you know, lower income

1 working people, you know, of which, you know -- I mean,  
2 80 percent of the folks who send their kids to Chicago  
3 Public Schools are, you know, people that qualify for  
4 free or reduced lunches, which means that are low  
5 income folks.

1:46:24

6           So I would strongly advocate to have  
7 compensation that would allow, you know, the -- the --  
8 the low -- low -- lower income working and middle  
9 income people to serve on the board.

1:46:41

10           The other thing I think it disenfranchises,  
11 especially parents, right, is provisions that say like  
12 if you're compensated at all or part of an organization  
13 that's compensated or has a contract with the board,  
14 that you're not allow to run.

1:47:00

15           And I just want to have us think about that.  
16 There are like thousands of parents right now that are  
17 involved in the public schools kind of as mentors,  
18 right, or as tutors or as after-school facilitators and  
19 coordinators that get small stipends for doing this.

1:47:20

20           A lot of those parents and community people  
21 are actually the people that have the best knowledge of  
22 -- of the schools, because they've been involved with  
23 it. To say that these parents, because they are  
24 getting some kind of small compensation or are working

1 for an organization that gets a contract with the  
2 board, would not be allowed to run, I think in some  
3 ways would disallow some of the people who could best  
4 serve because they have the best knowledge of what  
5 actually is happening inside the schools to serve. 1:48:02

6 So of course there are -- you know, I think  
7 we have to be as the -- the law is, you know, a little  
8 bit or -- or very cautious, right, or pay a lot of  
9 attention to the -- the potential conflict of interest. 1:48:21

10 But I think there are other ways to do that  
11 besides barring people who have any kind of  
12 relationship, financial relationship, to CPS from  
13 running. So those -- those are my main comments, and  
14 if anyone has questions, I'd be more than happy to  
15 answer. 1:48:38

16 Once again, we thank you all for taking this  
17 kind of time and spending the kind of -- you know, the  
18 hours that really are necessary to culminate the  
19 process that has been ongoing since 2011 of 2012.  
20 Thank you. 1:48:55

21 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: You're welcome. Thank  
22 you.

23 There is a hand for questioning. Senator  
24 Martwick? Remove your mic. Unmute, Senator. 1:49:17

1 VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: Yeah. Thank you.

2 Clicking all my buttons. Forgot which one to click.

3 Thank you, Madame Chair. 1:49:25

4 And so Marc, it's good to see you. Thank you

5 for appearing before us here today and thank you for

6 your comments. So I remember when we drew up the

7 conflict of interest provisions on this bill, we were

8 trying to -- you know, we were trying to do that,

9 prevent against conflicts of interest. 1:49:45

10 But you -- you -- I guess you -- you know,

11 like anything else, you think in the general sense, not

12 the specific. So you were talking about contracts that

13 parent mentors have with the school board that would

14 prevent them from seeking office. Could you explain in

15 just a little bit more detail? 1:50:01

16 MR. KAPLAN: Yes. So I'm in a number of

17 organizations in -- in the City of Chicago, right?

18 Grassroots community-based organizations that have

19 contracts with CPS to have a path to have parents

20 become more and more -- more involved in the schools. 1:50:20

21 So these parents serve -- they're -- they're

22 there every day -- well, there's different programs and

23 different -- different organizations. But they're in

24 the school generally almost every day. 1:50:34

1           And they work in the classrooms and they  
2 provide support services. You know, sometimes they're  
3 tutors. Sometimes they help, you know, with in  
4 bilingual situations.

1:50:50

5           Sometimes they help organize parent programs  
6 to get more parents into the schools. And it's -- it's  
7 been hugely successful. Because what we know is what  
8 we know, right, that parents talk best to parents and  
9 have the opportunity to -- to -- to -- to do that.

1:51:08

10           But the way -- my understanding is the way  
11 this law is currently constructed, it would prohibit  
12 those parents from -- who, as I've said, have huge  
13 experience in the schools and with children and with  
14 education, would prohibit them from running for the  
15 elected school board.

1:51:32

16           VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: Well, I -- I --  
17 and I appreciate that. I don't think that that was the  
18 situation that was complemented and I -- I think it's  
19 definitely something -- you know, the idea that we're  
20 encouraging parents to get more involved but then  
21 telling them that if they get more involved, they can't  
22 serve on the school board.

1:51:47

23           That -- that would seem contrary to the  
24 intent of what we were trying to do. But definitely

1 something to look at, so I appreciate you raising it.  
2 That's the first that's really been raised for us and  
3 it's something for us to really think about.

1:52:00

4 And -- and I -- I -- I do want to just say  
5 thank you to the rest of the people who are listening  
6 in today. It was Marc and a dedicated group that for  
7 more than a decade really started the fight for this  
8 and led to the moment where we can have these  
9 discussions.

1:52:17

10 So Marc, thanks for everything that you've  
11 done through -- throughout, you know, pushing --  
12 pushing and building grassroots to get to this point.  
13 So thank you for your testimony and your comments  
14 today. Thank --

1:52:29

15 MR. KAPLAN: Thank --

16 VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: -- you.

17 MR. KAPLAN: -- you. I -- I just want to  
18 recognize Valerie Leonard and Dwayne Truss and our  
19 strong allies on the West Side were -- were part of the  
20 struggle for all those years also.

1:52:39

21 VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: Absolutely.

22 MR. KAPLAN: And I think that, you know, we  
23 -- yeah. I -- it's great to see all of us continuing  
24 to the finish -- so to speak, to the finish line.

1:52:50



1           And as we all know, once we hit the finish  
2 line, there'll be more work to do. So we -- we -- we  
3 appreciate everyone here and all the time you're  
4 taking. Thank you.

1:52:57

5           VICE CHAIRPERSON MARTWICK: It never ends.  
6 Thank you again.

7           Thank you, Madame Chair.

1:53:00

8           SENATOR LIGHTFORD: You're welcome.  
9 Absolutely.

10           The line continues to move, Marc, so stay --  
11 stay true to the end.

1:53:06

12           And Jessica Handy, Stand for Children?  
13 Jessica, you are our last and final speaker for  
14 tonight.

15           MS. HANDY: All right. All --

16           SENATOR LIGHTFORD: All right.

1:53:17

17           MS. HANDY: -- right. Well, thank you for --  
18 for sticking around to hear my comments then. And  
19 thank you for giving so many opportunities for us to  
20 comment. I -- I appreciate the -- the amount of time  
21 that you guys have spent to get this right.

1:53:31

22           I'm Jessica Handy. I'm with Stand for  
23 Children. And I want to speak about three issues today  
24 are related to the transition.

1:53:38

1           The first is compensation of school board  
2 members. The second is race choice voting. And the  
3 third is -- is adding an additional reporting element  
4 around the transition.

1:53:49

5           So regarding compensation, you can add Stand  
6 for Children to the many voices you've heard tonight  
7 calling for compensating school board members as one  
8 tool to enable everyday parents and community members  
9 to devote their time to serving on the board.

1:54:04

10           A National Association of School Boards  
11 survey found that 77 percent of school board members  
12 spend between seven and four -- seven and 40 hours per  
13 month on school board work. So about ten -- two to ten  
14 hours per week.

1:54:21

15           And in Chicago, the commute's going to take  
16 up that whole two hours. So they spend -- they spend a  
17 decent amount of -- of time.

1:54:27

18           And that's a lot for somebody who is already  
19 on a tight budget, sacrificing time away from work and  
20 their family to perform this -- this important service.  
21 So the other thing we've been thinking about is, as we  
22 think about compensation, we want to think about what  
23 the role of a school board should be.

1:54:46

24           So effective school boards are deeply engaged

1 and committed to setting the vision and policies of a  
2 district, to selecting a superintendent to carry out  
3 those goals, to adopting a balanced budget and raising  
4 the requisite tax levies to support that.

1:55:02

5           School board members engage communities, but  
6 effective school boards do not typically get involved  
7 in day-to-day operations of districts. They treat  
8 teachers and leaders like the professionals they are  
9 and entrust them to do their job, working toward the  
10 goals the board has set.

1:55:17

11           So we started an informal survey about these  
12 implementation issues. We haven't closed it out yet.  
13 Still on our website if people want to take it.

1:55:25

14           But based on the results we've seen so far,  
15 about two-thirds of voters think the school board  
16 should be really sticking to those big picture  
17 responsibilities. 1 percent think the job should get  
18 involved in day-to-day issues, and about a third think  
19 it should be somewhere in between.

1:55:41

20           So I -- I guess what we're suggesting is that  
21 enabling the board to approve a stipend for itself  
22 would -- it -- it is -- is important. We think it  
23 should also reflect this expectation that it's not a  
24 full-time job, but it's a sizeable part-time job, and

1 members should be compensated for their time and  
2 service.

1:56:03

3 The National Association of School Boards  
4 survey found that 62 percent of members who took their  
5 survey were unpaid. But paying board members is -- is  
6 not uncommon for large districts.

1:56:16

7 Los Angeles is by far the outlier, paying  
8 their board members \$125,000. California's law is set  
9 up to vary salary caps based on district size.

1:56:27

10 That's an approach we might consider here.  
11 So like San Diego's board makes 18,000 per year.

12 Fresno's has -- earns 23,000 per year.

1:56:36

13 Board members across Florida earn 42,000 per  
14 year. And most of them are -- you know, several of  
15 them are around that range. 32,000, 48,000, 19, 17.  
16 In Clark County, Nevada, they get a \$9,000 stipend.

1:56:51

17 So -- so that would be our suggestion around  
18 compensation. Is just think about like what a  
19 reasonable compensation package would -- would look  
20 like or reasonable stipend for these members to do  
21 important part-time work.

1:57:02

22 The -- the next issue is we -- the -- the law  
23 does not include a primary process. So for the 2024  
24 election -- I -- I mean, and it would be very difficult

1 to add one now, because the petition process is already  
2 underway for the March '24 primary, so adding another  
3 election just for this would be expensive and it would  
4 negate the value of holding the election at a high  
5 turnout time, which is a really -- a really good  
6 practice that you guys did in adopting the November  
7 general election as the time for this -- for this board  
8 election.

1:57:39

9           So we -- we think you might consider holding  
10 a ranked choice ballot for the 2024 race. Because  
11 there's no primary, there are possibilities that you  
12 have multiple candidates that sort of cannibalize each  
13 other's votes and lead to a more extreme candidate  
14 getting in.

1:58:01

15           And -- and then in 2026, you might consider  
16 whether a primary would be an appropriate addition to  
17 this election cycle. And then the final thing I would  
18 say is you've -- you've -- you had a lot of different  
19 sorts of reporting requirements in your initial bill.

1:58:19

20           We had the financial entanglement report and  
21 then the ISBE did a report following that. I would  
22 just ask that maybe we continue with that level of  
23 transparency.

1:58:28

24           Maybe about a year after the board is seated,

1 have another report that looks at the status of  
2 financial disentanglements, the impact on the  
3 district's fiscal health, the costs of the transition,  
4 the hours of staff time devoted to board support,  
5 participation in the elections, impact on school  
6 culture surveys, and then -- and then maybe a final  
7 report a -- a year after the full -- full 21-member  
8 board is -- is elected. 1:58:55

9           And that could include additional metrics  
10 around outcomes, which I think we would be able to  
11 maybe see some movement on after three years. So thank  
12 you so much for listening and considering reasonable  
13 compensation, ranked choice voting, and additional  
14 reporting. 1:59:09

15           SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Thank you. Jess, I've  
16 got a question. Just want to know, do you feel then  
17 that all school districts across the state should be  
18 allowed to receive compensation? 1:59:23

19           MS. HANDY: So that is -- that is one of the  
20 questions on our survey. Because that's been something  
21 that I've been thinking about for a while, is, you  
22 know, if -- if Chicago's going to be allowed to -- to  
23 do this, shouldn't other school boards do this. 1:59:37

24           It -- I think it would be good for equity

1 across the state. I think there's also an argument to  
2 be made that in such a large school district, school  
3 board members do have a considerable workload, perhaps  
4 more than smaller districts.

1:59:50

5           So having some sort of variance in board  
6 compensation, based on the size of the district, I  
7 think makes sense. I -- I will say the -- the initial  
8 -- the initial survey results that we're seeing for  
9 Chicago folks is pretty similar to what Kids First is  
10 finding, that -- that a majority of -- of Chicago  
11 voters support allowing the board to compensate itself  
12 with a stipend.

2:00:18

13           Outside of Chicago, it's more mixed. Support  
14 for that is more -- is more mixed. So I think it's a  
15 -- a concept that could be socialized more outside of  
16 Chicago. But I do think it would enhance equity  
17 everywhere.

2:00:29

18           SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Okay. Okay, great.  
19 Well, thank you, Jessica --

20           MS. HANDY: Thank you.

21           SENATOR LIGHTFORD: -- Handy from Stand for  
22 Children.

2:00:37

23           This wraps us up tonight. You know I want to  
24 thank all of you again for joining us and, you know, I

1 found this to be a very productive conversation, a -- a  
2 conversation that can help guide us as we move forward. 2:00:53

3 Our commitment is the same. We are very  
4 dedicated to getting this right. And that's why  
5 gathering robust public input is so very important to  
6 this process. 2:01:05

7 Our next steps will be to examine all of the  
8 testimonies and proposals that were discussed here and  
9 let that guide us as we move forward. And just a  
10 reminder again that you -- we still have opportunities  
11 to receive input at our 24/7 website,  
12 ilsenateredistricting.com, or via email at  
13 ChicagoERSBC, all caps, complete spelling out  
14 Committee, at senatedem.ilga.gov. 2:01:42

15 So thank you all again. And I do not see any  
16 hands up, so I would say there being no further  
17 business to come before the Senate Special Committee on  
18 the Chicago Elected Representatives School Board, we do  
19 stand adjourned. Thank you so much and have a  
20 excellent night. 2:02:02

21 THE RECORDER: Going off the record, 7:15  
22 p.m.

23 (Off the record)

24



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CERTIFICATION

I, Matthew D. Schulte, do hereby certify that the foregoing transcript of said hearing is a true, complete and correct report of the entire testimony so given by said participants present at the taking of said recording to have appear of record.

I further certify that the testimony that was recorded by audio/visual recording device and thereafter transcribed into typewriting under my direction and control.

I further certify that I am not counsel for, nor attorney for any of the parties to the aforesaid cause, nor am I related to any of the parties to the aforesaid cause, nor am I interested in any manner in the said cause or in its outcome.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF: I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my notarial seal:

Matthew D. Schulte

October 23, 2023

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