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March 23, 2011

Dear Rep. Nowlin:

I would like to tell you how I feel the impact the current proposal that would divide Natchitoches Parish into two districts would have on Northwestern State University, its students and alumni. As president of the Alumni Association, resident and business owner in Natchitoches and Natchitoches Parish, I am deeply concerned about this.

As the oldest permanent settlement in the Louisiana Purchase, Natchitoches has a very strong and rich cultural and economic history. For more than 125 years, Northwestern State University has partnered with the residents of the town and parish to provide a high quality education that has produced productive members of this state, including past and present leaders. Our alumni have gone on to become elementary, middle, high school and university educators, nurses, military generals and officers and business leaders. Since NSU was founded, more than 80,000 young men and women have passed through the doors to earn a better life for themselves and their families. It takes a special person to recognize how our rich history influences our actions today. If the current plan to divide the parish into two districts goes forward, the historical and cultural significance of this region will be diminished. That success of our alumni has only been possible through the close partnership we have had with our local and legislative leaders since our university was founded. Most recently, our university leaders have had the pleasure of working with you as important bills that would impact NSU have come to a vote. The legislative support for NSU could very well be diluted if our current district is divided. The partnerships we have with our city, parish and legislative leaders and our identity as a region could be negatively impacted if the current plans move forward.

Northwestern State University also has a major economic impact on the region and the current legislative district. For every \$1 the state has invested in the university, we've seen an \$8 return on the investment. The university draws visitors to the district from all over the country for athletic events, concerts, plays and alumni reunions. These events bring in hundreds of thousands of tourist dollars that the Parish and region depend upon. NSU also plays a strong role in supporting communities in the district, through volunteer leadership, service-learning and projects.

I want to thank you for your support of Northwestern State University as our representative. Please let me know if our alumni can assist you as the redistricting process moves forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph B. Stamey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "J".

Joseph B. Stamey
President, NSU Alumni Association
Attorney, Stamey & Miller