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To the chair, to friends and foes of the matter, to the committee: I greet you all by saying good afternoon. I am DeAndré Keené Bell II, a junior Urban Studies & Public Policy pre-law scholar at Dillard University in New Orleans, LA.

Though not being born in the state, much of who I am is built off the myriad of lessons and family ties I have here. I spent much of my childhood playing down the streets of Houma; riding down the bayou with my paw paw Horace and our cousin Lucky. Suffice it to say, Louisiana runs through my veins.

Now, hearing the words and grievances of my colleagues, the very apparent question before this assembly is: why not? This isn't a dispute of political morality on either side of the aisle, so what do you have to lose? Are you trying to secure your seat and ensure reelection? Are you trying to legitimize your leadership and or legacy? Ask yourself then, what does the State have to gain? Because I can assure you that if you choose the people, the people will choose you.

As a 20-year-old Black man in Louisiana, the drawing of fair and equitable district lines across our state will cultivate a culture across Louisiana that you will not regret. Young people, who I'd advise you listen to, are beginning to buy into this Redistricting process, understanding the ramifications of the maps presented.

Members of this assembly, you have to do better. You know what is right and wrong. You know what is fair and unfair and to deprive 1/3 of the State's population of the ability to elect their preferred candidate keeps Louisiana at the bottom of nearly every statistic in this country.

Redistricting is a glimpse into the future and into the past. It shows us the inequities of times before, and the priorities of legislators and communities moving forward. So I'll ask again, why not redraw fair and equitable maps that represent demographic and population changes across Louisiana?