
From: Lynette Bech [REDACTED]
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To: House & Governmental Affairs
Subject: Redistricting - Washington Parish

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Good evening, Madame Chair and Mr. Chairman, My name is Lynette R Bech and have lived in Washington Parish for almost 8 years. Actively, I am co-chair of the Louisiana Democrat Party Disability Caucus a member of the Washington Parish Democrat Parish Executive Committee, Washington Parish Women's Democrat Group, Washington Parish NAACP, Florida Parishes Indivisible Group, REV UP Washington Parish, and American Red Cross. Being involved in my community I know Washington Parish better than those people who do not live here.

Washington Parish, like many other small rural parishes, has frequently been used as a voting block that can be divided or moved to protect larger and bigger political interests. Surrounded by the state of Mississippi on two sides and framed by the bigger districts of New Orleans and Baton Rouge our unique needs are rarely addressed. It is important that our electors understand our unique issues - specifically that we are tied to the North shore of the greater New Orleans area, but we are also rural with all the needs of a rural parish. We want a district that will represent us and not one as a result of "cracking." Moreover, present maps show that the maps were drawn along racial lines promoting Caucasian population over African American like it was intentionally planned. The sections are NOT drawn in a continuous line to shape districts as instructed such as including Slidell and Metairie together in a district, which jumps a body of water, Lake Pontchartrain. Of course, the present maps were approved by Governor Jindal.

For example, Lawrence "Larry" Frieman Dist. 74 Republican

(Mt. Hermon), Abita Springs, and Tangipahoa (tip). Majority of residents in Washington Parish have never seen him when it's voting time or any other time. He has no clue about the needs of Mt Hermon. He has no clue of those sections he represents and ignores our needs. The only portion he is concerned with is Covington, St Tammany. He doesn't grasp the problems we face with flooding due to hurricanes or simple thunderstorms. Furthermore, our rural community has nothing in common with his urban constituents. For example, access to the internet. Our community in Washington Parish does not have broadband like Covington. Our community suffers due to the lack of internet. After school, many of our children have to travel elsewhere to use free Wi-Fi, such as McDonald's, to even do homework. We need to bridge the digital divide for equal opportunity for education. How can we expect our children to succeed when they are placed at a disadvantage because of where they live? We should not be giving one community leverage over another. Minority communities receive less resources than those in the majority. When we see this type of leverage executed, it is hard to convince voters that their vote matters when they are not given a voice.

In addition to having a 1/3 minority of black voters in Louisiana, we have 34% of adults in Louisiana with a disability. Having a disability is the only minority group where anyone can join due to congenital defect, wounded veteran, accidental or becoming elderly. We deserve a voice in the political process in this state. We matter, too.

Therefore, we want fair and transparent maps. We want our elected representatives who are to represent us to live in our community, so they understand the problems and plight we face. We want and deserve at least 2 minority districts. We won't be silent anymore.

Thank you for your time

Lynette R. Bech