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Sent: Tuesday, January 4, 2022 5:25 PM
To: House & Governmental Affairs
Cc: marinovich@legis.la.gov; Jacqueline Jones
Subject: Jefferson Parish Westbank Testimony
Attachments: West Bank Redistricting Testimony.docx

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Dear Members of the Joint Governmental Affairs Committee,

My name is Jackie Jones, the Lead Organizer with the Jeremiah Group, and I'd like to thank you for holding this hearing and listening to the concerns of residents in the Greater New Orleans area as they relate to redistricting.

The testimony I am submitting today is on my own behalf, and also on behalf of more than 100 residents of the West Bank of Jefferson Parish who attended a community redistricting meeting in December. Many of those 100-plus people had planned to attend tonight's hearing, but chose not to due to the recent surge in Covid cases. Nonetheless, we all felt it necessary to make our voices heard on this important matter.

The West Bank of Jefferson Parish is one of the largest communities of interest in Louisiana, and also one of its most diverse. Yet many of us feel that our voice as a community is diluted in state government because our representation is split up among many different legislative districts, especially in the State Senate. I am testifying today, and representing so many of my friends and neighbors, because we want to see that change.

We believe, based on the latest Census numbers, that Jefferson Parish should gain an additional Senate district and that it should be a majority-Black district, which would give our community more direct representation in the legislature.

There are several important data points we believe support our case:

1. Jefferson Parish is the second-most populous parish in the state, with 440,781 residents, behind East Baton Rouge Parish, with 456,781 residents, and ahead of Orleans Parish, which has 383,997 residents.
2. However, Jefferson Parish only has 3 Senators who reside in the parish, while East Baton Rouge and Orleans each have 4 Senators who reside in those respective parishes.
3. Three of the four resident Orleans-based senate districts come into Jefferson Parish—Jefferson Parish makes up nearly 25% of Senate District 3 and approximately 40% of Senate District 7.
4. Both districts take a large block of Jefferson Parish's African-American voters, when Jefferson Parish has enough African-American voters to be drawn into a majority-black Senate District that is either entirely or almost entirely confined within Jefferson Parish.

The West Bank represents the future of Louisiana—more socially, racially, and economically diverse, with young families, transplants from other places, and international immigrants helping to drive our growth and ensure that our community thrives for decades to come. Creating more direct representation for our community will not only serve the best interests of those of us who live on the West Bank, it will provide a voice and a roadmap for how all of Louisiana can move forward into the 21 Century.