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**From:** Rita B. Weary, DST NOA President [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 4, 2022 4:32 PM  
**To:** House & Governmental Affairs  
**Cc:** gpbryant58@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** H&S Oral Testimony for Rita B. Weary - NOA DST  
**Attachments:** NOA DST Redistricting - Rita B. Weary.docx

**EXTERNAL EMAIL:** Please do not click on links or attachments unless you know the content is safe.

Good Evening,

Please find attached the prepared statement for Rita B. Weary, who will testify on January 5, 2022 on behalf of New Orleans Alumnae Chapter.

Sincerely,

**Rita B. Weary, President**  
**New Orleans Alumnae Chapter**  
**Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.**  
[REDACTED]

*"Recommitment To Action"*  
*Through Sisterhood, Scholarship & Service*



**Oral Testimony for NOA-DST President Rita B. Weary  
Louisiana Redistricting Roadshow  
January 5, 2021**

Good evening, Senate and Governmental Affairs Committee Chairperson Hewitt and House Chairperson Stefansk, Committee Co-Chairs, and all of the members of the La. Legislature who are here tonight. Thank you for coming to New Orleans and giving the citizens of our great City the opportunity to address you about the very important matter of redistricting. I am Mrs. Rita B. Weary, a Louisiana native and a graduate of Southern University in Baton Rouge. I am a retired Human Resources Vice President of Pepsi Co. having served in this role internationally, as well as in Schaumburg, Ill. I moved to New Orleans in 1988 and lived here until 2005. I returned in 2010 and have lived here since that time. I am an active member of the New Home Family Worship Center and also a proud Member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., currently serving as President of the New Orleans Alumnae Chapter, where I lead a membership of nearly five hundred (500) African American women. Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. is an international sisterhood organization of college educated women founded on the principles of sisterhood, scholarship, and service. In Louisiana, we have over five thousand (5000) members in 27 alumnae and 16 collegiate chapters, located in the cities, towns, and rural communities throughout the State.

Tonight, I am here to testify on behalf of myself and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and our goal is simple and straight forward: First, to ensure that Black political participation is not decreased in the State of La. as a result of this redistricting process; and second, to support and advocate for an increase in Black political participation in this State, based upon the size of the African American population, as established by the 2020 census count.

I am a resident of New Orleans Senate District 3 and House District 100, in the community known as New Orleans East. Like most of the City, my community is predominately African American. The City of New Orleans is known for its unique culture, its music, history, food, and entertainment. However, New Orleans also has serious problems – among them, poverty, an aging infrastructure, a shortage of affordable housing and severe vulnerability to flooding, enhanced by global warming. Because of the large majority African American population in our City, we have been able to elect our preferred candidate, Congressman Troy Carter, an African American, to represent us in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District, and a majority African American State legislative delegation, also. However, they cannot solve the problems





affecting New Orleans and the other communities of color throughout the State of La., alone. Many African American communities throughout the State suffer the same difficult problems as New Orleans, but due to the composition of their Congressional and legislative districts, they are unable to elect representatives who are willing to seek solutions to their problems. That is why they also need the opportunity to elect representatives of their choice, so that we can work together to solve the serious problems that impact us all.

I am here today on behalf of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and our 5000 members in this State to ask for fair and equitable redistricting maps for Louisiana. Congressional and Legislative Districts in this State should not be gerrymandered to dilute the impact of Black voting strength. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 prohibits such practices, including the cracking and/or packing of Black voters. We are requesting maps that create competitive districts that allow African American citizens to have a reasonable opportunity to elect the representatives of their choice. In addition, we believe that there are legislative districts that should be redrawn to create new Majority-Minority seats in the La. State Legislature.

Finally, the Black population of Louisiana is greater than 33 percent, one-third of the State's population. However, of the six Congressional Districts apportioned to La., only Congressional District 2, spanning New Orleans to Baton Rouge, is Majority-Minority, when clearly, there should be a second Majority-Minority Congressional District in the State. Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. supports the creation of a second Majority-Minority District in Congressional District 5. Organizations that support equality, equity, and justice for all, including the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, Urban League of Louisiana, ACLU, Power Coalition, Southern Poverty Law Center, the League of Women Voters of Louisiana, Louisiana Progress, and several others have submitted seven possible maps for your consideration that create a new Majority-Minority in Congressional District 5. We urge you to seriously consider these maps and give the African American citizens in that part of the State the opportunity to elect a representative of their choice, by creating a new Majority-Minority Congressional District. The time is now!

Thank you for the opportunity to speak and be heard.

