

Ellis, Celeste

From: Jared Evans <jevans@naacpldf.org>
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2024 10:38 PM
To: Ellis, Celeste
Subject: Testimony in favor of SB8
Attachments: Testimony11623.docx

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

Good evening. Ronnie Evans submitted the testimony below and attached in favor of SB 8 by Senator Womack that will be heard in committee tomorrow. He forgot to put the bill number in his testimony. Thanks.

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: RONNIE EVANS · [REDACTED]
To: ellisc@legis.la.gov <ellisc@legis.la.gov>
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2024, 05:34:21 PM CST
Subject: Testimony for Senate and Governmental Affairs Committee

Attached you will find my testimony for the Senate and Governmental Affairs Committee. I will not be able to attend on January 16, 2024 due to inclement weather in our area and closed roads.

Thank you for your consideration.

January 15, 2024

To: Members of the Senate and Governmental Affairs Committee

Good morning Chairman Fields and members of the committee. I am Ronnie Evans and I am here today to speak in favor of the proposed majority-black district in this map. I've lived the majority of my entire life within the boundaries of the proposed 6th congressional district and would like to reside in a district that allows me to elect my preferred candidate to Congress to represent me in Washington. I was born and raised in the small community of Evelyn, in DeSoto Parish. After graduating high school, I moved to Natchitoches to attend Northwestern State University, where I met my wife of 42 years, who is from the Cane River community in southern Natchitoches Parish, which is also within the confines of district 6. After graduation from Northwestern, my wife and I moved to Alexandria in Rapides Parish, where we lived and worked for several years. We were married in Alexandria. After a few years, we returned to Natchitoches, where we started and raised our family. Our two children attended the Northwestern Laboratory School System and graduated from Natchitoches Central High. Our son is an attorney who lives in Washington, DC and our daughter resides in Dallas, Texas with her husband and our 4 month old grandson. In 2019, I retired from the Natchitoches Parish Sheriff's office where I served as a sheriff

deputy for 33 years. In 2018, my wife retired from the Natchitoches Parish School System with 33 years as a teacher and administrator.

Our entire lives are in the proposed boundaries of congressional district 6. We live on Cane River but our doctors are in Alexandria and Shreveport. I have 6 siblings who either currently live or did live in Shreveport. Both of our children were born at St. Francis Cabrini Hospital in Alexandria and our daughter graduated from Northwestern. The closest Sam's Warehouse, Office Depot, and Best Buy to our home are in Alexandria. We do our business and personal errands such as dry cleaning and shopping in Alexandria. When our children were in grade school, we shopped for them primarily in the Alexandria mall. When our son flies home for the holidays to visit us, we pick him up and drop him off at the Alexandria airport. When our siblings and extended family members have major medical procedures, they are either done in Alexandria or Shreveport.

Our story, the story of our family, is not unique. Our next door neighbors on Cane River, own a business in Alexandria and commute there from Natchitoches every day. Many of our friends work or previously worked in Alexandria, DeSoto Parish, or Shreveport. These communities are united by Interstate 49, which connects Shreveport, DeSoto, Natchitoches, and Alexandria. All of these communities are located within the proposed 6th congressional district.

One event that ties this community together is the Natchitoches Christmas Festival. Held in the first weekend of December, every year, our friends and family come from throughout the proposed 6th congressional district to enjoy the festival of lights and parade. In 2011 our daughter was selected as the first black Miss Merry Christmas, the highest honor that any young woman from Natchitoches can obtain. Our family and friends from Shreveport, Alexandria, Opelousas, and Baton Rouge all came to celebrate with us. The Christmas Festival is an example of one of several events that brings the Black community, as well as other communities within the proposed 6th congressional district together.

I also want to speak today as a minister of the gospel and my experience as a pastor and minister in Natchitoches. I was ordained at my home church, Summerhill Baptist Church in Evelyn, Louisiana. I drive frequently from Cane River in Natchitoches to Evelyn in DeSoto to preach God's word. I served as a pastor in Natchitoches of two churches for over a decade. For each of my pastoral anniversaries, the guest pastor and guest choir were from a church within the proposed 6th congressional district. During the summer, when we hosted summer revival, the guest pastor and church was usually from Alexandria or Shreveport. Vacation Bible School, Family and Friends Day, Church Anniversary, Pastor Installation, Pastor Anniversary, and the anniversaries of all ministries, feature guest pastors, choirs, praise teams, praise dancers, ministers of

music, and other ministries from within the boundaries of District 6 in this map.

Finally, I want to speak about my experience in this district through my fraternity. I am a lifelong member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, I was initiated into the Theta Lamda chapter at Northwestern in the Fall of 1976. I have been an active member of the Natchitoches Alumni Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi for my entire adult life. Our fraternity, founded in 1911, recently celebrated its 114th anniversary. At the end of this month, the Natchitoches alumni chapter and the Alexandria alumni chapter will celebrate our Founder's Day together. I have served as an alumni advisor to the Theta Lamda Chapter for a number of years, where I have had the opportunity to advise and mentor many young men who seek achievement in every field of human endeavor. Many of these young men come to Northwestern from other cities in town within the boundaries of the proposed 6th congressional district. Over the years, we have initiated young men from Baton Rouge, Port Allen, Opelousas, Marksville, Alexandria, Mansfield, Natchitoches, and Shreveport, all of which are contained in the proposed 6th congressional district. The alumni chapters in Shreveport, Natchitoches, and Alexandria all fellowship together throughout the year. We are bonded by not only our brotherhood in Kappa, but our ties to the community and region. We all live, work, and worship within the boundaries of the proposed 6th congressional district. By creating this district,

you are uniting a community of interest of our fraternity in these parishes.

As you can see, the Black community in the proposed 6th congressional district is cohesive and shares many cultural, economic, social, and educational ties. I was born and raised, educated, married, raised my family, pastored, ministered, worshipped, fellowshipped, shopped, received medical care, and buried by loved ones all within the boundaries of the proposed 6th congressional district. Under the current map, we have no chance of electing our preferred candidate to Congress. I ask that you please pass this bill through the legislature so that my family and I will finally live in a district where we have the opportunity to elect our preferred candidate of choice to Congress.

Sincerely,

Ronnie Evans

A white rectangular box redacting the signature of Ronnie Evans.

Natchez, LA 71456