

Joint Committee on Joint Governmental Affairs

Minutes of Meeting
2021-2022 Interim
September 17, 2021

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative John M. Stefanski, chairman of the Joint Committee on Joint Governmental Affairs, called the meeting to order at 11:06 a.m. in Room 5, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

II. ROLL CALL

HOUSE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative John M. Stefanski, chairman
Representative Gerald "Beau" Beaulieu, IV
Representative Wilford Dan Carter, Sr.
Representative Daryl Andrew Deshotel
Representative Royce Duplessis, vice chairman
Representative Les Farnum
Representative Foy Bryan Gadberry
Representative Valarie Hodges
Representative Dodie Horton
Representative Barry Ivey
Representative Sam L. Jenkins, Jr.
Representative Michael T. Johnson
Representative Rodney Lyons
Representative Tanner D. Magee
Representative Candace N. Newell
Representative Polly Thomas
Representative Malinda B. White

SENATE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Sharon W. Hewitt, chairman
Senator R. L. Bret Allain, II
Senator Franklin J. Foil
Senator Jimmy Harris
Senator Barry S. Milligan, vice chairman
Senator Edward J. "Ed" Price
Senator Mike Reese
Senator Glen Womack

HOUSE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative Jeremy S. LaCombe

SENATE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Senator Gregory W. Tarver, Sr.

HOUSE STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Patricia Lowrey-Dufour, legislative analyst
Lorrienne Lucas, attorney
Rosalie Ammersbach, committee administrative assistant
Annie Smith, attorney
Claire Stevenson, attorney
Catherine Zeringue, attorney
Bryan Vincent, division director
Michelle Fontenot, clerk of the House

SENATE STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Matthew R. DeVille, attorney
Laur'en M. Cimino, secretary
Yolanda J. Dixon, secretary of the Senate
J.W. Wiley, first assistant secretary of the Senate
Suzanne G. Morain, second assistant secretary of the Senate

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Dr. William Blair, demographer
John Harrington, House student intern
Daniel Leming, House sergeant at arms
Faye Talbot, House sergeant at arms
Fate Mitchell, Jr., Senate sergeant at arms

III. BUSINESS**To consider and discuss the 2020 federal decennial census data and redistricting pursuant thereto:****(1) Presentation by staff regarding census data, redistricting terms and law, and malapportionment data**

Patricia Lowrey-Dufour, legislative analyst for the House Committee on House and Governmental Affairs, discussed the method of equal proportions from a PowerPoint presentation, Exhibit A, "Redistricting in Louisiana - September 17, 2021, Joint Governmental Affairs Committee Meeting", which is in the committee records.

Chairman Stefanski noted Exhibit B in the committee records, "Certificate of Entitlement", from the clerk of the United States House of Representatives declaring that Louisiana was entitled to six representatives in the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States based on the 2020 Federal Decennial Census.

Dr. William Blair, demographer, discussed Louisiana's 2020 Census apportionment data, the P.L. 94-171 data, population and demographic trends, and the 2020 Census validation and geography from Exhibit A and discussed handouts, which are included in the committee records and labeled as follows:

- Exhibit C, map, "Census Population Change by Parish: 2010 to 2020";
- Exhibit D, "Census 2010 to 2020 Parish Population Change (Ranked)"; and
- Exhibit E, "Census Place Population 2010 to 2020 Change".

Representative Gadberry asked Dr. Blair if the precincts would be uploaded to the Joint Legislative Redistricting website. Dr. Blair answered yes. Representative Gadberry asked if a digital map would be uploaded to the website. Dr. Blair stated that shape file data and block equivalency files were on the redistricting website and the public had access to the same data as members and staff.

Ms. Lowrey-Dufour encouraged Representative Gadberry to schedule an appointment with House redistricting staff if he wanted to work on maps and added that open-source, free redistricting software was available online.

Representative Gadberry asked Ms. Lowrey-Dufour if the shape files were current and not modified districts. Ms. Lowrey-Dufour stated that they were current precincts, not districts. She stated that staff could post a block equivalency file of all the current districts on the redistricting website.

Representative Jenkins asked Ms. Lowrey-Dufour if there were any remedies if someone believed an area was undercounted during the 2020 Census. Ms. Lowrey-Dufour stated that the Census Bureau would not change the redistricting data file but performed a Count Question Resolution (CQR) operation following each census. She explained that count questions resolved by the Census Bureau would not affect the redistricting data file.

Representative Thomas asked Dr. Blair to define a census block. Dr. Blair said a census block was the smallest geographic on which the Census Bureau releases data; it nests up to precincts, census block groups, census tracts, parishes, and the state.

Ms. Lowrey-Dufour discussed population allocation and aggregation from Exhibit A and discussed a handout, Exhibit F, "Allocation of 2020 Census Population for Database and Reporting", which is in the committee records.

Chairman Stefanski asked Ms. Lowrey-Dufour if the population allocation and aggregation was consistent with what Louisiana had done in the past. Ms. Lowrey-Dufour replied affirmatively.

Chairman Stefanski offered a motion to adopt the Allocation of 2020 Census Population for Database and Reporting. Without objection, the allocation method was adopted by a vote of 16 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Stefanski, Beaulieu, Wilford Carter, Deshotel, Duplessis, Farnum, Gadberry, Hodges, Horton, Ivey, Jenkins, Lyons, Magee, Newell, Thomas, and White voted yea.

Chairman Hewitt offered a motion to adopt the Allocation of 2020 Census Population for Database and Reporting. Without objection, the allocation method was adopted by a vote of 6 yeas and 0 nays. Senators Hewitt, Allain, Foil, Price, Reese, and Womack voted yea.

J.W. Wiley, first assistant secretary of the Senate, discussed redistricting terms, concepts, and law from Exhibit A.

Lorriane Lucas, attorney for the House Committee on House and Governmental Affairs, discussed equal population based on federal law from Exhibit A.

Yolanda J. Dixon, secretary of the Senate, discussed discrimination against minorities and The Voting Rights Act of 1965 from Exhibit A.

Chairman Stefanski noted Exhibit G in the committee records, "Guidance under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, 52 U.S.C. 10301, for redistricting and methods of electing government bodies", which was published by the United States Department of Justice.

Ms. Lowrey-Dufour discussed redistricting criteria from Exhibit A and discussed a handout, Exhibit H, "Plan Evaluation Form (DRAFT - 9/14/21)", which is in the committee records.

Representative Jenkins asked Ms. Lowrey-Dufour if adopting the Plan Evaluation Form would limit other questions that could come up regarding different plan submissions. Ms. Lowrey-Dufour replied that it would not limit questions and that staff was open to additions or changes to the evaluation form. Ms. Lowrey-Dufour explained that having a plan evaluation form objectively showed information about a plan submission and could make it easier for members to determine whether a plan met the criteria.

Chairman Stefanski offered a motion to adopt the Plan Evaluation Form. Without objection, the Plan Evaluation Form was adopted by a vote of 16 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Stefanski, Beaulieu, Wilford Carter, Deshotel, Duplessis, Farnum, Gadberry, Horton, Ivey, Jenkins, Mike Johnson, Lyons, Magee, Newell, Thomas, and White voted yea.

Chairman Hewitt offered a motion to adopt the Plan Evaluation Form. Without objection, the Plan Evaluation Form was adopted by a vote of 6 yeas and 0 nays. Senators Hewitt, Allain, Foil, Milligan, Reese, and Womack voted yea.

Mr. Wiley discussed malapportionment data for the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) and the Public Service Commission (PSC) from Exhibit A.

Ms. Lowrey-Dufour discussed malapportionment data for Congress and the Supreme Court from Exhibit A.

Ms. Dixon discussed malapportionment data for the Senate from Exhibit A and discussed handouts, which are included in the committee records and labeled as follows:

- Exhibit I, "Plan Statistics - Plan: Senate: Act 24 (2011) to the nearest 2020 Census Block";
- Exhibit J, "District Summary - 2020 Census - Pop and Voting Age Pop - Plan: Senate: Act 24 (2011) to the nearest 2020 Census Block";
- Exhibit K, "District Summary - Registered Voters - 2021 - July - Plan: Senate: Act 24 (2011) to the nearest 2020 Census Block"; and
- Exhibit L, map, "Census 2020 Senate Deviations".

Ms. Lowrey-Dufour discussed malapportionment data for the House of Representatives from Exhibit A and discussed handouts, which are included in the committee records and labeled as follows:

- Exhibit M, "Plan Statistics - Plan: House: Act 1 (2011) to the nearest 2020 Census Block";
- Exhibit N, "District Summary - 2020 Census - Pop and Voting Age Pop - Plan: House: Act 1 (2011) to the nearest 2020 Census Block";
- Exhibit O, "District Summary - Registered Voters - 2021 - July - Plan: House: Act 1 (2011) to the nearest 2020 Census Block"; and
- Exhibit P, map, "Census 2020 House Deviations".

Representative Duplessis asked Ms. Lowrey-Dufour to explain appellate courts and the legislature's constitutional oversight. Ms. Lowrey-Dufour stated that the legislature was given the constitutional authority to redraw the courts, including the appellate courts, and that any changes made to those districts had to be enacted by law.

Representative Gadberry asked Ms. Lowrey-Dufour if anyone could submit a map for consideration. Ms. Lowrey-Dufour replied affirmatively and stated that plans must be submitted in block equivalency files to have the capability to import those plans into the database and produce maps and reports. She encouraged those who wanted to submit a plan to also include the shape files, maps, and reasons why certain decisions were made. Representative Gadberry asked if block equivalency files contained geographic features. Ms. Lowrey-Dufour replied no.

(2) Discussion of timeline

Chairman Stefanski discussed the timeline for the redistricting roadshow hearings from Exhibit A. He stated that information presented at the meeting could be found on the Legislature of Louisiana's redistricting website.

(3) Public Comment

There was no public comment.

General Statements Received Regarding Redistricting

There was 1 resolution and 1 statement submitted via email in accordance with House Rule 14.33 in lieu of appearing before the committee. Copies are included in the committee records.

IV. CONSIDERATION OF ANY OTHER MATTERS THAT MAY COME BEFORE THE COMMITTEE

There were no other matters.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Chairman John M. Stefanski
Joint Committee on Joint Governmental Affairs

Date adopted: