

# Panel rejects Guillory's Senate redistricting plan

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By Mike Hasten

mhasten@gannett.com

**BATON ROUGE** — A more than year-long journey by Sen. Elbert Guillory to get his senatorial redistricting plan approved ended in committee Monday when it was killed 7-2.

The plan in SB27 by Guillory, D-Opelousas, varied in multiple ways from SB1 by Senate President Joel Chaisson, D-Destrehan, which already has been adopted by the Senate and sent to the House for consideration. It would have created an additional minority district over Chaisson's bill, bring-

ing the total to 12, and shifted several districts around the state.

Guillory said that unlike Chaisson's plan, his paid little attention to protecting incumbents. But he told the House it would be the first time in decades that the St. Landry Parish communities of Opelousas, Eunice and Washington would be in the same senatorial district.

"It's the demographic equity plan," said Guillory, who drew up his original plan before the 2010 U.S. Census numbers were released and toured the state

promoting it. "It creates two new minority districts and two new white ones."

That idea was contested by New Orleans Sen. Ed Murray, who said one of the white districts is currently a minority district in New Orleans.

Guillory, who is black, told Murray the population numbers were the driving factor in his plan.

Increasing the number of

minority districts is important, Guillory said, because blacks don't have enough of a voice in the Legislature. But several members of the committee said that increasing the number of minority districts by making predominantly white districts even whiter weakens the minority voice in the other 27 Senate districts.

"Saying you can represent us better than we can is a thing of the past," Guillory responded.

He acknowledged that some districts "would have almost no minorities living there" and that the aver-

age minority population in other districts would drop from 20-25 percent to 15 percent.

When senators criticized the shape of a minority district that basically hugged the Red River and branched out, Guillory said "it may not be the prettiest, but it is quite effective."

Sen. Lydia Jackson, D-Shreveport, responded "I didn't think anybody could have done a worse job than the president" drawing a minority district in central Louisiana "but I think you topped him."

Sen. Dan Claitor, R-Ba-

ton Rouge, said the district Guillory carved out in the St. Landry Parish area "looks like a fighting rooster with his wings spread out."

Sens. Mike Walsworth, R-West Monroe, and Bob Kostelka, R-Monroe, were the only votes against blocking SB27.

Sens. David Heitmeier, D-New Orleans, Jody Amedee, R-Gonzales, Rob Marionneaux, D-Livonia, and Jack Donahue, R-Mandeville, joined Jackson, Claitor and Murray in voting to kill the bill in committee.



Guillory