

**Senate Redistricting Public Hearing  
Summary of Testimony  
Florence**

Florence-Darlington Technical College  
April 6, 2011 6:30-8:30 p.m. scheduled

The public hearing began at 6:38 pm. The Redistricting Subcommittee members present were: Senator McConnell, Senator L. Martin, Senator Hutto, Senator Ford, Senator Malloy, Senator Cleary, and Senator Shoopman. The Senate Redistricting staff persons present were: Charlie Terreni, Debbie Hammond, Bonnie Anzelmo and Laurie Traywick.

Senator McConnell introduced members of the subcommittee and explained the redistricting process. He also explained that the ground rules for all of the 10 public hearings would be to ask each speaker to be clear, brief, and civil, so all persons would have the time to present their ideas and concerns clearly and concisely and that all positions would be given respect.

1. Mr. Bill Pickle, Chairman of the Florence County Republican Party, spoke first. Mr. Pickle stated that he was not speaking for the Republican Party but as a citizen of Florence. Mr. Pickle stated that Florence County does not have anything in common with some of the other larger areas of South Carolina, such as Charleston. He also said that Florence is not familiar with and does not relate to Columbia or Greenville. Mr. Pickle said that Florence, however, does have prime real estate because of its location. He pointed out that Florence is at the junction of I-95 and I-20 and has a regional airport. He also stated that Florence has a rail system. Mr. Pickle expressed that Florence has all of the amenities that industry and people want to have to move into the area. Mr. Pickle also stated that most of the people of Florence vacation and shop in Myrtle Beach. He stated that, for that reason, Florence wants to be a part of the Myrtle Beach area. Mr. Pickle said that, when the Myrtle Beach area becomes too crowded, it stands to reason that people and industry are going to move towards Florence County, and he stated that Florence County has land that is ready for residential and commercial development. Mr. Pickle also testified that Florence County has award-winning medical facilities.

Mr. Pickle stated that he is concerned about Florence County because it is split into several Senate districts, and he said Florence County needs to be kept together as much as possible. Mr. Pickle also spoke about his concerns with Florence County's Congressional districts. He stated that he lives in Congressional District 5. He explained that there are two neighborhoods in his area that are in Congressional District 5, which is represented by Congressman Mulvaney. He further explained that the rest of Florence County is in Congressional District 6, which is represented by Congressman Clyburn. Mr. Pickle stated that his concern is that Florence County is put into a Congressional district where it can receive good representation, and he said that he does not think Florence County has that representation at this time. Mr. Pickle stated that he has attempted to call Congressman Clyburn about 12 times in the last 12 years, and he has never spoken with anyone in Congressman Clyburn's office and has never received a returned telephone call. As such, Mr. Pickle feels that Florence County does not have good representation and would like to be a part of the new 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District.

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2. Ms. Mal Weatherly spoke next. Ms. Weatherly stated that she is a life-long resident of Timmonsville, which is in the western part of Florence County. She explained that Timmonsville is in a Senate district with Clarendon County. Ms. Weatherly asked that the senators put Timmonsville into a Senate district with Florence County. She stated that Timmonsville has no real connection to Clarendon County, and she explained that Timmonsville is a bedroom community for Florence because almost everyone who lives in Timmonsville works in Florence. Additionally, she stated that Timmonsville has a large Honda plant, and most of the workers at the plant are from Florence. Ms. Weatherly said that Timmonsville and Florence County are interconnected and interwoven, and she said that she does not believe Timmonsville can be truly represented by someone who represents the whole of Clarendon County. Ms. Weatherly stated that putting Timmonsville with a county other than Florence isolates their community and leads to Timmonsville losing their voice. She stated that trying to put people into a district so that the districts have the appropriate amount of people does not serve the people and does not serve voters.

Ms. Weatherly also spoke about the Congressional districts. She said that she believes it is difficult for Congressman Clyburn to represent people in Florence, Columbia, Charleston, and Orangeburg at the same time, and she stated that the people in Florence have no real connection with Orangeburg. She stated that, instead, Florence has a natural connection with Myrtle Beach. She explained that, because of I-95 and I-20, Florence County has become the gateway to Myrtle Beach. She stated that the television stations serve the Florence and Myrtle Beach areas, and when Florence County's representatives appear on television stations based in Columbia or Charleston, Florence never sees that broadcast. She asked that the senators consider these issues when drawing the new Congressional district lines.

3. Mr. Charles Allen Causey testified next. Mr. Causey stated that he believes Florence County is not getting good representation from Congressman Clyburn. Mr. Causey stated that he cannot get a phone call or response from Congressman Clyburn's office. Mr. Causey asked that the senators put Florence County in a district where it can be represented well.

4. Mr. Tommy Phillips spoke next. Mr. Phillips stated that he is a resident of Florence and has been since 1958. Mr. Phillips testified that he has watched the Pee Dee area grow and become a valuable part of South Carolina. Mr. Phillips stated that Florence, Darlington, Marlboro, Dillon, Marion, and Horry Counties make up the Pee Dee region. He explained that those counties share business and industry, and he stated that the area has a regional airport that has representatives from each county, with the exception of Horry. Mr. Phillips said that he believes it will be an advantage for South Carolina to have the Pee Dee region become Congressional District 7. Mr. Phillips stated that the interstates and highways in Florence County make it easier for business and industry to get from Myrtle Beach and other parts of the Pee Dee area out to other parts of the state. Mr. Phillips also stated that the area between Florence and Dillon Counties is almost the center between New York and Miami on I-95. Mr. Phillips stated that Horry County brings a substantial amount of money to South Carolina because of tourism, and he said that the other areas of the Pee Dee region offer industrial and business opportunities. Mr. Phillips also pointed out that the area has great educational opportunities because of Francis Marion College, Coastal Carolina University, Coker College, and the many technical colleges. Finally, Mr. Phillips explained that the Pee Dee is an excellent and a desired real estate area because it is more temperate than the north or Florida, and he stated

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that people from those places are moving to the Pee Dee because of that. Mr. Phillips asked that, for all of these reasons, he wants the Pee Dee area to become the 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District.

5. Ms. Betsy DeVault testified next. Ms. DeVault stated that she worked on the 2000 and the 2010 census as a crew leader. She said she sent her crew to Williamsburg County, Marion County, and Dillon County to make sure that everyone in South Carolina was counted in order to get an additional Congressional district and additional funding for schools. Ms. DeVault stated that Florence County needs to be in the new Congressional district, and she stated that Florence County needs to be one Senate district. She explained that, if the county is split, the funding is also split.

6. Mr. Ethan Rivera spoke next. Mr. Rivera testified that he was born in April of 1990, and he believes that in his life Florence County has not had a truly competitive Congressional race. Mr. Rivera stated that Congressman Clyburn received over 65% of the votes in Florence County since the congressman took office. Mr. Rivera then pointed out that 95% of Florence County is in Congressional District 6, and that district also includes Bamberg, Colleton, most of Dorchester, and most of Orangeburg Counties. Mr. Rivera stated that he believes Florence County has nothing in common with Bamberg County, and he stated that, instead, Florence County has more in common with Darlington County, as evidenced by the fact that the hearing was being held at Florence-Darlington Technical College. Mr. Rivera also stated that Florence County has issues in common with Horry County because Florence is the gateway to Horry County. Mr. Rivera testified that Florence has issues in common with Georgetown County, as well. As such, Mr. Rivera asked that that the Pee Dee area of Florence, Darlington, Horry, and Georgetown Counties be put in the same Congressional district.

7. Ms. Tricia York testified next. Ms. York stated that she is a resident of Florence County and has been since 1978. Ms. York expressed that she believes it is important for Congressional districts to be contiguous and contain counties with similar needs. Ms. York said that Florence County has more in common with Horry County than with Colleton County and the other counties that comprise Congressional District 6. Therefore, Ms. York stated that she would like to see the new 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District include Florence, Marion, Horry, and Georgetown Counties.

8. Ms. Stephanie Rawlinson, President of the Florence County Republican Women's Club and first Vice-Chairman of the Florence County Republican Party, spoke next. Ms. Rawlinson explained that she was speaking on behalf of the Florence County Republican Women's Club. Ms. Rawlinson stated that Florence County wants and needs the 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. She also stated that Florence County votes 55% Republican but is represented by a Democrat in Congress because Congressional District 6 was designed for a Democrat. Ms. Rawlinson said that the lines for Congressional Districts 5 and 6 are complicated and split Florence County in half and also split precincts and neighborhoods in half. Ms. Rawlinson stated that she ran the GOP headquarters in the last election cycle and heard complaints about the split in Florence County between Congressional District 5 and Congressional District 6. Ms. Rawlinson also stated that the splits were confusing for voters and poll workers. Ms. Rawlinson expressed that she wants Florence County to be a part of the new Congressional district with Horry County because the media coverage that Florence receives is out of Horry County.

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Ms. Rawlinson also expressed concerns with Senate District 31. She stated that the district splits Florence County, and she said the district needs to be kept within Florence County. She stated that she wants the district lines drawn so that Florence County is represented by someone who has the interests of Florence County at heart.

9. Ms. Wilhelmenia P. Johnson testified next. Ms. Johnson stated that she is from Darlington County. Ms. Johnson said that she was simply there to listen to testimony and make sure the senators are accountable to everyone. Ms. Johnson said that, in looking at senatorial districts, she wants to make sure that they are equal for all people. Ms. Johnson said that, currently, they are not equal for the rural areas. Ms. Johnson testified that she has been an elected official for 23 years in Darlington County and in rural Lee County. Ms. Johnson stated that South Carolina needs to learn how to share its wealth. She said that the senators should not simply strive to better one community; instead, they should strive to better the State, county, and local governments. Ms. Johnson stated that everyone should work together to draw the district lines.

10. Ms. Connie Hudson spoke next. Ms. Hudson said that she was in agreement with previous testimony given by Mr. Tommy Phillips and Ms. Stephanie Rawlins. Ms. Hudson also stated that she would like for the senators to include Effingham, South Carolina, which is where Ms. Hudson lives, in the new 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. Ms. Hudson explained that Effingham is between Highways 51 and 52 and is about 15 minutes from the City of Florence. She also stated that she would like to see the Pee Dee area and Horry County in the new Congressional district. Ms. Hudson testified that she is from Florence County, and her letters to Congressman Clyburn have gone unnoticed for years.

Ms. Hudson stated that she believed that Florence County and Horry County should be together in the 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District because the two areas have much in common. She explained that one of the commonalities is golf. Ms. Hudson stated that people go to the beach to play golf but that they have to get off of I-95 or I-20 and go through Florence first. She stated that, because of that, those people stop in Florence and play golf, as well, because the golf courses in Florence are nice and are not as expensive as the golf courses in Myrtle Beach. Ms. Hudson also stated that the people in Florence shop in Myrtle Beach and have houses at the beach. Ms. Hudson further explained that she has two children, and one of those children had to move away from the Pee Dee area to find a job. She testified that, if the Pee Dee area could get a congressman, that congressman could fight for jobs in Florence County and in Horry County.

11. Ms. Cathy Cantey testified next. Ms. Cantey stated that she lives in Florence County and has for most of her life. She further stated that she agrees with the testimony given by Stephanie Rawlinson and Bill Pickle, and she testified that she believes Florence County needs to be in the 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. Ms. Cantey expressed concerns about splitting the county between districts and about splitting precincts. Ms. Cantey also said she wants the redistricting process to be equal because she currently feels that her vote does not count. She believes that, if Florence County is made a part of Congressional District 7, her vote would count. She also said that she believes that the school funding would be more equal if Florence County is put into the 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. Ms. Cantey further testified that Florence County has commonalities with Horry County. She explained that people in Florence have houses at the beach in Horry

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County, and she thinks that being put with Horry County in the new district seat that the areas will receive better representation in Congress.

12. Mr. Ed Robison spoke next. Mr. Robison first asked whether he or the community could draw a redistricting plan and submit it for consideration to the subcommittee. Senator McConnell assured Mr. Robison that any plan he or his community submitted would be given consideration by the subcommittee. Mr. Robison then stated that he is bothered by the fact that South Carolina is still ruled by Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. He said that he hoped that, when drawing the new district lines, the senators would take into account why this State must comply with those federal statutes. Mr. Robison explained that South Carolina is still ruled by Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act because ethnic and racial groups have not always been treated fairly here. Mr. Robison said that fact is an embarrassment for South Carolina. He testified that everyone should have fair and equitable representation without having to be watched by the federal government. Mr. Robison also expressed his appreciation for Congressman Clyburn, and Mr. Robison stated that he believes that Congressman Clyburn gives fair and equitable representation. Mr. Robison testified that he is on city council in the City of Florence, and he said that he understands how it feels to be a minority trying to pass laws that will be fair to everyone. Mr. Robison stated that he hopes that the subcommittee members will be fair in drawing the district lines.

13. Mr. John Douglas spoke next. Mr. Douglas testified that he wants to keep Senate District 27 as much intact as possible, specifically as to how it relates to Chesterfield County. Mr. Douglas explained that most of Chesterfield County is in Senate District 27, which is represented by Senator Vincent Sheheen. Mr. Douglas also explained that a portion of Chesterfield County is in Senate District 29, which is represented by Senator Gerald Malloy. Mr. Douglas stated that Chesterfield County is divided by a large state forest in the heart of the county, and he said that the county's population is spread evenly throughout all areas. He stated that Chesterfield County is one community of interest because the county only has one school district and engages in common economic development efforts. He explained that having one senator serving most of the people of the county greatly aids in the county's efforts to move forward.

14. Mr. Ron Moore testified next. Mr. Moore stated that he prepared written remarks that he intends to submit to the subcommittee. He also stated that he listened to Senator McConnell's opening remarks and was particularly interested in the comments that were made concerning drawing districts with equal population and that each vote would have equal weight. Mr. Moore stated that he felt the senators had done a good job with having equal population in each Congressional district, but he said that he does not feel that each vote has equal weight. Mr. Moore stated that he does not believe his vote as equal weight because he lives in the 6<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. Mr. Moore testified that Congressional District 6 is extremely and abusively gerrymandered, and he thinks that gerrymandering empowers one block of voters while diluting another block of voters. Mr. Moore encouraged the subcommittee not to gerrymander in the future. Mr. Moore stated that, while he believes Congressional District 6 is contiguous, but he does not believe the district is compact because it almost stretches the length of the state. Mr. Moore also spoke about communities of interest, and he said that there are some areas in Congressional District 6 with which Florence County does not have anything in common.

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Mr. Moore further testified that he was aware of lawsuits that were filed after the last redistricting cycle, and he said that the lawsuits dealt with South Carolina having a compelling interest to draw a majority-minority district. Mr. Moore stated that he understands that is a compelling interest of the state, but he said a greater compelling interest is that each citizen of the state have an equal vote. Mr. Moore stated that he wants the senators to give the people of Florence County an equal vote and equal representation. Mr. Moore also stated that he has heard that Greenville and Spartanburg want to be divided and some of the area wants to be the core of the 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District; however, Mr. Moore stated that he feels it is unfair for the upstate to have two Congressmen and the Florence area not to have any representative. Mr. Moore said he is in favor of a new Congressional district that contains Horry County, Florence County, and Darlington County.

15. Mr. Tom Grimes, Chairman of the 6<sup>th</sup> District Republican Party, spoke next. Mr. Grimes testified that the people of Florence County do not have common interests with Colleton, Richland, or Charleston Counties. Mr. Grimes stated that he has looked at the map of Congressional District 6 as it existed prior to 1992, and he sees a contiguous body of nine counties. He stated that those areas made up the Pee Dee and the Grand Strand. Mr. Grimes explained that, prior to 1992, a person could not get to Myrtle Beach, Darlington, or Georgetown without going through Florence. He stated that those areas are “joined at the hip” and have common interests. Mr. Grimes explained that Marion County is the center of the previous 6<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, and he said that, in the 1970s, Marion and Mullins had economic development and growth. However, he said that, if a person rides through those areas now, there is no economic development. Mr. Grimes explained that economic situation is partially due to the fact that the previous 6<sup>th</sup> Congressional District was split in three ways in 1992, and the area was ruined. Mr. Grimes stated that the current congressman does not understand that area of the Pee Dee and cannot give good representation in Washington. Mr. Grimes asked the subcommittee to reunite the Pee Dee with Horry County when redrawing the Congressional district lines. Mr. Grimes testified that doing so would lead to significant change in the area. Mr. Grimes stated that the Pee Dee area has much more in common with the Grand Strand than with Columbia, Charleston, Colleton, or Bamberg.

16. Mr. Willie Gladden testified next. Mr. Gladden stated that he is from Marlboro County, and he wants to make sure that Marlboro County keeps its three current senators, which are Senator Elliot, Senator Malloy, and Senator Williams. Mr. Gladden said that all three senators work with the people of Marlboro County and have helped to do such things as build a new library and a new justice department. Mr. Gladden testified that, if Marlboro County loses one of the three senators, Marlboro County will suffer.

17. Ms. Sheila Gallagher spoke next. Ms. Gallagher first asked the senators not to split precincts because it increases the work load of the poll workers during elections. Ms. Gallagher gave an example of problems that occurred during a State House election because of split precincts. Ms. Gallagher also spoke concerning the new Congressional district. She said she would like for the senators to look at joining Florence County, Marion County, Lee County, Darlington County, and Chesterfield County in the 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. She stated that, because South Carolina is going to have seven Congressional seats now, perhaps five of them could be republicans’ seats and two of them could be democrats’ seats.

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18. Ms. Betty B. Dowling, Vice-Chairman of the Florence County Republican Women's Club and the second Vice-Chairman of the Florence Republican Party in charge of membership, testified next. Ms. Dowling stated that she was born in Florence County, and, in 1967, she married and moved to Timmons ville. Ms. Dowling explained that there are nine elected officials that the people of Timmons ville are responsible for electing. She stated those positions are seven school board seats and one county councilman. Ms. Dowling further explained that Timmons ville does not have good representation in the Senate.

Ms. Dowling also testified stated that she was in agreement with Mal Weatherly, Bill Pickle, Stephanie Rawlinson, Ethan Rivera, and Tom Grimes concerning the new congressional seat. Ms. Dowling said that she does not feel that her vote counts. She said she thinks Timmons ville is too divided and does not receive good representation. Ms. Dowling asked the senators to consider putting Florence County in the 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District.

19. Ms. Madie Robinson, President of the Florence County Branch of the NAACP and a citizen of Florence County, spoke next. Ms. Robinson stated that she wants the subcommittee to proceed with redistricting with transparency, fairness, compliance with the Voting Rights Act, and equal protection. Ms. Robinson testified that the senators should also ensure compliance with "one man, one vote." Ms. Robinson said the senators should redistrict in a way that avoids minority dilution, should avoid packing and cracking minority populations, and should avoid stacking, which is drawing district lines so that a large minority concentration is included with a larger white population with the purpose or effect of depriving minority voters of a voting majority. Ms. Robinson stated that the NAACP requests that the senate avoid drawing retrogressive redistricting plans. Ms. Robinson requested that the senators provide access to the Senate's redistricting software or online system and training for the use of the mapping system. She also requested that the members indicate terminals that will be available to the community and the times of that availability, and she requested a schedule of the remainder of the redistricting process. Finally, Ms. Robinson asked that prison inmates not be counted as members of the communities in which the prisons are located but instead be counted as residents of the counties from which they came. Ms. Robinson also expressed her appreciation for Congressman Clyburn and commented on this stellar performance in working with all people.

20. Mr. Andy Ingram was called to testify next, but Mr. Ingram stated that all of his comments had already been expressed.

21. Mr. Pat Gibson-Hye testified next. Mr. Gibson-Hye asked that the senators be fair and equitable when drawing the new district lines. He stated that the citizens of South Carolina should be embarrassed to still be ruled by Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. Mr. Gibson-Hye expressed his appreciation of Congressman Clyburn and stated that Congressman Clyburn tries to do things fairly and equitably. Mr. Gibson-Hye asked the senators to please consider the rural areas of Pamplico, Olanta, and Lake City when redistricting South Carolina.

22. Mr. Thomas Sheehy spoke next. Mr. Sheehy stated that he moved to Florence County from out of state and has only lived there for a short period of time, and he said that he is appalled by the Congressional and the Senate districts because small parts of counties are put into Congressional and Senate districts when other parts of the counties are in other districts.

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Mr. Sheehy stated that he does not believe that previous district plans have followed the traditional districting principles set forth on the Senate's public handout. Mr. Sheehy stated that equal population cannot be gained if the senators gerrymander. He said that, as long as the senators follow the guidelines they have set forth, the plan will be fair.

23. Mr. E.J. McIver spoke next. Mr. McIver agreed with the testimony of Ms. Madie Robinson. Mr. McIver explained that he was the chairman of the apportionment committee for Florence, and he stated that he was one of the first black city councilmen in Florence County. Mr. McIver stated that he is now on the school board in Florence. Mr. McIver praised Congressman Clyburn for his good work and for bringing money back to Florence County. Mr. McIver also stated that Senator Malloy is Mr. McIver's senator. Mr. McIver stated that he worked on a boys club project in 1977 in the City of Florence, and he said that everyone came together to get the boys club built. He expressed his hope that the State of South Carolina would come together to draw equitable Congressional and Senate plans for redistricting. He would like for South Carolina to be an example for the rest of the country.

24. Mr. Murray Jordan testified last. Mr. Jordan stated that he is a resident of Florence County. Mr. Jordan said that he and the senators had a mutual responsibility in redistricting. He stated that redistricting is the most important role that the government of South Carolina has. Mr. Jordan quoted a newspaper editorial concerning the dangers of gerrymandering, and he expressed his dislike of gerrymandering, as well. Mr. Jordan explained that he lives in Congressional District 6, and he stated that he feels his vote does not count. Mr. Jordan stated that he has called Congressman Clyburn, and he has never returned a phone call. He also stated that he feels he has no representation. Mr. Jordan testified that Congressional District 6 is racially gerrymandered to favor the incumbent. Mr. Jordan said that he believes gerrymandering is practiced from Congressional seats to school board seats, and Mr. Jordan said that he wants every district to meet the ideals and principles of law and to be constitutional. He further stated that he wants every district to be contiguous, compact, and similar in population. Mr. Jordan stated that the senators should also consider natural barriers and population concentrations. Mr. Jordan testified that he wants Florence and Horry County to be in the 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District.

Mr. Jordan also spoke to the Senate districts. He said that he wants each senator to have as much of a county as possible. He thinks that having Florence County in four Senate districts is not good enough. He believes that Florence County should not be so divided.

Senator McConnell recognized that Senator Elliot, who represents Senate District 28, and Senator Leatherman, who represents Senate District 31, were present at the meeting, and he invited both Senators to give testimony. Both Senators declined the invitation to speak. Senator McConnell then asked if there were any other people in the audience who wished to speak. No one responded. Senator McConnell then announced that the subcommittee would be in Charleston the next evening for those in the audience who were interested in attending other meetings.

The hearing was adjourned at approximately 8:15 p.m.

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