

Email 3-23-11  
Statement of Richard Gill  
House of Reps / Natchitoches

March 23, 2011

Representative Rick Nowlin  
816 University Parkway  
Suite C  
Natchitoches, LA 71457

Dear Representative Nowlin:

I am writing you today to express my concerns over the redistricting process currently being conducted. As a local business owner and a past Chairman of the Natchitoches Area Chamber of Commerce, I view this matter as giant step backwards from the progress we have made in bringing our community together and achieving our common goals.

I understand the requirements of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, but to place the emphasis primarily on race and to ignore all the other interests of the communities, is irresponsible and contrary to the intent of having House Districts in the first place. To split Natchitoches, NSU and the Cane River area will clearly have an adverse effect on our ability to focus our efforts on improving education, promoting tourism, and economic development. Natchitoches, more so than many rural communities, has very strong common interests and cultural connections that are not only important to Natchitoches, but to our state as a whole. The proposed changes are primarily due to changes in populations and demographics in other parts of the state; yet the Natchitoches community will suffer because of these radical changes while nothing has changed here.

Clearly, the Natchitoches community has work to do in the area of race relations, but redrawing these district lines to separate the races is not the message we should provide to our children. It is a step backwards. I ask that you and our other lawmakers do what is best for our local communities.

Thank you for your consideration of my concerns and for your service to our community.

  
Richard Gill  
195 St. Charles St.  
Natchitoches, LA 71457