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SYNOPSIS:

This bill would redraw the state's U.S. Congressional districts, last drawn in 2021, following the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Allen v. Milligan*, 599 U.S. \_\_\_\_, 143 S.Ct. 1487 (June 8, 2023).

A BILL  
TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

To amend Section 17-14-70, Code of Alabama 1975, to provide for the reapportionment and redistricting of the state's United States Congressional districts for the purpose of electing members at the General Election in 2024 and thereafter, until the release of the next federal census; and to add Section 17-40-70.1 to the Code of Alabama 1975, to provide legislative findings.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. Section 17-14-70.1 is added to the Code of Alabama 1975, to read as follows.

§17-14-70.1

The Legislature finds and declares the following:

(1) The Legislature adheres to traditional redistricting principles when adopting congressional



29 districts. Such principles are the product of history,  
30 tradition, bipartisan consensus, and legal precedent. The  
31 Supreme Court of the United States recently clarified that  
32 Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act "never requires adoption of  
33 districts that violate traditional redistricting principles."

34 (2) The Legislature's intent in adopting the  
35 congressional plan in this act described in Section 17-14-70.1  
36 is to comply with federal law, including the U.S. Constitution  
37 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended.

38 (3) The Legislature's intent is also to promote the  
39 following traditional redistricting principles, which are  
40 given effect in the plan created by this act:

41 a. Districts shall be based on total population as  
42 reported by the federal decennial census and shall have  
43 minimal population deviation.

44 b. Districts shall be composed of contiguous geography,  
45 meaning that every part of every district is contiguous with  
46 every other part of the same district.

47 c. Districts shall be composed of reasonably compact  
48 geography.

49 d. The congressional districting plan shall contain no  
50 more than six splits of county lines, which is the minimum  
51 number necessary to achieve minimal population deviation among  
52 the districts. Two splits within one county is considered two  
53 splits of county lines.

54 e. The congressional districting plan shall keep  
55 together communities of interest, as further provided for in  
56 subdivision (4).



57 f. The congressional districting plan shall not pair  
58 incumbent members of Congress within the same district.

59 g. The principles described in this subdivision are  
60 non-negotiable for the Legislature. To the extent the  
61 following principles can be given effect consistent with the  
62 principles above, the congressional districting plan shall  
63 also do all of the following:

- 64 1. Preserve the cores of existing districts.
- 65 2. Minimize the number of counties in each district.
- 66 3. Minimize splits of neighborhoods and other political  
67 subdivisions in addition to minimizing the splits of counties  
68 and communities of interest.

69 (4)a. A community of interest is a defined area of the  
70 state that may be characterized by, among other commonalities,  
71 shared economic interests, geographic features, transportation  
72 infrastructure, broadcast and print media, educational  
73 institutions, and historical or cultural factors.

74 b. The discernment, weighing, and balancing of the  
75 varied factors that contribute to communities of interest is  
76 an intensely political process best carried out by elected  
77 representatives of the people.

78 c. If it is necessary to divide a community of interest  
79 between congressional districts to promote other traditional  
80 districting principles like compactness, contiguity, or equal  
81 population, division into two districts is preferable to  
82 division into three or more districts. Because each community  
83 of interest is different, the division of one community among  
84 multiple districts may be more or less significant to the



85 community than the division of another community.

86 d. The Legislature declares that at least the three  
87 following regions are communities of interest that shall be  
88 kept together to the fullest extent possible in this  
89 congressional redistricting plan: the Black Belt, the Gulf  
90 Coast, and the Wiregrass.

91 e.1. Alabama's Black Belt region is a community of  
92 interest composed of the following 18 core counties: Barbour,  
93 Bullock, Butler, Choctaw, Crenshaw, Dallas, Greene, Hale,  
94 Lowndes, Macon, Marengo, Montgomery, Perry, Pickens, Pike,  
95 Russell, Sumter, and Wilcox. Moreover, the following five  
96 counties are sometimes considered part of the Black Belt:  
97 Clarke, Conecuh, Escambia, Monroe, and Washington.

98 2. The Black Belt is characterized by its rural  
99 geography, fertile soil, and relative poverty, which have  
100 shaped its unique history and culture.

101 3. The Black Belt region spans the width of Alabama  
102 from the Mississippi boarder to the Georgia border.

103 4. Because the Black Belt counties cannot be combined  
104 within one district without causing other districts to violate  
105 the principle of equal population among districts, the 18 core  
106 Black Belt counties shall be placed into two reasonably  
107 compact districts, the fewest number of districts in which  
108 this community of interest can be placed. Moreover, of the  
109 five other counties sometimes considered part of the Black  
110 Belt, four of those counties are included within the two Black  
111 Belt districts – Districts 2 and 7.

112 f.1. Alabama's Gulf Coast region is a community of



113 interest composed of Mobile and Baldwin Counties.

114           2. Owing to Mobile Bay and the Gulf of Mexico  
115 coastline, these counties also comprise a well-known and  
116 well-defined community with a long history and unique  
117 interests. Over the past half-century, Baldwin and Mobile  
118 Counties have grown even more alike as the tourism industry  
119 has grown and the development of highways and bay-crossing  
120 bridges have made it easier to commute between the two  
121 counties.

122           3. The Gulf Coast community has a shared interest in  
123 tourism, which is a multi-billion-dollar industry and a  
124 significant and unique economic driver for the region.

125           4. Unlike other regions in the state, the Gulf Coast  
126 community is home to major fishing, port, and ship-building  
127 industries. Mobile has a Navy shipyard and the only deep-water  
128 port in the state. The port is essential for the international  
129 export of goods produced in Alabama.

130           5. The Port of Mobile is the economic hub for the Gulf  
131 counties. Its maintenance and further development are critical  
132 for the Gulf counties in particular but also for many other  
133 parts of the state. The Port of Mobile handles over 55 million  
134 tons of international and domestic cargo for exporters and  
135 importers, delivering eighty-five billion dollars  
136 (\$85,000,000,000) in economic value to the state each year.  
137 Activity at the port's public and private terminals directly  
138 and indirectly generates nearly 313,000 jobs each year.

139           6. Among the over 21,000 direct jobs generated by the  
140 Port of Mobile, about 42% of the direct jobholders reside in



141 the City of Mobile, another 39% reside in Mobile County but  
142 outside of the City of Mobile, and another 13% reside in  
143 Baldwin County.

144 7. The University of South Alabama serves the Gulf  
145 Coast community of interest both through its flagship campus  
146 in Mobile and its campus in Baldwin County.

147 8. Federal appropriations have been critical to  
148 ensuring the port's continued growth and maintenance. In 2020,  
149 the Army Corps of Engineers allocated over two hundred  
150 seventy-four million dollars (\$274,000,000) for the Port of  
151 Mobile to allow the dredging and expansion of the port.  
152 Federal appropriations have also been critical for expanding  
153 bridge projects to further benefit the shared interests of the  
154 region.

155 9. The Gulf Coast community has a distinct culture  
156 stemming from its French and Spanish colonial heritage. That  
157 heritage is reflected in the celebration of shared social  
158 occasions, such as Mardi Gras, which began in Mobile. This  
159 shared culture is reflected in Section 1-3-8(c), Code of  
160 Alabama 1975, which provides that "Mardi Gras shall be deemed  
161 a holiday in Mobile and Baldwin Counties and all state offices  
162 shall be closed in those counties on Mardi Gras." Mardi Gras  
163 is observed as a state holiday only in Mobile and Baldwin  
164 Counties.

165 10. Mobile and Baldwin Counties also work together as  
166 part of the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission, a  
167 regional planning commission recognized by the state for more  
168 than 50 years. The local governments of Mobile, Baldwin, and



169 Escambia Counties, as well as 29 municipalities within those  
170 counties, work together through the commission with the  
171 Congressional Representative from District 1 to carry out  
172 comprehensive economic development planning for the region in  
173 conjunction with the U.S. Economic Development Administration.  
174 Under Section 11-85-51(b), factors the Governor considers when  
175 creating such a regional planning commission include  
176 "community of interest and homogeneity; geographic features  
177 and natural boundaries; patterns of communication and  
178 transportation; patterns of urban development; total  
179 population and population density; [and] similarity of social  
180 and economic problems."

181 g.1. Alabama's Wiregrass region is a community of  
182 interest composed of the following nine counties: Barbour,  
183 Coffee, Covington, Crenshaw, Dale, Geneva, Henry, Houston, and  
184 Pike.

185 2. The Wiregrass region is characterized by rural  
186 geography, agriculture, and a major military base. The  
187 Wiregrass region is home to Troy University's flagship campus  
188 in Troy and its campus in Dothan.

189 3. All of the Wiregrass counties are included in  
190 District 2, with the exception of Covington County, which is  
191 placed in District 1 so that the maximum number of Black Belt  
192 counties can be included within just two districts.

193 Section 2. Section 17-14-70, Code of Alabama 1975, is  
194 amended to read as follows:

195 "§17-14-70

196 (a) The State of Alabama is divided into seven



197 congressional districts as provided in subsection (b).

198 (b) The numbers and boundaries of the districts are  
199 designated and established by the map prepared by the  
200 Permanent Legislative Committee on Reapportionment and  
201 identified and labeled as ~~Pringle Congressional Plan 1~~  
202 [Livingston Congressional Plan 2-2023](#), including the  
203 corresponding boundary description provided by the census  
204 tracts, blocks, and counties, and are incorporated by  
205 reference as part of this section.

206 (c) The Legislature shall post for viewing on its  
207 public website the map referenced in subsection (b), including  
208 the corresponding boundary description provided by the census  
209 tracts, blocks, and counties, and any alternative map,  
210 including the corresponding boundary description provided by  
211 the census tracts, blocks, and counties, introduced by any  
212 member of the Legislature during the legislative session in  
213 which this section is added or amended.

214 (d) Upon enactment of ~~Act 2021-555, adding the act~~  
215 [amending](#) this section and adopting the map identified in  
216 subsection (b), the Clerk of the House of Representatives or  
217 the Secretary of the Senate, as appropriate, shall transmit  
218 the map and the corresponding boundary description provided by  
219 the census tracts, blocks, and counties identified in  
220 subsection (b) for certification and posting on the public  
221 website of the Secretary of State.

222 (e) The boundary descriptions provided by the certified  
223 map referenced in subsection (b) shall prevail over the  
224 boundary descriptions provided by the census tracts, blocks,





225 and counties generated for the map."

226 Section 3. The provisions of this act are severable. If  
227 any part of this act is declared invalid or unconstitutional,  
228 that declaration shall not affect the part which remains.

229 Section 4. This act shall be effective for the election  
230 of members of the state's U.S. Congressional districts at the  
231 General Election of 2024 and thereafter, until the state's  
232 U.S. Congressional districts are reapportioned and  
233 redistricted after the 2030 decennial census.

234 Section 5. This act shall become effective immediately  
235 upon its passage and approval by the Governor, or upon its  
236 otherwise becoming law.