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Public Hearing Testimony
Illinois House Redistricting Committee
April 3, 2021

Madam Chair and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Steven Monroy, and I am a staff attorney with the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund. MALDEF is a national civil rights law firm. MALDEF works to protect the rights of Latinos through community education, advocacy and litigation. Our organization has been involved in Illinois redistricting since the 1980s. We regularly partnered with stakeholders representing diverse communities, developed model maps, and monitored the state's compliance with minority voting rights, particularly the federal Voting Rights Act.

We testified at the April 1st hearing of this committee on the importance of creating districts that provide Latino community members a fair opportunity to elect candidates of choice. Latinos are 17.5% of the state's total population and about 15% of the state's voting age population. We urge the committee to use **voting age population figures** when drawing the final maps. The 2020 census collected information on the total state population that should be used to draw 118 practically equal state House districts. However, the analysis to protect Latino voting rights does not end at total population or Latino total majority districts. In order to provide Latinos a fair opportunity to elect candidates of choice, Latino majority districts must be drawn to give Latinos an effective share of the voting age population. To be effective, the percentage of Latino voting age population must be high enough to account for the number of non-citizens in Latino communities and traditionally lower rates of voter registration.

The attached map shows the districts currently in effect that were drawn in 2011. The numbers shown are Latino voting age population percentages calculated using data from the 2010 census – which was a snapshot in time to April 1, 2010. The map is copied from a Google map created by this committee in 2011 and colorized to highlight the Latino majority districts. The voting age population data is from a chart also created by this committee. The numbers have changed dramatically since then – as they do every ten years. So, the 2010 census cannot be used to support maps in 2021.

We appreciate that this committee is providing opportunities for the public to comment on the process and raise issues important to their communities. However, we share the concerns expressed by many individuals and organizations, that we cannot know if any map proposals comply with federal and state minority voting protections until we can analyze the results of the 2020 census. The ACS data does not provide the level of detail that we need in order to comment on proposed maps.

We offer the following recommendations:

1. The final map must account for **voting age population**.
2. That the Committee provides at least **two weeks** between releasing a plan and holding a hearing to consider a plan, so the public can provide meaningful feedback.

The Latino community has historically experienced voting discrimination and attempts to dilute the effectiveness of their votes. New district boundaries should fairly reflect minority voting strength and not seek to minimize or dilute the minority vote.

Thank you for your time.

2011 South Side Latino Majority Districts (Current Map)

