

April 8, 2021

House Redistricting Committee
Illinois House of Representatives

Dear House Redistricting Committee Members,

As you begin the important and arduous task of redistricting, I would like to present perspective on the greater Aurora community for you all to consider in your efforts.

As you know, Aurora is the second-largest city in Illinois. It is also one of the most diverse cities in all of the United States. As recently as 2019, WalletHub ranked Aurora the 15th most diverse city in the country – just two spots below Chicago. According to the 2010 Census, Aurora has the 42nd largest Latino population by percentage in America.

Historically, communities of color have been underrepresented and disenfranchised. Poverty rates, education level and achievement gaps, healthcare access and wellness gaps, home ownership gaps, the digital divide, and employment gaps are all commonly greater in these communities. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated these problems. I bear witness to both of these facts each and every day here at Hesed House, the second largest homeless shelter in the state of Illinois located in the City of Aurora.

According to the CDC, people of color been disproportionately infected, hospitalized, and died from COVID-19 compared to white, non-Hispanic individuals. They have also experienced greater socioeconomical impacts from the pandemic. Please feel free to review the two attached journal articles as both point out statistics, studies, and the opinions of professionals across multiple industries confirming these negative impacts.

[Inequity and the Disproportionate Impact of COVID-19 on Communities of Color in the United States: The Need for a Trauma Informed Social Justice Response By Lisa R. Fortuna, Marina Tolou-Shams, Barbara Robles-Ramamurthy, and Michelle V. Porche](#)

[Academics, Achievement Gap, and Nutritional Health: The Impact of Coronavirus on Education By Tameka C. Anderson](#)

These individuals and families have always needed greater representation; however, due to repercussions of this pandemic, representation is needed now more than ever. Representation provides these communities a voice and advocates for desperately needed resources and support. Without those voices and resources, we risk further disenfranchising and marginaling these men, women, and children.

As you look to redistrict, I urge you to consider this community and all communities of color throughout the state. Thank you for your time and attention in this matter.

Regards,



Joe Jackson
Executive Director
Hesed House
630-801-9819
jjackson@hesedhouse.org

