

**Testimony for the Illinois House of Representatives Redistricting Meeting - McHenry**  
**April 9, 2021**  
**10:00am**

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McHenry County Board Member

I'm here today because I want to ensure equal representation for all the various groups and communities in our county. McHenry county's population is approximately 308,000 and ranges from the suburban to rural.

While our median income is around \$87,000, the county has areas of poverty with needs for many public services. We have residents who live in multi-million-dollar homes while others live in subsidized housing, are homeless, or remain without transportation. Most of the needs for these lower-income populations are addressed by non-profits. I think it's important for our state and local governments to represent these populations so they can have a voice in decisions that will affect their homes, their jobs, their families and their lives.

McHenry County has 881 farms which comprises over 60% of our county's land. 95% of the farms are family owned. Currently, most of these farmers are in the same voting district, and I hope they can be kept as a block so their voices can continue to be heard.

Important factors in our community that affects our demographics:

- We have a significant and growing Hispanic population. Most of the population is underserved and is definitely not represented in the state and local governments. In my opinion, these populations should be located in the same district (as much as possible depending on their locations) so they can be represented and have a seat at the table when decisions are being made.
- As we know, having access to internet is vital in this day and age. A significant portion of our rural population does not have internet access because it is not cost-effective for the internet providers to lay the cable.
- McHenry County has a significant population of senior citizens that still reside in their homes. The data shows that senior citizens are healthier and happier if they stay in their homes instead of moving to a senior living facility. Many of these senior residents are homebound who need connection to others, are at-risk for depression, and rely on the local non-profits to provide services for most of their needs.
- Our community college (MCC) has grown significantly over the past 10 years. It is one of two community colleges in Illinois that actually grew during the pandemic. In my

opinion, this shows that more McHenry County residents are committed to higher education.

- I think it is important to note that McHenry County has an ICE Detention Facility. Most of the county residents do not know it resides on the fourth floor of our County Jail. The majority of those with this knowledge want the contract canceled due to the effects it has on our minority communities. These views are minimally represented in our local or state government.

The McHenry County Board is also in the process of redistricting, but this year it's significantly different because the board is being reduced from 24 to 18 members. This means we have to completely change the district boundaries, the number of members in each district, the Board Rules, and other necessary changes. I hope that we can hasten the census results and the decisions made so the election petitions and primaries are not unduly affected. We need to ensure the voters have plenty of time to get to know their candidates and each candidate has time to garner a campaign that represents them.

I would urge you to add some redistricting meetings in the evening. Those that work during the day cannot take time off from work to give their testimony. I watched one meeting last week where a woman was working at what seemed like a convenience store while she was giving her testimony. This made it difficult for her to speak and for us to understand her.

The state and local representation for McHenry County is not as diverse as its population. I want to make sure all people are represented no matter their income, race, gender, sexual orientation, party affiliation or religion.

I urge you to have sensible and fair maps drawn for every district so all populations can make their voices heard without being drowned out by the majority. Because McHenry County has a great variety of residents, please keep in mind the diverse and inclusive populations that need to be represented at all levels.

Thank you for allowing me to give this testimony.