

Testimony:

Thank you Chairperson and committee members for the opportunity to provide testimony. My name is Claudia Jackson and I am concerned Illinois resident and voter.

Today I stand before you imploring that you step up and be the Statesmen you were elected to be, and not the politicians the 'party machine' and 'bosses' want you to be. It is beyond time to shift your focus to promoting the Greater Good and away from protecting your party's turf and ensuring your reelection.

Rushing through these community redistricting hearings is case in point. This entire process has gone unnoticed by most residents and that appears to be the plan. Where is the robust outreach to communities across Illinois to give people time to plan to attend? In the past few years, the state has spent millions of dollars to ensure widespread participation in the 2020 Census. Currently, the state isn't spending a fraction of that to ensure people are aware of opportunities to participate in redistricting hearings that will influence how they are represented for the next decade. I have not heard from either my state senator or representative and posting notice on government websites is not enough to achieve the broad public participation that is needed.

And you know that.

There have been weeks of hearings, since March 17th in the Senate and April 1st in the House, that have covered a majority of the counties in Illinois. Participation by the general public at these hearings has not been nearly enough to ensure that maps will accurately reflect the many diverse communities all over Illinois. And here is a kicker, Change IL shared that two committee hearings were held without an option for the public to participate virtually.

How can that be?

This process has been conducted with a complete lack of transparency and detail about the subject matter. There has been confusion on which committee hearings to attend based on vague geographic areas. There is uncertainty about how testimony will be reflected in map proposals or if they will have any effect at all. Additionally, there is no indication of what the process looks like after the last committee hearing takes place.

You want to scare residents into thinking we only have two options: Either give up our democracy to a random draw, giving Republicans a shot to have unilateral control over map-making, or allow for maps to be pushed through by the Democratic majority using ACS data that never was intended to be used for drawing legislative maps.

But these are not the only options.

As the representatives from the National Conference of State Legislatures testified on March 17, the Illinois General Assembly could appeal to courts to grant a delay in constitutional deadlines to wait for census data. Elected officials could pass a law to push back our Primary Election Day and the petition filing period to ensure map drawers have enough time to draw maps before election filing deadlines. This is being done in other states, such as California and Oregon.

Yes that means change

Yes that means risk

Yes that means more work

but it's all for the Greater Good, right?