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### Testimony of Aviva Miriam Patt, Executive Director of The Decalogue Society of Lawyers

The Decalogue Society of Lawyers, founded in 1934, is the nation's oldest Jewish bar association. Decalogue's mission includes educating the public on legal and Jewish issues, maintaining vigilance against discriminatory public and private practices, particularly anti-Semitism, and working with other ethnic communities to combat hate and promote justice.

The Jewish community in Illinois is small – just over 2% of the population. Our ethnic group is not counted in the census, making it challenging for others to identify our communities for the purposes of political apportionment. That challenge was addressed by testimony provided to the redistricting committee in last month's public hearings. You heard that the greatest concentration of Jewish residents in Illinois exists in West Rogers Park, Peterson Park, Lincolnwood and Skokie. You heard that it is in the interest of our community to have a district drawn to encompass those areas, enabling us to influence the selection of those who would represent us. Although the testimony referred specifically to the subset of our community that identifies as Orthodox, many of the public policy issues raised – specifically religious accommodation and protection against anti-Semitic hate crimes and violence – are universal to the greater Jewish community.

Yet the request to create a Jewish-influence district in the only area in the entire state where that is possible was ignored, and the heart of the Illinois Jewish community was eviscerated, sliced into pieces allotted to three separate districts. We want to know why.

I have worked on redistricting for 40 years. I know – as only someone who has done it can know – how difficult it is meet all of the legal requirements and competing interests of communities of interest. I know that compromises need to be made and not every community's wish list can be granted. But looking at the map, I can not see what competing interests were met by dividing our community, precluding the creation of even just one Jewish-influence district in Illinois.

And as I look at the whole map, and the many neighborhoods and towns and villages that are fragmented to the point that their residents could not possibly have influence in the selection of a representative, I have to wonder what criteria was used. Did anyone giving public testimony over the past month ask for this map? The lack of demographic detail for the districts makes it impossible to assess whether the representation that all of our ethnic communities have asked for has been satisfied. And the lack of access to whatever data the redistricting committee used makes it impossible for us to assess whether our representation goals could have been better met.

The Decalogue Society of Lawyers opposes the adoption of this map. We ask the legislature to wait for the detailed census data to be released, then draw a map based on that data that reflects the expressed needs of the communities and ethnic groups that have asked for a fair and just map for **all** our communities.

For our own community, and in solidarity with other ethnic communities, we ask this: **Don't divide us. Don't disappear us. Don't disempower us.**