

24 Apart from the ascension of these high-profile African-American legislators to
25 historic leadership positions, the 2001 map has delivered effective representation for
26 African Americans in Illinois. Under the 2001 map, black state legislators have chaired
27 important committees such as Insurance, Elementary and Secondary Education
28 Appropriations, Small Business Empowerment and Workforce, Housing, Financial
29 Institutions, Revenue, Health and Human Services, and Pensions and Investments.

30 During 96th legislative session alone, from 2009 to 2010, African American
31 legislators were the chief sponsors of more 220 bills that became law. Throughout the
32 past decade, many of the hundreds of bills sponsored by African American legislators
33 have had a particular focus and impact on minority communities throughout Illinois. To
34 highlight just a few examples, the African American HIV/AIDS Response Act has
35 increased the availability of HIV testing in high-risk areas, which include many minority
36 communities, and authorizes the state to expand Medicaid coverage to non-disabled
37 individuals living with HIV/AIDS. A state law sponsored by then-state Senator Obama,
38 expanded healthcare coverage for families in Illinois whose income exceeded Medicaid
39 limits. And most recently, Illinois took the historic step of abolishing the death penalty, a
40 punishment disproportionately meted out to blacks. That measure's chief sponsor in the
41 state senate was an African American.

42 I review these accomplishments to impart one simple message to the Senate
43 Redistricting Committee: With all due respect, please do not tamper with this African
44 American success story, which is also a quintessentially American success story. African
45 American voters and legislators are now ingrained in the fabric of the political and
46 legislative processes of Illinois. In the 2010 midterm elections, black votes constituted

47 more than 36% of the total votes received by the Democratic gubernatorial nominee, who
48 won the election by a mere 31,000 votes.¹ We were an even greater share of the vote for
49 the Democratic candidate for the U.S. Senate. Our coalition fully expects the re-mapping
50 to reflect our voting strength as the most cohesive and loyal voting bloc in the state.
51 Thus, we do not expect any substantial changes relative to African American
52 representation in either the state legislative or congressional re-mappings.

53 Our coalition's metric for assessing any plan produced by the state legislature is
54 quite simple: does the map respect existing relationships between African American
55 voters and their representatives, and does the map recognize black voters as the most
56 cohesive and loyal partisans in the political process? Respecting existing relationships
57 means counting black citizens in their own communities. Thus, black inmates should be
58 counted in the communities from which they come and are likely to return, rather than
59 where they are incarcerated.

60 Respecting existing relationships also means being cognizant of the effect of
61 political decisions of the past decade that have dispersed black populations that resided in
62 large housing complexes that the city of Chicago chose to eliminate. We do not believe
63 that the involuntary displacement of communities of color should occasion still further
64 harm to remaining communities of color in the redistricting process. Instead, the
65 legislature must recognize that communities of interest survive and transcend physical
66 displacements, and ultimately, the re-mapping should reflect the continuing vitality of

¹ Exit polling placed the black vote at 19% of the electorate, of which Governor Quinn captured 90%. See <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2010/results/polls/#ILG00p1>. Thus approximately 17.1%, or 637,827 voters, of the 2010 electorate were black voters who voted for the Democratic gubernatorial candidate. Democrat Pat Quinn received a total of 1,745, 219 votes. See <http://www.elections.il.gov/downloads/electioninformation/votetotals/2010geofficialvote.pdf>. 637, 827 is 36.5% of Governor Quinn's vote total.

67 these communities of interests. Thus, where a representative's district has experienced a
68 decrease in population due to the involuntarily displacement of blacks from the city of
69 Chicago or elsewhere, mappers should strive to maintain that district by adjoining like-
70 minded voters who are likely to form a political coalition with existing residents of the
71 district.

72 Let me make one final point regarding the need to respect existing relationships.
73 Certain commentators and media outlets have portrayed as a foregone conclusion that
74 Illinois's slower population growth and diversifying demographics mean that black
75 representation must be decreased. However, these individuals and media have simply
76 misapprehended the census data and the redistricting process. First of all, whites—not
77 African Americans—have experienced the greatest decrease as a proportion of the state's
78 population.² In this regard, the myopic focus on the black community and the implication
79 that black voters must bear the brunt of demographic changes is misleading. The most
80 accurate characterization of the census data is that Illinois is less white. Second, as I
81 stressed above, counting population is one thing, counting votes is quite another. Black
82 voters remain the single-most reliable Democratic cohort in Illinois. The redistricting
83 process recognizes more than race and ethnicity; it recognizes political performance as
84 well.

85 We urge you to be attentive to the metrics we have outlined above. Thank you
86 for your time.

² Whites' share of the overall state population decreased by 2 percentage points while blacks' share of the population decreased by just over half a percentage point (.6). *Compare* http://www2.census.gov/geo/maps/special/profile2k/IL_2K_Profile.pdf with <http://2010.census.gov/2010census/data/>.

GENERAL IL REDISTRICTING TALKING POINTS

- NAACP welcomes the opportunity to participate in this hearing on redistricting in Illinois because the process is about more than political outcomes; more significantly, it is about the communities of people who are affected by the process.
- NAACP is well aware that redistricting has a major impact on who wins elections and by extension on all types of legislative decisions including passage of laws, funding decisions and investment in communities.
- Because the revised redistricting boundaries are in effect for 10 years, it is imperative that these new boundaries provide for fair electoral opportunities for all voters.
- It is important that citizens feel welcome to participate in their state and local redistricting processes. Therefore, the NAACP will be monitoring the process closely and looks forward to opportunities to engage meaningfully in the process as plans are introduced.
- Mindful of the history that communities of color have faced numerous obstacles to their meaningful participation in the political process; the NAACP expects that the redistricting process on every level, both statewide and local, will comply with the state and federal Voting Rights Acts.
- There appear to be a number of districts where the provisions of the Illinois VRA of 2011 will come into play and we look forward to working toward redistricting plans that will provide fair and effective representation.
- NAACP expects that the process will be responsive and accountable to communities of color and that their interests will be reflected in the new plans.

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