

**Testimony to the Illinois Senate Redistricting Committee
Regarding the Boundaries of Illinois' Legislative Districts
Submitted by Isabel Anadon, policy analyst, Latino Policy Forum
Saturday, April 30, 2011**

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Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of this committee. My name is Isabel Anadon and I'm a policy analyst with the Latino Policy Forum. The Latino Policy Forum is the only organization in the Chicago-area that facilitates the involvement of Latinos at all levels of public decision-making. Its goals are to improve education outcomes, advocate for affordable housing, promote just immigration policies, and engage diverse sectors of the community, with an understanding that advancing Latinos advances a shared future.

A major component of the Forum's community engagement is its role as co-convenor of the *Illinois Latino Agenda*, a 49-member coalition of Latino nonprofit organizations. One of the *Illinois Latino Agenda's* primary concerns is representation at various levels in state government. As such, we've focused significant time and energy working together in order to recommend new legislative district boundaries that protect the voting rights of Latino residents and strengthen their political representation.

Over the course of the last month, members of the *Illinois Latino Agenda* have testified at 9 House and Senate Redistricting Committee hearings combined. Thus far, our collective remarks have focused on the dramatic growth of the Latino population, the need for greater transparency throughout the remainder of the redistricting process and the creation of 20 new Latino majority, influence or coalition districts throughout the region.

All of the maps that have been submitted to the legislature have been formally adopted by the *Illinois Latino Agenda*. The *Illinois Latino Agenda* wishes to express gratitude to the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, the United Congress of Community and Religious Organizations and the Draw the Line Illinois coalition for their feedback throughout this process.

Today, I will share our analysis on Illinois House, Senate and Congressional seats as it relates to the creation of Latino majority, influence and coalition districts.

If you refer to the north side maps or the summary document that has been provided, you'll see that each of the three majority Latino districts that we propose have a total Latino population greater than 65%. Although the U.S. Voting Rights Act does not establish specific thresholds for minority-majority legislative districts, we believe that 65% is an important threshold given the relative youth of the Latino population in Illinois and the drop-off between voting-age population and citizen voting-age population in many Latino communities.

The legislative district boundaries in the north side map also account for community interests that have been expressed by members of the *Illinois Latino Agenda* and other local groups. For example, efforts have been made to ensure that the Humboldt Park community, particularly the *Paseo Boricua*, maintains its presence within 1 set of district boundaries.

In addition, much work has been focused on ensuring that the development of Chicago's South Side districts are in alignment with the federal Voting Rights Act and respect the cultural and economic interests of specific neighborhoods within the area. As such, this map keeps Little Village, Back of the Yards, and Chinatown together within their own respective legislative districts. Currently, each of these communities of interest is divided between at least 3 legislative districts and in some cases more.

Moreover, there are two pockets of densely populated Latino communities in the southeast region near Indiana found in the areas of Blue Island and south east Chicago. These two pockets have Latino populations of approximately 38% and 25%. We respectfully request that each of these densely populated Latino communities is kept together within their own respective legislative district boundaries as new district boundaries are drawn.

We recommend the creation of a minimum of 6 Latino majority, influence and coalition House districts on the south side, 5 of which have a Latino population greater than 65%.

With respect to Congressional districts, we recommend the development of a Latino majority district that has a total Latino population greater than or equal to 65% (currently represented by the 4th Congressional district). This district should encompass Latino concentrations on the north side of the Chicago region, such that it maintains its current shape in order to capture dense Latino populations on the south side of Chicago and in parts of Berwyn and Cicero municipalities.

Furthermore, we recommend the creation of a Congressional Latino influence district on the south side of Chicago encompassing areas of the City with significant Latino concentrations. Preliminary analysis indicates that a Latino influence district can be created to include a total Latino population of roughly 40%.

Based on rigorous analysis by members of the *Illinois Latino Agenda*, the proposed south side map optimizes Latino political representation by creating as many Latino majority districts as possible at the 65% threshold while taking caution not to pack Latino residents within district boundaries. It is a map that combines the best of what is possible, what is pragmatic, and what is legally defensible.

It should also be noted that in the development of these maps, deliberate and extensive outreach has been done, not only with the 49 members of the *Illinois Latino Agenda*, but in collaboration with other ethnic and racial communities throughout the region. These maps respect the considerations of these minority groups while maintaining the existing number of African American districts and protecting the interests of the diverse Asian community.

In summary, the *Illinois Latino Agenda* recommends the creation of 3 Latino majority House districts in Chicago's north side and 6 Latino majority House districts on the Chicago's south side and adjacent communities. These 9 districts, coupled with the 7 suburban districts that we have already presented, total the creation of 16 Latino majority, influence or coalition House districts throughout the state. The 16 proposed legislative districts provide an opportunity to create at least 4 Latino majority Senate districts, 1 on the north side and 3 on the south side of Chicago, for a total of 20 Latino districts.

Lastly, I'd like to comment on transparency and the redistricting process. All Illinoisans deserve an opportunity to view and comment on maps being considered by the General Assembly before they are voted upon. Absent the opportunity to view and comment on proposed legislative district boundaries, the Latino Policy Forum is unconvinced that incumbent legislators will keep the best interests of the Latino community in mind. The Latino Policy Forum calls upon the members of this committee to schedule an additional set of public hearings after maps have been drafted by the legislature with two weeks to review prior to a final vote. Given that advocates will be sharing their preferred maps with you throughout the remainder of this process, I respectfully ask that you show us yours. Thank you for the opportunity to testify at today's hearing.

Illinois Latino Agenda

20 Recommended Latino Majority, Influence and Coalition Legislative Districts
April 2011

Geography	TOTPOP Latino (%conc)	VAP Latino (%conc)	TOTPOP Black (%conc)	VAP Black (%conc)	TOTPOP Asian (%conc)	VAP Asian (%conc)	TOTPOP White (%conc)	VAP White (%conc)	Majority, Influence, or Coalition
Suburban									
Aurora	67%	61%	9%	10%	1%	1%	22%	28%	Majority, >65% Total Latino Population
Elgin/Carpentersville	56%	49%	7%	6%	3%	4%	32%	40%	Majority, <65% Total Latino Population
Evanston	20%	17%	29%	27%	8%	8%	39%	44%	Influence, <50% Total Latino Population
Franklin Park	63%	57%	4%	4%	4%	4%	29%	35%	Majority, <65% Total Latino Population
Joliet	32%	28%	25%	24%	1%	1%	40%	46%	Influence, <50% Total Latino Population
Rockford/Belvidere	23%	19%	23%	21%	2%	2%	49%	57%	Influence, <50% Total Latino Population
Waukegan	56%	50%	23%	23%	2%	3%	17%	22%	Majority/Coalition, <65% Total Latino Population
Chicago North*									
District 1	67%	63%	10%	9%	1%	2%	20%	25%	Majority, >65% Total Latino Population
District 2	66%	61%	3%	3%	7%	8%	21%	25%	Majority, >65% Total Latino Population
District 3	68%	62%	3%	3%	3%	3%	25%	31%	Majority, >65% Total Latino Population
Chicago South and Adjacent Communities									
District 1	57%	52%	2%	3%	22%	24%	17%	21%	Majority/Coalition, <65% Total Latino Population
District 2	69%	66%	18%	18%	2%	2%	10%	13%	Majority, >65% Total Latino Population
District 3	78%	72%	12%	14%	1%	1%	10%	12%	Majority, >65% Total Latino Population
District 4	65%	59%	5%	5%	1%	1%	28%	34%	Majority, ≥65% Total Latino Population
District 5	69%	62%	2%	2%	1%	1%	28%	34%	Majority, >65% Total Latino Population
District 6	67%	62%	8%	8%	2%	2%	22%	26%	Majority, >65% Total Latino Population

13 Latino Majority House Districts (9 majority districts with a total Latino pop ≥65%, 2 majority districts with a total Latino pop <65% and 2 majority/coalition districts)

3 Latino Influence House Districts

4 Latino Majority Senate Districts (1 Chicago north side & 3 south side)

20 Total Latino Majority, Influence and Coalition Legislative Districts

*Final percentages of total Latino population may decrease pending a decision from Albany Park community leaders whether or not to be included within district 2. Regardless, the 3 proposed north side districts would each contain a total Latino population greater than or equal to 65%.