

COALITION FOR A BETTER CHINESE AMERICAN COMMUNITY
華埠更好團結聯盟

SOLIDARITY

**Testimony by C.W. Chan before the Senate Redistricting Committee hearing
May 21, 2011**

My name is CW Chan. I am the chairman of the Coalition for a Better Chinese American Community (CBCAC). CBCAC is a coalition of major Asian American service organizations in the Chicago area. It was formed ten years ago to spearhead a campaign to have Chinatown drawn into a single legislative district.

We had reviewed the Senate and House proposed maps that were unveiled in the last few days. Although we still do not have the demographics of the House districts, it appears quite clearly that Chinatown has been kept intact, with the exception of a few population pockets at the edges as compared to the Greater Chinatown Community Area proposal submitted by CBCAC to this committee at previous hearings. Over 90% of the Chinese Americans in the south side neighborhoods of Armour Square, Bridgeport, McKinley Park and Brighton Park will be in a single State House District, which is a far cry from the result of the last redistricting which split Chinatown into four districts.

Ten years ago, the Chinatown community was the most convenient victim of redistricting. This time, Chinatown has become the most high-profiled victim. Throughout the redistricting process leading to this point, legislative leaders, and leaders from African American and Latino community organizations all rallied in support of Chinatown being kept intact in this round of redistricting.

I would like to express our gratitude to all our supporters. I would like to particularly thank Chairman Kwame Raoul for working closely with our community and advocating for our cause, in addition to guiding through the passage of the Voting Right Act of Illinois 2011 which protects the voting rights of Language and ethnic communities with less than a voting-age majority. I also want to thank this committee for holding hearings after the release of the legislature's proposal as requested by community groups.

The Chinatown community is pleased with the legislature's proposed maps. However, we are also mindful of the fact that many of our community coalition partners still have concerns about their respective areas, particularly the Asian American neighborhoods in the north Cook County. Being the most visible community that was split into multiple districts and has lived through its negative impacts as a result of the last redistricting, the Chinatown community feels strongly that such inequity should not happen to any racial and language minority communities with this redistricting.

While considered by many as a zero-sum game, this redistricting has brought many community organizations together. CBCAC is proud to be a partner of the UCCRO coalition group. UCCRO has engaged the largest number of diversified ethnic and community organizations, including CBCAC, at the very early stage of the redistricting process, and its proposal represents a painstakingly achieved compromise that would serve as a model of the collaboration and cooperation among ethnic and language minorities. We will continue to support UCCRO's effort to work with our legislators to improve the proposal maps for the protection of voting rights of minority communities.

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The Coalition for a Better Chinese American Community (CBCAC) consists of eight major service organizations in the community. CBCAC's mission is to empower Chinese American communities in Greater Chicago through organizing, civic participation, education and coalition building. CBCAC's members are: Asian American Institute www.aaichicago.org; Chinese American Civic Council; Chinese American Service League www.caslservice.org; Chicago Chinatown Chamber of Commerce www.chicagochinatown.org; Chinese Mutual Aid Association www.chinesemutualaid.org; OCA Chicago Chapter www.oachicago.org; Pui Tak Center www.puitak.org; and Southeast Asia Center www.se-asiacenter.org.

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