

Esteemed Members of the Redistricting Committee:

My name is Rey Lopez-Calderon, Executive Director of Alianza Leadership Institute and Lead Organizer for Alliance of the Southeast (ASE) a coalition of 12 churches and community organizations in the South Chicago, East Side, South Deering, and Hegewisch communities, which represent over ten thousand African-American and Latino residents in those neighborhoods. The Southeast Side has historically been a port of entry for migrants from Latin America and was also a port of entry for many African-Americans who migrated from the South. South Chicago and East Side in particular are the first Latino communities to be established in the City of Chicago.

ASE and Alianza both support the formidable work done by the United Congress for Community and Religious Organizations and collectively support its Unity Map. We believe that this Map is the strongest, most grassroots-minded map available and we are heartened by UCCRO's unique attempt to balance the interests of multiple ethnic, racial, and cultural communities. The principles of working together and achieving results we can all live with rather than at the expense of one another are, again both laudable and refreshing.

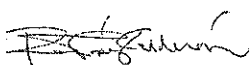
We at Alianza and ASE, operating in a diverse community of Latinos, African-Americans, Haitians, Jews, and many others, understand collaboration is required if we are to get anything changed on our communities. In fact, ASE was forged out of this need to bring together people of varying colors and creeds.

We applaud the House and Senate Redistricting communities for managing to keep communities such as Little Village and Chinatown substantially intact. We are, however concerned that according to the first iteration of the House Map that was made available via Google Earth, our key areas—especially the South Chicago and East Side communities are split into 2 Senate Districts and 3 House districts. Of special concern to us is the proposed excision of the South Chicago community that includes key institutions such as Immaculate Conception Church and the South Chicago Chamber of Commerce and draws them into the same district as Streeterville and the South Loop!

While we believe that the Southeast Latino population in particular would benefit from being in one House District and one Senate district, we understand that in order for African-American districts to be protected, *two house districts and one Senate district make the most sense*. **We, therefore, support two House districts** that would roughly approximate the aforementioned map proposed via Google Earth by the Illinois House, but respectfully request that the part of South Chicago that was excised and connected strenuously to distant neighborhoods that include such power institutions as Navy Pier and Soldier Field, be restored in the final map so that, at a minimum, the South Chicago Neighborhood and East Side remain substantially intact and that Latinos and African-Americans can continue to work together on common issues and maintain their potential for electing a candidate of their choosing.

Again, we applaud the efforts of both the House and Senate Redistricting committees. We believe that the work done so far has been well intentioned and effective at protecting minority communities. We submit this testimony in order to assist the committees in improving the map for distant communities like ours.

Respectfully submitted this 24th day of May, 2011



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