



The Village of Oak Park
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May 23, 2011

Honorable Kwame Raoul
Chairperson, Redistricting Committee
Illinois General Assembly
1509 E. 53rd Street, 2nd floor
Chicago, IL 60615

Dear Senator Raoul:

Thank you again for your continued leadership on behalf of the residents of our state.

Earlier this month, I wrote you on behalf of the residents of Oak Park, one of the larger cities here in Illinois. In that letter I took the opportunity to encourage you, along with others involved in the Illinois legislative remapping effort, to preserve the geographic balance of our community's legislative districts which has resulted in the able and effective representation of the interests of Oak Park residents over the course of the past decade. We are fortunate to be represented in Springfield by effective, intelligent, and committed members of the General Assembly: Senator Kimberly Lightford, Senator Don Harmon, Representative Karen Yarbrough, Representative LaShawn Ford and Representative Camille Lilly. In turn, on May 19, we were pleased to see that the draft map submitted by your committee was substantially similar to the legislative map that has been in place for the past ten years with regard to Oak Park's representation.

Since their publication, the draft maps submitted by both the Senate and House committees have been available for public comment, which has been forthcoming. We would like to take this opportunity to recommend one potential modification to the legislative districts as proposed. We believe this modification would help to facilitate improved representation, not only for the residents of Oak Park, but for all people living throughout our entire region.

As you know, the major intermodal transportation corridor that is I-290 (the Eisenhower Expressway) is our Village's single most important public policy intersection with Illinois State Government. This multi-modal corridor includes not only a highway, but also commercial freight rail as well as vital access to public transportation in the form of the CTA Blue Line. While a critically important transportation resource throughout our region, I-290 also effectively divides our community in two. Our long-standing priority, supported by initial efforts at both the federal and state levels, has been to foster ways to overcome the physical division that I-290 presents.

At the same time we are deeply committed to continuing our partnership with our neighboring communities in Chicago and the west Cook County regions to leverage the

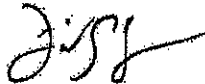
impending reconstruction of this corridor in order to ensure improved access to employment opportunities for individuals of all socioeconomic backgrounds along the corridor. We are working collaboratively to ensure a more effective integration of this eventual transportation infrastructure investment with the needs of all of our communities regarding thoughtful housing policy and economic investment. Because of their magnitude (please keep in mind what was involved in the I-90/94 Dan Ryan reconstruction) the corresponding projects will require the sustained focus of a team of legislators working cooperatively together for years. It is our belief that the scope of this project would benefit significantly from, and will in fact require, the attention of two senators and two representatives who together represent all of Oak Park, as well as each representing specifically the I-290 corridor and one or both of the critical intersections at Harlem and Austin.

In addition, we note that one critique of the Legislature's Redistricting Process is the manner in which lines divide neighborhoods. In our view, it is important that district lines are rational, logical and most importantly are consistent with existing community boundaries such as main thoroughfares rather than side streets or by lines that divide blocks.

We understand that the hour is late in the redistricting process. We thank you for your willingness to consider the concerns of the Village of Oak Park at this time.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



David Pope
President

cc: Senator Kimberly Lightford
Senator Don Harmon
Representative Karen Yarbrough
Representative LaShawn Ford
Representative Camille Lilly