



**Joint House and Senate Hearing Testimony  
Tuesday, May 24, 2011**

**TARGET Area Development Corporation** is a statewide community organization based in the Auburn Gresham neighborhood in Chicago. We engage residents and build coalitions to improve public schools, increase public safety, and build healthy and sustainable communities. Over the last year, we have played a leadership role in the redistricting work of the United Congress of Community and Religious Organizations (UCCRO). Working with other African-American leaders and organizations, as well as those from Latino, Asian and Arab-American communities has been essential to effectively developing racially equitable redistricting maps. We, along with 50 other community organizations, have signed on in support of UCCRO's Unity Map.

We want to thank the House and Senate Redistricting Committees for their hard work, and holding public hearings after the release of draft maps. Along with UCCRO, we have analyzed the proposed house and senate maps. While we appreciate that many of our partner communities including Chinatown and Little Village are kept together, our community, as well as many other communities of interest are split into multiple house and senate districts. In the proposed map, Auburn Gresham is drawn into three senate districts (16, 18 and 14) as well as four house districts (27, 31, 35, and 36). Being split into multiple districts at multiple levels of government will hinder our community's ability to effectively advocate for and improve our community. We ask the General Assembly to respect our community as a community of interest, and keep it in one house and one senate district as proposed in the Unity Map.

We also want to address issues beyond our individual community. The map released by the General Assembly proposes a loss of two African-American house districts and one African-American senate district. While we recognize that according to 2010 census figures we have lost African-American population in the Chicagoland area, the loss of these districts will have detrimental impacts on African-American communities that continue to struggle for equitable resources and effective representation. We believe, as is demonstrated in the Unity Map, that it is possible to protect existing African-American districts, expand other majority-minority districts, and keep communities of interest including Auburn-Gresham in one house and one senate district. We respectfully ask the General Assembly to revisit this proposed map to ensure our community, and well as all African-American and other minority communities, are respected.

Thank You,

Dr. Reverend Patricia Van Pelt-Watkins