Written Testimony of The Reverend Dr. Leon Finney
On Behalf of African Americans for Legislative Redistricting
Regarding Maps for the Cook County Board of Review
Senate Redistricting Committee - May 29, 2001

My name is The Reverend Dr. Leon Finney. I am President and CEO of the Woodlawn Community Development Corporation, and I submit this testimony as a member of African Americans for Legislative Redistricting (AALR). AALR is a coalition of African-American civic organizations created to ensure the fair representation of African-American interests in the 2011 remap. The coalition includes, among other organizations, the Cook County Bar Association, the Chicago Urban League, Operation Rainbow Push, and the Woodlawn Community Development Corporation. The purpose of this testimony is to indicate AALR's support for the Cook County Board of Review Map contained in House Amendment #1 to Senate Bill 1179.

It is easy for communities of color to misapprehend the importance of so-called down-ballot offices such as the Board of Review. Yet few issues are more important to voters than property taxes. It is for this reason that all community stakeholders deserve representation on the Cook County Board of Review.

Amendment #1 to Senate Bill 1179 does justice to the African-American community of Cook County by largely leaving intact existing district lines to District 3 and thereby respecting long-standing communities of interest. Under the proposed configuration, District 3 contains a Black voting-age majority of slightly more than 60%. AALR believes this number will allow the district to perform as an effective African-American opportunity district, as it has under the map implemented in 2001.

For these reasons, AALR endorses House Amendment #1 to Senate Bill 1179 and urges its passage and enactment.