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2011 ILLINOIS STATE SENATE REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE

PUBLIC HEARING

March 28, 2011
Michael A. Bilandic Building
160 North LaSalle Street
Room C-600
Chicago, Illinois

Sullivan Reporting Company, by
Tracy L. Overocker, CSR
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1 PRESENT:

2 SENATOR KWAME RAOUL, Chairperson

3 SENATOR MICHAEL NOLAND, Vice Chairperson

4 SENATOR JACQUELINE Y. COLLINS, Member

5 SENATOR DON HARMON, Member

6 SENATOR MATTIE HUNTER, Member

7 SENATOR EMIL JONES, III, Member

8 SENATOR KIMBERLY A. LIGHTFORD, Member

9 SENATOR EDWARD D. MALONEY, Member

10 SENATOR IRIS Y. MARTINEZ, Member

11 SENATOR DALE A. RIGHTER, Minority Spokesperson

12 SENATOR SHANE CULTRA, Member

13 SENATOR KIRK W. DILLARD, Member

14 SENATOR DAN DUFFY, Member

15 SENATOR MATT MURPHY, Member

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1 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: The Senate Committee on
2 Redistricting will be called to order. Please take
3 the roll.

4 MR. NOE CHAIMONGKOL: Senator Duffy?

5 SENATOR DUFFY: Here.

6 MR. NOE CHAIMONGKOL: Senator Luechtefeld?

7 (No response.)

8 MR. NOE CHAIMONGKOL: Senator Murphy?

9 SENATOR, MURPHY: Here.

10 MR. NOE CHAIMONGKOL: Senator Dillard?

11 SENATOR DILLARD: Here.

12 MR. NOE CHAIMONGKOL: Senator Cultra?

13 SENATOR CULTRA: Present.

14 MR. NOE CHAIMONGKOL: Senator Righter?

15 MINORITY SPOKESPERSON RIGHTER: Here.

16 MR. NOE CHAIMONGKOL: Senator Martinez?

17 SENATOR MARTINEZ: Here.

18 MR. NOE CHAIMONGKOL: Senator Maloney?

19 SENATOR MALONEY: Here.

20 MR. NOE CHAIMONGKOL: Senator Lightford?

21 (No response.)

22 MR. NOE CHAIMONGKOL: Senator Jones?

23 SENATOR JONES: Here.

24 MR. NOE CHAIMONGKOL: Senator Hunter?

1 SENATOR HUNTER: Here.

2 MR. NOE CHAIMONGKOL: Senator Harmon?

3 SENATOR HARMON: Here.

4 MR. NOE CHAIMONGKOL: Senator Haine?

5 (No response.)

6 MR. NOE CHAIMONGKOL: Senator Collins?

7 SENATOR COLLINS: Here.

8 MR. NOE CHAIMONGKOL: Senator Noland?

9 VICE CHAIRPERSON NOLAND: Here.

10 MR. NOE CHAIMONGKOL: Chairman Raoul?

11 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Here.

12 There being 17 members present -- it
13 is necessary for a quorum -- the Redistricting
14 Committee will now come to order.

15 I will first read through the witness
16 slips that I've been handed -- a nice healthy stack
17 of them -- excuse me -- ahead of time. If I
18 mispronounce any names -- being on the receiving end
19 of that for many years of my life, I can understand
20 sensitivities to that.

21 We have Theresa Mah, Coalition for a
22 Better Chinese-American Community, oral testimony,
23 written statement filed.

24 David Wu, Pui Tak Center, Coalition

1 for a Better Chinese-American Community, with oral
2 testimony, written statement filed.

3 Bernarda Wong, Chinese-American
4 Services League, oral testimony, written statement
5 filed.

6 Ami Gandhi, Asian-American Institute,
7 oral testimony, written statement filed.

8 Lawrence Hill, African-Americans for
9 Legislative Redistricting, oral testimony, written
10 statement filed.

11 Terry Smith, African-Americans for
12 Legal Redistricting -- Legislative Redistricting,
13 oral testimony, written statement filed.

14 Josina Morita, United Congress of
15 Community and Religious Organizations.

16 Michael Rodriguez, Enlace Chicago --

17 MR. MICHAEL RODRIGUEZ: Very good. Very good.

18 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: -- oral testimony.

19 Sharod Gordon, TARGET Area
20 Development, oral testimony.

21 Vaughn Wilson, Kenwood-Oakland
22 Community Organization.

23 Virginia Martinez, MALDEF, oral
24 testimony.

1 Erku Yimer, Ethiopian Community
2 Association of Chicago.

3 Richard Martinez, Jr., New 10th Ward
4 Community Service Organization, oral testimony,
5 written statement filed.

6 Generation to Generation Church, oral
7 testimony. Generation to Generation Church, two
8 individuals who signed their names, I can't make them
9 out.

10 Kyle Hillman, oral testimony.

11 James Harland, The Answer, Inc., oral
12 testimony.

13 John Baggett, The Answer, Inc., oral
14 testimony.

15 Rabya Khan, Asian-American Institute,
16 oral testimony, written statement filed.

17 Sharda Thapa, Asian-American
18 Institute.

19 Melissa Williams, NAACP, oral
20 testimony, written statement filed.

21 Rob Aspholm, MAGIC, Inc., oral
22 testimony.

23 Martin Torres, Latino Policy Forum,
24 oral testimony, written statement filed.

1 Betty Magness, IVI-IPO.
2 Idida Perez, West Town Leadership
3 United, oral testimony, written statement filed.
4 Kiran Siddiqui, Hamdard Center, oral
5 testimony, written statement filed.
6 Harendra Mangrola, Sumit Construction
7 Company, oral testimony, written statement filed.
8 George Lieu, written statement filed.
9 Jim Ginderski, Neighbors for a
10 Healthy, Rogers Park, oral testimony, written
11 statement filed.
12 Rosa Perea, Centro Comunitario --
13 Juan Diego. I apologize if I mispronounced.
14 Ron Taylor, Neighbors United, oral
15 testimony.
16 Paul McKinley, oral testimony.
17 Jeff Smith, oral testimony.
18 Joseph Watkins, oral testimony.
19 Robert Garcia, oral testimony.
20 And Valerie Leonard.
21 Senator Martinez, for what purpose?
22 SENATOR MARTINEZ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
23 I would like to ask for a motion to
24 allow any media to take still photos and videos of

1 these proceedings.

2 SENATOR HUNTER: I second the motion.

3 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Senator Martinez moves to
4 allow members of the media, seconded by Senator
5 Hunter.

6 Is there leave?

7 Leave being granted, the media will be
8 allowed to videotape.

9 Senator Harmon, for what purpose do
10 you --

11 SENATOR HARMON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 I move that this hearing be
13 transcribed by the Court Reporter so that the
14 Committee can have a full transcript of this hearing
15 which the Committee can approve at a future hearing
16 once members and the staff have had time to review
17 the transcript and make any needed corrections.

18 SENATOR COLLINS: I second the motion.

19 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Senator Harmon moves to
20 allow a court reporter to transcribe the hearing. It
21 is seconded by Senator Collins.

22 Is there leave.

23 Leave being granted, the court
24 reporter will be allowed to transcribe the hearing.

1 Senator Noland, do you seek to be
2 recognized?

3 VICE CHAIRPERSON NOLAND: Yes. Thank you,
4 Mr. Chairman.

5 I would make a motion that the members
6 of the public also be allowed to take still
7 photographs, as if we could dissuade them otherwise.

8 (Laughter.)

9 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Senator Noland moves to
10 allow the public in attendance to take still photos,
11 seconded by Senator Maloney.

12 Is there leave?

13 Leave being granted, you guys can take
14 pictures.

15 (Laughter.)

16 I will start with an opening statement
17 and then the Minority Spokesperson wants to make an
18 opening statement -- I'll allow that -- and we'll go
19 right into testimony.

20 First, I'd like to remind everybody
21 that the Senate Redistricting Committee is a standing
22 committee in the Illinois Senate; therefore,
23 Committee members of this Committee conduct
24 themselves in accordance with the rules of the

1 Illinois Senate and I request that your decorum
2 during these proceedings be above par.

3 As you all know by now, the United
4 States Census Bureau recently released detailed 2010
5 Census population totals in Illinois. In accordance
6 with the U.S. Constitution, the Federal Voting Rights
7 Act, Article 4, Section 3, of the Illinois
8 Constitution, and the Illinois Voting Rights Act, the
9 General Assembly must redraw the boundaries of the
10 Illinois congressional, legislative and
11 representative districts in order to account for
12 population shifts since the year 2000 Census.

13 This hearing is designed to seek
14 information from the public in order to facilitate
15 the redistricting process and ensure full
16 participation.

17 Recently, Governor Quinn signed two
18 changes in the redistricting process into law that
19 will make this mapping process different from any
20 other process in Illinois history.

21 While there are those who undervalue
22 these reforms, I would like to remind them that it
23 was through the work of this Committee and hearings
24 all around the state that we were able to bring the

1 first changes to the Illinois redistricting process
2 since the 1970 Constitutional Convention and the
3 first Voting Rights Act and thereby bringing the
4 first Voting Rights Act into Illinois history.

5 Despite the challenges State
6 Government faces today, this shining achievement
7 continues to be a proud and progressive path for
8 inclusion for all Illinoisans in the political
9 process.

10 As Chairman of the Senate
11 Redistricting Committee and sponsor of our new
12 redistricting law, it is my hope that this process
13 reflects the spirit of our recent reforms.

14 This Committee took input from the
15 public all around the state over the last year and a
16 half on reforming the redistricting process. The
17 underlying theme was that people wanted to ensure
18 inclusion and open up the redistricting process. The
19 Illinois Voting Rights Act of 2011 and the
20 Redistricting Public Participation Act will help
21 accomplish these goals.

22 So far, this has already been the most
23 open redistricting process in history allowing me to
24 quickly note some of the strides we've made, which

1 may not have been reported by the press. Due to the
2 technology available, within minutes of the release
3 of census data that was made -- the census data was
4 made available to the public on a Senate Democratic
5 Caucus Web site and our Caucus Twitter page. I've
6 personally paid to launch our Committee site
7 dedicated to the work of the Committee at
8 www.ilsenateredistricting.com. That Web site is a
9 one-stop shop for hearing dates, tools and resources
10 as it relates to the Committee.

11 I'd like to note that the ample public
12 notice given allowed for 37 individuals and groups to
13 preregister to testify with the Committee staff and
14 numerous others, not only organized, but be present
15 today. I'm also proud to announce that today's
16 hearing is a first in the Illinois Senate history to
17 stream live on-line from the Bilandic Building here
18 in Chicago.

19 For this initial set of hearings and
20 the additional hearings to come, this Committee is
21 very much interested in hearing your perspective on
22 how the current district lines for redistricting the
23 Congressional District may or may not have served
24 your community. Your input will greatly influence

1 and assist not only this Committee, but the entire
2 General Assembly as to how new district lines must be
3 drawn during the spring session.

4 To better assist us, I ask that
5 interested citizens and organizations provide the
6 Committee with the following:

7 A description of the community or
8 communities of interest your organization serves or
9 represents, including any relevant demographic
10 information such as social, political, economic or
11 other characteristics that are unique to the
12 community or communities of interest your
13 organization serves or represents; a map of the
14 community or communities of interest your
15 organization serves or represents as encompassed by
16 relevant precincts or voter tabulation districts,
17 either in a paper copy or electronic format
18 compatible with our GIS software; specific views on
19 any social, political, economic or other issues
20 commonly held by the members of the community or
21 communities of interest your organization serves or
22 represents evincing the communities' cohesion;
23 specific interest groups that exist within the
24 community or communities of interest your

1 organization serves or represents; concerns you have
2 regarding existing congressional, legislative or
3 representative boundaries that affect the community
4 or communities of interest your organization serves
5 or represents; suggestions for the placement of new
6 congressional, legislative or representative
7 boundaries that will affect the community or
8 communities of interest your organization serves or
9 represents.

10 I realize that this is a unique
11 experience for many of you. The opportunity for the
12 public to testify in communities of the legislature
13 doesn't occur often. I, again, welcome you and thank
14 you for involving yourself in the democratic process.

15 Allow me to give a couple
16 instructions -- a few instructions to those in
17 attendance as it relates to testimony today. If you
18 plan on testifying today, please file a witness slip
19 with a member of the redistricting staff.

20 Will staff raise their hands?

21 (Indicating.)

22 To expedite the process today, I will
23 be calling names in groups of fives. When your name
24 is called, please make your way to the front of the

1 room and take a seat in the front row. When it's
2 your turn to testify, please state your name and
3 organization for the Committee record. If you're a
4 member of the public at large, please state your name
5 and the neighborhood you reside in. Due to the long
6 list of individuals seeking to testify, I ask that
7 those present today try their best to limit their
8 testimony to 3 minutes.

9 Keep in mind, you are encouraged to
10 submit written testimony for the Committee record to
11 a member of our staff. Written testimony filed will
12 be posted within two business days of the adjournment
13 of this hearing. I ask you, to the best of your
14 ability, if you are one who has indicated that you
15 are going to submit oral testimony and also file a
16 written statement, to try your best not to be
17 redundant. Your written statement will be of record.

18 For those of you who did not bring
19 written testimony today, with leave of the Committee
20 members present, I offer you the opportunity to
21 submit such testimony to my attention via e-mail at
22 Redistricting@SenateDem.ILGA.gov or fax at
23 (217) 782-1272.

24 Senator Righter, I would like to

1 recognize you for the statement you wish to give.

2 MINORITY SPOKESPERSON RIGHTER: Thank you,
3 Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Committee,
4 our honored guests. It's good to see such a big and
5 interested crowd here today. I will be very brief as
6 it is 20 till 1:00 for a hearing that was supposed to
7 start at noon.

8 You know, this is going to be an
9 interesting process for all of us and this process
10 and those of you -- I think most of you in this crowd
11 probably are well familiar -- or at least somewhat
12 familiar with the process by which constitutionally
13 we are to draw these maps.

14 As you probably also know, there was
15 an effort by myself and many colleagues -- my
16 colleagues in the General Assembly not to tweak at
17 the corners of this process -- and things like Caucus
18 Web pages and Twitters are nice, but this system
19 needs a dramatic overhaul. There was an effort to do
20 that this last year, it failed and so we are moving
21 forward.

22 I congratulate the Chairman on his
23 efforts on some of the reforms that have gone
24 forward, but I would ask those of you who are in this

1 crowd and those of you who will later watch this or
2 read this to keep in mind two things after this
3 hearing is over: one is that you should insist on
4 having just as many, if not more, substantive
5 hearings on the map that actually comes out as a
6 product or voted out by the General Assembly as you
7 have hearings before without having seen any
8 drawings; and, two, you should insist on knowing
9 exactly, specifically what criteria we used in
10 drawing that map that we will see later.

11 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: With that, the first
13 witnesses will be Theresa Mah from the Coalition for
14 a Better Chinese-American Community; David Wu,
15 executive director of the Pui Tak Center; Bernarda
16 Wong, president of the Chinese-American Service
17 League; Ami Gandhi, Asian-American Institute.

18 Let's start with those four.

19 Welcome to you all.

20 TESTIMONY

21 BY

22 MS. THERESA MAH:

23 Thank you. Good afternoon,

24 Chairman Raoul and Senators. I'd like to thank you

1 for the opportunity to speak before you at this
2 Committee hearing.

3 My name is Theresa Mah. I live in the
4 McKinley Park neighborhood of Chicago and I work with
5 the Coalition for a Better Chinese-American
6 Community. CBCAC has been around for ten years now
7 having formed a decade ago to spearhead the effort to
8 keep the Chinese population within the boundaries of
9 a single district during the last remapping process.

10 Despite our best efforts, that process
11 ended disappointingly for us. After all was said and
12 done, more than 20,000 Chinese residents were divided
13 between four city wards, four state House districts,
14 three state Senate districts and three congressional
15 districts. Our community was fragmented and our
16 votes diluted and despite a 60 percent growth in the
17 population since the 1990 Census, our voting rights
18 were greatly diminished.

19 This time around, we were determined
20 to make our strongest possible case for change. We
21 have worked hard and have doggedly made our case to
22 everyone who would listen. We have coordinated with
23 and consulted with the Asian-American Institute,
24 community leaders and multiple ethnic coalitions and

1 surrounding minority communities. We have been
2 chomping at the bit to have this opportunity again
3 after ten long years. And in the decade that has
4 passed, our community has grown yet again.

5 In contrast to the overall population
6 loss sustained by both the City and the State, the
7 Asian population in the Armour Square Chinatown and
8 surrounding neighborhoods has increased by 55 percent
9 to just over 31,000. The neighborhood areas that
10 sustained this growth include the South Loop,
11 Douglas, Armour Square, Bridgeport, McKinley Park and
12 Brighton Park. It is from this concentration that we
13 have identified the community area that we would like
14 to see kept intact during the current redistricting
15 process. This is an area that we are designating as
16 the Greater Chinatown Community area.

17 What I am here to present today is a description of
18 this community to demonstrate how it is a unique and
19 cohesive community. The Greater Chinatown Community
20 area, as we define it, is bounded, roughly, by the
21 Chicago River and the Stephenson Expressway on the
22 north, Kedzie to the west, Pershing, for the most
23 part, on the south and Michigan and Indiana Avenues
24 to the east up to Polk Street at its very northern

1 tip. We have included a map of this area for your
2 reference and for the public record.

3 As you can see from the second set of
4 accompanying maps, the concentration of the Chinese
5 population represented by the area shaded in red has
6 increased tremendously since 2000. The two maps side
7 by side also show the direction of growth. Not only
8 is there an increasing density in the Armour Square
9 and Bridgeport neighborhoods, there is also movement
10 toward the southern boundary of Bridgeport and Fuller
11 Park westward into McKinley Park and Brighton Park
12 and going east into the South Loop and Douglas
13 neighborhood areas.

14 This is a community of interest that
15 can be defined as either a crossover, coalition or
16 influence district, according to the recently enacted
17 Illinois Voting Rights Act of 2011, which received
18 unanimous support in November 2010 from this very
19 committee and for which we are very grateful.

20 Within the boundaries of this Greater Chinatown
21 Community area, there is a total population of 89,623
22 residents of which 30 percent are Asian. In this
23 particular area, the vast majority of the residents
24 classified as Asian, through the Census, are, in

1 fact, Chinese-American. However, there are also
2 other Asian ethnic groups residing in this area and,
3 of course, Chinese-Americans share many commonalities
4 with a larger group of Asian-Americans.

5 At every corner of this Greater
6 Chinatown Community area, there are demographic and
7 institutional anchors that give credence to our
8 characterization of this area as a cohesive
9 community. At the center of it are dense commercial
10 areas and social service institutions located in what
11 most people associate with Chicago's South Side
12 Chinatown or Armour Square Chinatown when Chinatown
13 Square went along Archer Avenue and the Wentworth
14 Avenue commercial district. The area is always
15 bustling with people and the social service agencies
16 like the Chinese-American Service League and Pui Tak
17 Center attract clients from every part of the
18 community area.

19 At the southwestern tip, we find Kelly
20 High School, which may have the largest Chinese
21 student population of all high schools in the Chicago
22 Public School system. Because Chinatown does not
23 have its own neighborhood high school, many families
24 have either moved to this neighborhood so that their

1 children can be closer to the school or rely on the
2 Archer Avenue bus to transport them from the other
3 end of the community area.

4 Also near the southwestern portion of
5 this community area, one finds McKinley Park, a
6 lovely, well-used park with a lagoon, skating rink
7 and field house. In recent years, it has been
8 increasingly clear that significant numbers of
9 Chinese families have moved into the neighborhood
10 surrounding the park. Dozens of Chinese seniors
11 gather daily at this park to socialize and exercise.
12 They live with their families in nearby single-family
13 homes. Many can be found in the summertime tending
14 to their gardens filled with Chinese vegetables like
15 long beans and bok choy. Each morning as they travel
16 to work on the Archer Avenue bus, which traverses the
17 length of the community area along the Archer Avenue
18 corridor, we're surrounded by other Asian faces and
19 chatter in several Chinese dialects.

20 Based on casual observation, I would
21 venture to say that Asians make up about 80 percent
22 of the morning rush hour passengers on this bus line,
23 from Kedzie going west to the Red Line "L" stop at
24 Wentworth Avenue.

1 Apart from the commonality and racial
2 and ethnic background, this is also a community with
3 much in common in terms of their need for culturally
4 and linguistically sensitive social services. The
5 sampling of 18,000 residents in this area who speak
6 an Asian language found that about half characterized
7 their ability to speak English as not well or not at
8 all. Given the situation, the ability to effectively
9 advocate for their needs becomes especially
10 challenging.

11 I have witnessed such difficulties
12 firsthand on more than one occasion when my
13 colleagues at the Chinese-American Service League
14 attempted to enlist their clients in efforts to
15 contact their legislatures to preserve funding for
16 programs and services that are crucial to them. It
17 is in such instances that it would be helpful to have
18 a single elected official to contact rather than to
19 have a client endure the confusion of determining
20 which one of four or five districts they live in and
21 having to explain to -- their request to a legislator
22 who may not feel particularly accountable to their
23 needs.

24 Over the past decade, residents of

1 this Greater Chinatown Community area have not only
2 increased significantly in number, but we have become
3 more civically engaged as well. The number of
4 registered voters has more than tripled since 2000
5 and we have increased voter turn out in nearly all
6 the precincts in which we have done outreach in the
7 past several elections.

8 If Asian-Americans had been treated
9 fairly during the last redistricting process, these
10 gains would have had a commensurate impact on our
11 community's ability to participate in Government and
12 make positive -- make a positive difference in our
13 community; but divided as we are into small fractions
14 of four and actually now five state representative
15 districts, we have little opportunity to influence
16 the outcome of an election or ensure that our elected
17 officials feel accountable to us.

18 We, as Asian-Americans, want to be
19 treated fairly during the redistricting process. It
20 is for these and many other reasons that we ask the
21 Committee to keep the Greater Chinatown Community
22 area intact as you determine the boundaries of our
23 new legislative maps in the upcoming months.

24 Thank you very much.

1 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Thank you. Please add
2 Senator Lightford to the roll.

3 I ask witnesses, to the best of their
4 ability, if you submit any written statement to -- if
5 you could highlight the details of your written
6 statement because, as you can see, we have a lot of
7 people in the room today and I'd like to see my kids
8 tonight.

9 David Wu.

10 TESTIMONY

11 BY

12 MR. DAVID WU:

13 I thank you for the opportunity to
14 speak to you at this Committee.

15 My name is David Wu. I am the
16 executive director of the Pui Tak Center, a
17 church-based community center in Chinatown. We've
18 been active with the Coalition for a Better
19 Chinese-American Community on civic engagement issues
20 such as redistricting. I'm a resident of Chinatown
21 and live in a two-flat that my grandparents purchased
22 over 60 years ago, and I just want to talk about the
23 negative impacts that 2001 redistricting had on our
24 community.

1 The first is, it's really difficult
2 for our community members to know who represents
3 them. You've heard that there are four city wards,
4 three state Senate districts, four House districts,
5 three U.S. Congressional districts. Tomorrow, a
6 busload of our ESL students from Chinatown are going
7 to go down to Springfield and they're going to be
8 meeting legislators for the Adult Education Advocacy
9 Day. So there might be students from your district
10 coming to visit you.

11 Most of the time students in other
12 programs know exactly who their rep is and their
13 senator is; but for us, on the way down, everyone is
14 going to be studying a map, okay, who represents me,
15 there's -- an example: If you live near the corner
16 of 25th and Lowe, if you're on the southwest corner,
17 you're represented by the 9th state rep; if you're on
18 the southeast corner, you're represented by the 2nd
19 state rep; and if you live north, that's the 6th
20 state rep.

21 And so it's very confusing for someone
22 who is very fluent in English; but for immigrants who
23 have difficulty with language, it's awfully
24 confusing. And so despite our best efforts to

1 involve people, they find this situation confusing
2 and frustrating and embarrassing and so it's
3 difficult for them to be informed and active
4 citizens.

5 The second impact is that because
6 we're split up in so many districts, it's hard for
7 our legislators to be responsive to the needs in our
8 communities, especially the larger infrastructure
9 projects. A few years ago I remember a number of
10 community leaders met with an elected official and
11 they said, You know, it's wonderful, Chinatown has so
12 many people advocating for them. And that's one way
13 to look at it, but none of our legislators know us so
14 well and serve as champions for our needs and so
15 that's what a unified single district would enable us
16 to have.

17 So what are some of the large
18 infrastructure projects that we need support and
19 championing for? Over 50 years ago Chinatown lost
20 its two parks when the Dan Ryan Expressway was built.
21 At that time the community was promised a new park,
22 and twelve years ago, the Pui Tak park was built; but
23 it didn't have a field house and so we're still
24 hoping to -- and still waiting for this proposed

1 field house to be built.

2 The Chinese immigrants come with hopes
3 for their children and base their hopes on education
4 so libraries and schools are really important. If
5 you visit Chinatown, our library is really
6 overcrowded and our library is one of the busiest in
7 the Chicago Public Library system and so we've been
8 asking and trying to get a new library built in our
9 community.

10 In terms of education, Theresa talked
11 about the schools. A lot of our -- in our proposed
12 area, there's not one high school where the 30,000
13 Chinese live, an area of 90,000 residents. So our
14 youth have to go far away -- 30, 45 minutes
15 sometimes -- on the CTA to get to school and so we're
16 hoping to bring a high school closer to our
17 community.

18 So the experience that we've had
19 trying to advocate for larger infrastructure projects
20 teach us that not only do we need people who are
21 advocating for our needs, we really need a champion
22 down in Springfield to push our agenda and fight for
23 the things that we need. So we believe that being in
24 a single district helps us to do just that. Thank

1 you.

2 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Thank you.

3 Bernie.

4 TESTIMONY

5 BY

6 MS. BERNARDA WONG:

7 Good afternoon, everyone, Chairman
8 Raoul -- good afternoon, everyone, Senator Hunter,
9 our senator, and community members.

10 My name is Bernie Wong and I'm
11 president of the Chinese-American Service League --
12 we call ourself CASL -- a social service agency that
13 has been serving the Chinese community in Chicago for
14 over 30 years.

15 I would like to thank the Committee
16 for holding this very important hearing together to
17 gain input for the redistricting process. CASL is
18 also a very active part of the Coalition for a Better
19 Chinese-American Community -- both Theresa and David
20 had mentioned that -- which has been working on the
21 redistricting issue and community problem in general
22 for over a decade.

23 I've lived and worked in the Greater
24 Chicago -- Greater Chinatown Community area for the

1 past few decades -- that shows my age now -- I've
2 raised my family in the Bridgeport neighborhood and
3 I've been a member of St. Therese Catholic Church for
4 several decades. My organization, the
5 Chinese-American Service League, was founded in 1978
6 and is the largest and the most comprehensive social
7 service agency in the Midwest dedicated to serving
8 the needs of the Chinese-Americans.

9 Housed in the Kam L. Liu Building with
10 over 300 bilingual staff and professional and support
11 staff, CASL has a budget of over 11 million that
12 supports programming that mainly serves immigrants
13 who do not -- may not have formal education and
14 possess few transferable skills; but since many of
15 these individuals do not speak English and sometimes
16 have no family or friends in the area, CASL often
17 becomes an instant family and friend and teacher to
18 our clients.

19 With our support, CASL clients become
20 thriving residents and citizens of the Greater
21 Chicago Community making valuable contributions in
22 their own right as independent, productive members of
23 society. In the words of one of our clients -- I
24 quote, We have nothing but our dreams. The

1 Chinese-American Service League helped us realize
2 them, end quote.

3 CASL has many, many programs -- I
4 invite all of you to come visit -- Chinese education
5 development, health services, employment services,
6 housing, financial, literacy, outreach services and
7 many more. We reach over 17,000 clients annually.
8 Our clients live primarily in the Chinatown Armour
9 Square, Bridgeport, McKinley Park, Brighton Park
10 area. We also have included a portion of the South
11 Loop in our community area because there is a
12 significant number of Chinese residents who are our
13 clients living in Oak -- Dearborn Park, all the way
14 around Dearborn and 90th.

15 The attached map showing the location
16 of our staff along with the Pui Tak Center's ESL
17 students is a compelling document that is a strong
18 argument for keeping this area, which we have
19 designated the Greater Chinatown Community area, as
20 part of a single district in the redistricting
21 process.

22 While CASL is currently located in
23 Illinois' 5th House District, CASL clients are now
24 spread over a total of five State Representative

1 Districts: the 6th, the 2nd, the 9th and the 1st.
2 The case is the same with other service organizations
3 in the community, including Pui Tak, as you heard,
4 which enrolls almost 1,000 ESL students in its
5 classes. Ev- -- Henry Ru- -- a community-based
6 social service agency on the eastern edge of the
7 community area, estimates that the clientele has
8 grown to 60 percent Asian. All of this organization
9 receives some state funding so the outcome of the
10 state redistricting will undeniably have a very
11 important impact on how well we are able to serve our
12 clients and our community.

13 Additional community institutions
14 including numerous family associations scattered
15 throughout the neighborhood. The Chinese Community
16 Center, the Chinese-American Civic Council, The
17 Chinatown Chamber of Commerce, the Ling Shen Ching
18 Tze Temple on 31st and Morgan, and Mercy Hospital on
19 26th and Michigan is also an important community
20 institutions which has taken quite a few positive
21 measures to recognize the increasing number of
22 Chinese patients it serves. Signs are bilingual in
23 English and Chinese and -- as is many of the doctors
24 and nurses and other staff. The community is also

1 bound together by a wide range of small family-owned
2 businesses including restaurants, noodle shops,
3 printing and sign shops. No longer limited to the
4 Chinatown commercial district along Wentworth and
5 Cermak that most people think of as Chinatown, these
6 businesses are well distributed throughout the
7 community area. There are -- there are also many new
8 areas burgeoning with the entrepreneurial spirit of
9 our community along Morgan and 31st, 31st Street in
10 Bridgeport, and all along the Archer Avenue corridor
11 into McKinley Park and Brighton Park.

12 On 35th Street between Morgan and
13 Aberdeen, the internationally acclaimed artists from
14 China, the Zhou Brothers, have opened a complex of
15 galleries, artist studio and cafes. The Zhou
16 Brothers, by the way, were are former clients and our
17 strong supporters of CASL's work.

18 Within this Greater Chinatown
19 Community area, community members can obtain a range
20 of ethnic goods and services not available anywhere
21 in the vicinity. Limited English speakers can easily
22 converse and conduct business transactions with
23 shopkeepers and service providers in their native
24 Chinese dialects.

1 The new generation of
2 Chinese-Americans who grow up fluent in English is
3 also well served by educational institutions in an
4 area. Numerous Chicago public schools and some
5 private schools throughout the area have
6 Chinese-American student population ranging from 10
7 to 92 percent. There is a growing number of tutoring
8 centers and programs and martial arts that cater to
9 the young people of this community.

10 The Greater Chinatown Community area
11 is a vibrant and cohesive community. Its interests
12 are not served by being split into multiple districts
13 as it is currently. So I ask that the Committee
14 please respect our requests to be named into one
15 single district.

16 Thank you very much.

17 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Thank you.

18 Let me just remind folks that if you
19 have a written statement, we've got plenty of folks
20 here that are going to be testifying, so try to
21 highlight the salient points in the written
22 statement, if you haven't. That's for everybody.
23 Otherwise we'll miss session this week.

24

1 TESTIMONY

2 BY

3 MS. AMI GANDHI:

4 Hello. My name is Ami Gandhi. I'm
5 the legal director of Asian-American Institute.
6 Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify
7 today.

8 I have submitted written comments that
9 are lengthy in detail and provide updated
10 demographics about the rapidly growing Asian-American
11 community in Illinois. So thank you for considering
12 that longer statement as well. I'll keep it brief
13 for right now.

14 Asian-American Institute, also called
15 AAI, urges the General Assembly to give meaningful
16 consideration to the input of Asian-Americans -- not
17 just AAI, but our community members and community
18 organizations as well and not just at this stage in
19 redistricting, but it's crucial that input be heard
20 after draft maps are released and when we can give
21 specific feedback about how the lines will affect our
22 communities.

23 AAI is a Pan-Asian, nonprofit,
24 nonpartisan organization located here in Chicago

1 whose mission is to empower the Asian-American
2 community through advocacy, coalition, building,
3 research and education. 2011 redistricting will
4 critically affect people's day-to-day lives because
5 redistricting determines who can vote, who can run
6 for office and who can win in a given district; but
7 historically in Illinois, minority votes have been
8 diluted by unfair and illegal practices including
9 cracking and packing.

10 For that reason, for many years, AAI
11 has been working with the broader community to unite
12 our neighborhood into single districts and prevent
13 further vote dilution as a result of redistricting.
14 We work in coalition with other minority groups and
15 reform groups -- quite a broad assortment of
16 groups -- including Coalition for a Better
17 Chinese-American Community, Mexican-American Legal
18 Defense and Educational Fund, Illinois Campaign for
19 Accountable Redistricting, and United Congress of
20 Community and Religious Organizations, just to name a
21 few.

22 And in the written testimony submitted
23 today, we describe in detail the legal protections of
24 Asian-American voting rights; current demographics of

1 Asian-Americans in Illinois, according to the very
2 recently released Census information, details about
3 one of the areas of concern, the Greater West Ridge
4 area of Chicago, and the nearby suburbs in that part
5 of Cook County; and the great need for transparency
6 throughout the redistricting process.

7 Under federal and state law,
8 Asian-Americans have the right to have votes that
9 count and that's why we're here today. Our community
10 is particularly concerned about having an equal
11 opportunity to participate in all parts of the
12 political process and especially the ability to elect
13 representatives of our choice.

14 You've heard us testify repeatedly
15 about the rising number of residents and the
16 corresponding fragmentation in neighborhoods such as
17 Chinatown, West Ridge and other places that are
18 compact communities whose members have common ground
19 in terms of history, ethnicity, language and social
20 concerns.

21 In addition to CBC, Hamdard Center,
22 South Asian-Americans, Korean-Americans and other
23 community leaders and organizations are here to
24 testify today with details about the population that

1 they have firsthand experience with and the
2 devastating harm that we face as a result of unfair
3 vote dilution.

4 It's crucial that during this
5 redistricting cycle, the General Assembly must keep
6 cohesive communities of interest united when drawing
7 district lines by respecting boundaries defined by
8 the communities themselves. AAI and our allies plan
9 to provide such community boundaries very soon
10 regarding the Greater West Ridge area and the nearby
11 suburbs in Cook County and we're in the process of
12 obtaining input from community leaders and
13 organizations.

14 It's important for us to consult with
15 the people who live, work and serve clients in those
16 areas so those maps will be coming shortly; but to
17 provide a preview of the demographic for you here
18 today, since 2000, the Asian-American population in
19 Illinois has grown by 39 percent, making us one of
20 the fastest growing racial populations in the state.
21 We represent about 5 percent of the state's
22 population and in some areas, such as Chinatown and
23 Greater Chinatown and Greater West Ridge, the
24 concentration is much, much higher. It's even upward

1 of 25 percent.

2 Asians and Latinos make up an
3 increasingly large portion of the electorate
4 nationwide and in Illinois and AAI and our community
5 partners have worked very hard to increase civic
6 engagement so -- not just to advocate or better lines
7 to be drawn during the redistricting process, but to
8 improve voter turnout, voter registration and to
9 encourage people to participate in their government
10 at all stages of the process.

11 Nonetheless, an Asian-American has
12 still never been elected to the Illinois General
13 Assembly or any statewide office, even though over
14 100 Asian-Americans in Cook and DuPage counties have
15 run for office, including federal, state and local
16 positions and most of these candidates have run in
17 the last 10 years.

18 Contributing to the problem of
19 Asian-Americans not having the full and fair
20 opportunity to elect candidates of our choice,
21 redistricting has fragmented our neighborhood
22 repeatedly. After the 2000 Census, five Illinois
23 Senate districts were over 10 percent Asian-American,
24 but the district lines that were redrawn in 2001 left

1 only two Illinois Senate districts to be over 10
2 percent Asian-American; and based on the current
3 district lines in the recently released Census data,
4 16 House districts and 10 Senate districts are over
5 10 percent Asian-American.

6 Now, I mention that because we want to
7 make it clear that Asian-Americans are very important
8 stakeholders in this year's redistricting process at
9 the State and Congressional levels.

10 As I mentioned, we are very concerned
11 about the Greater West Ridge area, an example of an
12 area whose residents have common ground in terms of
13 history, ethnicity, language and social concerns, and
14 as you can see on the map that's attached to AAI's
15 testimony, not only is there a high concentration of
16 Asian-Americans in these areas, but there's a
17 plethora of institutions in these areas as well that
18 are vital to our community members and community
19 members of all races in that area, including
20 nonprofit organizations, religious institutions,
21 schools, ethnic, media, retail and commercial
22 outlets.

23 As shown by recently released Census
24 data, the district in this area indicated on your map

1 faced a loss of population; however, each of these
2 same areas experienced a significant growth of Asian
3 population, again, just pointing to the important
4 stake that we have in the process.

5 The residents in this area are largely
6 comprised of Asian, Indian, Korean and Filipino
7 residents and there are also clusters of Pakistani,
8 Chinese, Vietnamese and other Asian-American
9 residents in that area. These people experience
10 similar social problems, including limited access to
11 public transportation, low income, limited English
12 proficiency and linguistic isolation. That area is a
13 gateway for many new immigrants and new citizens who
14 are in the process of adjusting to life in the U.S.

15 Now, AAI and other groups gave input
16 during the 2001 redistricting process; but our
17 communities were still further splintered. We
18 testified at hearings like this, but our voting
19 rights were still diluted. So that points to the
20 need for meaningful considering of our input, not
21 just now but also after draft maps are made
22 available.

23 Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: And to recognize Senator

1 Righter.

2 MINORITY SPOKESPERSON RIGHTER: Thank you,
3 Mr. Chairman.

4 I want to ask a question of the
5 Coalition for a Better Chinese-American Community.

6 And, young lady -- I think you
7 testified you were the leadoff -- the map that you
8 have, that you distributed to the members, I want to
9 be clear, this isn't a proposed House or Senate
10 district, this is simply a reach in, if you will,
11 that you kind of outlined saying that whatever else
12 is around this, this area should be held together.

13 Is that a fair characterization of
14 what you've given us.

15 MS. THERESA MAH: That is correct.

16 MINORITY SPOKESPERSON RIGHTER: Can you go over
17 again, just very quickly, the demographics within the
18 region -- that region?

19 MS. THERESA MAH: Yes. The total population of
20 that community area is a little over 89,000 and of
21 that 89,000, about 30 percent are Asian and just
22 about another 30 percent Latino, another 30 percent
23 White and 10 percent African-American.

24 MINORITY SPOKESPERSON RIGHTER: Do you plan on,

1 either by -- on your own or with maybe another group
2 or two, submitting something more comprehensive, in
3 other words, a suggestion for what a House or Senate
4 district should look like around this area that
5 you've outlined?

6 MS. THERESA MAH: Yes. We do plan to attend
7 one of the upcoming scheduled hearings and at that
8 time, we will have a proposed map with a state house
9 district that we would like to see that includes our
10 community area.

11 MINORITY SPOKESPERSON RIGHTER: Okay. Great.
12 We look forward to that. Thank you.

13 MS. BERNARDA WONG: I just want to also add
14 that we are in communication with many of the other
15 organizations that are outside of the Asian community
16 that we work closely with. Our partners are talking
17 to them. So we are aware of them.

18 MINORITY SPOKESPERSON RIGHTER: Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Thank you. I appreciate
20 Senator Righter's questions. I would suggest that,
21 you know, we get that type of input from anybody who
22 wants to give it to us because that's what these
23 hearings are about, to try to get that type of input.
24 I appreciate testimony.

1 Senator Lightford.

2 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
3 I'll be quick.

4 You indicated there were five state
5 rep districts that float through the Chinatown
6 community and one of you acknowledged Senator Hunter
7 as your senator.

8 How many Senate districts flow through
9 the Chinatown area.

10 MS. THERESA MAH: Currently three.

11 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Three Senate districts,
12 five rep districts?

13 MS. THERESA MAH: (Nonverbal response.)

14 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Okay. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Senator Noland?

16 VICE CHAIRPERSON NOLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

17 Just for a point of clarification,
18 now, I don't know that the four of you intended to be
19 heard as a panel. So I want to be sure that we're
20 making a distinction. When we say "Asian," use the
21 term "Asian," are we all talking about the same
22 demographic group with your request for
23 representation.

24 MS. AMI GANDHI: We are. When we are talking

1 about the statistics, we're talking about the exact
2 same Census statistics that refer to Asians as one
3 category and then we've made distinctions, such as
4 the fact that in Chinatown, most of the Asians are
5 Chinese-American and in the West Ridge area, most of
6 the Asians are South Asian or Filipino.

7 VICE CHAIRPERSON NOLAND: And, likewise, in the
8 Skokie/Morton Grove area?

9 MS. AMI GANDHI: Most of the Asians in that
10 area, again, all fall within the term "Asian"; but
11 the subgroups include Asian, Indian, Pakistani,
12 Filipino, Vietnamese.

13 VICE CHAIRPERSON NOLAND: Similar composition?

14 MS. AMI GANDHI: Correct.

15 VICE CHAIRPERSON NOLAND: Thank you.

16 MS. AMI GANDHI: Thank you.

17 MR. DAVID WU: Up to right now, the Census has
18 only provided information for Asians and not
19 sub-Asian groups. So in Chinatown, even -- most
20 people are Chinese.

21 VICE CHAIRPERSON NOLAND: Right. Okay. Thank
22 you.

23 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: All right. Thank you.

24 Thank you for your testimony.

1 And the next group we'll hear from:
2 Lawrence Hill; Terry Smith from the African-Americans
3 for Legislative Redistricting; Josina Morita from the
4 United Congress Community and Religious
5 organizations; Bryan Echols from Metropolitan Area
6 Groups for Igniting Civilization, Jennifer Arwade
7 from the Albany Park Neighborhood Council; and
8 Michael Rodriguez, Enlace Chicago.

9 A VOICE: Senator, there are three
10 representatives for AALR.

11 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Okay. How many seats do we
12 have?

13 A VOICE: AALR would need -- three
14 representatives, but one statement.

15 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Fabulous.

16 We'll start with African-Americans for
17 Legislative Redistricting.

18 MR. LAWRENCE HILL: Good afternoon. My name is
19 Lawrence Hill.

20 I am president of the Cook County Bar
21 Association, the oldest black bar association in
22 America. I am here today on behalf of
23 African-Americans for Legislative Redistricting. We
24 are a coalition of civic leaders and civic groups

1 throughout the state of Illinois, including various
2 local chapters of the NAACP and the National Urban
3 League. Some of our members were participants in the
4 2001 Legislative Redistricting and, thus, brings that
5 invaluable historical insight to the process.

6 My objective here today is to outline
7 AALR's vision of the minimum prerequisites of a fair
8 redistricting plan for black residents of Illinois.
9 In doing so, I address three areas of primary
10 concerns: The Illinois Voting Rights Act of 2011;
11 attempts at packing black voters, and other various
12 considerations.

13 We believe -- first of all, with
14 regards to the Illinois Voting Rights Act of 2011, we
15 believe that that Act is momentous in salutary law
16 that promises a fair redistricting process for all
17 racial minorities, if it is properly implemented.
18 This Act fills a void left by the Voting Rights Act
19 of 1965.

20 In Bartlett versus Strickland, the
21 United States Supreme Court held that the Voting
22 Rights Act prohibition against minority dilution
23 applies only where a minority group constitutes a
24 voting age majority in a putative district. The

1 Court, however, expressly left to the states whether
2 other protection in addition to majority-minority
3 districts would be available. Illinois has elected
4 to exercise the discretion left to it by the United
5 States Supreme Court.

6 We read the Illinois Voting Rights Act
7 to require the legislature to create crossover,
8 coalition or influence districts where it is not
9 feasible to create a majority-minority district and
10 where doing so was otherwise consistent with the
11 other redistricting edicts in the United States
12 Constitution.

13 Our coalition views the Illinois
14 Voting Rights Act as a protection against
15 gratuitously cracking the black vote. Now, cracking,
16 of course, is the dilution of the vote by spreading
17 the black population into multiple districts in which
18 it cannot control the outcome of an election. In the
19 absence of the Illinois Voting Rights Act in a
20 district where blacks do not constitute a voting-age
21 majority, it would be fair game to redistribute the
22 population.

23 However, assuming the other
24 prerequisites of a voting dilution claim are

1 satisfied, if a black plurality can demonstrate the
2 existence of white crossover votes sufficient to
3 elect the black-preferred candidate or to show
4 sufficient support from other minority groups to
5 elect the black preferred candidate, then the
6 Illinois Voting Rights Act mandates that the black
7 population not be fractured. Our first minimum
8 prerequisite for a fair redistricting process that
9 the Illinois Voting Rights Act of 2011 be followed.

10 We understand that the Illinois Voting
11 Rights Act and its additional minority opportunity
12 options to be constant with the Equal Protection
13 Clause of the 14th Amendment and as, such, it can
14 be -- Bartlett crossover districts may serve to
15 diminish the significance and influence race by
16 encouraging minority and majority voters to work
17 together towards a common goal.

18 Quite apart from encouraging cross
19 racial coalitions, the flexibility provided by the
20 Illinois Voting Rights Act helps to debunk the
21 stereotype of the black vote as raced-based -- as
22 race-based, rather, and to permit traditional
23 redistricting practices, such as partisanship and
24 maintenance of community interests to renown to the

1 benefit of black voters.

2 Let me be a little more specific. The
3 United States Supreme Court held in *Easley versus*
4 *Cromartie* that where racial identification correlates
5 highly with political affiliation, districts that
6 concentrate blacks as strong Democrats do not abridge
7 the Constitution.

8 In addition to demonstrating continued
9 excellence -- existence, rather, of racially
10 polarized voting in Illinois, the 2010 midterm
11 elections underscored black voters' positions as the
12 most loyal Democrat voters in the state. Exit polls
13 showed the Democratic voter candidate captured 90
14 percent of the black vote while taking a mere 33
15 percent of the white vote, a difference giving the
16 Democrat candidate a slim margin of victory.

17 In the United States Senate contest,
18 black voters delivered 94 percent of their vote to
19 the Democratic candidate, while whites supplied only
20 31 percent of their votes. Political cohesion of
21 this magnitude makes it a stretch to caricature the
22 minority opportunity districts sanctioned by the
23 Illinois Voting Rights Act as race-based.

24 Black voters in Illinois are also the

1 strongest partisan and, as such, should not be
2 characterized myopically as a racial group in the
3 electoral process.

4 We also understand the Illinois Voting
5 Rights Act to be sensitive to the idea of maintaining
6 the community of interest. Many black voters in
7 Illinois have a unique relationship with their
8 current state representative or senator. These
9 relationships are the product of constituent service
10 and advocacy issues that bear especially upon
11 communities of color. Where such relationships
12 exist, the Illinois Voting Rights Act allows for
13 their continuance, rather, even if the black vote in
14 this population does not constitute a majority in
15 that district.

16 Moreover, the United States Supreme
17 Court has been solicitous of State efforts to
18 maintain constituency representative relations. For
19 this reason, we do not expect a substantial change
20 of -- we do not expect a substantial change in the
21 current map as it relates to African-American
22 districts, unless there is a compelling reason for
23 change.

24 I would like to next address our

1 coalition's concerns with the packing of the black
2 voters. "Packing" refers to the over-concentration
3 of black voters in a few districts, thereby,
4 constricting their ability to control or influence
5 outcomes in a greater number of districts.

6 After the 2001 redistricting, the
7 Illinois Republican Party, along with individual
8 plaintiffs, brought suit under Article 2 of the
9 Voting Rights Act claiming that several of the
10 black-majority districts that had been created by the
11 redistricting plan did not have enough
12 African-Americans to give them effective control.

13 These claims were rejected by the
14 court which found that the static rules of thumb
15 about the requisite percentage of black voters
16 necessary for an effective district must yield to
17 countervailing empirical evidence. The suit was then
18 and is to this day perceived as an attempt by the
19 Republican Party to pack the black voters.

20 We understand that the redistricting
21 process is political. We simply do not wish to be
22 its pawns. Thus, our second minimum prerequisite for
23 a fair redistricting is that the legislature be --
24 legislature be guided by the best available political

1 data in determining which majority-minority districts
2 to create, which Illinois Voting Rights Act
3 majority-opportunity alternatives to create and what
4 percentage of minority populations will create
5 effective majority-minority and majority-opportunity
6 districts.

7 This, obviously, may not forestall
8 litigation like the suit brought after the 2001
9 redistricting effort; but a baseline commitment
10 provided by the best available data, rather than
11 generalizations, will speed the resolution of any
12 litigation. Of course, we respectfully request that
13 all such data be relied upon by either of the parties
14 be made available to the public.

15 The final couple points I want to make
16 on my testimony, first of all, relates to the
17 imprisoned population in the state. We understand
18 that the practice here in this state is to count
19 prison inmates as residents of the locality while
20 they're in prison. Because blacks and Latinos
21 constitute a disproportionately high share of the
22 state and federal prison population in Illinois, we
23 believe that the practice is harmful and should be
24 changed to -- the prisoners should be counted where

1 they originate from instead of where they're
2 currently housed. Finally -- that process of
3 counting inmates where they're housed -- where they
4 come from as opposed to where they're housed is
5 prevalent currently in Maryland and New York.

6 And our final statement is with regard
7 to the fact that the Illinois Voting Rights Act of
8 2011 does not expressly apply to congressional
9 redistricts; however, the same discretion afforded to
10 the states in Bartlett does apply to congressional
11 redistricting. We believe as a final minimum
12 prerequisite for fair redistricting, that the
13 legislature should apply the basic framework of the
14 Illinois Voting Rights Act to its congressional
15 redistricting.

16 Our coalition, African-Americans for
17 Legislative Redistricting, is looking forward to
18 participating in future hearings and we thank you for
19 your time today.

20 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Thank you.

21 Josina.

22

23

24

1 TESTIMONY

2 BY

3 MS. JOSINA MORITA:

4 Hi, my name is Josina Morita. I'm
5 here on behalf of the United Congress of Community
6 and Religious Organizations, which is a grass-roots
7 multiracial alliance of community organizing groups
8 that works in over 30 different communities across
9 the Chicagoland area. We have been -- we are also a
10 member of the Illinois Coalition for Accountable
11 Redistricting, the Draw the Line Coalition.

12 We have for the last six months been
13 in the process of looking at Census data and drawing
14 maps at the state and congressional levels and we are
15 asking the General Assembly, along with the
16 traditional redistricting criteria of equal
17 population, compact and contiguous districts to
18 consider the following that we are also using in our
19 drawing process, which includes respecting
20 communities of interest.

21 You just heard from Chinatown and how
22 they've been split and the impact. Many of the
23 communities that we represent also have been split
24 into as many as four House districts and three Senate

1 districts, which have had an impact on resources and
2 representations for their communities.

3 We also echo what was just said around
4 the issue of how prisoners are counted in the process
5 of redistricting. We ask that if House Bill 94 makes
6 it to the Senate, that there is support for that that
7 change how prisoners are counted. The legal question
8 about the census counting them at their usual
9 residence, while for the purpose of redistricting,
10 they're supposed to be counted at their legal
11 residence and the Illinois Supreme Court, multiple
12 times since the 1700s, has said that prison is not a
13 legal residence and if they did vote, that they would
14 be voting at their home address, not from prison. So
15 respecting communities of interest.

16 Second, that in the process of
17 ensuring the creation of a Voting Rights district,
18 that certain Voting Rights districts do not undermine
19 the other efforts of other communities. So an
20 African-American community. Voting Rights district
21 does not undermine a Latino Voting Rights district.

22 I think that Illinois has a strong
23 track record with the example of the creation of
24 Guiterrez's congressional district in being able to

1 create racially equitable plans that are mutually
2 beneficial for all communities, and we believe that
3 that can continue to be true at the state and
4 congressional level in the current redistricting
5 process.

6 We've drawn maps at the state level
7 and we believe that the existing African-American
8 state districts can continue to be protected and that
9 there are multiple opportunities for additional
10 Latino districts at the same time keeping Chinatown
11 together.

12 And, last, that we would like to see
13 the -- as Senator Righter stated earlier, we ask that
14 we -- that communities in the public can see a draft
15 of the redistricting map before votes are taken so
16 that communities can provide input. We'd like to
17 work in partnership with the General Assembly and the
18 Senate Redistricting Committee in ensuring that there
19 is a fair map that represents all of these different
20 communities.

21 So thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Thank you.

23 Is there anybody...

24

1 TESTIMONY

2 BY

3 MR. ROB ASPHOLM:

4 Mr. Echols couldn't be here today, but
5 I'm Rob Aspholm, an organizer and public coordinator
6 with MAGIC, and I just have a brief statement.

7 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Okay.

8 MR. ROB ASPHOLM: Metropolitan Area Group for
9 Igniting Civilization or MAGIC is a community-based
10 organization that serves and empowers residents in
11 the Woodlawn community. This community is bordered
12 by Martin Luther King Drive to the east -- to the
13 west -- excuse me -- Lake Michigan to the east; 60th
14 Street to the north, and 67th and 70th Street to the
15 south.

16 Woodlawn is a community of interest.

17 We are predominantly an
18 African-American community facing shared challenges
19 of high dropout rates, violence, health disparities
20 and lack of access to city services and resources.
21 Our residents are connected by a shared commitment to
22 engage in youth reducing violence, developing
23 community-based public safety and health programs and
24 improving our local schools.

1 Woodlawn is currently split into many
2 districts at all levels of government. In 2000, our
3 own community was drawn into two congressional
4 districts, the 1st and 2nd; four state house
5 districts, the 5th, 25th, 26th and 32nd; three state
6 Senate districts, the 3rd, 13th and 16th; and three
7 city wards, the 5th, 6th and 20th. This has made it
8 more difficult for Woodlawn residents to have their
9 voices heard and their needs met. Woodlawn should be
10 recognized as a community of interest and should be
11 kept together and drawn into as few districts as
12 possible in the current redistricting process.

13 MAGIC is a member of the United
14 Congress of Community and Religious Organizations,
15 which is part of the Illinois Coalition for
16 Accountable Redistricting and Draw the Line. We are
17 committed to working with African-American, Latino,
18 Asian, Arab and other communities to ensure the
19 redistricting process is transparent, equitable and
20 engages communities.

21 As a coalition, we call on the Senate
22 Redistricting Committee and the General Assembly to
23 do the following: present potential redistricting
24 maps to the public at least a week before a vote so

1 that communities can provide input; ensure fair
2 representation by protecting voting rights under the
3 Federal Voting Rights Act and the new Illinois Voting
4 Rights Act, including influence, coalition and
5 crossover districts; and, finally, recognize and
6 respect communities of interest by keeping them
7 together and not splitting them.

8 Thank you.

9 TESTIMONY

10 BY

11 MR. MICHAEL RODRIGUEZ:

12 Good afternoon, Mr. Chair,
13 distinguished members of the Committee.

14 My name is Michael D. Rodriguez. I'm
15 the executive director of Enlace Chicago. We are
16 members of the United Congress for Community
17 Religious Organizations as well as the Illinois
18 Latino Agenda and we represent Little Village --
19 Enlace Chicago does.

20 Our mission is to improve the quality
21 of life of Little Village residents. According to
22 the U.S. Census, Little Village, known as South
23 Lawndale -- and it is a community of interest. Our
24 community of 90,000 residents has the largest

1 concentration of Mexican-Americans in the Midwest
2 United States. Our community has been split into
3 many districts at all levels of government.

4 In 2000, our community was drawn into
5 two Congressional districts, four state House
6 districts, three state Senate districts, and four
7 city wards. This made it very difficult for Little
8 Village residents to have their voices heard and
9 their needs met.

10 Little Village should be kept together
11 and drawn into as few districts as possible in the
12 current process. Little Village should be drawn to
13 one House district and one Senate district, and I
14 believe you have a copy of that proposed district in
15 your hands. Generally speaking, it's Archer Avenue
16 to the south, railroad tracks off of Ogden Avenue to
17 the north, Cicero to the west and Western to the
18 east.

19 We'd like to call on the Senate
20 Redistricting Committee and also the General Assembly
21 to do three -- three of the following things: One is
22 to present potential redistricting maps to the public
23 at least one week before a vote so that communities
24 can have interests and have their input.

1 Secondly, we'd like to ensure that
2 fair representation by protecting the Voting Rights
3 Act under the Federal Voting Rights Act and a new
4 Illinois Voting Rights Act, including influence,
5 coalition and crossover districts.

6 And, lastly, we'd like to recognize
7 and respect communities of interest like Little
8 Village -- most notably Little Village -- as well as
9 Chinatown and other areas by keeping them together
10 and by not splitting them up.

11 Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: I've got a question that I
13 want to throw out there for either of the last two
14 speakers because something I was thinking about as --
15 because I represent the -- I represent a large part
16 of the Woodlawn community.

17 And as I look at your map of Little
18 Village and see the definitions of neighborhoods,
19 North Lawndale, South Lawndale -- one speaker spoke
20 of keeping a -- what has historically been described
21 as a neighborhood together as a community of interest
22 and, you know, there's a conflict between what -- how
23 different people may define different communities and
24 how you -- you know, it's going to be challenging for

1 us to deal with with that and I'm curious as to what
2 you define as the boundaries of Woodlawn and how that
3 interacts with -- in common pooled interest with
4 Grant Crossing and Englewood and South Shore and the
5 surrounding neighborhoods.

6 MR. ROB ASPHOLM: We were simply using the
7 City's community map. It's as provided by the City
8 of Chicago. So of the 77 community areas of Chicago.
9 So -- like I mentioned earlier, that's bordered by
10 King Drive on the west, Lake Michigan on the east,
11 60th Street on the north, and 67th to 71st Street on
12 the south.

13 MR. MICHAEL RODRIGUEZ: These are specifically
14 identified Census areas and I think they coincide
15 with the 70-some-odd -- 77-some-odd community areas
16 as defined by the Census tracts in the City of
17 Chicago.

18 MS. JOSINA MORITA: We also have further
19 documentation for each of the community areas that
20 are talking to you that provide more substantial
21 evidence that there are community's interests,
22 including language, you know, income, housing needs,
23 violence, other things. So we have that
24 documentation for you as well.

1 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: I'm just suggesting that if
2 there's violence in South Shore, there's violence in
3 Grant Crossing, there's violence in Englewood,
4 there's violence in Woodlawn but they're defined as
5 four distinct different neighborhoods, right, but
6 they speak all the -- they speak the same language;
7 right?

8 MS. JOSINA MORITA: Right.

9 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: So I'm just --

10 MS. JOSINA MORITA: We provided some
11 distinguishing characteristics of roles in terms of
12 the vicinity to University of Chicago gentrification
13 factors as well.

14 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Okay. All right.

15 Senior Righter.

16 MINORITY SPOKESPERSON RIGHTER: Thank you, Mr.
17 Chairman.

18 First, Mr. Hill, not a question but a
19 comment I noticed on Page 3 of your testimony,
20 Line 27. I heard you go over about the notion that
21 you would request -- you think it's appropriate that
22 any information -- or information that's relied upon
23 by whoever drafts a map be disclosed at the same
24 time, I would assume, that the map is disclosed

1 itself.

2 Is that -- I don't want to put words
3 in your mouth. Is that a fair characterization of
4 what you mean.

5 MR. LAWRENCE HILL: That's exactly correct.

6 MINORITY SPOKESPERSON RIGHTER: Okay. Thank
7 you.

8 Then to Mr. Rodriguez, I think you're
9 the one who submitted -- now, this is an actual --
10 this is a legislative district unlike the one we saw
11 earlier.

12 MR. MICHAEL RODRIGUEZ: Exactly. That is a
13 proposed legislative -- House district.

14 MINORITY SPOKESPERSON RIGHTER: Okay. Now,
15 I'm -- I live in Illinois but nowhere near Chicago
16 and I'm not familiar with this area.

17 What does this look like compared to
18 the current legislative map.

19 MR. MICHAEL RODRIGUEZ: I don't know if you got
20 the other sheet of paper; but there is another map
21 here and it shows you how South Lawndale is broken up
22 into various Senate, House, Aldermen and
23 Congressional districts --

24 MINORITY SPOKESPERSON RIGHTER: I do have that.

1 Thank you.

2 MR. MICHAEL RODRIGUEZ: Yeah. So that would
3 give you what it looks like today, and basically it's
4 in three House districts and three Senate districts
5 there.

6 MINORITY SPOKESPERSON RIGHTER: And the
7 district, as you've proposed it, would -- what would
8 the demographics of that district be?

9 MR. MICHAEL RODRIGUEZ: So it's 108,000 total
10 population, which would be a House district.
11 Demographics would be 82 percent Hispanic, about
12 90,000 of those residents. I think it's at the
13 bottom of the sheet there.

14 MINORITY SPOKESPERSON RIGHTER: I see. Okay.
15 I'm sorry. I keep asking you questions that you've
16 already answered.

17 What are the demographics -- do you
18 know, roughly, the demographics of the districts that
19 currently divide this area?

20 MR. MICHAEL RODRIGUEZ: Sure. I mean, I would
21 say that demographics of the districts that currently
22 divide this area are probably a bit similar,
23 although, I think the greatest need -- I think that
24 the Chinese community spoke to it -- when we talk

1 about capital needs and things of that nature -- we
2 have three reps currently, none of them live in
3 Little Village or none of them see Little Village as
4 their primary area of service, if you will.

5 So I think one of the reasons why we
6 want to be our own district is that we want to make
7 sure that we're able to elect someone within our
8 community who shares the interests of the community.

9 MINORITY SPOKESPERSON RIGHTER: Thank you,
10 Mr. Rodriguez.

11 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Senator Martinez.

13 SENATOR MARTINEZ: I'm a little confused. I'm
14 sorry. The last comment that you made about that --
15 you don't have one state rep that represents Little
16 Village, don't you have three?

17 MR. MICHAEL RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

18 SENATOR MARTINEZ: So you have three and you're
19 looking to see one -- that you have --

20 MR. MICHAEL RODRIGUEZ: We'd like to be in one,
21 yes. None of the three necessarily see Little
22 Village as potentially their base, if you will, and
23 none of them --

24 SENATOR MARTINEZ: Because the way it's

1 divided?

2 MR. MICHAEL RODRIGUEZ: Exactly. Our community
3 is divided.

4 SENATOR MARTINEZ: Okay. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Senator Murphy.

6 SENATOR MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

7 Mr. Rodriguez, your target per --
8 Latino percentage in your district you've created for
9 us is 82; correct?

10 MR. MICHAEL RODRIGUEZ: Point 14.

11 SENATOR MURPHY: Point 14, every vote counts.

12 MR. MICHAEL RODRIGUEZ: That's right.

13 SENATOR MURPHY: Is that what you consider to
14 be sort of the total necessary voting age -- total
15 population to elect a candidate of your choice?

16 MR. MICHAEL RODRIGUEZ: I think that's another
17 philosophical question. The answer in this area is
18 largely Latino community. I think what we're getting
19 at more specifically is that we want to make sure
20 that our community is in one district so that we're
21 able to have a true representative of our community
22 area in both the House and the Senate.

23 Now, if you're asking another question
24 about Latino -- Latinos being able to elect their own

1 individual, you know, that's another question.

2 SENATOR MURPHY: Well, why did you choose 82.14
3 as opposed to another number?

4 MR. MICHAEL RODRIGUEZ: Well, that wasn't
5 specifically why we did -- that wasn't a driving
6 factor in this district. The driving factor in this
7 district was geography and the community of interest
8 shares a geography. The percent Latino wasn't
9 necessarily the driving interest in this district.

10 SENATOR MURPHY: Now, if that were replicated
11 around the state based on the geography of where the
12 Latino population is in the state of Illinois, would
13 you be comfortable with 82 percent Latino districts
14 everywhere where they are in the state?

15 MR. MICHAEL RODRIGUEZ: I think that's up for
16 debate. I think there could be a number lower than
17 that that would be sufficed for folks. I think there
18 actually are -- there is data out there and there has
19 been various interests met at a lower number than 82.
20 That wasn't the driving factor behind this district.

21 SENATOR MURPHY: Do you have any examples of
22 other areas where a lower number was?

23 And anybody can answer this, but, I
24 mean, where a lower number was bound to be acceptable

1 for some reason other than geography.

2 MS. JOSINA MORITA: I'll be honest, we don't
3 feel 100 percent comfortable. We have Virginia who
4 has been legal a expert on this issue from MALDEF who
5 will be speaking to this issue in a little bit, and I
6 think it's probably best to let her answer those
7 legal questions around electable districts and voting
8 percentages.

9 SENATOR MURPHY: Okay. Thank you.

10 SENATOR MARTINEZ: Could I --

11 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Quickly.

12 SENATOR MARTINEZ: I'm looking -- what happened
13 to Jennifer Arwade? Is she --

14 MS. JOSINA MORITA: Jenny couldn't make it. I
15 have her testimony in writing here to submit.

16 SENATOR MARTINEZ: Okay.

17 MS. JOSINA MORITA: Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: All right. Thank you to
19 all of you.

20 I guess we'll have Betty Magness,
21 IVI-IPO; Robin Taylor, Neighbors United; Sharod
22 Gordon, TARGET Area Development Corporation; Shannon
23 Bennett, Kenwood-Oakland Community Organization; and
24 Kyle Hillman from Rogers Park.

1 TESTIMONY

2 BY

3 MS. BETTY MAGNESS:

4 Good morning. And thank you for the
5 opportunity to speak.

6 I'd like to say that my witness
7 statement was filed. You should have it by now. My
8 name is -- thank you for the opportunity to speak and
9 I did file a written statement. My name is C. Betty
10 Magness. I am a member of the New Eastside Area
11 Residents Association, Rainbow PUSH Coalition and
12 Independent Voters of Illinois Independent Precinct
13 Organization. I'm here today to read a statement
14 from IVI-IPO.

15 IVI-IPO is strongly opposed to
16 gerrymandering. We believe that voting districts
17 should be created for the benefit of constituents,
18 not for representatives. District boundaries should
19 be able to be justified by a public policy need, not
20 by private interest or desires. It is as
21 inappropriate for legislatures to vote for a map
22 based on their political self-interest as it would be
23 to vote for legislation based on their financial
24 self-interest.

1 IVI-IPO supports the following
2 criteria: Districts should not be drawn to favor or
3 discriminate against incumbents, candidates or
4 parties; incumbent addresses must not be considered;
5 must comply with the Voting Rights Act; should
6 respect counties, cities, communities of interest and
7 neighborhoods; must be geographically contiguous;
8 should have reasonably equal populations. To the
9 extent there is no conflict with the criteria above,
10 districts should be geographically compact.

11 The redistricting process should be
12 open for public input, computer terminals and/or
13 on-line mapping should be available for public use
14 during the same period of time the legislature is
15 drawing districts. The map drawn by the legislature
16 should be available for public inspection and a venue
17 for public comments should be established for at
18 least one week prior to a vote being taken to adopt a
19 map. I would like to also say IVI is a 67-year-old
20 organization.

21 Lastly, we are concerned with the
22 counting of -- African-American and Latino prisoners
23 being counted where they are housed rather than where
24 they live originally prior to incarceration.

1 We also express the concern of fair
2 representation of the Asian American community.

3 Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Thank you.

5 Mr. Gordon.

6 TESTIMONY

7 BY

8 MR. SHAROD GORDON:

9 Good afternoon, Senator, members of
10 the panel. Thanks for hosting this hearing today.
11 I'm Sharod Gordon. I am the executive director for
12 TARGET Area Development in Auburn Gresham on the
13 South Side of Chicago.

14 TARGET Area, we are a community-based
15 organization -- and excuse me for my -- I meant to
16 preface that I did submit written testimony as well
17 to the panel. TARGET, we are a community-based
18 organization that serves and empowers residents in
19 the community. We are bordered from Stewart to the
20 west down to Leavitt and from the east, 75th to the
21 north and south on 91st -- 91st Street.

22 Auburn Gresham is a community of
23 interest. We are predominantly an African-American
24 community served by the 79th Street business corridor

1 and a strong community of working-class residents, a
2 number of faith institutions and several community
3 organizations that service residents and youth for a
4 number of needs of the community.

5 Our residents, we are connected by a
6 shared commitment where we work -- strive to reduce
7 violence, develop community-based neighborhood safety
8 programs working to reduce the violence and we work
9 on preserving our community housing stock, which at
10 Auburn Gresham we do have a large housing stock of
11 single-family homes and not just multi-unit
12 buildings, and we also work diligently on improving
13 our local schools in Auburn Gresham.

14 However, there are several problems.
15 We are currently split into many districts at all
16 levels of government. In 2000, our community was
17 drawn to one Congressional district, however, we have
18 three state House districts, 27, 31 and 36, and, as
19 you know, that is a problem because every two years,
20 members of the house have to get re-elected and
21 residents are often confused by who it is that I'm
22 voting for and when exactly do I need to vote this
23 time around.

24 We also have three Senate districts.

1 We do have our one champion who stepped up, Senator
2 Collins, but we also have two other senators where we
3 are struggling at times to work to meet our needs,
4 the needs of the residents. We also have three city
5 wards.

6 Now, I'll just go through just three
7 specific problems for us. Because there are so many
8 districts -- a number of districts, our residents
9 have a problem sometimes reaching out to the
10 different legislators. Again, they don't know who
11 they are and they also don't know that this is my
12 specific legislator. We take a number of informed
13 and empowered residents to Springfield to advocate
14 for specific evidence-based programs and for specific
15 needs of the community but, however, we have to work
16 really hard to get those folks to know who it is
17 exactly that they're going to see when they get to
18 Springfield.

19 We also have -- and this is a specific
20 issue -- one building in one of our -- in our
21 district that the building is split -- it's a huge
22 commercial facility with residential apartments and
23 that building -- that one building on the corner is
24 actually split into two districts. So the east side

1 of the building, they vote for one senator and one
2 rep; the west side of the building votes for another.

3 Now, that is really, really strange;
4 but it's true, it's real and it's happening and
5 that's why we're striving to push the Committee to
6 really work to hear the interests of the community.

7 And, lastly, with other problems that
8 the needs of the community sometimes go unheard
9 because they'll spend time in an alderman's office
10 and sometimes -- as you know how it goes, that they
11 have to wait and wait and wait to get their needs
12 met, but then they find out that they're actually in
13 the wrong Alderman's office.

14 So we really believe that that can be
15 rectified by consolidating and ensuring that we do
16 have one concise district for Auburn Gresham. Auburn
17 Gresham should be recognized in the redistricting as
18 a community of interest and should be kept together
19 and drawn into as few districts as possible.

20 TARGET Area, we're members of -- as
21 you heard from some of the other testimonies that
22 were presented earlier, we are members of United
23 Congress of Community and Religious Organizations and
24 we're committed to working with not only the

1 African-American population in the Auburn Gresham
2 community, but Latinos and Asians and the Arabs and
3 other communities to ensure that the current
4 redistricting process is transparent, equitable and
5 engages all the communities in the process.

6 And I'd like to say that I agree with
7 the Senate Minority Leader that Facebook and Twitter
8 and the Internet, it is a good way to reach out to
9 the residents, but we'd like to ensure that not only
10 hearings are held in these faci- -- in the state
11 facilities, but the hearings are held in the
12 community as well so that our residents can have an
13 opportunity and see what the maps would look like
14 when it's redistricted.

15 And so, lastly, as was mentioned with
16 our coalition, what we're calling on the General
17 Assembly to do is present the potential redistricting
18 maps at least a week before the vote so that we can
19 provide input.

20 Thanks a lot.

21 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Thank you.

22 Next.

23

24

1 TESTIMONY

2 BY

3 MR. VAUGHN WILSON:

4 Hi. My name is Vaughn Wilson. I will
5 be speaking on behalf of KOCO, the Kenwood-Oakland
6 Community Organization. I would like to thank
7 Chairman Raoul, Senator Harmon, Senator Martinez, and
8 other distinguished members of the Illinois State
9 Senate for having us -- allowing us this opportunity.

10 Kenwood-Oakland Community Organization
11 is a community-based organization that serves and
12 empowers residents in the community. This community
13 area is bordered roughly by Cottage Grove to the
14 west, Lake Michigan to the east, 35th Street to the
15 north, and 51st Street to the south.

16 We are historically an
17 African-American community with a rich community
18 history. Over the last decade, our community has
19 changed with the demolition of public housing and
20 gentrification which increased the need for our
21 communities to unite to meet the needs of our
22 long-term residents.

23 Our residents are connected by a
24 shared commitment to reduce violence, advocating for

1 affordable housing and improving our local schools
2 and we would like to be consulted on how our
3 community map is drawn. Again, Kenwood-Oakland
4 Community Organization is also a member of community
5 police organizations and as a coalition, we call on
6 the Senate Redistricting Committee and the General
7 Assembly to do the following:

8 One, present potential redistricting
9 maps to the public at least one week before a vote so
10 that the communities can provide input; two, it shows
11 representation by protecting voting rights and under
12 the Federal Voting Rights Act and under the new
13 Illinois Voting Rights Act including influence,
14 coalition and crossover districts; and, thirdly,
15 recognize and respect communities of interest by
16 keeping them together and not splitting them.

17 We have not submitted written
18 testimony, but we will.

19 Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: I appreciate that.

21 TESTIMONY

22 BY

23 MR. KYLE HILLMAN:

24 Thank you for this opportunity to

1 speak today as well as the Assembly's recent attempts
2 to make the process a little bit more fair and open.
3 I appreciate it.

4 My name is Kyle Hillman. I'm a
5 resident of Chicago and I live currently in the
6 Rogers Park community, the farthest north ward in
7 Chicago.

8 I'm asking that the Illinois Assembly
9 redraw Rogers Park community into a Chicago-based
10 district, specifically moving areas currently in the
11 18th to the 14th to create a fair redistrict that
12 follows the spirit of the recently passed bill
13 SB 3976.

14 The area I speak of today is a large
15 minority population, a large refugee population,
16 nearly obsolete business, job opportunities, there's
17 a struggling school, there's a high crime rate and it
18 has one of the largest food kitchens in the metro
19 area and, yet, it is included in a district that is
20 mostly consisting of lakefront homes in Evanston and
21 New Trier.

22 In the last election, this area cast
23 2,219 votes out of 25,935. While Rogers Park is a
24 highly diverse neighborhood, it's roughly one-third

1 Caucasian, one-third Latino, one-third black and
2 north of the Howard area that I'm referring to is
3 roughly about 50 percent African-American and 50
4 percent black. If you move the lakefront properties
5 from Rogers Park, you'll actually get a 2 to 1
6 African-American to white disparity and, yet, the
7 18th is roughly about 70 percent Caucasian.

8 The ability of minorities to organize
9 in this area is greatly diminished and I believe if
10 we were moved into the 14th, they could be enhanced
11 because they will be with individuals that share
12 economic and racial similarities and removing the
13 territory from the 18th and placing it into a more
14 balanced district will allow for the creation of an
15 influence district or even a coalition district on
16 the North Side consistent with SB 3976, Illinois
17 Voting Rights of Act of 2011.

18 While the area has quality
19 representatives in Springfield -- I want to make sure
20 that's noted -- it's my belief that the North Side of
21 Rogers Park would be better served in a district that
22 includes the rest of the community as well as those
23 that share their issues.

24 Thank you.

1 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Thank you very much.

2 I just want to make one comment.

3 We have to find that building and we
4 have to put that into one district; but I do want to
5 say, though, you know, when I first ran for the
6 legislature in 1996 -- and I live in the exact same
7 building that I live in -- lived in back then.
8 However, I ran in the 12th Legislative District back
9 then. I currently represent the 13th Legislative
10 District which, back then, was across the street to
11 the east. If you walk directly across the street was
12 the district that then candidate Barack Obama was
13 running in and then across the street to the north
14 was the 3rd Legislative District where Margaret Smith
15 was and somebody's got to live at a boundary; right?

16 There's got to be some building
17 that -- I thought it was odd that I was right on the
18 corner of a district at the time; but I thought about
19 it, you know, there's going to be -- there's
20 boundaries all over the place and there's corners to
21 districts and somebody has to live there.

22 Now, the situation you described --

23 MR. SHAROD GORDON: Right. Exactly.

24 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: -- building in one

1 district; but it's not odd, you know, you will have
2 tons of people --

3 MR. SHAROD GORDON: Right.

4 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: -- will be able to testify
5 that they live on the boundary of three legislative
6 districts.

7 Any questions for -- Senator Maloney.

8 SENATOR MALONEY: Just as a point of curiosity,
9 was that building there when redistricting took
10 place?

11 MR. SHAROD GORDON: Yes. The building was
12 built in 1924.

13 SENATOR MALONEY: Great. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Senator Dillard.

15 SENATOR DILLARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and
16 members.

17 Miss Magness.

18 MS. BETTY MAGNESS: Yes.

19 SENATOR DILLARD: I agree with the IVI-IPO
20 statement here. Why do you think it's important that
21 we not take into consideration where current
22 incumbents live? I mean, that is one of your planks.
23 Why is -- why shouldn't we do that?

24 MS. BETTY MAGNESS: Well, one of the reasons is

1 that the prominent reason for drawing districts is to
2 include people and one person should not be the
3 determining factor for what happens in a
4 neighborhood.

5 SENATOR DILLARD: And, in your mind, when you
6 say that districts should be geographically
7 contiguous, do you mean square or do you have a
8 figure of --

9 MS. BETTY MAGNESS: No.

10 SENATOR DILLARD: -- something in your head?

11 MS. BETTY MAGNESS: What I mean is when you
12 draw a district, I don't want to cut it off at the
13 middle. For example, the building he's talking
14 about, to split it up at that building would mean
15 that the district was not contiguous, geographically
16 contiguous. That's what I was referring to.

17 SENATOR DILLARD: Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: All right. With that, I
19 appreciate the testimony from all of you.

20 Next, we will have Rami Nashashibi
21 from the Inner-City Muslim Action Network; Virginia
22 Martinez from the Mexican American Legal Defense and
23 Educational Fund; Valerie Leonard from Lawndale
24 Alliance; Erku Yimer from the Ethiopian Community

1 Association of Chicago.

2 MS. VIRGINIA MARTINEZ: I believe Rami is not
3 here because somebody else testified.

4 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Then we'll add Karl
5 Brinson, West Side NAACP.

6 MS. MELISSA WILLIAMS: Melissa Williams. I'll
7 go get him.

8 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Thank you.

9 We'll start with you, Virginia.

10 TESTIMONY

11 BY

12 MS. VIRGINIA MARTINEZ:

13 Thank you, Chairman Raoul and members
14 of the Senate Redistricting Committee, for allowing
15 MALDEF to testify today as the Illinois legislature
16 embarks on the critical and highly controversial
17 process of redrawing the Congressional legislative
18 district lines.

19 My name is Virginia Martinez,
20 Legislative Staff Attorney with MALDEF, the Mexican
21 American Legal Defense and Educational Fund. I was
22 joined by Elisa Alfonso who is the Midwest
23 Redistricting Coordinator for MALDEF now. We'd like
24 to update you on our efforts as well as our concerns

1 as this process moves forward.

2 As you know, MALDEF is a national
3 civil rights law firm that works to safeguard the
4 rights of the 50 million Latinos in the United
5 States. MALDEF has worked to protect the voting
6 rights of Latinos through advocacy and, when
7 necessary, litigation since its founding in 1968 and
8 particularly in Illinois since the 1980s.

9 As in the past, we are working to
10 develop a map that protects the rights of the more
11 than 2 million Latinos now living in Illinois. As
12 you are aware, the Latino population grew
13 significantly during the past ten years. Much of
14 that growth was in the collar counties. We are
15 currently in the process of educating these Latino
16 communities about the redistricting process and are
17 consulting them as we look at potential districts.

18 As co-conveners of the Illinois Latino
19 Agenda, made up of almost 50 community-based
20 organizations -- those are Latino community-based
21 organizations -- we have established a Redistricting
22 Committee to ensure that Latino communities have a
23 voice in this important process.

24 Additionally, MALDEF is a member of

1 Draw the Line Illinois, a project of the Illinois
2 Campaign for Accountable Redistricting, which has as
3 its goal to inform and engage the public in the
4 redistricting process. This coalition of
5 community-based, reform and civil rights
6 organizations is providing communities with the
7 information and tools to be fully engaged in the 2011
8 redistricting.

9 MALDEF seeks to ensure that the
10 elected officials adequately protect the rights of
11 Latinos, particularly in areas that have seen
12 substantial growth in the Latino population. The
13 Voting Rights Act will be the lens through which we
14 will view your efforts.

15 In order for members of the Latino
16 community to have an effective voice in the
17 redistricting process, we will have to see the maps
18 developed by the relevant legislative committees with
19 enough time to analyze fully the impact on Latinos
20 and other protected groups.

21 While we appreciate the scheduling of
22 these hearings to receive input, we think, as Senator
23 Righter has pointed out, it is also critical to have
24 hearings after the relevant legislative committees

1 have developed their proposed maps and at least two
2 weeks before any vote is taken. This will provide us
3 with the time to review the maps for compliance with
4 the Federal and State Voting Rights Acts. Without
5 such an opportunity, the promise of a more
6 transparent process is meaningless.

7 We expect to testify again before the
8 Committee to discuss our proposed map after
9 consulting with various community leaders about the
10 political cohesiveness and shared interests of
11 neighborhoods, including income levels, educational
12 backgrounds, housing patterns, language and
13 meaningful access to educational opportunities, that
14 bind these communities together. Some of these
15 community leaders are here today and will testify in
16 future hearings regarding the communities of interest
17 that must be protected.

18 Thank you again for the opportunity to
19 testify before this Committee.

20 TESTIMONY

21 BY

22 MS. MELISSA WILLIAMS:

23 Good afternoon, Chairman. My name is
24 Melissa Williams. I am a member of the West Side

1 Branch of the NAACP. However, on -- today, I am here
2 on behalf of the NAACP Illinois State Conference.
3 We'd like to thank you for this time and opportunity.
4 I will attempt to be brief and we will be presenting
5 additional information at future hearings around the
6 state of Illinois.

7 The NAACP Illinois State Conference
8 has 37 branches throughout the state including the
9 West Side, South Side, South Suburban and Evanston
10 branches in the Chicagoland area alone. We also rise
11 in support of and to echo the African-Americans for
12 Legislative Redistricting and the testimony that they
13 have provided on today.

14 We do believe that the Illinois Voting
15 Rights Act of 2011 is a law that promises a fair
16 and -- redistricting process for all racial
17 minorities if it is properly implemented. We have
18 read the Illinois Voting Rights Act to require that
19 the legislature to create a crossover, coalition, or
20 influence districts where it is not feasible to
21 create majority-minority districts and where doing so
22 is otherwise consistent with other redistricting
23 edicts in the United States Constitution.

24 The NAACP's position is that the IVRA

1 serves as a protection against cracking, packing or
2 stacking the black vote. Now, we've heard about
3 cracking and packing today. We'd also like to add to
4 the record the definition for stacking, which is the
5 drawing of district lines so that a large minority
6 population concentration is included with a larger
7 white population with the purpose or effect of
8 depriving minority voters of a voting majority. We
9 are completely against cracking, packing and
10 stacking.

11 Our first minimum prerequisite for a
12 fair redistricting in the Illinois Voting Rights Act
13 of 2011 is that the Voting Rights Act be followed.
14 We feel that we do not have to remind the Committee
15 of the One Person, One Vote doctrine, which mandates
16 that each election district or a particular
17 legislative body contain an equal number of citizens
18 to ensure that each individual's vote is given equal
19 weight in the electoral process.

20 Further, understanding Section 2 of
21 the Voting Rights Act, it prohibits any voting
22 practice or procedure that results in denial and/or
23 abridgement of the right to vote on account of race,
24 national origin or color. It prohibits vote dilution

1 and does not require any proof of discriminatory
2 intent.

3 In addition, bringing to light Section
4 5 of the Federal Voting Rights Act, which could cause
5 freezing of election practices and procedures until
6 new procedures are reviewed by the United States
7 Department of Justice or the United States District
8 Court as well as to ensure that no voting procedural
9 changes are made that will lead to retrogression and
10 the position of racial minorities with respect to
11 their elective exercise of the electoral franchise.
12 We understand the Illinois Voting Rights Act and its
13 additional minority options to be in harmony with the
14 Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment and do
15 support, again, the Illinois Voting Rights Act of
16 2011.

17 With these thoughts in mind, we would
18 also like to highlight, once again, as Justice
19 Kennedy wrote in Bartlett, crossover districts may
20 serve to diminish the significance and influence of
21 race by encouraging minority and majority voters to
22 work together toward a common goal.

23 In addition to promoting these
24 cross-racial coalitions, it is the NAACP's position

1 that the Illinois Voting Rights Act helps to
2 discredit the assumption of the black vote as merely
3 being race-based and that the IVRA also permits
4 concentration on traditional districting factors such
5 as partisanship and incumbency to the benefits of
6 black voters.

7 Again, we reiterate that the United
8 States Supreme Court has held, and we quote, Where
9 racial identification correlates highly with
10 political affiliation, districts that concentrate
11 blacks as strong Democrats do not abridge the
12 Constitution, end quote.

13 Finally, we would like to conclude
14 this testimony by remarking on two other concerns.
15 First, we understand Illinois practice as counting
16 prison inmates as residents of the localities in
17 which they are imprisoned. However, because blacks
18 and Latinos constitute a disproportionately high
19 share of the state and federal prison population in
20 Illinois, we also believe that this practice is
21 harmful to minority interests in the redistricting
22 process.

23 Therefore, another minimum
24 prerequisite for fair redistricting is to count

1 inmates as residents of the locality from which they
2 have come. This is the current practice in other
3 large racially diverse states.

4 Finally, we, too, are aware that the
5 Illinois Voting Rights Act of 2011 does not expressly
6 apply to Congressional redistricting; but we assert
7 that the same discretion afforded to the states in
8 Bartlett does apply to Congressional redistricting in
9 Illinois as well.

10 We believe as a final minimum
11 prerequisite for fair redistricting that the
12 legislature should apply the basic framework of the
13 Illinois Voting Rights Act in 2011 to its
14 Congressional redistricting.

15 Again, we thank you for your time and
16 we look forward to participating in future hearings
17 around the state.

18 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Thank you.

19 TESTIMONY

20 BY

21 MS. VALERIE LEONARD:

22 Hi. My name is Valerie Leonard. I
23 want to say thank you so much for this opportunity.
24 I am here representing the Lawndale Alliance and we

1 are a grass-roots association of residents in North
2 Lawndale. We are basically a group that has tackled
3 a number of issues, including education and the fact
4 that there is a number of mortgage foreclosures in
5 the area and we're not necessarily getting our fair
6 share of federal funds.

7 In terms of the description of the
8 North Lawndale Community, I can send you, by PDF, a
9 file that will show you the boundaries of the
10 community, how it relates to our districts -- the
11 Representative district as well as the Senate
12 district. In terms of our population, we are 93.85
13 percent African-American as of 2005. I need to look
14 at the updated Census data to make sure that that
15 number is still accurate.

16 The Lawndale Alliance, again, some of
17 the things we've worked on is TIF Reform, but we also
18 want to focus on more education around this
19 redistricting process. As you can hear today, this
20 is very complex. We're still trying to get our
21 fingers wrapped around it and we want to make sure
22 that we do more grass-roots education on the issue.
23 We're going to partner with a number of other
24 grass-roots organizations as well as some state

1 networks that will actually do outreach and educate
2 people in the community so the next time we hear of a
3 hearing, that we can participate and be educated
4 about the issues.

5 When we look at our concerns, you
6 know, I'm just trying to get a good grasp of what's
7 going on, we're very concerned about the reduction in
8 the percentage of African-Americans that could be
9 represented in the new 5th Senate District. We had a
10 preview that those boundaries would be redrawn in
11 such a way that we can actually dilute the
12 African-American composition. Right now, it's about
13 55 percent African-American. We don't know what the
14 proposed boundaries will be; but we've been told that
15 we will see, quote unquote, more diversity and when
16 you're in a majority, more diversity for you, you
17 know, naturally means it's going to be a lower
18 percentage.

19 So we would hope that any new
20 districts be drawn in such a way that we can maintain
21 at least 55 percent of our -- of that district. And
22 we also had a chance to look at the new Census data
23 and based on the new population for 2010, we're
24 expecting that the target district population would

1 be about 108,000 people per district if you just take
2 that number and divide it by 118 districts.

3 We also noted that Representative
4 District 9 went from 105,248 in 20- -- in 2000 to
5 about 112,000. The reduction actually comes from
6 District 10. So we lost about 9,800 people in
7 District 10. We gained about 7,600 people in
8 District 9.

9 We would hope that as you're redrawing
10 District 5 for the Senatorial District, that any
11 overage from District 9 be applied to District 10 and
12 you take the extra 7,600 that you would need from
13 neighboring districts, but do it in such a way that
14 you would not dilute our 55 percent.

15 We are also concerned, as many other
16 people are, about the way prisoners are treated. In
17 fact, we think that the current process actually
18 disenfranchises a significant number of people. We
19 have people here in Chicago who are representing the
20 interests of people who aren't counted in their
21 districts and when you look at the funding that comes
22 to -- associated with the people who are in prison,
23 that funding is usually for CDBG or some other social
24 service program, it usually is not benefiting the

1 prisoners themselves, so they're counted in the
2 downstate area, not beneficial to prisoners, when
3 they get back, we have to pay for, you know, their
4 transition and there's no funding.

5 So, again, we're actually echoing the
6 sentiment of most people and saying that we actually
7 would like to have the Census for the prisoners
8 actually counted from the community that they
9 originate from.

10 Again, we're concerned about the loss
11 of a congressional seat. We hope that when the
12 redistricting occurs that we do not lose an
13 African-American congressman. And then, most
14 importantly for us at this point, we definitely need
15 to have a public hearing on the West Side of Chicago
16 after we do some more education; and for us, when we
17 talk about education, we're going to look at the
18 Census statistics and see how that drives this whole
19 process and we're going to take about three weeks to
20 do that. So we're asking that you do a public
21 hearing around the second week of May in the Chicago
22 area on the West Side.

23 And that about closes everything out.
24 Again, I will be sending you PDF files of the maps so

1 that you have that in your possession.

2 All right. Thank you very much.

3 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: I will caution everybody
4 that in the month of May, the legislature is pretty
5 heavily down in Springfield. So if you have
6 expectations for us to be -- you know, it's likely
7 not going to happen.

8 MS. VALERIE LEONARD: All right. Thank you.

9 How about weekends.

10 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: We're there on weekends,
11 too.

12 TESTIMONY

13 BY

14 MR. ERKU YIMER:

15 Good afternoon. My name is Erku
16 Yimer. I'm the executive director of the Ethiopian
17 Community Association of Chicago. I have lived and
18 worked in the 7th Legislative District in the last 26
19 years.

20 ECAC is a community and refugee-based
21 organization that provides essential services to
22 refugees and immigrants in general and Ethiopian
23 immigrants in particular. Since 1992 ECAC has
24 resettled more than 2,000 refugees from all over the

1 world.

2 The refugee and immigrant population
3 ECAC serves resides (sic) mostly in Uptown, Edgewater
4 and Rogers Park neighborhoods in the 7th Legislative
5 District. These three neighborhoods are currently
6 port of entries for many refugees and immigrants and
7 many of the specialized immigrant and refugee service
8 providers are located in these neighborhoods.

9 As port of entries to many refugees
10 and immigrant groups, the foreign born population in
11 these neighborhoods is more than 33 percent. When we
12 add the children born from immigrant families, the
13 population with immigrant background will be well
14 over 50 percent. The population that resides in
15 these neighborhoods is so diverse and speaks about 68
16 different languages. That is one unique
17 characteristic of the communities ECAC serves.

18 Most immigrants that come to these
19 neighborhoods have limited English skills or do not
20 speak English at all. Some are even illiterate in
21 their own languages. Most service providers provide
22 ESL classes targeting this population. ESL training
23 is a critical factor to getting employment and to
24 interact socially with each other or others.

1 In this depressed economy, it is
2 almost impossible to find a job and become productive
3 members of society without knowledge of English.
4 Housing and employment opportunities are the most
5 pressing needs in these communities.

6 The 7th Legislative District roughly
7 runs from Irving Park on the south to Evanston border
8 on the north. The lake is the boundary from the east
9 all the way from the south to the north. The border
10 on the west zigzags from Western Avenue around Irving
11 Road, extending further west around Foster Avenue to
12 Oakley around Peterson Avenue on the west and Ridge
13 Avenue from Devon to Howard Street.

14 All immigrant groups want to develop
15 and maintain some of their traditions and culture and
16 relate with mainstream society and with each other
17 through their music, restaurants and museums. All
18 also come from countries where soccer is a popular
19 game and a good pastime. Although there are very
20 limited facilities, soccer players crowd the parks
21 during weekends and after hours during spring, summer
22 and fall seasons. They have a common view on getting
23 assistance and attention on these important and yet
24 unfulfilled needs.

1 Each ethnic group in these communities
2 has some informal mutual assistance associations to
3 address the needs and interests of their members.
4 However, there are established interest groups, such
5 as Mutual Assistance Association of Illinois, MAAI,
6 composed of Cambodian Association of Illinois,
7 Chinese Mutual Assistance Association, Ethiopian
8 Community Association of Chicago, Lao-American
9 Service Center, Bosnia-Herzegovina Association,
10 Vietnamese Association of Illinois and Pan-African
11 Association, all refugee based organizations.

12 The MAAI has been in existence for the
13 last 25 years advocating for affordable housing, ESL
14 funding and funding for other social services that
15 each organization provides to its constituency. The
16 MAAI also runs joint programs such as employment
17 training, ESL and citizenship/civic education
18 classes. The MAAI has been a critical part of
19 refugee resettlement program in the State of
20 Illinois.

21 Another interest group is the
22 Coalition of African, Asian, Arab-American, European
23 and Latino Immigrants of Illinois, CAAELII. It
24 advocates for immigrant rights and provides

1 organizing services for immigrants. Its constituents
2 are more than 17 immigrant organizations in the City
3 of Chicago. Most MAAI members are active
4 participants in CAAAEELII.

5 A significant portion of immigrant
6 population resides in the adjacent neighborhood of
7 West Rogers Park. Inclusion of this neighborhood to
8 the 7th Legislative and 14th Representative District
9 makes a whole lot of sense. This kind of
10 redistricting will empower the immigrant community
11 and gives them a powerful voice to address their
12 critical needs and interests. The combined resources
13 of these neighborhoods can build a capacity to
14 address their diverse needs. It also brings cohesion
15 among immigrant communities themselves.

16 Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Senator Righter.

18 MINORITY SPOKESPERSON RIGHTER: Thank you,
19 Mr. Chairman.

20 Miss Williams, I had -- honestly had
21 not before today heard the term "stacking."
22 Obviously, I've heard the other two, but not
23 "stacking."

24 MS. MELISSA WILLIAMS: Right.

1 MINORITY SPOKESPERSON RIGHTER: So you gave me
2 a good definition of that. Let me ask you, based on
3 your knowledge of the current legislative map, are
4 there any districts, House or Senate, in the current
5 map which fit the NAACP's definition of stacking?

6 MS. MELISSA WILLIAMS: One of the best examples
7 that I could give, actually, like I said, I'm from
8 the Westside Branch of the NAACP. However, I'm not
9 familiar with the entire state as a whole, what the
10 maps would look like; but a pretty good example may
11 lend to what our Asian-American groups presented on
12 today.

13 It looks like Chinatown is an instance
14 where there have been groups of Chinese-Americans
15 that have been kind of stacked on top of each other,
16 but at the same time split into different districts.
17 So that other people -- not necessarily in our
18 definition that we gave here today -- it was speaking
19 about a larger white population, but it could be a
20 larger population of anyone.

21 It could be an African-American
22 population that is causing the stacking where we've
23 got some Asian-Americans that are kind of stacked
24 together and then we've got a larger African-American

1 population that's preventing them from even having
2 any real voting power in that particular district or
3 that particular ward.

4 MINORITY SPOKESPERSON RIGHTER: What's the --
5 okay. I feel like now I'm hanging on by a thread
6 here.

7 MS. MELISSA WILLIAMS: Okay.

8 MINORITY SPOKESPERSON RIGHTER: What is the
9 political goal of someone who draws a district like
10 that?

11 I appreciate that requires some
12 conjecture on your part.

13 MS. MELISSA WILLIAMS: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

14 MINORITY SPOKESPERSON RIGHTER: Can you help me
15 with that?

16 MS. MELISSA WILLIAMS: Well, the political goal
17 would be more for the majority population to continue
18 to be able to elect who they would want rather than
19 having the population of Asian-Americans that are
20 stacked in that area. They just don't have enough
21 voting power in order to either put someone that is
22 Asian into office or put a candidate of their choice
23 into office.

24 MINORITY SPOKESPERSON RIGHTER: Okay. Would it

1 be someone of a political party?

2 MS. MELISSA WILLIAMS: It may be. It may be.
3 It's not necessarily just by race that they're
4 looking to put an Asian or. In our case, we would be
5 looking to put an African-American in, it's a
6 situation that we may have a candidate that we feel
7 strongly about, but we don't have enough pull because
8 there are not enough of us to even put that candidate
9 in that we're interested in.

10 MINORITY SPOKESPERSON RIGHTER: Right.

11 But in the example you're giving me,
12 the African-American community is the one being
13 stacked by someone else; correct.

14 MS. MELISSA WILLIAMS: Right. So you're
15 looking at a situation where you've got
16 Asian-Americans that are living in there together,
17 but it's just not enough of them in order to be able
18 to pull the candidate that they want to pull.

19 MINORITY SPOKESPERSON RIGHTER: All right. Are
20 there examples of African-Americans being stacked in
21 the current legislative map of which you are aware?

22 MS. MELISSA WILLIAMS: Not that I'm aware of.
23 What we would need to do is examine the state as a
24 whole because, again, we're from the West Side Branch

1 of the NAACP; but our particular organization
2 represents NAACP branches around the state. So if
3 you would give us a little time, we will confer with
4 the other branches around the state and see if they
5 have some examples.

6 MINORITY SPOKESPERSON RIGHTER: I would ask you
7 specifically to do that --

8 MS. MELISSA WILLIAMS: Absolutely.

9 MINORITY SPOKESPERSON RIGHTER: -- and notify
10 the Committee.

11 MS. MELISSA WILLIAMS: Absolutely. Thank you.

12 MINORITY SPOKESPERSON RIGHTER: Thank you,
13 Mr. Chairman.

14 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Senator Lightford.

15 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Thank you.

16 My apologies for not remembering
17 names; but, the Lawndale area, in your testimony you
18 mentioned the 10th District, the 9th District and the
19 5th. And so I would love to have an understanding of
20 the percentages that you said that as long as the
21 district remains 55 percent -- which district were
22 you referring to?

23 The 5th is the Senate, the 9th and the
24 10th is the House. So are you saying the 55 percent

1 and in all three districts or just the Senate
2 District.

3 MS. VALERIE LEONARD: My understanding, the way
4 the Senate districts are put together, they are
5 comprised of two. So the 5th Senate District will be
6 comprised of 9 and 10. And, just so you know, the
7 source of that data, so to speak -- you know, I
8 attended a forum where they were actually selecting
9 Senator Hendon's replacement and Secretary of State
10 Jesse White indicated to the people who are
11 interested in replacing him -- he says, Oh, by the
12 way, the District is now 55 percent African-American,
13 you know, after the district is redrawn, it's going
14 to be more diverse.

15 So to me, the District, you know,
16 represents the combination of 9 and 10 together. So
17 what I would need to do is go back and, you know,
18 look at the breakdown for each of the two; but I
19 would want to make sure that combined, we're not
20 necessarily diluting African-Americans in that
21 district.

22 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Okay. And I just asked for
23 clarity because you would get a different percentage
24 in, perhaps, the 9th Representative District in terms

1 of numbers than the 10th. The 10th is where the
2 district is a little more diverse; but I'm glad
3 Secretary White has a magic wand and he can see into
4 the future and can already tell you that the District
5 will be more diverse.

6 Thank you.

7 MS. VALERIE LEONARD: Well, I'm glad that was
8 conjecture.

9 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Thank you to you.

10 MS. VIRGINIA MARTINEZ: Senator Murphy, do you
11 want me to address the question that you asked
12 earlier about the 82 percent?

13 SENATOR MURPHY: I appreciate the offer. My --
14 I think you made it pretty clear in your remarks that
15 you expect to be back --

16 MS. VIRGINIA MARTINEZ: Yes.

17 SENATOR MURPHY: -- before this Committee, and
18 I think -- my hope would be that that conversation
19 can be had with you testifying when we actually have
20 the map in front of us. I think that might be a more
21 appropriate time to have that conversation.

22 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: I don't mind. I would
23 appreciate a brief reply.

24 MS. VIRGINIA MARTINEZ: The issue about Little

1 Village, in particular, is that it's probably the
2 most concentrated Latino area in the state, and so
3 you would not have that repeated in the other Latino
4 communities. There's a gentleman here from Back of
5 the Yards. We always hear from South Chicago. Those
6 are more diverse communities. Even Pilsen right next
7 door to Little Village is more diverse. And so when
8 you draw those districts, they are not as
9 concentrated; but there's not a magic number either.

10 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: That's what I was going to
11 get to. Thank you.

12 Okay. Next up is Reverend Flowers
13 from Westside Ministers Coalition; Kiran Siddiqui,
14 Hamdard Center; Sik Sohn, Korean-American Resource
15 and Cultural Centers; Harendra Mangrola, Indian
16 American community leader; Sharda Thapa,
17 Nepali-American community leader.

18 Seemingly, we only have three of you
19 so I'm going to continue.

20 A VOICE: The Korean gentleman had to leave.

21 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Is anybody here from the
22 Westside Ministers Coalition?

23 (No response.)

24 Rabya Khan.

1 (No response.)

2 All right. We'll start from the left.

3 TESTIMONY

4 BY

5 MR. HARENDRA MANGROLA:

6 Good afternoon. My name is Harendra
7 Mangrola, and I'm an active member of the
8 Indian-American community, especially in the
9 northwestern suburbs where I make my home. I have
10 lived in Illinois for 24 years, 21 years of them in
11 Skokie. I'm the vice president of Sumit Construction
12 Company, which is an MBE general contractor working
13 in Illinois. Also, I'm president of Gayatri Gyan
14 Mandir, a not-profit religious and cultural
15 organization, located in Niles and Itasca.

16 As an Indian-American, I know that I
17 share many commonalities and concerns with other
18 Asian-Americans. As a member of the Association of
19 Asian Construction Enterprises, I advocated for the
20 reinclusion of Asian-Americans in Cook County and
21 Chicago's affirmative action programs for
22 construction.

23 In 2004, Sumit Construction Company,
24 Inc., testified about the discrimination that

1 Asian-Americans still face in this industry. That
2 experience made it clear that our community is at a
3 disadvantage when there is no Asian-American with a
4 seat at the table.

5 Through my community involvement, I
6 have worked with Asian-Americans in the Skokie,
7 Morton Grove and Niles area which are represented by
8 five House districts. As we have tried to build
9 relationships with legislators, we have found some
10 legislators more responsive than others.
11 Representative Lou Lang's district has the largest
12 Asian-American population at 24 percent. Not
13 surprisingly, he has been more responsive to our
14 issues than others.

15 In order to gain better representation
16 and accountability from our legislators, I urge the
17 Committee to draw our community into fewer districts,
18 especially those who have receptive legislators, like
19 Representatives Lang and Daniel Biss.

20 Chicago's Chinatown is a well-known
21 example of how Asian-Americans have been fractured,
22 but there are other examples well known to our
23 community. As Kyle Hillman points out, the
24 fracturing of the Indian and Pakistani that he calls

1 the Devon Desi Corridor, in his March 24th, 2001
2 Huffington Post article.

3 Finally, just as this Redistricting
4 Commission attempts to rectify problems with the
5 state map such as with the Devon Desi Corridor, it
6 should also fix Congressional districts, where
7 Asian-Americans could express their political voice
8 more effectively if we were not divided among
9 districts.

10 Thank you for the opportunity to
11 testify.

12 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Thank you.

13 TESTIMONY

14 BY

15 MS. KIRAN SIDDIQUI:

16 Good afternoon, Chairman Raoul and
17 Senators. Thank you so much for allowing us the
18 opportunity to speak of the issue of redistricting.

19 My name is Kiran Siddiqui. I'm the
20 executive director of Hamdard Center for Health and
21 Human Services, a non-for-profit organization
22 specializing in providing social and primary care
23 services to the South Asian, Bosnian and Middle
24 Eastern population in the Rogers Park, Edgewater,

1 Skokie and other outlying areas for the past two
2 decades.

3 I was also the program director of
4 Apna Ghar, the only South Asian domestic violence
5 shelter in Cook County, for five years. I've been
6 providing social services to the South Asian
7 community for the past twelve years, which has
8 included case management, counseling and advocacy.

9 For eleven years, I was a resident of
10 Skokie, and presently I'm a resident of Morton Grove
11 for the last ten years. I'm deeply involved in the
12 South Asian community of Morton Grove, and I've seen
13 the growth of the immigrant and South Asian community
14 increase dramatically.

15 As background, when I say "South
16 Asian," I am referring to a subgroup within
17 Asian-Americans that includes people of Indian,
18 Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Nepali, Sri Lankan and
19 Bhutanese descent. Even though we come from
20 different countries, there are many cultural and
21 social similarities between our groups.

22 There are more and more businesses in
23 my area owned and operated by South Asians like
24 grocery stores, day cares and salons.

1 In Morton Grove, my daughter attends
2 the Muslim Education Center which has a large
3 percentage of South Asian students enrolled as well
4 as in Sunday School. The Village of Skokie has
5 reported that approximately 56 percent of public
6 school students speak a language other than English
7 at home and of these languages, the largest
8 categories are Urdu spoken, Pakistan or Spanish.
9 Between 2004 and 2010, Urdu and Spanish have gone
10 back and forth as the first and second top languages
11 spoken at home by Skokie students, other than
12 English.

13 Niles West High School that serves
14 Skokie, Niles and parts of Morton Grove has an
15 enrollment of approximately 2,500 students and Asians
16 make up the second highest race enrolled.

17 According to 2010 data released by the
18 Illinois State Board of Education, in the areas of
19 Skokie, Morton Grove, Niles and Lincolnwood there are
20 at least ten school districts where Asians make up
21 over 25 percent of the enrollment. This shows that
22 many students and families in these areas have unique
23 concerns that need to be addressed effectively by the
24 elected officials who represent them.

1 Members of the community, I've
2 invested in this community. I've been living in this
3 community for the last 21 years and I've seen the
4 growth of the South Asian population in Morton Grove,
5 Niles and Skokie. We have built a mosque that serves
6 over 500 people and nearly 85 percent of them are
7 South Asians, and many of these South Asian members
8 come to Hamdard Center for services as we are the
9 closest multi-comprehensive social service agency.
10 My staff members reflect the community and speak six
11 different Asian languages which includes Urdu, Hindi,
12 Punjabi, Gujrati, Telegu and Malaylam to accommodate
13 the clients' many complex needs.

14 Hamdard Center is a beacon of services
15 for many immigrant and refugees and we serve over
16 2,000 clients per year in spite of the state budget
17 cuts, which has seen an average of 10 percent cut in
18 state funding to my agency for the last two years.

19 Hamdard Center is a sister agency to
20 other Asian and South Asian agencies like
21 Indo-American Center, Asian-American Institute, Apna
22 Ghar, Metropolitan Asian Family Services, Muslim
23 Women Resource Center, and Korean Woman -- Korean
24 American Women in Need and we share many of the same

1 concerns.

2 We have collaborated on many projects,
3 including the U.S. Census 2000 Outreach, when four of
4 the agencies mentioned above were Questionnaire
5 Assistance Centers for the Census. This example
6 shows you the cohesiveness of the partnership that
7 many Asian and South Asian institutions in Cook
8 County have.

9 Our concern is simple -- is that we
10 serve Asians and South Asian clients from Skokie,
11 Niles and Morton Grove, yet there's a stark lack of
12 Asian and South Asian elected officials serving this
13 growing community.

14 According to Census 2000, Illinois'
15 Asian population was the fastest growing in the
16 state, swelling in the collar counties, yet, there is
17 not even one publicly elected state official that
18 reflects the dramatic shift.

19 Currently, myself and my sister
20 agencies would agree with me that we have to go to
21 several different elected officials to get our
22 problems addressed which our clients bring to us.
23 This is a huge hindrance to us as well as our clients
24 and we want this Committee to be fair when reviewing

1 district lines.

2 District lines have a real impact on
3 whether we, as minorities, can participate in
4 government and make a positive difference in our
5 communities. It is important that my community be
6 grouped together so that we can elect candidates of
7 our choice who can be responsive to our needs.

8 Our community is united not just by
9 race, but also by the many other socioeconomic
10 factors that we have in common, such as income and
11 access to services.

12 As a South Asian who has worked for
13 the South Asian population for the last 12 years and
14 a South Asian who has lived in Skokie/Morton Grove
15 for the last 21 years, I'm heavily invested in the
16 process of redistricting and would like to appeal to
17 the members to keep this process transparent.

18 We, as Asian-Americans, want to be
19 treated fairly during this redistricting process.
20 Hamdard Center is currently working with the
21 Asian-American Institute to create maps with specific
22 boundaries which we hope to give to you soon.

23 Thank you for your time.

24 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Thank you.

1 TESTIMONY

2 BY

3 MR. SHARDA THAPA:

4 Thank you, Senator Raoul and Senators.

5 I'm Sharda Thapa testifying as a

6 member of the AAI and I'm a member of the

7 Nepali-American community, one of the community

8 groups within the Asian-American community.

9 I have lived in Chicago for 34 years,

10 18 of them in West Rogers Park or West Ridge

11 neighborhood and I'm a freelance business consultant

12 active in my community in Asian-American activities

13 since 1981, mainly in the areas of founding, growing

14 and maintaining social and cultural organizations.

15 Recently, I have become active in civic and political

16 affairs, especially in helping Asian-Americans gain

17 fair representation in elective government and the

18 ability to elect candidates of our choice, an area

19 which we have been lacking.

20 The Nepali-American community in

21 Chicagoland, including immigrants from Nepal as well

22 as other -- people of Nepali descent, has grown from

23 less than 100 in 1980 to nearly 10,000 now and more

24 than a quarter of them are estimated to reside in the

1 north-northwest section of Chicago and the nearby
2 suburbs like Skokie and Niles.

3 Over time, the population has tended
4 to shift gradually, as people established themselves,
5 from the City to the close-in suburbs and farther
6 out. The number of immigrants is being augmented by
7 the recent resettlement in the northern part of
8 Chicago of a substantial number of Nepali-speaking
9 refugees from Bhutan, who are Nepali ethnics driven
10 out of Bhutan in the 1980s, and their -- along with
11 their families.

12 This is the -- this concentration is
13 the most notable in the entire area and is not going
14 to be replicated for our community and this is also
15 closely linked to the growth of the Devon area
16 corridor as a South Asian hub, comprising people of
17 Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Nepali descent.

18 As a long-time West Rogers Park
19 resident, I have observed its growing importance to
20 our community because of its concentration of social
21 and cultural institutions, family-owned businesses
22 and immigrant residents. These effective and
23 efficient means of providing much-needed services to
24 our community can only be enhanced if the contiguity

1 is maintained and the institutions receive both
2 credit and funding for providing these services.

3 Since the Nepali-American community is
4 relatively new, there are no social service
5 institutions and support organizations targeted to
6 this group. As a result, many in our community have
7 to rely on agencies established with other South
8 Asians or Asians in mind.

9 Nepali-Americans originally arrived
10 here independently as professionals or students or
11 associated with Indian immigrant entrepreneurs,
12 usually as employees. Many of these Nepalis have
13 been helped up by earlier Indian and Pakistani
14 immigrants.

15 There is no travel, work or residency
16 restrictions between India and Nepal and some of
17 these ties have continued on into the U.S. The
18 religious, cultural, food and living styles of Nepal
19 are very analogous to India or Tibet, more the
20 former.

21 It is, therefore, fair to say that all
22 South Asian immigrants would like to remain together
23 and benefit from being within one district or a few
24 districts, rather than being split up into many

1 districts. We could then elect candidates of our
2 choice responsive to our unique needs.

3 Nepali-Americans will generally
4 endorse boundaries drawn to respect our community and
5 the other South Asian communities. We are working
6 with AAI to create maps with specific boundaries, and
7 we will give those to you.

8 So thank you for the opportunity to
9 testify. I urge you to give meaningful consideration
10 to the Asian-American Community's input and treat our
11 community fairly during the redistricting process.

12 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Thank you very much.

13 TESTIMONY

14 BY

15 MS. RABYA KHAN:

16 Thank you. Good afternoon, Chairman
17 Raoul and Senators. Thank you for holding this
18 hearing today and giving us the opportunity to speak
19 to you all. I have three brief paragraphs so just
20 bear with me.

21 My name is Rabya Khan and I'm a
22 community activist. I am here today on behalf of the
23 Asian-American Institute and the Council of Islamic
24 Organizations of Greater Chicago.

1 There is a growing Muslim and Asian
2 population in Illinois and the Muslim-American
3 community contains significant percentages of
4 minorities from the Arab-American, African-American,
5 Latino-American and Asian-American population. There
6 is a cohesiveness within the Asian-American community
7 at large. We come from different countries and
8 religious backgrounds, but we share many cultural and
9 social similarities.

10 The Asian-American Institute, as
11 you've already heard earlier today, testified about
12 the growing population of Asians in the Greater West
13 Ridge area of Chicago as well as the growing Asian
14 population of nearby suburbs such as Skokie and
15 Morton Grove.

16 It is important and imperative that
17 our voice and votes not be diluted. The vision of
18 our community, through redistricting, will erase our
19 voices and make it even more challenging to organize
20 and unite. This will, in turn, affect our ability to
21 conduct voter registration campaigns, mobilize
22 registered voters and educate our community members
23 about the electoral process.

24 Our social and religious institutions,

1 such as mosques, temples and churches, are built
2 within already established communities and serve to
3 help disseminate critical information relating to
4 social services like ESL classes, citizenship
5 classes, job training programs, social events,
6 political events and youth events.

7 Our communities face a host of common
8 issues, such as the need for culturally realistically
9 appropriate social services, especially for people
10 with limited English proficiency and people new to
11 this country.

12 If the district lines divide community
13 institutions, it will be an additional challenge for
14 our community to overcome. District lines will have
15 a direct effect on how responsive elected officials
16 will be to our needs.

17 For example, we have already
18 established relationships with state senators and
19 representatives near the Devon community and the
20 Greater North Side of Chicago. They understand our
21 needs for protecting and documenting students,
22 language, social services, citizenship classes and
23 English classes.

24 We have only begun to organize

1 ourselves and increase our involvement with the
2 electoral process. I hope our testimony today and
3 the years of active organizing is taken into account
4 by this Committee in the redistricting process.

5 Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Thank you.

7 Any questions.

8 Senator Hunter.

9 SENATOR HUNTER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

10 Sitting here listening to each one of
11 you, it seems as though the population which you
12 serve is scattered throughout a suburban community.

13 Is there, like, a cluster that -- of
14 the population in which you serve or that you work
15 with and the like? Where do you live? Where do each
16 one of you all live?

17 MR. HARENDRA MANGROLA: In Skokie.

18 SENATOR HUNTER: In Skokie.

19 MS. KIRAN SIDDIQUI: I am in Morton Grove.

20 SENATOR HUNTER: Morton Grove.

21 MR. SHARDA THAPA: I live in West Rogers Park.

22 SENATOR HUNTER: West Rogers Park.

23 MS. RABYA KHAN: I grew up in the Western
24 Suburbs, but I've been living in the City for the

1 last ten years.

2 SENATOR HUNTER: Okay. So, for example, Kiran
3 Siddiqui, you mentioned you work with the South Asian
4 population. I heard you mention about four or five
5 different subgroups and populations which you serve.

6 Are they all clustered in the same
7 community in which you reside or...

8 MS. KIRAN SIDDIQUI: We have a very large
9 percentage of South Asians in Skokie and Morton
10 Grove.

11 SENATOR HUNTER: Okay. And, so, did I hear you
12 mention that you work at a battered -- domestic
13 violence shelter?

14 MS. KIRAN SIDDIQUI: I did for nine years and I
15 also currently -- for the last two years I've been
16 working with another foundation that also has a
17 domestic violence shelter.

18 SENATOR HUNTER: So that's where you work now?

19 MS. KIRAN SIDDIQUI: I work for Hamdard and one
20 of the programs is a domestic violence program.

21 SENATOR HUNTER: Okay. And would you say that
22 the majority of the clients for which you serve are
23 of South Asian descent?

24 MS. KIRAN SIDDIQUI: For both my agencies that

1 I work with, the overwhelming percentage of clients
2 that we serve are South Asian.

3 SENATOR HUNTER: Okay. Thank you.

4 What about the rest of you all?

5 I'm just trying to visualize the
6 location of the persons that you work with.

7 MS. RABYA KHAN: Sorry. If I could say
8 something.

9 So I think for the City -- for
10 example, for the City of Chicago I think many people
11 are familiar with the Devon area --

12 SENATOR HUNTER: Yes.

13 MS. RABYA KHAN: -- you know, which is also
14 sometimes referred to as Little India. So I think
15 there's a huge percentage of South Asians in that
16 area in the 50th Ward for the City and, also, it kind
17 of overlaps, I believe -- but don't quote me on
18 that -- you guys would know better -- but that would
19 be the city population. As far as the suburban
20 areas, there is a large constituency in the near
21 northern suburbs of Morton Grove and Skokie, Niles
22 and the western suburbs out by Oak Brook and also
23 some southern suburbs than just the Arab-American
24 population, which is another minority group.

1 So, I don't know if that helps you,
2 Senator.

3 SENATOR HUNTER: It does. It does.

4 MR. SHARDA THAPA: The population tends to
5 cluster in different areas.

6 So, for example, if you go into
7 certain areas of Skokie or Niles, you know, there
8 will be dozens and dozens of houses, there's areas in
9 West Rogers Park where I walk five or six precincts
10 in relation -- and, you know, like, every house for
11 three or four blocks on both sides of the street
12 would be mostly South Asian.

13 So that's the way it clusters --

14 SENATOR HUNTER: Okay. Okay. Good.

15 MR. HARENDRA MANGROLA: Same thing.

16 SENATOR HUNTER: Okay. Good. Thank you very
17 much.

18 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Thank you all for your
19 testimony.

20 Is there a representative -- we've got
21 about eight names here from the New 10th Ward
22 Community Service Group Organization. Is there a
23 representative here? Iman Demond and Asiaha Butler
24 from RAGE and then Paul McKinley and Joseph Watkins.

1 Let's start from the left over here.

2 TESTIMONY

3 BY

4 MR. ROBERT GARCIA:

5 Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.
6 I appreciate you giving me the opportunity to speak.

7 My name is Robert Garcia and I'm a
8 resident of the South Chicago area -- that is, from
9 the Southeast Side of Chicago that represents State
10 House Districts 25, 33 and 34 and Congressional
11 District 2.

12 So, as I speak with you today,
13 protests continue throughout the Middle East as
14 people, tired of their voices not being heard,
15 continue to rise up and demand change. The U.S.
16 Government has responded by urging reforms that would
17 provide representations to the people.

18 In some cases, these suggestions have
19 turned to wars as our friends and family members in
20 the Armed Forces drop bombs on Libyan targets to aid
21 anti-government forces all for -- what we are told is
22 to help spread democracy. While the lives of our
23 friends are put at risk and millions of our tax
24 dollars are spent to bring democracy to others, in

1 many parts of the country, our own people lack
2 representation and advocates for reform.

3 In the state of Illinois, there are
4 over 2 million Latinos who represent close to
5 16 percent of the population and, yet, our
6 Congressional representation only amounts to
7 5 percent, this in both Congress -- in both State and
8 Senate Houses in Illinois.

9 According to census data, whites only
10 make up 64 percent of the Illinois population and,
11 yet, have close to 80 percent of the seats in
12 Congress, while blacks who have less than 2 million
13 make up 14 percent of the population have three
14 representatives or 15 percent of the Congress.

15 Everyone here is educated enough to
16 understand that these numbers are a direct result of
17 the district mappings. Districts are mapped out
18 around boundaries that provide representative seats
19 to different populations to meet their unique needs.

20 Now, with all due respect to black and
21 white leaders who have reached out to help represent
22 us, your efforts are appreciated; however, it's time
23 that we start to do for ourselves. There are times
24 and reasons why our differences have and will lead to

1 views and cases where our experiences differ and need
2 to be discussed, whether it's language and cultural
3 needs, discussions on the complexity of Latino social
4 issues and civil affairs or even in just the ability
5 of our children to see representational Latino
6 leadership and dream that one day they may be called
7 to act in the name of democracy for the service of
8 all people as others before them.

9 It is increasingly important that our
10 voices be heard. Langston Hughes once stated, I
11 swear to the Lord, I still can't see, why democracy
12 means every one but me. We understand the complexity
13 in redistricting, however, as you redraft the
14 boundaries, please consider the steeps we still have
15 yet to be given and a need for our people to be
16 represented the same as everyone else.

17 Currently, where I reside on Chicago's
18 Southeast Side, close to 50,000 Latino votes are
19 split in between House Districts 25, 33 and 34, each
20 controlled by non-Latinos. In addition to our
21 Congressional needs, we ask that the State consider
22 our Illinois representative needs through the
23 creation of a Latino majority district in our area.

24 Just a couple more comments. We would

1 also like to ask for two-weeks' notice when you guys
2 present your redistricting proposals because as a
3 member of various grass-roots organizations, you have
4 to understand that it is very difficult to inform the
5 public and also to give them a chance to speak their
6 minds on what the proposal would mean for them; and
7 we would also like to ask that fair redistricting is
8 implemented to ensure that prisoners can speak their
9 voices and their communities in the district -- in
10 their own districts that they will be returning to
11 upon release.

12 Thank you very much for your time. I
13 appreciate you guys listening and giving me the
14 opportunity to speak.

15 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Thank you.

16 TESTIMONY

17 BY

18 MR. XAVIER ROMAN:

19 My name is Xavier Roman speaking on
20 behalf of the New 10th Ward Community Service
21 Organization. Richard Martinez is supposed to be
22 here too, but he's our department chair and he's not
23 able to be here.

24 The New 10th Ward Community Service

1 Organization is a new community organization that
2 represents the neighborhoods of South Chicago, East
3 Side, Hegewisch, South Deering, Fenwick Park, Slag
4 Valley, Jeffrey Manor in the Chicago 10th Ward.

5 The purpose and mission of this
6 organization is to make a positive investment into
7 these 10th Ward communities throughout the existing
8 CBOs, community-based organizations, mobilizing and
9 organizing for social justice issues packing the
10 Southeast Side of Chicago and holding our elected
11 official accountable.

12 The South Side/Southeast Side 10th
13 Ward community is where many of the first Mexican
14 immigrants settled in Chicago at the beginning of the
15 last century, primarily because of the abundant steel
16 industry that existed.

17 Since then, generations of Latinos
18 have made the Southeast Side their home. Latinos in
19 this part of the City of Chicago have been
20 entrepreneurs, founded CBOs, church, communities of
21 faith, elected union officials, homeowners, voters,
22 taxpayers -- we could extend this case into the south
23 suburban communities such as Burnham, Calumet City,
24 Lansing, Blue Island, Chicago Heights, and South

1 Chicago Heights as well.

2 The one area not fulfilled has been
3 elected political representation. The 10th Ward with
4 over 60,000 residents have been a Latino community
5 over the last 20 years. The 10th Ward is part of the
6 2nd Congressional District, which there are 78,250
7 Latinos or 13.2 percent of the District, and Illinois
8 State House District 25, which is 10,571 Latinos or
9 11.9 percent; 33 is 25,091 Latinos or 27.4 percent;
10 and 34, which is 10,015 or 10.6 percent according to
11 the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau Statistics. At this
12 time, there are no elected officials -- Latino
13 officials representing the Southeast Side, 10th Ward,
14 at any level.

15 We would also include the south
16 suburbs as well. The Latino community which has been
17 part of shaping the fabric of the Southeast Side, the
18 10th Ward and the southeast suburbs for the last 120
19 years is currently a community with no elected Latino
20 representation and, therefore, a disenfranchised
21 community.

22 As you can see from the numbers listed
23 above, the predominant number of Latino residents are
24 currently divided among three Legislative House

1 districts, which has led to the dilution of our
2 voting power and strength and, as a result, a lack of
3 elected political representation.

4 After a view of updated U.S. Census
5 2010 population numbers, it is apparent that a
6 numerical case cannot be made for a Hispanic/Latino
7 majority Congressional district and Illinois State
8 Senate District in this part of the city and county;
9 but there are substantial Latino numbers to advocate
10 for and to make a case for the creation of a
11 designated Hispanic/Latino Majority state House
12 district utilizing the converging Latino growth
13 numbers based on the City of Chicago's 10th Ward and
14 continuing to Burnham, Lansing and Calumet City. We
15 believe that there is a strong case in creating a
16 Hispanic/Latino district that uses components of
17 contiguity and compactness.

18 The New 10th Ward Community Service
19 Organization also wants to make clear to the
20 Redistricting Committee that by advocating for the
21 creation and designation of a Latino majority House
22 district, we are not seeking to minimize the
23 representation of other minority groups. In fact, it
24 is our hope that other minority groups would support

1 our efforts and advocacy.

2 In conclusion, the New 10th Ward
3 Service Organization respects the legislative process
4 that has been laid out with regards to the
5 redistricting and it is our prayer that the
6 Redistricting Committee would, in turn, exercise good
7 stewardship of its responsibilities in being both
8 responsive and respectful to the community -- the
9 Latino community.

10 Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Thank you.

12 TESTIMONY

13 BY

14 MR. JOSEPH WATKINS:

15 Hello. My name is Joseph Watkins, and
16 I thank you all for giving me the opportunity to come
17 out here to speak.

18 I represent an organization called
19 VOTE. VOTE is an acronym, the Voice of the
20 Ex-Offender, those who have been marginalized and
21 excised out of society, who have been disfranchised
22 and neglected. Under the current districting, the
23 black enclaves have suffered economic death pulled
24 apart by many elements: Racism, classism, map

1 transformation, neglect and gentrification, which,
2 for the most part, has a great impact on the
3 redistricting hearings today.

4 The black enclaves are represented by
5 three Congressional districts and ten Senate
6 districts and eighteen -- about eighteen state
7 Representatives and which -- which includes
8 Hispanics, Asians, Arabs and the white population who
9 receive most of, if not all, of the attention and
10 resources while the blacks are marginalized. And
11 every election we give 90 percent of our votes to the
12 elected who use our share of federal tax dollars to
13 help others build the aforementioned populations.

14 We are counted in all enclaves and all
15 the prison areas, but we're underrepresented in our
16 own communities and economics. In reality, blacks
17 are the majority in the United States and in the
18 state of Illinois.

19 Now, you all look at me puzzled when I
20 say that; but when you look at all the other groups,
21 the white population is made up of Lithuanians,
22 French, Dutch, Irish and so forth; the Asians are
23 made up of Japanese, Vietnamese and the likewise; and
24 the same with the Arabs.

1 The blacks are the only monolithic
2 group in this country who are non-immigrants who have
3 come to this country and we are being
4 underrepresented in this country and in the city and
5 in politics, and under the current redistricting --
6 under the current district where gerrymandering has
7 been going on, our resources have been given to our
8 people who don't look like us. Our federal tax
9 dollars have been given to people who don't look like
10 us.

11 I live in Bronzeville Community which
12 is supposed to be the black metropolis of Chicago --
13 or one of them, so they say, but you can't tell.
14 It's the home of former projects, Robert Taylor,
15 Pilcher Park and the like, and just as we were
16 neglected and shunned and marginalized, we are in the
17 same situation today and my hope is that when we --
18 when you-all do your redistricting -- is that you all
19 increase the amount of representation in the black
20 community.

21 We have, what, three Congressional
22 districts and I think that each group, like the
23 Hispanics, the Asians -- and I think we all should
24 have our own representatives. The redistricting

1 should be drawn to reflect 90 percent of voting age
2 people in each community.

3 Therefore, those of us who have been
4 marginalized have to get excuses from our
5 representatives, that I'm elected for all the people.
6 See, I don't hear the Hispanics, I don't hear white
7 folks say it, but I hear it from our own community.
8 And so to combat that, I'm requesting that all our
9 redistricting be done to include black -- but all the
10 black enclaves should be intertwined or fixed up in a
11 gerrymandering way.

12 Each race is represented by their own
13 culture and we live in Chicago, which is supposed to
14 be a diverse city, but blacks don't benefit from
15 diversity -- or maybe -- let me -- I don't want you
16 all to be confused, maybe African-Americans may
17 benefit from this but blacks don't and there's a
18 difference between the two.

19 See, African-Americans are those who
20 assimilated to the white race, who got jobs in
21 another class; the rest of us blacks are poor people
22 still fighting for freedom for a race that we don't
23 get in our representations from our elected
24 politicians or the state -- United States or local.

1 And so, therefore, it's very important
2 for us -- to my class of people that we be added into
3 this districting by adding or increasing our -- that
4 we're representing -- to reflect our community
5 because we're being underrepresented.

6 And with that, I'll rest.

7 And thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Thank you.

9 TESTIMONY

10 BY

11 MR. PAUL MCKINLEY:

12 First of all, I'd like to say thank
13 you, ladies and gentlemen, for allowing us to speak.

14 First of all, I'd like to say that
15 when the projects was tore down on State Street,
16 there was a large tracks of population of
17 African-American to the south suburbs.

18 SENATOR HUNTER: Can you identify yourself?

19 MR. PAUL MCKINLEY: My name is Paul McKinley
20 and I'm a member of an organization called VOTE,
21 Voice of the Ex-Offender, and the X stands for
22 everybody that's been X'd out in our community,
23 whether it be welfare mothers, whether it be, you
24 know, basically the ones that you all throw in the

1 garbage can of society and write us off and say that
2 we're the ones that's the problem, the poor people.

3 I'd like to say that a lot of the
4 houses -- a lot of the people that was living in the
5 City of Chicago when the Projects was tore down
6 during the transformation plans were removed, which
7 was underneath Mayor Daley and Terry Peterson. It
8 was basically an ethnic cleansing and it was moved to
9 the south suburbs, the people in the south suburbs,
10 we asking this body that there be recommendations for
11 this body to change some the meetings.

12 The state of Illinois has 12 million
13 people in it and Cook County has 5 million people in
14 Cook County. So we at least need more than just this
15 one meeting in Cook County. We definitely need
16 another meeting -- a few -- maybe even five meetings
17 in the south suburbs because when you are dealing
18 with our people moving from the city to the south
19 suburbs, that means that there needs to be new
20 districts strung out there. That means that
21 everything needs to be changed.

22 It's a whole new world now since you
23 have taken most of our people out of this community,
24 and a lot of those people are not Democrats. Some of

1 those people have now become Republicans or whatever.

2 So it would be in the benefit of this
3 body to hear some of the grass-root ideas that we
4 have, and one of the grass-root ideas that we would
5 like to have is that a lot of the grass-root people
6 doesn't (sic) have access. There is a technical
7 divider. And so we would like to ask that this body
8 open up an office in a state building or in a
9 state-owned property building where we would have
10 access to computers. We would like to have access to
11 the TIGER file.

12 We also would like to have access or
13 some type of budget put to the side for these
14 grass-roots organizations such as you see right here
15 at this table where we'd be able to go to Springfield
16 and be able to advocate even better for our people.
17 That way, the people that live in the south suburbs
18 as well in the City when they was -- when all this
19 ethnic cleansing was going on can testify and try to
20 sit down and put another structure together wherein
21 it will benefit redistricting in our community.

22 We also have a problem with some of
23 the numbers. We disagree with some of the numbers
24 that was -- that the Census came in. We have a

1 serious problem. We don't believe that there's just
2 14 percent of African-Americans. We believe that
3 when all this displacement, when all this turning our
4 people into what President Bush called the people in
5 New Orleans.

6 SENATOR HUNTER: Refugees.

7 MR. PAUL MCKINLEY: Yeah. They turned our
8 people into refugees in the south suburbs where a lot
9 of them are living out there. So there's -- a lot of
10 them did not get counted. A lot of people didn't get
11 counted in our community and in the urban areas --
12 they are right on the West Side -- or Danny Davis had
13 a policy that he made no effort to really try to
14 count our people.

15 So -- and we would like to ask y'all
16 to investigate that because we don't think that there
17 was really any sincere way that we had as a
18 grass-root organization to be able to have any impact
19 on the Census.

20 So we would like for this body to put
21 something to -- to put a budget to the side with the
22 grass-root organization, not these organizations that
23 has been pimping us. And we getting money -- you
24 know the organizations NAACP, Urban League, Operation

1 Push, Nation of Islam -- all these, they don't
2 represent us. We don't go to their churches and
3 we're not in their religion. We're just individuals
4 in our communities suffering from the misleadership
5 of those organizations.

6 Those organizations -- first of all,
7 I'd like to make one thing plain in this room also
8 about the NAACP. The NAACP cannot represent
9 African-Americans. It represents a colored people,
10 i.e., an ethnic group. Every person in this room is
11 from an ethnic group. You have a race and you have a
12 real identity. So they cannot -- they cannot
13 identify in 2011 and even change the name of their
14 organization to specifically say, We are dealing with
15 an ethnic group or this ethnic group or that ethnic
16 group.

17 So even in philosophy, they can't
18 stand up for me and try to redraw a map. How are you
19 going to redraw a map for me and you're not even
20 giving me the legitimacy as saying that I'm even a
21 man? You are calling me something that ain't even in
22 the dictionary. There is no dictionary that says
23 that we're colored.

24 So for you-all to enter this stuff in

1 here and say that they're -- they don't represent us.
2 They cannot represent -- only in the ethnic group can
3 they represent the ethnic group. These Latinos, came
4 in here, they specifically said they were Latinos and
5 they identified what ethnic group they was talking
6 about.

7 So we would, first of all, like to ask
8 this body to stop allowing other groups who are
9 non-profit organizations to represent us and not even
10 identify who you are representing. What redistrict
11 did you represent?

12 When I saw the Chinese come in here,
13 they said that they was Asian-Americans. That's what
14 they said. Every one in here heard that. That's got
15 no dispute about what they said. They was
16 identifying who they was. So how can another group
17 come in and receive non-profit dollars and say that,
18 I'm representing you and I don't have to call you by
19 your ethnic group and I don't even have to let you
20 even have a race?

21 And this is stuff that is definitely
22 offensive in 2011. We're in 2011. We're an
23 organization that was founded in 2009. I don't need
24 nobody to represent me that has no respect for me.

1 How would you feel about it if I come in and say I
2 represent you and don't even have the audacity to
3 respect your ethnic group? That's total disrespect.

4 So we are asking that this body set
5 something aside for the grass-roots organizations so
6 we can be able to submit our map. If not, then the
7 process is flawed. If you can't do that, the process
8 is flawed. If we don't have an opportunity to be
9 able to -- each one of us at this table to be able to
10 sit down and to go in a room and to do whatever we do
11 and present it to this body. Accept it or reject it,
12 we should have that opportunity.

13 After all, this is a democracy. We're
14 not living in Communist -- used to be Communist
15 Russia. We're living in a democracy and in a
16 democracy, everybody has an opinion. I mean, you may
17 not agree with it, but we are at least allowed to
18 have that opinion or voice that opinion. That's one
19 of the first amendments of our constitution.

20 So I'm asking that -- also, that this
21 body, because you will be presenting a statement, you
22 will be presenting your map that this body will be
23 presenting, we would like to see that map in advance
24 before it's voted on.

1 Can we at least get an agreement on
2 that so that we can -- if there's something wrong
3 with it or something right with it, we will at least
4 be able to do that? Can I get something -- some type
5 of response from this body after I get through
6 speaking on this, Mr. Chairman?

7 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Yes.

8 MR. PAUL MCKINLEY: Okay. Thank you very much.

9 TESTIMONY

10 BY

11 MS. ASIAHA BUTLER:

12 Good afternoon. My name Asiaha
13 Butler. I'm a representative or a member of the
14 Resident Association of Greater Englewood, also known
15 as RAGE.

16 I'd like to first thank you all for
17 the opportunity to allow us to do this hearing and
18 express our concerns in terms of the Greater
19 Englewood area.

20 The Resident Association of Greater
21 Englewood is a non-for-profit, nonpartisan public
22 interest group which mobilized residents and
23 resources to create positive change in the community
24 through solution-based problem-solving. I served on

1 the Census Count Committee for Greater Englewood so I
2 find this issue very dear to me.

3 We would like the record to reflect
4 the following boundaries be defined for the area of
5 Englewood: 55th Street to the north, 75th Street to
6 the south, the Dan Ryan Expressway to the east, and
7 Hamilton Avenue to the west. We do have a map that
8 we've outlined so we can give it to all the Committee
9 members.

10 Currently, these communities are
11 actually aligned with the boundaries of the Chicago
12 Police District, which is that. We also have a map
13 of the 7th District boundaries and according to the
14 2010 Census, the population within these boundaries
15 is 69,344.

16 Currently, Greater Englewood is
17 covered by two Senatorial districts, 3rd and the
18 16th, and the three Representative districts, 6th,
19 32nd and the 31st District. In an effort to ensure
20 adequate services and representation in the Illinois
21 General Assembly, we are requesting Greater Englewood
22 to be remapped to fall into one Senatorial district
23 and no more than two Representative districts.

24 Although Greater Englewood does not

1 currently suffer from inadequate racial
2 representation, our community's voting power is
3 diverse among five state legislative districts. This
4 limits our ability to hold, until representation,
5 representatives accountable on persistent issues we
6 face as a community.

7 Safety is a primary concern of
8 residents and businesses in Greater Englewood, thus,
9 it would be appropriate to align service boundaries
10 in this case. The Chicago -- a Chicago 7th Police
11 District with political boundaries.

12 We believe this recommendation will
13 better enable our communities to work with our
14 representatives to increase safety as well as address
15 other related issues, such as education and economic
16 development.

17 Our mission at RAGE is to bring
18 residents together to tackle issues we face as a
19 community realigning our state legislative footprint
20 into the Senatorial district and no more than two
21 Representative districts and the Illinois
22 redistricting process will be a step in the right
23 direction.

24 We'd like to thank you all for your

1 time and your consideration and, again, thank you for
2 allowing us to speak today.

3 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Senator Maloney?

4 SENATOR MALONEY: Thank you. To the second
5 gentleman representing the 10th Ward -- I'm sorry. I
6 forgot.

7 MR. XAVIER ROMAN: Xavier Roman.

8 SENATOR MALONEY: Okay. Xavier, thank you very
9 much.

10 The demographics of the 10th Ward, can
11 you tell me a little bit about that now, just exactly
12 what it is.

13 MR. XAVIER ROMAN: Yeah, they go from 83rd
14 Street --

15 SENATOR MALONEY: No, no, not the boundaries --
16 I'm familiar with the boundaries -- the demographics.
17 White? Black? Latino?

18 MR. XAVIER ROMAN: The demographics run into
19 67 percent Latino and the African-American
20 population, I believe that is about 21 percent and
21 then the rest Caucasian.

22 SENATOR MALONEY: Okay. So, in your view,
23 establishing a Latino district there would not erode
24 the influence of the African-American population?

1 MR. XAVIER ROMAN: Correct.

2 SENATOR MALONEY: Do you have a suggestion or
3 will you be producing a map?

4 MR. XAVIER ROMAN: Yes, we will.

5 SENATOR MALONEY: Okay. Great. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Senator Hunter.

7 SENATOR HUNTER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

8 Mr. McKinley, you were referring to
9 meetings and hearings.

10 Are you suggesting that we hold more
11 hearings in Cook County? Is that -- did I hear --

12 MR. PAUL MCKINLEY: Yeah. What I was saying
13 was since most of the people who was once living on
14 State Street was living in the Projects they have now
15 moved to the south suburbs and we would like to have
16 some meetings in the south suburbs if we are going to
17 be adequately represented because we're not going to
18 be represented by just having a meeting right here.
19 We've got to have some meetings in the south suburbs
20 because there is a large migration of
21 African-Americans who moved out there.

22 And so we would definitely ask that
23 this body recommend that they would have meetings out
24 there.

1 SENATOR HUNTER: Okay. I had another question.

2 You mentioned that something needs to
3 be set aside. So are you referring to that, we
4 should make public workstations available so that
5 you-all can utilize to draw your own map? Is that
6 what you were referring to.

7 MR. PAUL McKINLEY: Yes, ma'am. What we were
8 asking for was, by the City of Chicago being a
9 central location -- and it's not hard for people to
10 jump on the bus through the whole City of Chicago and
11 come to a central location where we can sit down
12 and -- review, sit down and talk to people. We are
13 trying to get some volunteers, some legal people so
14 that we will be able to draw our map as well as the
15 people in the suburbs.

16 SENATOR HUNTER: So what organization are you
17 working with?

18 Is VOTE trying to draw your own map or
19 are you bringing other individuals or group.

20 MR. PAUL McKINLEY: No, it's a task force. We
21 have a task force and we have also formed our own
22 caucus.

23 SENATOR HUNTER: Who is "we"?

24 MR. PAUL McKINLEY: There's several

1 different --

2 SENATOR HUNTER: Organizations?

3 MR. PAUL MCKINLEY: -- organizations who have
4 their own names --

5 SENATOR HUNTER: Okay.

6 MR. PAUL MCKINLEY: So I just came down here --
7 you asked me who I was and I was telling you what my
8 position is --

9 SENATOR HUNTER: Right?

10 MR. PAUL MCKINLEY: -- but we have a coalition
11 of different people who want to sit down with us and
12 draw these maps. It's not me as an individual
13 because I'm -- I don't know that much about it.

14 SENATOR HUNTER: So if we make workstations
15 available, would it be the group that would utilize
16 the workstation?

17 MR. PAUL MCKINLEY: It would be the group that
18 will utilize the facilities so we will be able to
19 come and draw our map because you are dealing with a
20 group of people that doesn't have the -- they have
21 limited funds where they cannot be doing it.

22 And also the -- Springfield, I would
23 ask that this body would not have so many meetings in
24 Springfield because what it actually does, it --

1 concerning this, it makes it appear that y'all are
2 intentionally not allowing the grass-root people to
3 have a say by having a meeting so far away that it's
4 just absolutely ridiculous. I mean, they can only
5 get on the bus and go somewhere.

6 SENATOR HUNTER: Okay. I just wanted to
7 clarify --

8 MR. PAUL MCKINLEY: Okay. Thank you very much.
9 I'm waiting for the Chairman to say that he was going
10 to do that.

11 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Senator Collins?

12 SENATOR HUNTER: I have one more question,
13 Mr. Chairman.

14 Ms. Butler, what makes Englewood
15 different or does it stand out?

16 What is the uniqueness about the
17 Englewood community as compared to the other
18 communities.

19 MS. ASIAHA BUTLER: I would say one of the
20 things that makes us unique is also the way that
21 we're mapped locally. We are divided into six
22 different wards, which also makes it very difficult
23 for us to get any legislative or representations from
24 our elected officials. So if we can start at the

1 state level, we are hoping it can trickle down to the
2 local level.

3 SENATOR HUNTER: Good. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Senator Collins.

5 SENATOR COLLINS: Mr. McKinley?

6 MR. PAUL MCKINLEY: Yes, ma'am.

7 SENATOR COLLINS: McKinley. Let me just ask
8 you a question.

9 How did you hear -- I'm hearing you
10 want to have more hearings out in the south suburban
11 area. How did you hear about this hearing and what
12 would your suggestions be about getting the word out?

13 If we were to have other meetings, how
14 do we get the word out to your group or your -- what
15 would you suggest to do.

16 MR. PAUL MCKINLEY: First of all, I'd like to
17 say that people who live in the south suburbs are
18 isolated and a lot of people who have moved out there
19 were Section 8s. They don't have transportation as
20 far as cars, they don't own no -- they got a house --
21 they're living in a house and some of them don't even
22 have jobs. And I'm not speaking ill of them, but
23 they don't have the transportation to be able to move
24 around in the City, in the City of Chicago --

1 SENATOR COLLINS: Well, besides the
2 transportation issue, how would you communicate -- or
3 how would we communicate that we are having -- how
4 did you hear about -- first of all, how did you hear
5 about this hearing and how would we work to have
6 those individuals that don't have access to
7 transportation, that -- we're not asking about the
8 transportation, we're asking how do we get the
9 information out to them about the hearing if we were
10 to have a hearing in the suburbs?

11 What are your suggestions.

12 MR. PAUL MCKINLEY: Well, first of all, in each
13 one of these communities you have grass-root
14 organizations. Most of the time they're un-utilized.
15 And I heard of it through word of mouth. I did not
16 hear it on the Internet. I didn't know -- somebody
17 told me word of mouth, called me up, texted me and
18 then I started telling everybody else about it. Some
19 people in the south suburbs said, We ain't going to
20 be able to make that on short notice like that.

21 So I heard it like that. So the best
22 thing to do is that the -- if the -- this body were
23 to be able to say that, well, next month, whatever
24 day, then we would go to the network the grass-root

1 organization and inform them in the south suburbs
2 that you were having these events, then we would be
3 able to -- you know, because you-all do have it on
4 the Internet -- I'm on the Internet -- then you would
5 have participation because the grass-root
6 organization would then tell the people in other
7 parts of the community, Hey, this is what's
8 happening, it's happening at the school out here or
9 the library or so and so church, whatever and they
10 would you -- then people would come and facilitate
11 the meeting.

12 SENATOR COLLINS: So you're saying "the
13 grass-root organization."

14 Do you have some of the --

15 MR. PAUL McKINLEY: There's several names.
16 There's several names.

17 SENATOR COLLINS: Well, would you provide us
18 with a name of a grass-root organization so we can
19 contact them?

20 MR. PAUL McKINLEY: That would be the best way.

21 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Senator Righter.

22 MINORITY SPOKESPERSON RIGHTER: Thank you,
23 Mr. Chairman.

24 Mr. McKinley?

1 MR. PAUL MCKINLEY: Yes, sir.

2 MINORITY SPOKESPERSON RIGHTER: The question
3 you asked the Chairman -- and I know he'll respond to
4 you about seeing a map before it's voted on by the
5 General Assembly -- how long -- there's some other
6 groups that have talked about a week, two weeks.

7 Do you have an idea as far as period
8 of time in mind?

9 MR. PAUL MCKINLEY: Well, we don't want to --
10 see, let's say that you are going to vote on it in a
11 week. We wouldn't want you to show us the map in a
12 week. We have a -- first of all, the map itself is
13 complex and you're giving us a map and us sitting
14 down -- we're a layman, and you are considered
15 professionals.

16 MINORITY SPOKESPERSON RIGHTER: Not everybody.

17 MR. PAUL MCKINLEY: And by you being a
18 professional, you may be able to go through it
19 better. You may have -- one of your staff members
20 may be able to go through it better. But us at this
21 table -- hey, I mean, I don't consider myself the
22 stupidest person in the world, but I wouldn't be able
23 to go through it like that.

24 So we would have to sit down with our

1 grass-root organizations and our coalition and look
2 through it and if we only have a short amount of
3 time -- two weeks is just too short. We think we
4 need at least -- you know, right after you come up
5 with it, right after you come up with it, it should
6 be made public. There shouldn't be no shadows.
7 There shouldn't be no, We came up with the map and
8 we're not going to let it out before -- 2 minutes
9 before showtime.

10 Now, that's the real issue and I
11 believe legitimately that's what the organizations
12 are saying to you, that as soon as y'all have drawn
13 up the map and agreed, Well, here is our map, then
14 you need -- it needs to be put on the Internet, it
15 needs to be a press conference, whatever, through the
16 public media and in that way -- and they need to have
17 a meeting right after that so we can respond saying,
18 Well, we find problems with this because you're going
19 to have problems with it and we find this is okay and
20 that would be the better way to do it.

21 MINORITY SPOKESPERSON RIGHTER: Now, you said
22 an absolute minimum of two weeks?

23 MR. PAUL McKINLEY: That's --

24 MINORITY SPOKESPERSON RIGHTER: You actually

1 said more.

2 MR. PAUL McKINLEY: That's not -- two weeks is
3 not really giving a layman a real type of a chance.
4 I'm saying that when you -- as soon as you put the
5 map together -- it is not a secret. You-all not at
6 the Manhattan Project. So it should be revealed to
7 the public that, We have come up with this plan,
8 there is no rush to hurry up and pass it, and -- I
9 believe, you represent the Republican Whip; right?

10 MINORITY SPOKESPERSON RIGHTER: I'm the -- I'm
11 a Republican. I'm also the deputy leader.

12 MR. PAUL McKINLEY: Oh, I thought you were --

13 MINORITY SPOKESPERSON RIGHTER: Don't get
14 caught up in titles.

15 MR. PAUL McKINLEY: What I was saying was was
16 that quite surely, you would want -- your group would
17 definitely want more time to make sure that the
18 things that you want would be in there. We want the
19 same thing. You know what I'm saying? Because right
20 now, our community, we feel like we're the
21 minority -- not that we don't have representation up
22 here, but we feel that we are the minority.

23 So that's what she was saying about
24 Englewood. We feel that the way that that map was

1 drawn up was a way to disenfranchise us. So that
2 needs to be straightened out and it doesn't need to
3 be done like that no more; but that's not there,
4 that's in the south suburbs and everything.

5 So that's what I'm saying.

6 MINORITY SPOKESPERSON RIGHTER: You bring an
7 interesting perspective because you're right, you're
8 not one of these groups or associations, necessarily;
9 but two other areas, if I can, out of respect for
10 everyone's time.

11 One, do you think that we should have
12 hearings around the state after that map comes out.

13 MR. PAUL MCKINLEY: We definitely need to have
14 hearings after the map comes out because what it's
15 saying is that the map is a go. It's already done.
16 We don't -- Hey, you can look at the map, but we're
17 going to vote on it anyway. And we don't want to
18 throw out that type of -- I mean, isn't there a war
19 right now because they're saying there's a dictator
20 over there?

21 We want to have an open and free
22 process and the only way you can have an open and
23 free process is to have hearings afterward with the
24 people who may have a gripe about the map. They need

1 to be brought into the room, they need to look at the
2 map, they need ample time to review the map, and then
3 they need ample time to respond to say that, This map
4 does not reflect our community and it
5 disenfranchises.

6 Because that's what the Latinos are
7 saying, that their community and that they're being
8 disenfranchised by the way the map is being drawn now
9 and to keep them from being franchised (sic) because
10 if they're disenfranchised.

11 I'm being disenfranchised, so you
12 don't want these -- them looking at it one way, Mike
13 Madigan's way, and we don't want that. We want --
14 the last time I looked, this is the Land of Lincoln,
15 not the Land of Mike Madigan.

16 SENATOR COLLINS: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: All right. Now, to reply
18 to this gentleman, the initial phase of the
19 redistricting process is one where we're going to try
20 to pass a map through -- via legislation. If we're
21 unsuccessful with that, it will go to a commission;
22 and if that's unsuccessful, it will go to special
23 mag- -- it will go to the courts.

24 What we -- what I've been trying to do

1 throughout this process is -- and probably the way
2 you heard about it, through word of mouth -- is
3 because I've done everything I can to make sure that
4 the word of mouth is out there. I've sent press
5 releases. I've sent -- I put it on the Web site.
6 I've spoken to groups. I've done everything I can to
7 try to get the word of mouth out there because I
8 haven't been trying to hide a thing.

9 Part of what I want out of these
10 hearings -- and I know there are going to be plenty
11 more and I take under advisement your suggestion that
12 there be hearings in the south suburbs. What I want
13 from hearings is to get input so that that input can
14 be taken into account in drawing a map, not just
15 saying, Okay, look at this. You tell me ahead of
16 time what it is you want in there.

17 Once that is done, once there is a
18 first rendition like legislation -- you know, I
19 introduce different types of legislation -- once the
20 legislation is introduced, sometimes if there's
21 suggested changes and we have amendments and, you
22 know, depending on when -- you heard -- you've been
23 here throughout the day. There is all sorts of
24 different community groups that want all sorts of

1 different things --

2 MR. PAUL McKINLEY: That's right.

3 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: -- some of those things
4 conflict with one another, right --

5 MR. PAUL McKINLEY: Mm-hmm.

6 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: -- and so we're doing our
7 best to try to get that input so that -- I've put a
8 Web site up. It's my intention to, you know, as soon
9 as there's a rendering of a map, to post that up so
10 people can see that and so we can have hearings
11 afterwards and so people can be informed.

12 MR. PAUL McKINLEY: Mr. Chairman, before you
13 go, you still haven't answered the question about the
14 facilitating the grass-root organizations and
15 allowing them to have a -- setting up some type of
16 budgets so they can have a room or opportunity to be
17 in the State Capitol or something like this. You
18 know what I'm saying? That was one of the other
19 issues and I am quite sure that you are doing your
20 best to get the word out, but you are just one man.

21 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Exactly. And I'm glad you
22 just made that point. I am just one man and, you
23 know, this one man has come out of his personal
24 pocket to put up the Web site -- not the State's

1 money, not anybody else's money, it comes out of his
2 personal pocket to put up the Web site. I only have
3 so much in my personal pocket.

4 MR. PAUL MCKINLEY: Well, that is a noble
5 experiment, but I'm really going to get back to the
6 real meat of the conversation, that are you willing
7 to be -- open up the facilities for these groups so
8 that they can sit down and try to help draw the map
9 to facilitate us?

10 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: We have -- I'm being so
11 informed, we have purchased a public workstation and
12 eventually we're going to roll out protocols so that
13 people --

14 MR. PAUL MCKINLEY: Where is that, Senator?
15 You don't know right now?

16 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Yeah, I don't know right
17 now; but I will personally inform you.

18 MR. PAUL MCKINLEY: Okay. Thank you very much.

19 MR. JOSEPH WATKINS: What is our --

20 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Can you speak into the mic?

21 MR. JOSEPH WATKINS: I'm sorry. What is it --
22 after looking at -- like Paul was saying, we were
23 just informed about this hearing over the weekend,
24 which gave us a short time to prepare, but we went on

1 the Internet, I think, on some site and what is this
2 mapmaker ESRI or something? Are you familiar with
3 that?

4 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: It's a map drawing
5 software?

6 MR. JOSEPH WATKINS: Yes. Is that -- does that
7 connect to you all if we were to try to --

8 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: We're going to have that
9 available on the public --

10 MR. PAUL MCKINLEY: He's asking if we would
11 have access to that and the TIGER file?

12 MR. JOSEPH WATKINS: We was asking, will we
13 have access to that because --

14 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Yeah, when we roll out the
15 public workstation -- I'm just being informed of the
16 public workstation --

17 MR. PAUL MCKINLEY: It's his fault, okay.

18 MR. JOSEPH WATKINS: And, finally, I almost
19 forgot to say that we, too, want to make sure that
20 prisoners are counted in their district as well.

21 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: I think there is some
22 pending legislation in the House filed by LaShawn
23 Ford.

24 Thank you very much.

1 Rosa Perea, Centro Comunitario Juan
2 Diego; Jeff Smith; Jim Ginderski, Neighbors for a
3 Healthy Rogers Park, Steve Brunton, Chinese Mutual
4 Aid Association -- I can't make out the first name --
5 Idida Perez, West Town Leadership United.

6 Are you here?

7 (No response.)

8 John Baggett.

9 (No response.)

10 John Baggett.

11 (No response.)

12 James Harlan.

13 (No response.)

14 James Harlan.

15 (No response.)

16 All right. You may start.

17 TESTIMONY

18 BY

19 MS. ROSA PEREA:

20 Hi. My name is Rosa Perea and I work
21 at a community center called Centro Comunitario Juan
22 Diego on the Southeast Side of Chicago and I am also
23 a member of the New 10th Ward Community Service
24 Organization and I'm going to be really brief. I

1 have just points that I want to just really quickly
2 go over.

3 So our agency was opened in 1994 for
4 the Latino community. There was no -- actually,
5 nowhere for Latino community residents to go and get
6 services, specifically, the newly immigrated
7 community. So through the years our agency has
8 grown. We currently service over 20,000 people a
9 year and that's not just the South Chicago community,
10 that's including South Chicago all the way down to
11 Lansing and even going into Indiana.

12 Our programs currently, are just
13 really quickly, family literacy programs, organizing
14 programs, services and, more successful, our
15 community health promoter programs where we go into
16 the community and do home visits and try to get
17 people out to the services that they need. These are
18 people that are marginalized and sometimes not
19 counted.

20 But I just wanted to quickly say that
21 we do have Miss Barbara Currie who does support some
22 of the immigration issues; but other than that, we do
23 not have anybody else who really represents -- truly
24 represents the South Chicago Latino community and I

1 just wanted to ask you all to please -- I'm
2 advocating for designated Hispanic rights in the
3 House district. My colleagues already spoke a lot
4 more on that. So I just wanted to quickly throw that
5 out.

6 Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: I appreciate that.

8 Just as a note, I do have a lot of
9 contact from a lot of people from the Southeast
10 Chicago community --

11 MS. ROSA PEREA: Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: -- specifically on
13 immigration issues as well. I've been very active on
14 that, just as a note.

15 TESTIMONY

16 BY

17 MR. JIM GINDERSKI:

18 There's a bar in New York City called
19 The Bitter End and I feel like I'm on similar ground
20 here.

21 Good afternoon. My name is Jim
22 Ginderski and I live in the Rogers Park community of
23 Chicago.

24 I lead the health advocacy group,

1 Neighbors for a Healthy Rogers Park which among other
2 things, completed a community health needs assessment
3 of Rogers Park, and subsequently used that data to
4 recruit a provider and obtain a federal New Access
5 Point grant that built the Rogers Park Health Center.

6 I also serve on the 49th Ward Zoning
7 and Land Use Committee, the Steering Committee of the
8 49th Ward Democratic Organization, County
9 Commissioner Larry Suffredin's Health Advisory Board,
10 and Senator Steans' Policy Advisory Board, and I'm a
11 founding member of the 49th Ward's Participatory
12 Budgeting Leadership Committee.

13 My work in these and other roles has
14 given me a solid understanding of the challenges
15 presented by the current configuration of our
16 electoral districts.

17 Rogers Park is an old community,
18 established in 1830, incorporated as a village in
19 1878, then annexed into the City of Chicago in 1893.
20 Chicago officially designates the area outlined in
21 blue in your handout as the Rogers Park neighborhood.

22 As you can see, Rogers Park adjoins
23 Lake Michigan on the east side, the suburb of
24 Evanston to the north, the West Ridge Neighborhood to

1 the west and Edgewater to the south. Roughly
2 85 percent of Rogers Park is within the 7th Senate
3 and the 14th House districts. The other 15 percent,
4 along the northern edge and outlined in orange in
5 your handout falls within the 9th Senate and 18th
6 House districts. It is that area that I wish to
7 address today.

8 The question for Rogers Park is
9 whether our northern eleven precincts fit better with
10 districts that are 95 percent suburban in composition
11 or more intimately linked to the rest of the Rogers
12 Park community. The answer is clear. Historically,
13 economically, culturally, in matters of government
14 and other services as well as geography, Rogers Park
15 is a distinct community and its northern section is
16 an integral part of it.

17 The area in question, again, marked in
18 orange, is nearly surrounded by Rogers Park's
19 7th Senate and 14th House districts. To the north,
20 marked in pink, is a cemetery; to the east is the
21 lake; and to the west, a 15-foot high wall
22 surrounding the CTA train yard. Only a few block
23 section of Howard Street to the west of the train
24 yard is an actual interactive border with the 9th

1 Senate and 18th House districts, and this is mostly a
2 commercial area along a major thoroughfare, which is
3 also the municipal border with Evanston.

4 This arrangement places a dense and
5 complex Chicago neighborhood into a mostly suburban
6 legislative district, forcing suburban legislatures
7 to maintain an additional layer of constituent
8 service resources for an area that is barely
9 5 percent of their jurisdiction.

10 This division makes even less sense
11 when neighborhood factors are considered. Rogers
12 Park's elementary schools feed into the 7th District
13 Sullivan High School and Chicago Math and Science
14 Academy, except for Gale Elementary, which is located
15 in the 9th District. Also, Howard Area Community
16 Center's Alternative High School for kids who have
17 struggled at Sullivan is located in the 9th District
18 putting matters that involve families with children
19 at both institutions under the aegis of four
20 legislators.

21 This situation plays out in other
22 ways, as well.

23 On health, for example, public health
24 and emergency services in Rogers Park are handled by

1 the Chicago Fire Department and the Department of
2 Public Health. This is especially relevant with
3 epidemiology issues like H1N1 flu, West Nile Virus
4 and rabies tracking.

5 Suburban data generated by analysis
6 there and provided to the 9th and 18th District
7 legislators is only relevant to 95 percent of those
8 districts and possibly in conflict with what may be
9 provided by Chicago agencies to the portion of the
10 district within city limits.

11 This confusion is compounded by the
12 use of e-mail for constituent communications, as
13 e-mail lists have to be specially configured to
14 account for the geography.

15 Mental health issues in Rogers Park
16 involve multiple Chicago agencies, including the
17 Chicago Department of Mental Health. In the 9th and
18 18th Districts, the Evanston and Skokie Departments
19 of Public Health hold sway. Also, suburban health
20 institutions often see themselves as disconnected
21 from Rogers Park residents, for example, Evanston
22 Hospital, which recently redrew its charity care
23 boundaries to specifically exclude Rogers Park
24 residents.

1 Rogers Park is served by the 24th
2 District of the Chicago Police Department. In cases
3 where legislator involvement in police issues is
4 required, under the current mapping, two senators and
5 two representatives share responsibility for Rogers
6 Park's 1.8 square mile area.

7 The complexity of this was clear a
8 couple years ago when the majority of 911 calls for
9 service in Rogers Park were from the area in the 9th
10 and 18th District, while the rest of the 7th and 14th
11 Districts lie within the 24th Police District. In
12 the 9th and 18th Districts, most policing is done by
13 suburban departments who do not have jurisdiction in
14 Rogers Park.

15 One shared resource between all four
16 districts is the lakefront. Here, too, however,
17 there are substantial differences between how Rogers
18 Park and Evanston view their portion of the Lake
19 Michigan shoreline. Different agencies manage this
20 resource in the city and suburbs and in Rogers Park,
21 the beaches are open and free to everyone, where in
22 Evanston, access is controlled using fees.

23 The Rogers Park business community is
24 served by the Rogers Park Business Alliance which

1 manages two City of Chicago Special Services Area
2 Taxing districts, one in the 7th and 14th and one in
3 the 9th and 18th Districts. There are also three TIF
4 districts in Rogers Park, with two of those in the
5 7th and 14th and one in the 9th and 18th Districts.
6 Additionally, most businesses in the 9th and 18th
7 districts are represented by the suburban Chambers of
8 Commerce who don't have a presence in Rogers Park at
9 all. If it sounds confusing, well, it is.

10 Rogers Park is served by a number of
11 unique media, including RogersPark.com. A recent
12 survey found that Rogers Park had the fifth highest
13 concentration of neighborhood-based blogs in the
14 nation, which shows clearly that residents feel
15 strongly about their community.

16 There are two newspapers in the 9th
17 and 18th Districts, but they mostly confine their
18 reporting to events in the suburbs.

19 Finally, there are the human services
20 providers, several of which are partially State
21 funded and serve the Rogers Park neighborhood.
22 Little, if any, work is done by most of these
23 agencies in the suburban areas of the 9th and 18th
24 Districts. They are city neighborhood institutions

1 that should be accountable to city neighborhood
2 legislators. Some, like Howard Area Community
3 Center, have actually got buildings in all four
4 Rogers Park District areas, creating extra burdens to
5 maintain relationships that divert resources from
6 their primary missions.

7 In no way, for the record, is this
8 proposed change intended to imply dissatisfaction
9 with the legislators who currently serve in the 9th
10 and 18th Districts. Indeed, Senator Schoenberg and
11 Representative Gabel have consistently risen to the
12 challenges this mapping has forced upon them.
13 However, this remap could allow them to serve
14 uniformly suburban districts without the distraction
15 of a 5 percent City carve-out.

16 On nearly every front, from business
17 to culture to charity work to education, as well as
18 our ability to speak as a united community, the
19 eleven precincts of the 49th Ward of Chicago are a
20 part of Rogers Park and should be part of the 7th and
21 14th State legislative districts.

22 I'll just add, kind of off the
23 mainstream here, that my community, Rogers Park, at
24 one point was the most racially diverse community in

1 the nation. We're still, by far, the most racially
2 diverse ZIP code, I believe, in the entire state of
3 Illinois. We're a shining example of where this
4 country hopes to be. Maybe in 100 years -- we've
5 heard a lot of folks here talk about -- today how to
6 wrest some fairness from a long troubled process,
7 putting our community together. We speak 80
8 languages in our community.

9 As Senator Steans always says, no one
10 person can possibly ever embody all of our stories.
11 We don't do anything perfectly, there is always
12 tensions in every diverse community; but I think if
13 you put us all together as a neighborhood, we would
14 work our issues out and we would do pretty well.

15 One day, I think this whole country is
16 going to get to that point; but right now, Rogers
17 Park is the closest place we all eventually hope to
18 get. So I hope you will consider putting us all in
19 the same district so we can continue to move forward
20 together.

21 Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Mr. Smith.

23

24

1 TESTIMONY

2 BY

3 MR. JEFF SMITH:

4 Thank you, Chairman Raoul and members
5 of the Committee.

6 My name is Jeff Smith. By way of
7 credentials, I was a former State Central
8 Committeeman many years ago in the 9th Congressional
9 District when it was configured a little differently
10 than it is now and I'm currently on the Board of
11 Directors of the Democratic Party of Evanston as well
12 as a couple other organizations, including the
13 Central Street Neighbors Association, which is one of
14 the larger community organizations in Evanston, and
15 Citizens for a Greener Evanston, which helped develop
16 the Evanston Climate Action Plan.

17 I worked with Legal Services
18 Corporation and TESIS on redistricting cases doing
19 nothing but, for an entire summer, trying to break up
20 some of those cracked districts that you saw there.
21 I wrote my senior law school thesis on redistricting.
22 I developed a course on election law and taught it a
23 couple times, including to some folks who are now
24 elected officials.

1 And I have testified before the
2 Evanston City Council on redistricting after two
3 different separate instances and worked with students
4 and residents to draw up area board maps. And I was
5 recently a candidate for the General Assembly from
6 the 18th District.

7 You heard Mr. Ginderski and
8 Mr. Hillman --

9 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: I'm going to give you my
10 pen with all that expertise.

11 MR. JEFF SMITH: Well, we'll see. We'll see.
12 I'd like to think that if I had gotten elected, at
13 most, perhaps, they wouldn't be looking to cede from
14 the 18th, but their points are well taken.

15 I did want to tell this Committee two
16 sad stories that I experienced during the recent
17 election, the primary, a year ago. One was one that
18 happened repeatedly when I was campaigning, when I
19 would ask people what district they lived in, who
20 represented them in the General Assembly.

21 At that point, our representative,
22 Julie Hamos, had been there nearly a decade and it
23 being -- having the reputation of a literate and
24 politically involved district, you would think

1 everybody would know, and I was shocked to find how
2 many people could not answer the question without a
3 prompt. And if you gave them the prompt, Well, is it
4 Julie Hamos, Oh, yes. Yes, it is. And then they
5 write down their address, of course, they were in
6 Kraig Paulsen's district.

7 So people will say "yes" to a question
8 and that, to me, was a little dispiriting. More
9 dispiriting was on election day when our campaign got
10 calls from people who were not being given a ballot
11 and wanted to vote for me and were unable to because
12 the judges in the precinct were giving them ballots
13 for the 17th Representative district because it was a
14 split precinct.

15 The judges didn't seem to realize that
16 and when we finally won the argument convincing them
17 to stop giving out those ballots, then they wouldn't
18 call up the folks who had misvoted saying, Well,
19 we'll see how close it is and if it's really close,
20 then we can do something about it. Well, it wasn't
21 that close, but the point is everybody should be able
22 to vote, everybody should have their vote count and
23 these things wouldn't happen if lines weren't drawn
24 without respect to other -- to other boundaries.

1 Mr. Ginderski gave a history that's largely correct
2 of Rogers Park and Evanston. I would say that the
3 two communities are a little more linked in history
4 and Evanston is not what you would call a typical
5 suburb, you can argue that there's more
6 representation if you have more than one
7 representative, but he is correct that those 11
8 precincts are physically cut off from the rest of the
9 district from by the CTA tracks primarily and by a
10 cemetery on the north, they're really -- it's hard to
11 get from one part of the district to the other, so
12 his points are well taken.

13 In general, I would concur and
14 therefore won't repeat many of the points that Betty
15 Magness of the IVI-IPO made as to the advisability of
16 districts being compact, contiguous and having
17 natural and recognized community boundaries. This,
18 obviously, poses an ironic and difficult dilemma for
19 you when you're trying to draw lines based on quote,
20 traditional community boundaries where those
21 community boundaries may, in fact, reflect racism or
22 other divisions that we don't approve of and you
23 don't want legislation to be perpetuating those
24 divisions. Nonetheless, we have to take them into

1 account.

2 The new point I would like to raise --
3 or the newest is that I would encourage drawing --
4 against drawing, quote, safe, unquote, partisan
5 districts. I'm talking about drawing districts that
6 are so safe that the entire battle is done in the
7 primary process because what that does, especially
8 with Illinois' early primary, is shift the battle to
9 primary cycle and it extends the election season. It
10 contributes to us having the sense of perpetual
11 campaigning. It makes elections more expensive. It
12 fatigues the electorate, it produces legislatures
13 that are more pulverized than they would be otherwise
14 and, thus, it produces the gridlock some of the
15 problems that we've experienced, both at the state
16 and the national level.

17 And I'm not attributing this, just
18 like my Democratic party in Evanston had, to either
19 political party. I think it's a product of the
20 process. It disempowers safe districts; that is,
21 those who don't affiliate with major parties ranging
22 from political independence to those who support
23 minor parties and incumbents already have some
24 incredible advantages. So it doesn't really need

1 safe districts to have a good chance of getting
2 reelected.

3 I would urge that the map-drawing
4 software be made as available as possible to as many
5 people as possible as early as possible so that input
6 by the public is not confined simply to commenting on
7 maps that others have drawn.

8 I'm going to urge that you do things
9 that are going to make your job more difficult. And
10 I'm sorry to do that, but what you need to do
11 requires inquiry into more of the demographics. You
12 need to take into consideration the prejudices
13 against any community that claims that it needs a
14 district of its own. We need to see evidence that a
15 community votes as a block and that the electorate
16 outside of that group, a majority electorate, votes
17 against that population as a group.

18 Otherwise -- because if everybody
19 voted the same, then the colors and ethnicities
20 really wouldn't matter. People would be having an
21 equal opportunity to choose, quote, the
22 representative of their choice and, to this extent,
23 we have to take into account the meaning of the
24 elections of Barack Obama, Anita Alvarez, Joe

1 Berrios, Rahm Emanuel, and even Ameya Pawar in the
2 47th Ward of Chicago.

3 There is potential constitutional
4 problems no matter what we do. It's possible that no
5 matter what this body -- this legislature does, there
6 will be a lawsuit and so, therefore, making the
7 process as transparent and following neutral
8 principles to the greatest extent possible will help
9 any map you draw be the most defensible in that
10 litigation.

11 In addition to those who have urged
12 that the map be released at least one week before the
13 vote, I urge it be earlier than that. I would also
14 urge that it come out in the election cycle. It will
15 give the opportunity for campaigns to get off of the
16 ground; that would be a denial of democracy if the
17 map didn't get approved until the week before
18 petitions are due to be circulated. Waiting until
19 the last possible moment would indeed work as an
20 incumbent protection bill. I'm sure no incumbent
21 wants to be accused of that.

22 In short, you have a difficult task,
23 a lot of principles to take into consideration. I
24 urge adherence to the greatest extent possible to

1 reform principles that have been put forth by groups
2 such as the IVI-IPO, by Cindi Canary of the Coalition
3 Group, political reform by some of our leading
4 newspapers in this -- in this state, and by the
5 citizen activist groups that have come forth and
6 urging, if not demanding, adherence to principles of
7 real democracy.

8 Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Thank you.

10 I suppose we'll probably be accused of
11 incumbent protection no matter what we do and how we
12 do it, but I guess that's one of the perils of the
13 jobs.

14 Senator Harmon.

15 SENATOR HARMON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just
16 a quick question for Mr. Ginderski.

17 We heard earlier today from Kyle
18 Hillman.

19 MR. JIM GINDERSKI: Yes.

20 SENATOR HARMON: Very similar testimony.

21 Are you working together? Is that a
22 coincidence.

23 MR. GINDERSKI: You know, this -- pardon me.
24 That's one of the unique things about Rogers Park. I

1 had no idea Mr. Hillman was coming here today and I
2 asked him what he was testifying for and he flipped
3 open his folder and he has the exact same map with
4 the exact same ideas that I do.

5 SENATOR HARMON: Okay. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: I have a question, kind of
7 a Rogers Park/Evanston question since I have you both
8 here.

9 When you start talking -- this goes to
10 the complexity of, you know, weighing various
11 communities of interest. When you start thinking
12 about it -- and I understand, I'm familiar with the
13 cemetery separating along the lakefront there; but
14 there are other portions that go directly, you know,
15 across Howard and into Evanston, and in the Evanston
16 community -- I'm of Haitian descent -- you have some
17 Haitians in the Rogers Park community and you have
18 other Caribbeans in the Rogers Park community as well
19 as you do have a significant Caribbean population in
20 Evanston.

21 So there may be communities of
22 interest of Caribbean-Americans that say, Hey, we
23 want to be held together and that would go against
24 the philosophy that you propose. I'm not suggesting

1 one against the other or in favor of the other, but I
2 think it's an illustration of the complexity of what
3 we have to deal with. You've heard the roomful of
4 diverse Illinoisans with their various commonalities
5 and some of them conflict with one another. I just
6 wanted to hear your thoughts on that.

7 MR. JIM GINDERSKI: You know, in Rogers Park,
8 we have the Haitian-American Community Organization
9 and the Progressive Haitian-American Community
10 Organization and a whole lot of work was done raising
11 funds for the country of Haiti after the last
12 earthquake. Those efforts were undertaken across the
13 entire community, certainly with the involvement of
14 Haitian -- people of Haitian descent, but also a
15 tremendous amount of involvement in terms of Rogers
16 Parkers. We really do see each other as members of
17 all the same community.

18 I won't deny and wouldn't want to deny
19 that those other connections exist that go beyond
20 Rogers Park's borders. Some of those are ethnic;
21 some of those are commercial and economic. There is
22 some geography that does overlap; but, you know, as a
23 community, we seem to really work hard together and
24 take care of our own and feel a real sense of -- kind

1 of an ownership of our relationships with each other
2 regardless of background and that's a very unusual
3 thing, as you know, in Chicago and even in the
4 country.

5 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: And I agree. It's a
6 healthy thing and I wish the world could be like
7 that, right; but what we've heard today is we've
8 heard testimony from different ethnic groups saying,
9 No, we want to keep this ethnic group together. We
10 want to keep this ethnic group together.

11 And then we've heard testimony from
12 people from various different neighborhoods, however
13 you define them, and definitions of neighborhoods
14 also overlap, right, you have some --

15 MR. JIM GINDERSKI: Sure.

16 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: -- you know, there's Hyde
17 Park Township that encompasses Hyde Park, Woodlawn
18 and, you know, various neighborhoods, there's
19 Bronzeville, there's varying definitions of what
20 Bronzeville is and depending on who steps to the mic,
21 they'll define it in a different way.

22 And so I'm just -- I'm not suggesting
23 one thing, but another one with regards to your
24 suggested district for Rogers Park.

1 But, you know, Jeff, do you have any.

2 MR. JEFF SMITH: Well, I've had five different
3 state representatives since I've lived in Evanston
4 and two of those changes have come about directly as
5 a result of redistricting. Evanston used to be
6 unified and then it was split in half at Church
7 Street horizontally, and now it's split down Ewing
8 Avenue and I'm about 100 yards out of Daniel Biss'
9 district.

10 Sometimes a border is a border and
11 sometimes a border isn't a border. Certainly the
12 gangs don't respect Howard Street as a division
13 between Evanston and Rogers Park and they use it to
14 run from one jurisdiction to another depending on
15 who's chasing them.

16 Lionel Jean-Baptiste was, I think,
17 considering running for the 18th Representative
18 District and I don't know that he would have
19 considered it as seriously if the 11th precinct of
20 Rogers Park had been cut off from the 18th.

21 Certainly, it would have been a
22 challenge for anybody to represent that district,
23 though, given that you've got some of the problems
24 with health services, with AIDS, with immigrant and

1 refugee populations in the same district where, had I
2 been elected, one of my constituents would have been
3 Mark Kirk and the entire community of Kenilworth, its
4 extraordinary economic diversity in addition to the
5 population diversity.

6 One, sometimes we look at Evanston and
7 we say, Well, it's great that we have two state
8 representatives instead of just one, the normal
9 quote, natural thing, would be to put it all back in
10 one township, but there can be sometimes some
11 advantage to that.

12 I would defer, though, in most cases
13 to the community -- that's where you start -- and if
14 Rogers Park wants to be one district, then I say
15 let's start with that as your baseline and if you're
16 going to put -- if you're going to split up a
17 community, don't just slice off a little wedge of it,
18 you know, make it so it's enough that it has an
19 impact, it's a community of influence. That's the
20 whole concept behind it --

21 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: The community is a generic
22 term --

23 MR. JEFF SMITH: Yes.

24 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: -- so people from the

1 Latino community will consider themselves the
2 community and then people that -- from a neighborhood
3 will define themselves as a community.

4 Mr. Ginderski talked about the kind of
5 melting pot that they have in Rogers Park and there
6 may be an ethnic group within that melting pot that
7 says, Hey, well, if you take us and I don't -- you
8 know, I don't know the specifics of the ethnic
9 population and how it's distributed in and around
10 Rogers Park -- forget Evanston for a second in -- in
11 and around Rogers Park, they may say, Hey, we can
12 draw a, you know, Nigerian-American district if we
13 take the lines this way.

14 And so there's always going to be
15 conflicts and I think that's the point that I'm just
16 trying to raise is the complexity of this process.

17 Are you, Mr. Smith, going to be
18 submitting a proposed map?

19 MR. JEFF SMITH: Possibly in conjunction with
20 some other folks, but I don't have the mapping
21 software on my laptop yet.

22 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: All right. Well, we'll
23 look forward to it.

24 MR. JEFF SMITH: Is that going to be released

1 by on -- in some form made available?

2 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: We're going to look into --
3 you know, the complexity, the challenges and I've
4 asked for input from people from different
5 organizations with regards to, you know, What do you
6 want to be made available? So we're going to look at
7 that because there is all sorts of different mapping
8 software. This is a whole lot different than ten
9 years ago and so there is a danger of endorsing one
10 thing or the other; but we will, as mentioned
11 earlier, be making a public work station available
12 and, you know, there will probably be some tools that
13 will also be made available on-line.

14 Thank you all for your testimony.

15 Was there anybody that we missed.

16 MR. MARTIN TORRES: (Indicating.)

17 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Please step forward.

18 TESTIMONY

19 BY

20 MR. MARTIN TORRES:

21 Hi. Martin Torres for the Latino
22 Policy Forum. I filled out a witness slip.

23 Good afternoon, Chairman and

24 distinguished members of this committee. My name is

1 Martin Torres and I'm a policy analyst at the Latino
2 Policy Forum.

3 A major component of the Forum's
4 community engagement is its role as co-convener of
5 the Illinois Latino Agenda, a 49-member coalition of
6 Latino nonprofit organizations and co-convenor with
7 MALDEF. You heard from Virginia Martinez earlier
8 this afternoon.

9 One of the Latino Agenda's primary
10 concerns is representation at various levels in state
11 government. Redrawing the state's legislative
12 boundaries via the redistricting process represents
13 the greatest mechanism to uphold the voting rights of
14 minority communities and to strengthen their
15 political representation.

16 I would like to share some information
17 with you regarding the dramatic growth of Illinois'
18 Latino population. Some of that has been already
19 shared today.

20 As far as federal boundaries are
21 concerned, 2010 Census data used during the
22 apportionment process shows that the Latino
23 population growth saved Illinois from losing a second
24 congressional seat. If the Latino population had

1 changed at the same rate as the non-Latino population
2 over the last decade, Illinois would have been over
3 470,000 residents short of the population required
4 for an 18th congressional seat.

5 Fortunately for Illinois, the Latino
6 community expanded by 33 percent or nearly 500,000
7 people over the past decade. Other folks have gone
8 through some of this data, so I'll spare you from
9 the -- you have some sheets in your materials that I
10 left for you.

11 As far as state level implications,
12 counties dramatic Latino population group must be
13 accompanied by new legislative district boundaries
14 that enable greater Latino representation in the
15 Illinois General Assembly.

16 It's important that communities with
17 shared interests be able to select their candidates
18 that reflect their priorities and have an opportunity
19 to hold them accountable for their actions.

20 If the state legislature rejected the
21 diversity of Illinois' population, there would be at
22 least 28 legislative district boundaries where voting
23 blocks containing the Latino majority could select a
24 candidate of their choice instead of the twelve that

1 we have today.

2 In addition, it's important that the
3 Latino concentration reflected outside of the
4 majority or coalition districts be maintained
5 together as -- supporting the development in those
6 districts wherever possible. Given that 38 percent
7 of Latinos live in Chicago, this is particularly
8 important in the suburbs of the seven-county region
9 where 52 percent of the population resides.

10 The Latino Policy Forum has begun
11 collaborating with members of the Illinois Latino
12 Agenda as well as the Draw the Line Illinois
13 Coalition in order to advance the greater political
14 representation for the Latino and other minority
15 communities.

16 Lastly, all Illinoisans deserve an
17 opportunity to review and comment on maps being
18 considered by the General Assembly before they are
19 voted upon. As such, the new policy calls for
20 members of this committee, as Senator Righter
21 suggested, to schedule an additional set of hearings
22 after the maps have been drafted by the legislature.
23 Given that the advocates will be sharing the
24 preferred maps with you throughout the remainder of

1 this process, we respectfully ask that you show us
2 yours.

3 Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON RAOUL: Questions?

5 (No response.)

6 There being none, thank you for your
7 testimony.

8 One announcement before we adjourn.
9 Our next hearing will be on April 6th at 9:00 a.m. in
10 the State Capital in Springfield in Room 212. We
11 will be making announcements of further hearings as
12 we go on. We've set out our first four or five and
13 we'll be making announcements of further hearings as
14 we move on.

15 I thank you, everybody, for your
16 patience, and the committee on redistricting is
17 hereby adjourned.

18 (Which were all the
19 proceedings had.)

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22 ***The transcript produced will be the property of
23 the Illinois State Senate and will be made available
24 to the public through the Illinois General Assembly
Website after approval by the members of the Illinois
State Senate Redistricting Committee. Any
reproduction or redistribution of this material in
electronic or written form is expressly prohibited by

1 law.***

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1 STATE OF ILLINOIS)
) SS:
2 COUNTY OF WILL)

3 Tracy L. Overocker, being first duly sworn on
4 oath, says that she is a Certified Shorthand
5 Reporter, that she reported in shorthand the
6 proceedings given at the taking of said public
7 hearing, and that the foregoing is a true and correct
8 transcript of her shorthand notes so taken as
9 aforesaid and contains all the proceedings given at
10 said public hearing.

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Certified Shorthand Reporter
15 No. 084-004439

16

17

Subscribed and sworn to
before me this ___ day
18 of _____ 2011.

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Notary Public

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