

## **March 28, 2011 Testimony to Illinois Senate Redistricting Committee**

### **Harendra Mangrola, Vice President, Sumit Construction**

My name is Harendra Mangrola, and I am an active member of the Indian American community, especially in the northwestern suburbs, where I make my home. I have lived in Illinois for 24 years, 21 years of them in Skokie. I am the Vice President at Sumit Construction Co., Inc., which is a MBE General Contractor working in Illinois.

Also I am President of Gayatri Gyan Mandir, a not profit religious and cultural organization, located in Niles and Itasca.

As an Indian American, I know that I share many commonalities and concerns with other Asian Americans. As a member of the Association of Asian Construction Enterprises, I advocated for the re-inclusion of Asian Americans in Cook County and Chicago's affirmative action programs for construction. In 2004, Sumit Construction Co., Inc. testified about the discrimination that Asian Americans still face in this industry. That experience made it clear that our community is at a disadvantage when there is no Asian American with a seat at the table.

Through my community involvement, I have work with Asian Americans in the Skokie, Morton Grove and Niles area which are represented by 5 House districts. As we have tried to build relationships with legislators, we have found some legislators more responsive than others. Representative Lou Lang's district has the largest Asian American population at 24%. Not surprisingly, he has been more responsive to our issues than others. In order to gain better representation and accountability from our legislators, I urge the committee to draw our community into fewer districts, especially those who have receptive legislators, like Representatives Lang and Daniel Biss.

Chicago's Chinatown is a well-known example of how Asian Americans have been fractured, but there are other examples well-known to our community. As Kyle Hillman points out the fracturing of the Indian and Pakistani that he calls the "Devon Desi Corridor" in his March 24, 2011 Huffington Post article ([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/kyle-hillman/illinois-redistricting-chinatown\\_b\\_839901.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/kyle-hillman/illinois-redistricting-chinatown_b_839901.html)).

Finally, just as this Redistricting Commission attempts to rectify problems with the state map such as with the "Devon Desi Corridor", it should also fix congressional districts, where Asian Americans could express their political voice more effectively if we were not divided among several districts.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Harendra Mangrola  
9727 Keeler Ave.  
Skokie, IL. 60076  
(847)673-2622