



Wednesday, May 11, 2011

Illinois General Assembly,

A broad-based coalition of grassroots community organizations have come together across racial communities to support The United Congress of Community and Religious Organizations (UCCRO) Redistricting Committee's "Unity Map." More than 50 African-American, Latino, Asian, Arab, immigrant and other community organizations, representing over 40,000 Illinoisans, have created and endorsed this map to advance racial equity and racial unity. Together, we are calling on the General Assembly to protect the voting rights of Illinois residents by creating 57 majority-minority state house and senate districts as new legislative boundaries are crafted during the redistricting process—an increase of 11 from 2000.

The "unity map" protects existing voting rights districts, creates new majority-minority districts, and respects many communities of interest that have been split into as many as four state house districts for the last decade including Little Village, Chinatown and Back of the Yards. The United Congress' proposed map protects the existing 24 majority-African-American state house and senate districts as majority-minority districts. The Latino population has grown by 32.5 percent statewide over the last decade. In 2000, there were 13 majority-Latino state house and senate districts. Our proposed map includes 17 majority-Latino districts—an increase of four majority-Latino districts. Asian-American communities have also increased. Our proposed map includes three districts with over 20 percent Asian populations. For more information and images of the "Unity Map," visit www.unitedcongress.org/redistricting.

Together, we are calling on the General Assembly to do the following:

1. Work with this coalition, and grassroots communities throughout the state, in developing a map.
2. Uphold the voting rights of communities of interest, particularly those defined by ethnic and geographic boundaries as protected by law.
3. Publicly share images and geographic files (shp, dbf and bin files) of proposed maps at least ten days before bringing them to a vote in the General Assembly.
4. Draw majority-minority districts wherever possible—at least 57—while protecting existing voting rights districts and respecting communities of interest throughout the state.

Thank You,

The United Congress of Community and Religious Organizations
Redistricting Committee

Alianza Leadership Institute
Alliance of Filipinos for
Immigrant Rights and
Empowerment
Arab American Action Network
Arab American Family Services
Ambassadors for Christ Church
Asian American Institute
Brighton Park Neighborhood
Council
Cambodian Association of Illinois
Committee for a Unified Back of
the Yards
Clergy Community to
Community
Coalition for a Better Chinese
American Community
Council of Islamic Organizations
of Greater Chicago
Disciples for Christ Church
Enlace Chicago
Hamdard Center for Health &
Human Services
Howleit and Associates
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant
and Refugee Rights
Illinois Latino Agenda
Inner City Muslim Action
Network
Interfaith Leadership Project
Jeanette's Joy Community
Services
Korean American Community
Services
Korean American Resource and
Cultural Center
Latino Policy Forum
Lawndale Alliance
Lawndale Amachi Program
Metropolitan Area Groups for
Igniting Civilization
Mosque Foundation
Mothers Against Violence
Everywhere
Muslim Women Resource
Center
Neighbors United
Resident Association of Greater
Englewood
Proyecto de Accion de los
Suburbios del Oeste
Parkways Tenant Council
Project Mobilize
Puerto Rican Agenda
Sanad
Sankofa Incorporated
Target Area Development
Corporation
Team 15 United
United Congress of Community
and Religious Organizations
West Town Leadership United
Woodlawn East Community and
Neighbors Inc.



United Congress of Community and Religious Organizations

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

The United Congress of Community and Religious Organizations is a grassroots-led multiethnic human rights alliance. Our nine member organizations work in 30 communities in the Chicagoland area. Over the last year, we have worked with African-American, Latino, Asian and Arab-American leaders to develop racially equitable maps at the state and Congressional levels. Over 50 community organizations (list included) have signed on in support of the Unity Map released in March, drawing a total of 57 majority-minority state house and senate districts throughout the state.

We want to thank the House and Senate Redistricting Committees—especially Representative Currie and Senator Raoul, for their leadership in ensuring that both chambers individually and collectively held public hearings after the release of draft maps as promised. We want to acknowledge and share our appreciation for the time each of you has put into this process, as well as understand the challenges and complexities faced in creating a fair redistricting map. We hope to continue to work with all of you to improve the redistricting process to ensure increased transparency and public engagement in the future.

Along with our coalition members, we have analyzed the house and senate maps released last Thursday and Friday. We believe that many of the principles, priorities and issues that the United Congress and its coalition partners have raised through this process are reflected in this map. In particular, we applaud the fact that the proposed maps keep Chinatown and Little Village—communities that have been split into multiple districts for the last decade—intact. We do, however, believe that the map can and should be improved to respect more communities of interest including Back of the Yards, Englewood, West Englewood, Auburn Gresham, Woodlawn, Brighton Park, the South Chicago area and the Bridgeview and Burbank areas with high concentrations of Arabs—all of whom you've heard from at various hearings—as well as many others that are split in the proposed house and senate maps. We also believe that the General Assembly should create more voting rights districts, as well as stronger voting rights districts, to protect the voting rights of Illinois communities.

In general, we are concerned that the proposed map decreases the number of districts over 55 percent African-American as well as the number of districts over 65 percent Latino in the state from the current map. To be clear, the Unity Map submitted to the General Assembly

demonstrated that it is possible to protect existing African-American districts as well as add new majority-Latino districts, new Asian-American influence districts and establish the state's first Arab-American influence district.

In particular, we ask that the General Assembly consider the following:

- Protect existing African-American state house and senate voting rights districts on the west side. Strengthen these districts to ensure there are effective majorities to ensure residents in these areas will be able to elect the candidates of their choice. We have provided maps that demonstrate that it is possible to draw four house and two senate districts at 57 percent African-American each in this area. The proposed map, however, draws districts at 46, 52, 55 and 56 percent in this same area.
- Ensure that existing as well as new Latino state house and senate districts on the north and south sides have effective majorities to ensure residents in these areas will be able to elect the candidates of their choice. In particular, we believe that the percentages of north side districts can be strengthened and that percentages on the south side can be more balanced. We drew three house districts above 65 percent. The proposed map draws districts at 67, 56, 57, and 58 percent in this same area.
- Respect the communities of interest identified by Asian American communities on the north side by keeping them together in two house districts, and one senate district. We believe Asian Americans can and should make up at least a quarter of two House districts and one Senate district, and that Asian American neighborhoods as defined by the people who live there can still be kept intact. The proposed map draws one district at 25 percent, and another at 20 percent Asian in this same area.
- The Latino population in the South Chicago area can make up one-third of a house district. While it would be ideal to keep this population in one House district, in the interest of ensuring African-American districts in this area are protected, we ask that this community be drawn into at least one Senate district.
- The growing Arab-American population in Chicago's southwest suburbs—which has faced many challenges pre-and-post 9-11—should be recognized as a community of interest and kept together in at least one senate district. While the 2010 Census only collects racial data, 2009 American Community Survey data estimates that there are over 8,500 Arab-Americans living in the Bridgeview, Burbank, Palos Hills, Hickory Hills, Palos Hills, Palos Heights, Chicago Ridge, and Worth areas—making up as much as nine percent of the population in some of these municipalities.

Again, we thank the General Assembly for their efforts and respecting communities of interest including Little Village and Chinatown, but believe the map can and should be improved to ensure fair representation for Illinois communities.

UCCRO's Unity map is supported by Alianza Leadership Institute, Alliance of Filipinos for Immigrant Rights and Empowerment, Arab American Action Network, Arab American Family Services, Ambassadors for Christ Church, Asian American Institute, Brighton Park Neighborhood Council, Cambodian Association of Illinois, Committee for a Unified Back of the Yards, Clergy Community to Community, Coalition for a Better Chinese American Community, Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago, Disciples for Christ Church, Enlace Chicago, Hamdard Center for Health & Human Services, Howleit and Associates, Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, Illinois Latino Agenda, Inner City Muslim Action Network, Interfaith Leadership Project, Jeanette's Joy Community Services, Korean American Community Services, Korean American Resource and Cultural Center, Latino Policy Forum, Lawndale Alliance, Lawndale Amachi Program, Metropolitan Area Groups for Igniting Civilization, Mosque Foundation, Mothers Against Violence Everywhere, Muslim Women Resource Center, Neighbors United, Resident Association of Greater Englewood, Proyecto de Accion de los Suburbios del Oeste, Parkways Tenant Council, Project Mobilize, Puerto Rican Agenda, Sanad, Sankofa Incorporated, Target Area Development Corporation, Team 15 United, United Congress of Community and Religious Organizations Redistricting Committee, West Town Leadership United, and Woodlawn East Community and Neighbors Inc.

Thank You,

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Comparison Chart: Proposed Latino districts with a total Latino population greater than or equal to 65%

SENATE DISTRICTS					
Geography	Illinois General Assembly Proposal		UCCRO/ Illinois Latino Agenda		Senator
	Latino Total Pop %	Latino VAP%	Latino Total Pop %	Latino VAP %	
South Side	70%	64.75%	65.63%	59.82%	Munoz
South Side	69.43%	63.44%	71.17%	66.11%	Sandoval
South Side	NA	NA	65.83%	59.99%	No Incumbent
South Side	56.18%	50.30%	NA	NA	Landek
North Side	61.10%	55.58%	68.75%	63.75%	Delgado
North Side	57.46%	52.01%	42.98%	38.50%	Martinez
Latino Total Pop % will be greater than or equal to 65%					
Total Senate	2		4		

HOUSE DISTRICTS					
Geography	Illinois General Assembly Proposal		UCCRO/ Illinois Latino Agenda		Representative
	Latino Total Pop %	Latino VAP %	Latino Total Pop %	Latino VAP %	
South Side	81.60%	78.29%	76.58%	73.37%	Burke
South Side	58.43%	52.73%	54.15%	48.71%	Acevedo
South Side	80.40%	75.20%	77.12%	71.65%	Mendoza
South Side	58.47%	51.96%	NA	NA	Madigan
South Side	NA	NA	65.76%	59.34%	No Incumbent
South Side	80.27%	75.92%	64.68%	58.10%	Hernandez
South Side	32.09%	27.28%	NA	NA	Zalewski
South Side	NA	NA	66.98%	61.94%	No Incumbent
North Side	66.56%	61.05%	68.82%	63.04%	Arroyo
North Side	57.25%	51.80%	66.71%	61.62%	Berrios
North Side	50.42%	55.63%	68.70%	64.46%	Soto
North Side	57.67%	52.15%	NA	NA	Mell
Aurora	57.69%	51.34%	66.56%	60.58%	Chapa LaVia
Latino Total Pop % will be greater than or equal to 65%					
Total House	4		9		

Latino Total Pop % will be greater than or equal to 65%		
	General Assembly	UCCRO//LA
Total Senate	2	4
Total House	4	9
Grand Total	6	13

NA represents districts that were not proposed by both the Illinois General Assembly and the Illinois Latino Agenda/UCCRO

Prepared by Latino Policy Forum, May 2011

Data and analysis provided by the United Congress of Community and Religious Organizations