26-April, 2021

Illinois House Democratic Caucus
Illinois Senate Democratic Caucus
Redistricting Committees
100 West Randolph Street
Chicago, Illinois 60601

Redistricting Committees:

I wanted to reach out to you to share my thoughts and concerns on the redistricting process underway here in Illinois. This topic is even more important now that it is clear that Illinois will be losing one of its Representatives.

After 4 years unlike almost any other in the history of our country, we now are facing redistricting with a lack of meaningful census data. As a retired Chief Information Officer, I have made my living around the value of using data as the foundation of good decisions. With the confusion around Census end dates and immigrant intimidation, it is clear that the US 2020 census data won't be an accurate reflection of our real population demographics. Using this information alone will lead us to poor decisions in redistricting, and a further diminishment in the voices of our unique communities across the state.

It is more important than ever that this redistricting cycle we use the voice of the community in our redistricting decisions. Let us take advantage of the delay in the release of the 2020 Census data to ensure that our diverse populations are heard from as potential maps are drawn.

In addition, it is important that we avoid the gerrymandering so common in many states that cherry picks regions to ensure the dominance of one political party over another. Finding ways to align our districts to a better balance of compactness, continuity, and existing boundaries will enable us to better represent the true will of the people.

I know that this process is not easy, and that this Committee has taken on a tremendous responsibility for the electorate. I encourage you to make the hard decisions, seek better data, and ensure that the voices of the communities you serve are heard. Taking the time to do this right and not make the easy compromises will be more than worth it.

Sincerely,

Catherine Kozik