

City of Aurora



Innovation & Core Services | Community Services

44 Downer Place | Aurora, IL 60505

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April 15, 2021

Good afternoon Senate Redistricting Committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the state's legislative districts. My name is Dan Barreiro and I reside at 795 Bluebonnet Court in Aurora. I have lived in Aurora for over 50 years. Just last week, our first African American Mayor Richard C. Irvin was overwhelmingly elected to a second, four-year term and Aurora also elected our first Asian American Alderman, Schweta Baid.

I am submitting this written testimony on behalf of the City of Aurora where I am the Chief Community Services Officer and I have had the honor of working for the citizens of our second-largest city since 1986. In Community Services, we take great efforts to communicate with all ethnic communities in English, Spanish and sometimes other languages. As an example, our Customer Service Center has bilingual staff and we utilize a language line service to communicate with residents who speak languages other than English or Spanish. We provide support to three cultural boards and we work with 25 neighborhood groups. Several groups hold their meetings in Spanish.

Since incorporating into the city of Aurora in 1857, Aurora has grown into four counties, seven school districts, seven townships and two community college districts. We have a growing population and a long history of diversity. This trend continues as the new 2020 Census data will reveal. Based on the 2010 Census, Aurora's Hispanic Community numbered 81,809 (41%) followed by the African American community with a population of 20,348 (10%) and the Asian community with a population of 13,105 (6.6%). Aurora's Latinx and Asian population are sure to make big gains again when the numbers are finalized for the 2020 Census.

One concern is the use of the American Community Survey instead of 2020 Census data. New roof tops have been built in Aurora from transit-oriented developments, age targeted housing as well the completion of stalled subdivisions from the housing market crash. The American Community survey might not account for additional growth in Aurora which could impact fair representation.

At the present time Aurora is in primarily two senate districts and 4 representative districts. Because of Aurora's population, it is difficult to have Aurora in only 1 senate district and 2 representative districts. The current boundaries have worked well with providing representation for Aurora residents. We have excellent diversity among our legislators and are proud to have two outstanding women representing us in the Senate with Assistant Majority Leader Linda Holmes and Karina Villa. We also

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have three excellent women in the Illinois House -- Reps. Kifowit, Hernandez and Hirschauer – and of course one man, Rep. Keith Wheeler.

But as the second largest city in the state it is important for Aurora to maintain its voice in Springfield. As a diverse community it is important that ethnic communities are not split up so they have a weaker voice. It is important to not dilute their presence.

When you are reviewing the data for redistricting, please consider equity, inclusion and representation. The public hearings are a great beginning. It would also be great if similar hearings could be held on the proposed legislative maps before a final vote is taken and I hope the second-largest city in Illinois keeps a seat at the table when the final maps are drawn.

Thanks again for this opportunity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dan Barreiro".

Dan Barreiro

Chief Community Services Officer