Blackroots Alliance Testimony: Equitable Redistricting in Chicago South

To: Sub-Chair Peters and committee members
From: Victoria Stewart, Public Policy Coordinator of Blackroots Alliance

My name is Victoria Stewart, I am the Public Policy Coordinator for Blackroots Alliance, a non-profit organization that works to uplift Black communities and leaders while we advance on the path towards Black liberation. During the last year we have worked on the various campaigns such as the Census and working to end prison gerrymandering with the goal of protecting legislative representation in Black communities, communities that are already under represented. In the face of this upcoming redistricting, concern is raising in what this remapping will mean for Black communities. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the uprisings responding to police violence, and everything else that comes along with them our communities have been fighting to survive and no one is hearing their cries for justice. They deserve representatives that will not only advocate for them, but listen to them.

"Our mission is grounded in a love for the Black community, and a commitment to seeing our people achieve their fullest human potential." but that is not possible if our communities on the Southside continue to be not only ignored, but silenced. There are online tools such as Representable which allow community members to draw their own maps, centering the voices of people that need to be heard the most. Historically, gerrymandering, redlining, highways and gentrification have ripped apart communities and we can't allow the same people who did that to draw what our districts look like for the next ten years. Especially when we don't even know which data is being used to draw these arbitrary lines. People who have grown up in, lived in, worked in, raised families in, and learned in these neighborhoods know what their neighborhoods look like and what their communities need. Listen to them. Listen to us.

The redistricting process needs to be transparent and have community input to ensure that Black communities will not continue to be pushed aside and

neglected as we continuously have been. The southside deserves to be heard. The southside deserves equity. Thank you.