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**Public Hearing Testimony**  
Illinois Senate Redistricting Committee  
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Good after Madame Chair and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Griselda Vega Samuel, and I am the Midwest Regional Counsel for the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF). MALDEF is a national civil rights law firm that works to protect the rights of Latinos through community education, advocacy and litigation. Our organization has been involved in Illinois redistricting since the 1980s. We partnered with stakeholders representing diverse communities, developed model maps, and monitored the state's compliance with minority voting rights.

We would like to recognize the hard work and dedication of all the organizations, elected officials, and community leaders who completed a historic get-out-the-count campaign for the 2020 census in Lake County. We also thank every resident who self-responded to the census.

We have testified at several hearings of this Committee and the House Redistricting Committee on the importance of creating districts that provide Latino community members a **fair opportunity to elect candidates of choice** – as required by the federal Voting Rights Act. The federal Voting Rights Act requires states to draw majority-minority districts that provide specific racial minority or language minority groups the opportunity to elect candidates of choice. The best way to accomplish this is by creating districts with **Latino-majority voting age population**. We expect that the 2020 census will show that the Latino population in Lake County, particularly in Waukegan, has grown over the last 10 years. We urge the Committee to

consider whether a Latino-majority House district can be drawn in the area to be the second Latino-majority House district outside of Cook County – following the existing Latino-majority district in Aurora.

The Illinois Voting Rights Act of 2011 has been broadly discussed in past hearings but we wish to raise questions about the implementation of that law. The Illinois Voting Rights Act of 2011 was passed during the last redistricting cycle and it is different from the federal Voting Rights Act. The federal law has comprehensive requirements and a detailed compliance process developed by decades of litigation.

When a minority group is not large enough to comprise a majority-minority district, then the Illinois Voting Rights Act of 2011 requires the state to draw a district that provides the minority group an opportunity to elect candidates of choice together with other groups. We applaud that the state is guided by these goals but the law itself does not contain meaningful standards for analyzing compliance. In order to understand the legislative intent behind proposed maps, we urge the Committee to include a compliance report with all map proposals that details how the maps adhered to the federal Voting Rights Act and the Illinois Voting Rights Act.

**To conclude, we offer the following recommendations:**

1. The final map must account for **voting age population**.
2. That the Committee considers whether a Latino-majority House district can be drawn in the Waukegan area.
3. That the Committee publishes a compliance report with all map proposals that details how the maps comply with the federal Voting Rights Act and the Illinois Voting Rights Act.

4. That the Committee provides at least **two weeks** between releasing a plan and holding a hearing to consider the plan. As our Ms. Celeste Flores from Mano a Mano testified earlier today, it is critically important that the community is given sufficient time to provide comment and feedback on all proposed maps, so there is meaningful community engagement.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify. I welcome any questions.