

CHICAGO REDISTRICTING WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Puerto Ricans here in Chicago have been historically uprooted from communities across the city due to Urban Renewal, a process of displacement many of us know as gentrification. The Puerto Rican community in Chicago has a history of migration that goes back more than 70 years. The first Puerto Rican migration dates back to the 1930s, many Puerto Ricans made State Street just south of the downtown hotels their home and community. The second wave of Puerto Rican migrated in the 1940's and settled in what many of our grandparents remember as "La Clark" a neighborhood around Dearborn, La Salle and Clark Street just north of downtown. In the 1960s, Chicago's Puerto Rican community was displaced by a vicious cycle of gentrification forcing them to move north west to Old Town, Lincoln Park, Lakeview, and Wicker Park, after a very familiar experience of displacement Puerto Ricans moved into West Town and Humboldt Park.

Maintaining the integrity of Paseo Boricua also known as La Division - a historical, cultural and commercial corridor is our moral obligation. As a Puerto Rican area we must strive to sustain and grow the social capital of the state of Illinois and its agencies for its constituents. Puerto Rican have claimed space and built a vibrant community, we must end the process of gentrification. Uprooting families has erased or ability to sustain historical memory, I urge every elected official to consider the 70 year lived experience of the Puerto Rican community when making decision on the redistricting of our city.