

Good afternoon, Chair Bennett, Vice-Chairs Turner and Koehler, and honorable members of this Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to engage with the redistricting process. My name is Gloria Yen, and I am the Director of the New American Welcome Center at the University YMCA in Champaign, Illinois where we work each and every day to ensure equitable access to services, economic opportunity, and meaningful belonging for the 25,000 (roughly 12%) foreign-born residents living in Champaign County from over 110 countries - from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, from Mexico, from China, and so many more.

Despite population loss across the state, our community continues to grow in no small part thanks to immigrants-- in fact [51%](#) of our local foreign-born population entered the U.S. after 2010. Immigrants in Champaign County support key sectors - from STEM and Education to manufacturing, healthcare, and hospitality. A third are U.S. Citizens with another quarter eligible for naturalization - an effort we have been working hard on through citizenship instruction courses, immigration legal assistance, and voter education.

Regardless of status, immigrants throughout Champaign County have established homes, contributed to our economy, and strengthened the social fabric of our community. Our community looks very different today than it did 10 years ago or even 5 years ago. Meaningful belonging means districting that will keep immigrant communities together, fostering reflective representation, equitable distribution of resources, and civic engagement. You have a tall order in front of you by June 30, but I trust the commitment of this esteemed committee to ensure that that reality. Thank you for your work to improve fair representation and voting power for racial, ethnic, and linguistic minorities.