

To: Chairman Aquino and members of the Senate Redistricting Committee

From: Roberto Valdez Jr., Latino Policy Forum

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Memo: Subject Matter on Redistricting principles and requirements, the Census, and the boundaries of Illinois Congressional, Legislative, and Representative Districts.

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The Latino Policy Forum would like to thank Chairman Aquino and members of this committee for taking the time to review and weigh the data and information regarding the 2021 redistricting legislative map. The Forum is a statewide non-profit advocacy and policy organization. Part of the Forum's work to strengthen leadership includes ensuring there is a fair redistricting process that provides opportunities for the Latino community to elect the candidates of their choice. This also includes ensuring there are cohesive Latino communities of interest in the state legislature's mapmaking process, promoting equitable Latino representation in mapmaking proceedings, and advocating for a map that is reflective of the demographics of Illinois' Latino population.

### **Latino Policy Forum Redistricting Work: Past and Present**

In 2011, the Forum participated in redistricting work by presenting a map that reflected Latino equity in the state and the number of Latino-majority districts based on the state's population. The Forum also met with other redistricting coalitions, such as the United Congress of Community and Religious Organizations (UCCRO) and others, with the same mission of ensuring the state legislature approved a map that reflected the state's diversity of minority communities. The goal was to have Illinois' minority communities – Latino, African American, Asian, and other communities – equitably represented in the 2011 redistricting map. Unfortunately, the result of the 2011 map did not match what the Forum found to be an equitable number of Latino districts in the state.

For the 2021 redistricting process the Forum has approached a similar route in convening a Redistricting Advisory Committee led by community advocates and civic leaders from across the state, and producing a preliminary map using the most current American Community Survey (ACS) data to view the potential number of Latino-majority districts possible based on the demographic distribution of the state's Latino population. This exercise establishes a foundation for what the Forum believes to be fair representation of the Latino community and what the state legislature should consider including in a 2021 map.

The Forum was fortunate to begin its redistricting work in the Fall and Winter of 2020 by meeting with experts to provide insight on the process, organize an issue education webinar event, begin to recruit representatives to serve on the Redistricting Advisory Committee, and as mentioned above, create a map to view the potential number of Latino districts possible in a 2021 legislative map. The Forum believes this information is critical for lawmakers to consider as they begin to discuss the 2021 legislative redistricting map.

### **An actual perspective at Latino equity in a 2021 redistricting map**

According to the most recent American Community Survey (ACS) data, the total population in Illinois is over 12.6 million individuals with over 2.2 of that group being Latino. This makes Latinos approximately 17 percent of the state's population. The National Conference of State Legislatures specifies that all states must comply with federal constitutional requirements related to population and anti-discrimination. The Equal Protection Clause of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution requires state legislative districts be substantially equal in population. For the state of Illinois to accomplish this, each House district must have a population of approximately 107,000 plus and each Senate district must

have a population of approximately 214,000 plus. If we use the numbers mentioned above and apply an exercise where we focus on the Latino population and the goal of equity for Latinos in Illinois, specifically centered on redistricting and the drawing of an equitable map, theoretically there could be approximately 21 House districts and 10 Senate districts (30 total districts) with 100 percent Latino population in those districts. This exercise is not the way districts are drawn, but it is a perspective of seeing what true equity would look like.

Instead of 100 percent population, historically, there has been a criterion set of between 65 to 50 percent population. For the sake of this explanation, we apply 60 percent total population as the criteria to the same exercise above. If this were the case, there could be approximately 30 House districts and 15 Senate districts, for a total of 45 Latino-majority districts. Because the Latino population in Illinois is disbursed and there is a lack of Latino concentration in particular areas in the state, the district amounts above are impossible to achieve. But what this exercise does give is a high-level view, based strictly on the state's population, of what equity would look like in a redistricting map for the Latino community in Illinois.

### **Considerations for a 2021 map reflective of Illinois' population**

When focusing on Latino concentration throughout the state of Illinois and considering the set number (approximately 107,000 for House districts and approximately 214,000 for Senate districts) that will fulfill the population threshold to draw a district, and setting the criteria to at least 50 percent total population, the Forum's analysis shows there being approximately 15 Latino-majority House districts and 5 Latino-majority Senate districts totaling 20 Latino districts. The geographic breakdown of these districts would be the following:

- 11 House districts in the City of Chicago area
- 5 Senate districts in the City of Chicago area
- 4 House districts in the suburban Chicago area

The Forum asks the committee to consider the minimum number of Latino districts (20) in order to meet equitable representation of Latinos in the 2021 remapping process. Attached are the preliminary maps drawn and data distribution for your reference. In addition, as the redistricting process unfolds in the coming months, the Forum also advocates and encourages legislators to keep in mind the guiding principles developed by the Forum's Redistricting Advisory Committee when making decisions around remapping, which includes to:

1. Seek to understand and set an equitable number of Latino-majority House and Senate Districts that could be drawn for the benefit of the Latino community.
2. Ensure process and proposed maps comply with federal Voting Rights Act and Illinois Voting Right Act, specifically following (10 ILCS 120/5-5) Sec. 5-5. Redistricting (b) which states:
  - a. "The phrase "crossover district" means a district where a racial minority or language minority constitutes less than a majority of the voting-age population but where this minority, at least potentially, is large enough to elect the candidate of its choice with help from voters who are members of the majority and who cross over to support the minority's preferred candidate. The phrase "coalition district" means a district where more than one group of racial minorities or language minorities may form a coalition to elect the candidate of the coalition's choice. The phrase "influence district" means a

district where a racial minority or language minority can influence the outcome of an election even if its preferred candidate cannot be elected.”

3. Draw districts ‘compact, contiguous, and substantially equal in population’ as much as possible.
4. Determine an established minimum threshold criterion to create Latino majority districts so voters can elect candidates of their choice for representation in the state legislature.
5. Urge for a map that keeps communities of interest intact in Chicago and other parts of the state in order for the Latino community to have the best chance to elect the candidate of their choice for representation in the state legislature.
6. Work in collaboration with other redistricting coalitions to determine the feasibility of developing a “unity map” which optimizes the community of interest of all underserved communities in Illinois.
7. Support underserved communities to create districts that contain a minimum threshold criterion so voters can elect candidates of their choice for representation in the state legislature.

Another consideration of equity is how the Illinois population has changed and the growth of the Latino population. The below chart outlines Illinois population data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s ACS by Race/Ethnicity in 2010, population data by Race/Ethnicity in 2019, and the numeric and percent change of population from 2010 to 2019.

<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>Number of People 2010</b>	<b>Percent of Total Population 2010</b>	<b>Number of People 2019</b>	<b>Percent of Total Population 2019</b>	<b>Numeric Change 2010 to 2019</b>	<b>Percent Change 2010 to 2019</b>
Asian	580,586	4.5	738,666	5.9	158,080	27.2
Black	1,832,924	14.3	1,850,086	14.6	17,162	0.9
<b>Latino</b>	<b>2,027,578</b>	<b>15.8</b>	<b>2,217,569</b>	<b>17.5</b>	<b>189,991</b>	<b>9.3</b>
White	8,167,753	63.7	7,704,467	60.8	-463,286	-5.6
TOTAL	12,830,632	98.3	12,671,821	98.8	-158,811	N/A

In the table the percent columns will not add to 100 due to rounding and/or the exclusion of other racial/ethnic groups. The total population number will be larger than the numbers in each category as we have not included other ethnic or racial groups that are counted by the US Census. Also, because of the application to the percent of total population some of the columns may not add up.

As can be seen in the chart, the Latino community is driving population growth in the state being responsible for over nine percent of the total state growth. Illinois would have lost an additional 189,991 between 2010 and 2019 if it were not for the Latino population growth. In regard to population numbers, Latinos had the highest increase of any race/ethnicity in the state from 2010 to 2019, and only second to the Asian community in regard to highest number of percentage growth between those years.

The Forum strongly appreciates the support of this committee during the 2021 remapping, and we look forward to your continued work. Thank you so much for your consideration. If you have additional questions, my email address is [rvaldezjr@latinopolicyforum.org](mailto:rvaldezjr@latinopolicyforum.org).