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### Testimony of Aviva Miriam Patt, Executive Director of The Decalogue Society of Lawyers

The Decalogue Society of Lawyers, founded in 1934, is the nation's oldest Jewish bar association. Decalogue's mission includes educating the public on legal and Jewish issues, maintaining vigilance against discriminatory public and private practices, particularly anti-Semitism, and working with other ethnic communities to combat hate and promote justice.

In the society's earliest days during the rise of anti-Semitism, Decalogue often had to fight for equal opportunities for Jewish lawyers to advance in their professions. We challenged newspaper job listings that specified "gentile" or "non-Jew" as requirements for hiring and worked to end the scheduling of the Bar exam on Jewish holidays. Sometimes we had to respond to anti-Semitism expressed in court by other attorneys and even by judges. As the decades passed and discrimination under the law and within society receded, Jewish attorneys were able to participate fully in the profession and in public life, including elevation to the bench.

But remnants of prejudice still remain and Jewish candidates for the bench face an uphill battle to be elected countywide. Few Jewish candidates have succeeded in recent years, and mostly those with substantial campaign coffers. Multiple studies have shown that voters choose judicial candidates largely by gender and the perceived ethnicity of their name, and Jewish names are not among the popular ones.

The legislature created judicial subcircuits in Cook County to enable racial and ethnic communities to elect judges that would increase the diversity of the bench, and the 9th subcircuit met that need for the Jewish community. At the time, it encompassed the greatest concentration of Jewish voters in Cook County. But our people have become much more dispersed in the past 30 years and Decalogue is asking for the subcircuit to be redrawn to include other areas which are now home to more Jewish residents.

The Jewish population in Illinois is small – at no level of government do we constitute a majority. But it is possible to draw districts in which we have sufficient concentration to have an influence in the political process. And when it comes to electing judges, that influence exists only at the subcircuit level. We have submitted a map identifying those areas that can be combined to create a Jewish-influence district in the far northside of Chicago and the northern suburbs. Decalogue asks that as the subcircuits are being redrawn, the 9th Subcircuit be redrawn to include these areas so that our community can have a strong voice in selecting those who will administer justice in our County.