

From: Adaljiza Sosa-Riddell [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 14, 2011 5:11 PM
To: CommServ
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re:

July 12, 2011

Mr. Curt Pedersen, Chair
Boundary Review Committee
500 West Temple Street, Room 383
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mr. Pedersen:

My name is Adaljiza Sosa-Riddell. I am a Lecturer Emeritus in Chicana/o Studies and political science at the University of California, Davis. I currently reside in Glendale, California. I write to request the Boundary Review Committee for redistricting the county of Los Angeles, to consider Plan Z, my own proposal, to create 1 additional seat on the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors for a total of 6 seats. My specific concern is with the isolation of San Fernando and Pacoima from other similar “communities of interest” in Los Angeles County.

As a political scientist and a citizen of the US, I have studied in depth the importance of the political process of democracy in maintaining a strong nation. I believe all the people in a nation need to become avid participants in the political process to maintain a strong and vibrant nation. Redistricting is a major component of the democratic process because it gives people a voice in the process, builds consensus, empowers them to continue taking part in the system, and adjusts the body politic to population changes. I consider the three most important goals for redistricting in California to be: 1) close adherence to one-person/one-vote as ideal for a democracy; 2) adherence to the 1965 Voting Rights Act; and 3) providing fair opportunities for Latino/Hispanic representation. Based on my beliefs, my research, and my experiences I conclude that opportunities for Latino/Hispanic candidates to represent their district and their “community of interest” must increase significantly in the 2011 redistricting maps. This conclusion is based on three considerations: 1) the 2010 U.S. Census statistics necessitate a quantitative expansion of electoral districts wherever possible to accommodate all old and newly emerging “communities of interest”, 2) to accomplish the ideal of one person-one vote as required by the United States Supreme Court in the case of Reynolds v. Sims, and 3) my own self-interest as a Latina desiring to promote improvement in the lives of my community.

Los Angeles county is especially in need of change over-all because of significant population growth, shifts in the configuration of “communities of interests”, the oft-discussed immeasurable undercount, and shifting class boundaries manifested in changing housing and employment patterns. While there will be many arguments about the possible errors in the Boundary Review Committee Los Angeles redistricting maps, if it is to err, it should err on the side of over-representation of the Latino/Hispanic community because of three characteristics of that community. Those three characteristics are: 1) a large criminalized (illegal) immigrant population that avoids being counted; 2) a large resident non-citizen population which cannot vote; and 3) a large incarcerated population counted either in prison site where incarcerated or not counted at all and also denied the right to vote. The net results are political under-representation,

policy under-serviced, and a large part of a community left *sin voz* (silenced). Historically, the Latino/Hispanic community has been under-represented as well and it will take time and effort to remedy these past wrongs.

Our democratic system is failing the Latino/Hispanic community, as well as not reaching its own full potential.

Although there are no guarantees that once a community of interest is defined, a candidate for elected office with similar interests or experiences will emerge, the chances are better than zero that someone with sincere concerns for this community can be properly elected. The residents of Latino/Hispanic communities of interest deserve the opportunity to be represented fairly and judiciously.

Now, allow me to recount for you one of my experiences. I was born and raised in Colton, California, a child of immigrant parents. My family left Guanajuato, México in the turbulent years of the Mexican Revolution. In the USA, they raised 9 hard-working American children, many grandchildren, despite living in conditions of hardship and abject poverty. In the summer of my 16 years, as I finished my junior year of high school, anticipating my high school graduation, preparing myself for college, and eagerly planning to enroll in UC Berkeley, I went to work in San Fernando, California in a sewing factory. After 3 years of “summer migration” between Colton and San Jose to work in the fields, living in tents without heat, indoor toilets or running water, our family decided we did not want to continue that trajectory. We looked for jobs from Coachella to the Grapevine, following Highways 66 and 99. Rather, my father looked for jobs for my brother, himself, and me. He found a job for himself and for me, in San Fernando. My brother had to go on to Palmdale. Thus we found ourselves commuting from Colton to San Fernando weekly, driving in on Monday morning and returning Friday evening. This arrangement necessitated we find a place to live in San Fernando for very little money in order to give Mom as much money as possible to feed the family at home. My brother kept our pick-up truck to drive to Palmdale, where he lived in the truck. We had no phones, no TV, no radio. My father found us a very clean place, a garage converted into a basic apartment, behind a trusting friendly family’s home. That summer I made good friends in San Fernando, in the sweatshop where I worked. Although I was a stranger from a different barrio, I was never afraid, never harassed, never hurt. I came to appreciate my father’s extensive Mexican network, which meant he could always find a friend to help each other. He knew Mexican families along the two highways, from Colton to San Fernando. I came to know San Fernando as my home away from home, with many friendly people in between.

I submit Plan Z because for me, San Fernando City and Pacoima (unincorporated area) are quite similar to the city of Pico Rivera and the unincorporated area of East LA. They are as historically connected as are many areas throughout California. These Latino/Hispanic enclaves in Los Angeles can be considered “one community of interest” while recognizing several internal divisions because of shared and distinct national origins, shared ethnicities both indigenous and Spanish/Portuguese /United States, shared histories (conquest, migration, wars of liberation). San Fernando/Pacoima and Pico Rivera/East LA are both densely populated Latino communities, share the same type of grocery stores, neighborhood commerce, cultural activities, spoken languages, and family relations. They have similar socio economic status (high unemployment rates, low household income, high incarceration rates, low access to health care) and problems of educational attainment (16% of Latino men ages 25 to 34 hold an Associate degree or higher, the lowest rate of the four ethnic/racial categories utilized by U.S. Census Bureau). They face similar issues such as poor access to healthcare, unrepaired streets, high home foreclosure rates, criminalization of general population, and under-funded schools.

PLAN Z: Six seats (six districts) on Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors

District 1: Add from Sylmar south along Inter State 5 corridor including San Fernando, Sun Valley, Burbank, Glassell Park, Eagle Rock, to Lincoln Heights, then East along Inter State 10 to Pico Rivera and South El Monte, as per current District 1.

District 2: No changes

District 3: No changes

District 4: No changes

District 5: Remove La Cañada –Flintridge, Pasadena, San Marino, San Pasqual, Arcadia, Sierra Madre, Bradbury, Duarte, Azusa, Glendora, Citrus, South Monrovia Island, San Dimas, La Verne, Claremont

District 6: Sunland, La Tuna Canyon, La Crescenta-Montrose, Tujunga, La Cañada –Flintridge, Pasadena, San Marino, San Pasqual, Arcadia, Sierra Madre, Bradbury, Duarte, Azusa, Glendora, Citrus, South Monrovia Island, San Dimas, La Verne, Claremont, to San Bernardino and Orange County lines.

*Altadena requires special consideration, as it does not fit easily within either District 5 or the new District 6.

The difficulties encountered in expanding the number of districts from 5 to 6 leads me to endorse MALDEF Plan 1 which creates one additional Section 2 Voting Rights Act district by changing sections within the current plan (2001) without changing the number of BOS seats. Although MALDEF Plans 1 and 2 both further the Latino community's ability to elect candidates of choice in the L.A County Board of Supervisor districts, I favor Plan 1 because it more accurately reflects the historical connections of the city of San Fernando, and adjacent unincorporated area of Pacoima, to the Inland Empire as well as to Downtown Los Angeles.

Despite the many improvements made in California in the last 30 years, most of the percentages achieved in national, statewide, and local elected offices, (18.7% in State Assembly, 15% in State Senate, and 13% in Congressional delegation), all are far below the Latino/Hispanic total population representation in California, (37.6%). For Los Angeles county (47.7%) the gap between electoral representation and community needs is much greater, with Latinos/Hispanics meeting the criteria outlined earlier for "elected opportunities" in only 1 of 5 districts (20%) The gap between the needs of a community and the willingness or ability of the body politic to provide it is so wide that it is now receiving national attention. This County commission can take some steps at the grass roots level to address the problems, which will affect every resident of Los Angeles County and far beyond. I consider this an untenable situation this Commission can begin to remedy.

Thank you for your attention:

Adaljiza Sosa-Riddell, Ph.D.
Senior Lecturer, (SOE), Emeritus
Chicana/Chicano Studies Dept.
University of California, Davis
Davis, California 95616

Home Office: [REDACTED]
Glendale, CA 91206
Home: [REDACTED]
Cellular: [REDACTED]

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Statistical Assistance Provided by:
Jorge Anaya, BA, MBA
US Navy Reserves
Contact Prof Sosa-Riddell for info.