



THE FLORENCE-FIRESTONE AND WALNUT PARK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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Board of Supervisors/Boundary Review Committee
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Board of Supervisors:

I write to you today with great concern about redistricting plans currently under consideration which would affect supervisorial district lines in Los Angeles County. Results from the 2010 U.S. Census unequivocally show the existence of at least two compact Latino communities within the county constituting at least half of the voting age citizens. In other words, the creation of two or more Latino-majority supervisorial districts and keeping a competitive African-American district intact is now possible.

As you know, at the Los Angeles County, the Boundary Review Committee is responsible for determining the borders of the five supervisorial districts. Though several worthy proposals have been submitted for their consideration, I wish to voice my strong support for the Amended S-1 Plan, also known as the Latino/African American Coalition Map—which would create two supervisorial districts with populations that would be both majority Latino and geographically compact.

The Amended S-1 Plan meets all necessary case law standards. But it also achieves another equally important obligation—it honestly addresses Los Angeles County's history of racial discrimination at the ballot box, and it does so in the spirit of civic collaboration and good governance as evidenced by the fact that the Amended S-1 Plan enjoys support of organizations beyond the Latino community.

The unpleasant but incontrovertible truth is that voting in Los Angeles County has historically been polarized along ethnic lines, and primarily between Latinos versus non-Latinos. This was true in 1991, when the county's district lines were redrawn to fairly allow for Latino representation—but only because the U.S. Supreme Court forced the county's hand as a result of the *Garza vs. County of Los Angeles* case, which doggedly chronicled the institutionalized, systemic racism perpetuated for generations against the county's Latinos.

Now it is 2011, and Latinos irrefutably represent a clear majority of Los Angeles County's voting age citizens. Yet a 2008 report co-authored by David I. Lublin and Gary Segura and titled "An Evaluation of the Electoral and Behavioral Impact of Majority-Minority Districts" scientifically proves what many Latinos have known anecdotally for generations—that voting in Los Angeles County is still polarized among ethnic lines, and particularly between Latinos and non-Latinos. To put it bluntly, racial discrimination at the ballot box is not a thing of the past.

Taken together, these facts demonstrate a compelling need for at least two majority-Latino supervisorial districts. Indeed, I believe that this unfulfilled need would constitute *de facto* disenfranchisement—which is exactly the opposite of the Boundary Review Committee's mission. It is no exaggeration to say, in fact, that the people of Los Angeles County are relying on the committee to ensure that disenfranchisement in any form does not happen.

Yet this is exactly what happened when the committee failed to support the Amended S-1 Plan. This outcome is particularly true when taking into account Latinos' generally lower socioeconomic status combined with the game-changing effects of the infamous U.S. Supreme Court's *Citizens United vs. Federal Election Commission* ruling in January of 2010, which allowed for unlimited corporate funding of independent political broadcasts in candidate elections.

As such, because the Amended S-1 Plan would fulfill not just the letter but the spirit of the Boundary Review Committee's mission, I strongly urge you to adopt it. Thank you very much for taking the time to read this letter and for considering its message. Please feel free to contact me in the future if necessary.

Sincerely,

THE FLORENCE-FIRESTONE/WALNUT PARK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Efrén Martínez", written in a cursive style.

Efrén Martínez
Executive Director/CEO