



November 10, 2021

P.O. Box 56447 Sherman Oaks, CA 91413

*Sent via electronic transmission*

Re: The People's Bloc Redistricting Coalition

Dear Los Angeles County Redistricting Commissioners,

In addition to the presentation of the People's Bloc map on Sunday, November 7, we would like to submit in writing the following responses to the Commissioners' questions:

**Wong**

1. In the People's BLOC software you used when transferring the map of SD3 - the configuration doesn't look contiguous. Can we move lines east to make it contiguous?

Response: Our plan is contiguous when developed with census blocks. When the plan is converted to RDUs, the RDU that contains LAX extends to the coast, breaking up SD3 into two non-contiguous chunks. Our plan, which uses census blocks, leaves the beach in SD3 to connect Santa Monica to the South Bay.

**Franklin**

2. Can you clarify the representation of the large Asian population in Rowland Heights?

Response: The People's Bloc map was drafted with community partners to incorporate on the ground priorities. We have reached out to our partners in the San Gabriel Valley to share their priorities in their own words. We will follow up with that information when it is received.

3. Why and how is San Fernando Valley being split? Where are the distinctions being made to split SFV?

Response: Maintaining COIs and VRA considerations in other areas of the County while balancing population required the San Fernando Valley to be cut in the People's Bloc map. Our cuts keep the low-income, immigrant, housing, and cost-burdened BIPOC core of SFV together--these are the neighborhoods that share similar policy goals and socioeconomic characteristics according to our [Redistricting Equity Index](#). The more affluent parts of SFV--are drawn in a separate district with other communities that share more socioeconomic characteristics.

4. The City of Long Beach, are there any cuts being made in East, West, North, or South? All should be kept whole. Are there any of those being affected? All of LBC should be kept whole!

Response: While we tried to keep Long Beach whole, there were population constraints, especially around keeping SD4 as a Latinx CVAP majority district. We tried to make a clean cut



in Long Beach (along Atlantic Ave) that does not cut any neighborhood boundaries or COIs that we were aware of. Our redistricting equity index helped us decide where to make the cut so that Long Beach neighborhoods grouped with SD2 could still elect representatives that care about their issues.

5. From all of your partners, did you read the letters from the City of Long Beach Office of the City Manager and other folks who oppose LB being cut in any way?

Response: The People's Bloc worked with community-based organizations to bring forward residents' priorities historically underrepresented in redistricting processes. Our map prioritizes on the ground voices rather than government officials. In Long Beach, the People's Bloc worked with Communities for A Better Environment, Khmer Girls in Action, and Long Beach Forward. Each of these organizations has deep community relationships and trust. Throughout the redistricting process, they engaged residents, identified COIs, and reviewed maps, including guiding which communities were grouped together and how Long Beach was cut.

### **Holtzman**

6. Why do you think this Commission is allowed to account for any Census undercount?

Response: The census has historically undercounted lower-income communities and communities of color. The 2020 census faced new challenges, including a pandemic, the shift to an online self-response process, and rhetoric at the federal level that led to increased levels of fear within immigrant communities of sharing information with the government. While we will not know the undercount for some time, the People's Bloc factored this into how our lines were drawn. This is one reason why the population deviations vary between districts in our map (up to ~3%). Our population deviations also vary in order to accommodate COI and VRA considerations.

7. What rationale are you using to justify doing race count redistricting?

Response: Race was not the predominant consideration in drafting the Bloc's "Solidarity Map." In order to respect the "local community of interest" requirement in Section 21534(a)(4) of the Elections Code, the "Solidarity Map" takes into account many data points besides race, such as income, housing costs, nativity, language, COVID-19 infection rates, and voter participation rates. While some of these factors correlate with certain racial or ethnic groups, the US Constitution does not prohibit all consideration of race in redistricting. See *Easley v. Cromartie*, 532 U.S. 234 (2001).

The Bloc's "Solidarity Map" does consider race in order to ensure racial minority communities can elect their representative of choice, as required by Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, 52 U.S.C. § 10301, prohibiting discrimination in voting on the basis of race, color, or membership in a language minority group, while protecting COIs in areas where VRA considerations do not come into play. Given the growth of the Latinx population in LA County, the "Solidarity Map" preserves the ability of Latinx Angelenos to elect their candidates of choice by creating two Latinx majority districts. In addition to these considerations, the "Solidarity Map" preserves communities with shared geographies, language spoken, and common economic experiences



based on resident input. The Historic Latinx regions, including Boyle Heights, Lincoln Heights, and El Sereno, maintain a Latinx majority district in the Eastside. A second Latinx majority district is drawn, pairing SELA with areas to the south and east like Long Beach and Whittier.

### **Kenny**

8. Who are your members, and what comments were used to draw this map?

Response: The People's Bloc is a multi-racial table of 27 community-based organizations across Los Angeles County. The Bloc's twenty-seven members worked throughout the year to educate residents across Los Angeles County about the redistricting process and identify communities of interest (COIs). This process included distilling and synthesizing redistricting information into easily digestible materials and community events. Information gathered through this engagement process became the guide for priority setting and line drawing. Through weekly COI workshops and bi-weekly steering committee meetings, members of the Bloc shared community preferences. All of this intel was used to develop maps that met VRA regulations, kept communities whole, balanced the changing population, and connected regions with similar interests. Regularly, draft plans were produced and shared with the People's Bloc members to consult online drawing. Then, through an inclusive and representative decision-making process, the Bloc reviewed and refined draft maps until they achieved agreement honoring diverse community perspectives. The larger Bloc membership approved all draft and final maps. When consensus was not possible, we relied on member voting and then worked individually to address concerns of any member organizations not ready to support the will of the majority.

While 27 members of the People's Bloc contributed to the line drawing process for the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Districts map and the coalition voted to support the maps, the following groups 15 groups requested to have their names added to the map's submission:

1. Advancement Project California
2. Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council
3. Black Women for Wellness
4. Community Coalition
5. Communities for A Better Environment
6. Inner City Struggle
7. Khmer Girls in Action
8. LA Black Worker Center
9. LA Voice
10. Long Beach Forward
11. Newstart Housing Corporation
12. Power California
13. SCOPE
14. Social Justice Learning Institute
15. South Asian Network

Many of the groups who are not listed have chosen to focus their redistricting efforts on other jurisdictions or are not actively participating in advocacy efforts.



### **Mayeda**

9. Does SD3 consist of San Pedro? If so, it would have to be moved to SD4 because of Catalina Island.

Response: San Pedro is located in SD4 due to the shared socioeconomic characteristics and policy interest San Pedro shares with Wilmington and other communities in SD4. We mistakenly placed Catalina Island with SD3 but can adjust our maps so that the islands are in SD4 and can be connected via ferry route to the port.

10. In what way does LAX being included in SD2 would be beneficial to SD2?

Response: LAX is the largest employer of Black people in Los Angeles County. It employs many residents in the communities of interest identified through our virtual workshop gatherings. Many people in South L.A. find employment at the LAX for several reasons: the accessibility of reaching the LAX (Metro lines) and its proximity to South L.A. and Inglewood. These residents would like to see LAX drawn into their district as it has become a part of their community and everyday lives.

11. SD4 Pomona has a little in common with Torrance. This map does look a little weird. Can you talk about the rationale of Torrance being added to SD4?

Response: Through resident outreach, two Bloc members, the Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council and Little Tokyo Service Center, share a preference for Torrance to be grouped in SD4. Their members felt Torrance had more similarities with South Bay cities in SD4 than the surrounding areas of SD3, for example, a diverse population with relatively high immigrant and limited English proficient populations. Accommodating the request of placing Torrance in SD4 dropped the Laxtinx CVAP below 50%. Pomona was drawn into SD1 in an earlier version of the Bloc's map but was moved to SD4 in order to maintain that 50%+ Latinx CVAP in SD4. Bloc members approved the move of Pomona into SD4 because of the shared characteristic it holds with communities like SELA, for example, shared public health needs (e.g., COVID recovery), high shares of housing cost-burdened households, immigrant and limited English proficient populations.

### **Mendoza**

12. How many splits are there in San Gabriel Valley? Have you been in contact with SGV Council of Governance?

Response: The People's Bloc map was drafted with community partners to incorporate on the ground priorities. We have reached out to our partners in the San Gabriel Valley to share their priorities in their own words. We will follow up with that information when it is received.

### **Morales**

13. What is your definition of a Black effective district?

Response: Given population limitations, we are not able to draw a Black majority district. To



maintain Black voting power, our map ensures SD2 continues to be a strong Black influence district, which we define as having greater than 30% Black CVAP. This definition was used by the People's Bloc and other partners when drawing maps for other jurisdictions such as State Assembly Maps.

### **Obregon**

14. Redondo Beach is in the upper left corner of SD4. I don't know if there's a commonality with Pomona. I think I would like it more in SD3.

Response: The People's Bloc map includes Redondo Beach in SD3 with other coastal communities.

15. Why is Long Beach being split?

Response: While we tried to keep Long Beach whole, there were population constraints, especially around keeping SD 4 as a Latinx CVAP majority district. We tried to make a clean cut in Long Beach (along Atlantic Ave) that does not cut any neighborhood boundaries or COIs that we were aware of. Our redistricting equity index helped us decide where to make the cut so that Long Beach neighborhoods in SD 2 could still elect representatives that care about their issues, based on shared socioeconomic characteristics and policy needs such as high housing costs, high pollution burden, and public health needs.

### **Segura**

16. Can you confirm where the City of Lynwood is being proposed at? What was the rationale for shifting Lynwood to SD4 and out of SD1?

Response: We received significant feedback from SELA partners that Lynwood has strong connections with SELA. In our map, Lynwood is in SD4 and grouped with the cities of Bell, Bell Gardens, Cudahy, Maywood, Huntington Park, Lynwood, Vernon, and South Gate, and the two unincorporated areas are Florence-Firestone and Walnut Park. These communities are predominantly renters, and many are multi-generational households. Residents are primarily Chinese-, Pacific Islander, and Mexican American, largely working-class, and many unhoused individuals. The primary employers of this region are USC and the retail and service industry.

17. What is the red spot right above Pomona in your map?

Response: This is the city boundary of Industry, which is in SD1.

18. What was the rationale behind dividing the communities in SGV instead of making it whole?

Response: The People's Bloc map was drafted with community partners to incorporate on the ground priorities. We have reached out to our partners in the San Gabriel Valley to share their priorities in their own words. We will follow up with that information when it is received.

19. Where is the City of Montebello located?



Response: Montebello is located in SD1 in the People Bloc map.

### **H. Soto**

20. Shapes of some of the districts look a little gerrymandered. Would you characterize it as a gerrymandered map? How would you differentiate it from a gerrymandered map?

Response: Compactness is one criterion of many and does not rank higher than compliance with the Voting Rights Act or respecting the integrity of Communities of Interest. A district's shape does not necessarily indicate gerrymandering. Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, 52 U.S.C. § 10301 prohibits discrimination in voting on the basis of race, color, or membership in a language minority group. Following the Voting Rights Act and ensuring minority groups can elect candidates of choice often requires deviating from compactness.

### **S. Saira Soto**

21. We heard a lot from SELA, ELA, SLA wanting to be kept whole. ELA wanted to be separated from Monterey Park. If you received feedback, would you be able to go back and modify your map?

Response: We are open to making changes to our map, but changes are made with the collective approval of Bloc membership. Our 27 members would need to review and vote on any change. As a point of clarification, our understanding is that the CRC was drafting its own map and simply using the Bloc's map and other maps for inspiration and as examples from public feedback at this time. Therefore, we encourage the Commission to use our map as inspiration for its line-drawing process.

22. Duarte is being split. Duarte is a very small city.

Response: We believe the Bloc's membership would approve bringing all of Duarte into SD1, but note where it was cut based on our Redistricting Equity Index, grouping areas in Duarte that are more similar to SD5 with SD5, and areas more similar to SD1 with SD1.

### **Stretcher - No questions**

### **Vento - No questions**

### **Williams**

23. I know that you put it in SD2 for economic engine reasons. Would it have any impact if LAX was moved back to SD3?

Response: LAX is the largest employer of Black people in Los Angeles County. It employs many residents in the communities of interest identified through our virtual workshop gatherings. Many people in South L.A. find employment at the LAX for several reasons: the accessibility of reaching the LAX (Metro lines) and its proximity to South L.A. and Inglewood. These residents would like to see LAX drawn into their district as it has become a part of their community and everyday lives. Moving LAX back to SD2 would deprive these communities of one of their largest employers.



24. What district is the Florence Firestone area in?

Response: The People's Bloc map includes Florence Firestone is in SD4 with SELA.

**Please feel free to contact Kirk Samuels with Community Coalition (kirk@cocosouthla.org), Jacky Contreras with Community Coalition (jacky@cocosouthla.org), and Aaron Robertson with Advancement Project California (arobertson@advanceproj.org) with any questions you may have and to assist in communication with partners.**

Sincerely,  
The People's Bloc