



April 21, 2021

The Honorable Toni Atkins
President pro Tempore
California State Senate
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Anthony Rendon
Speaker
California State Assembly
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Steve Glazer, Chair
Senate Elections and Constitutional Amendments Committee
California State Senate
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Marc Berman, Chair
Assembly Elections Committee
California State Assembly
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: **Local Redistricting Challenges**

Dear Pro Tem Atkins, Speaker Rendon, Senator Glazer, and Assembly Member Berman:

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), Urban Counties of California (UCC), Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), the League of California Cities (CalCities), and the California Special Districts Association (CSDA), we write to express our appreciation for your willingness to assist local agencies with statutory changes necessary to effectuate a robust 2021 redistricting process despite the delay of Census data. We seek your assistance in providing additional clarity to local agencies as soon as is practical, so they can have the confidence necessary to proceed with redistricting planning and activities.

In 2019, the Legislature approved, and Governor Newsom signed AB 849 (Bonta) into law, establishing new criteria and public outreach and access requirements for city and county redistricting broadly. These provisions were negotiated in good faith to provide cities and counties with ample time to prepare for the 2021 redistricting process without imposing unreasonable costs and practical challenges.

However, as you know, the United States Census Bureau has informed the nation's states and local governments that data from the 2020 census will not be made available for redistricting purposes until September 30, 2021. This delay dramatically impacts California's 2021 redistricting process, as our statutes and constitutional obligations consider circumstances in which data is provided months earlier. While the Census has now promised an earlier release of new data in a "legacy" format, local agencies remain concerned about meeting the dual goals of improved public outreach and accurate maps under constrained timeframes that include the major year-end holidays.

We acknowledge that statutory adjustments – as yet unknown – must be made in order to effectively accommodate the delay in data from the Bureau; we appreciate your willingness to work with us on those changes. We also recognize that the state is facing similar challenges and that the Citizens' Redistricting Commission is discussing how to best manage the constrained timeframe available for congressional, Senate, Assembly, and Board of Equalization redistricting.

We respectfully request that as you consider statutory changes to effectuate state redistricting – including the possibility of moving the June 2022 primary election – you also consider the impact on local agencies' redistricting processes. The decision to adjust the date of the June primary or to keep the date directly impacts any potential statutory change to ensure appropriate time for local redistricting. The sooner local agencies know what the parameters are for managing these time constraints, the sooner we can make plans and inform the public about what to expect from their local redistricting effort and the easier we will feel about our plans for 2021 redistricting.

We greatly appreciate your consideration of local agencies as you consider the path forward. You can understand that the delay in receipt of Census data has caused considerable anxiety among local agencies about their ability to approve new district boundaries in a timely way while meeting new outreach requirements, new line-drawing criteria, and dealing with an increasingly polarized electorate and the lingering effects of the pandemic, lockdown, and recession.

With all this uncertainty, we hope you will keep local agencies in mind and informed as you proceed. To that end, we would appreciate the opportunity for a meeting to discuss further. Thanks to you and your respective staffs for continuing this important dialogue and we look forward to working with you in the coming weeks to resolve these issues.

Sincerely,



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cc: Members and Consultants, Senate Elections and Redistricting Committee
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