Community input - CA25/ 21st State Senate/ 38th Assembly

Josh Gray
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California Independent Redistricting Commission:

My name is Joshua Gray. I’m a resident of Simi Valley and in the 25th Congressional and 38th Assembly District.

One of the key criteria of developing district boundaries is to respect “communities of interest.” In 2010, the previous commission did not sufficiently protect communities of interest in North Los Angeles County. I’m writing to express my view that unlike in 2010, this commission must respect the given criteria for the development of district maps, and that the interests of Ventura County are recognized with district boundaries that represent the unique and colorful history of this region.

Currently the 25th Congressional District (which includes Assembly Districts 36 and 38, and Senate Districts 21 and 27) encompasses numerous municipalities spanning over 1,500 square miles. There are no easily identifiable shared interests between Simi Valley and the rest of the district. Between Simi Valley and Santa Clarita, the closest contiguous city to Ventura County, the respective chambers of commerce have different priorities and focuses, they have separate law enforcement agencies and fire responders, and none of their school districts or community college districts overlap. The cities do not co-host or advertise each other’s events. The only identifiable connections between Simi Valley and the remainder of the district are the currently shared congressional and assembly district seats.

One timely example of the specific challenge presented by having multiple counties represented by a single district has been demonstrated by the response to the Covid-19 epidemic. Both Los Angeles and Ventura Counties, and cities within their respective jurisdictions, had different health departments and protocols in place, which made it more difficult for our representatives to provide their constituents with constantly-evolving critical health and safety information.

I ask this commission to ensure that separate and distinct “communities of interest” are not artificially connected by arbitrary district boundaries again, and that Los Angeles and Ventura Counties each be bestowed with representation that respects their specific interests.

Regards,
Joshua Gray