Commissioner - thank you for providing me the opportunity to testify today. My name is Denise Flores. I am affiliated with the YMCA of Los Angeles and partnering with the NALEO Education Fund. I have lived in the Los Angeles County for the past 16 years.

I am a native of the community of East Los Angeles. I am confident enough to say that I know East Los Angeles and its neighboring community of Boyle Heights very well as I have walked and driven past every street before. Many not around the area folks confuse East Los Angeles and Boyle Heights because of how similar the environment is to one another. Both East Los Angeles and Boyle Heights have a very high percentage of Hispanics living in the area. This is very prominent in the streets as there are a lot of stores or offices with Spanish names. I would consider them as sister communities because of how similar they are.

The communities of East Los Angeles and Boyle Heights are of a very different atmosphere compared to other Los Angeles communities. Although I live in East Los Angeles, I attend a high school in Eagle Rock which is considered North East Los Angeles. It is a 25 minute commute from my house and I have been attending that school for the past 6 years. These past 6 years I have been commuting to Eagle Rock, I have been very aware of the differences compared to my native community. From the start, the streets are nicer and the houses are bigger. There is less police patrol in the area, and the demographic is different. In East Los Angeles and Boyle Heights, the vast majority of the community is Hispanic. In Eagle Rock, the community is very diverse with White being the majority.

There is also a very big difference in the education. The schools in East Los Angeles and Boyle Heights are constantly advocating for better resources to improve the quality of education for kids who are already at a disadvantage because of their background. Another thing to point out is that there is a large population of charter schools in East Los Angeles and Boyle Heights compared to other communities. Public schools are constantly being taken over and their funds cut due to the charter schools in the area who are owned by big corporations instead of the local school district. The schools around Eagle Rock do not go through the same struggles the schools in East Los Angeles and Boyle Heights do. Another thing to point out is that in 2019 the median income of Eagle Rock is 96k. In East Los Angeles the median income is 47k and Boyle Heights’ is 41k. As you can see there is a difference in pricing. Where I am going with this whole comparison between these communities is that it makes no sense having communities with a higher income combined with communities of lower income if there is no obvious form of equity between them.

Our community of East Los Angeles and Boyle Heights are different from others because of how united we are. We all share the same culture as well as very similar background stories. We are so used to living in impoverished areas that we do not realize that we deserve better living conditions. The same living conditions that other people of our “same” district live in. That is why I am advocating for equity in the districts East Los Angeles and Boyle Heights are found in as the people of my community deserve a better quality of life.