Commissioners - thank you for providing me the opportunity to testify today. My name is Ana Santos, I am with the Weingart East Los Angeles YMCA and partnering with NALEO Education Fund.

I have lived in Boyle Heights for the last four years. I work as a Teachers assistant at an elementary school for the Los Angeles Unified District and I am a caretaker of a Holocaust survivor. My neighborhood is known for its rich history of resilience and activism from the student walkouts known as the Blowouts in the 60’s to the Mothers of East LA that have combated a toxic battery plant in the community. As well as being known for being a strong immigrant community of various backgrounds.

Throughout my 30 years of life I have lived in many neighborhoods in Los Angeles county and none have compared to how knitted the community is in Boyle Heights. A concern of mine is food insecurity in my community. Something I have noticed is the lack of grocery stores that are around the neighborhood therefore limiting SNAP services. This was more evident during the Covid19 Pandemic that is still affecting us. My community as outlined by the map attached is considered west of Indiana St, north of Washington Blvd, east of Mission Rd, and south of Main St.

In 2017 110 stores accepted SNAP services but in 2021 the number decreased to only 94 stores, this is all according to My Neighborhood Data. This data tells us that instead of having an increase of stores that have SNAP services there has been a decrease. This is concerning, especially during the pandemic since people from the community are forced to travel to different communities for food.

My hope would be for Boyle Heights not be divided into multiple representatives so that we make the access to governmental, local services, and state resources centralized by one representative.