

Written Testimony

I am Taavi Kaskla, a resident of Garden Grove. I am writing to you today as a lifetime resident of Orange County as well as a union representative for United Domestic Workers (UDW), the union that represents In-Home Supportive Service (IHSS) providers. UDW is a member of the People's Redistricting Alliance in order to promote a greater community voice during this redistricting process.

Describe your community by stating your shared interests and your shared characteristics. What connects your community together? This can include your community's social and economic demographics, narratives about your community's history and culture, or anything else.

My community is:

In-Home Supportive Service (or IHSS) providers are essential to our county because they allow people with disabilities to live in their own homes and communities with dignity. There are around 27,000 IHSS providers in Orange County. That number is only going up as our population ages and will need extra assistance and support. UDW asks that during this redistricting process we keep the large community of IHSS providers and the people who they care for in mind.

What are the streets or boundaries that mark your community's borders? What are the significant landmarks: rivers, parks, shopping areas, historic sites, etc.? What are the gathering places and service providers: business districts, schools, community centers, religious places, and social service agencies? Do the current political district boundaries divide your community? Or do they keep your community together?

My community is located:

It is admittedly difficult to pinpoint a specific community or neighborhood where IHSS providers live because they live in all parts of the county. IHSS providers care for a wide range of people, from children with developmental complications, friends who have been disabled, to the elderly with failing health. Most IHSS providers take care of their family members and live together with them. Because there are thousands of such family homecare providers scattered across the county, it is very likely that you have one living in your neighborhood. IHSS providers who do not live with their clients commute all over the county to work.

I want to recognize and emphasize that IHSS providers can come from all ethnic backgrounds, income levels, and community groups. IHSS providers tend to be from middle and low income families, but this is not a hard-set rule. On top of that, a significant number of IHSS providers belong to the Latinx communities in Santa Ana and Anaheim, the Vietnamese communities in Garden Grove and Westminster, and Korean communities in Buena Park and Cypress. For this reason, I want you to consider the middle and low income families who live in these respective communities during redistricting.

Provide a description of how your community is similar to the communities and neighborhoods around

My community is similar to the following neighborhoods:

Provide a description of how your community is different from communities and neighborhoods around.

My community is different from the following neighborhoods:

Highlight community issues and histories (in personal stories, if possible) that help demonstrate the importance of having elected officials who understand and respond to community needs. Share stories and data about community concerns to show how you feel your voices have been heard, or haven't been heard.

What makes my community special is:

It is imperative that new district maps reflect fair and equitable demographics. We highly encourage you to create districts that uplift these communities instead of disenfranchising them. We would like to see the Latinx communities in the cities of Santa Ana and Anaheim used to create Voting Rights Act districts as much as possible. The Vietnamese communities in Garden Grove and Westminster should be kept together in your maps. We also ask to keep the Korean community in Buena Park and Cypress together.

Respecting these Voting Rights Act requirements and communities of interest will make it more likely for elected officials to better represent our members.

Emphasize why it's important for your community to be kept together in the new district maps.

In conclusion:

Having elected officials who listen to our IHSS community is crucial because the IHSS program is funded partly by the county and partly by the state. When elected officials do not support the IHSS system and threaten cuts to the program, IHSS providers and the loved ones they care for suffer. UDW is participating in and watching this redistricting process to make sure that new districts are in the best interest of our union members and Orange County IHSS providers.

Finally, we thank the CCRC for being open and transparent so that we can participate in these hearings.

ORAL TESTIMONY (AUGUST 4 OCBOS COI PUBLIC INPUT HEARING)