

From: **KareemEssay**

Date: Fri, Oct 1, 2021 at 3:51 PM

Subject: Written Testimony for the Redistricting of "Little Arabia" in Anaheim

To: <votersfirstact@crc.ca.gov>

To whom this may concern,

My name is Kareem Essayli, and I am a board member of the Arab American Civic Council ("AACC") and a recent J.D. graduate from Chapman Law School.

As part of its initiatives, the AACC has facilitated the engagement of Arab communities in the redistricting of Anaheim's "Little Arabia." The AACC acknowledges the significance of establishing a welcoming cultural and business destination, and a safe space for Arab immigrants and other immigrant communities from the Middle East and North Africa ("MENA") region. It is important to note that the Arab American community in West Anaheim is diverse in culture and faith, given that the community originates from a vast array of countries in the MENA region. Despite their cultural and religious distinctions, the Arab American community in West Anaheim are bound together due to their shared history, language, and geography.

Although West Anaheim has not been officially designated as "Little Arabia," this area primarily spanning between Brookhurst Street to Crescent to the north and Katella to the south, is an economic and cultural hub for many Arab Americans. Considering that the number of Arab American residents in the area has increased exponentially over the years, "Little Arabia" has now become an easily recognizable enclave for the community, which is reflected by the more than one hundred Arab-owned small businesses and religious and social establishments. Specifically, these small businesses comprising of grocery stores, restaurants, and cafes, have attracted thousands of visitors to "Little Arabia," who have a taste for the unique Middle Eastern cuisine. Accordingly, "Little Arabia" not only serves the Arab community but also provides an economic benefit to Orange County.

Furthermore, "Little Arabia" has also been a vital hub for immigrants from all backgrounds to assimilate into American society. This area has provided immigrants with the education and resources needed to start their own businesses, pay bills and taxes, and apply for schools. In addition, this area has given the immigrant youth the opportunity to become civic leaders and engaged in the political process, thereby ensuring the proper representation of their community. Lastly, as evident by its social composition, "Little Arabia" has also shown the importance of inclusivity and diversity.

For these reasons, it is crucial that the Arab community's presence in West Anaheim is accounted for in the new redistricting maps and that "Little Arabia" is kept whole in order to maintain the shared social and economic needs of the community.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kareem Essayli, J.D.
Board Member
The Arab American Civic Council