

**Community of Interest Testimony
to the California Citizens Redistricting Commission**

Date: October 4, 2021

Zone: J (Orange County)

Area: Buena Park, Artesia, Cerritos

Name: Hina Ahmad

Organizational Affiliation: South Asian Network (People's Redistricting Alliance)

Community of Interest: South Asians

Direction: Draw Buena Park with Cerritos and Artesia

Introduction:

Hi, my name is Hina Ahmad. I am writing on behalf of the South Asian Network. Our organization provides culturally and linguistically sensitive direct services to the South Asian community in the areas of healthcare access, civil and immigrant rights, and gender based violence. In addition we are a member of the People's Redistricting Alliance, a coalition of 16 community-based organizations established to promote a greater community voice in statewide and local redistricting processes here in Orange County.

Who my community is:

My community of interest is the South Asian community. It is diverse in culture, language and faith, and is integral to the community at large. Our community gathers in times of celebration and times of advocacy. They are a community that shares resources across the board. The South Asian community is also diverse in its socioeconomic status, education levels, and immigration status. Many South Asians immigrated to this country, seeking asylum, seeking opportunity, and have since built strong ties with local communities. The South Asian community in Southern California is bound together by a shared history and geography.

Where my community is located:

My community is located near the many faith based institutions that serve the region, including the Buena Park Gurdwara on Orangethorpe and Knott and "Little India" in Artesia. These communities have south South Asian grocery stores, clothing stores and restaurants close together, creating a unique gathering place for community members. These religious and cultural institutions/community centers are what make Artesia, the "Little India" of California! The South Asian Network is also in the heart of Little India, and we provide citizenship, public benefit, mental health and food assistance to our community, primarily in Artesia, Buena Park and Cerritos.

My community is similar to the following neighborhoods:

My community is similar to other neighborhoods in the region in that it is diverse in its language capacities, faith, socioeconomic status, countries of origin, education, immigration status, and more. The temples and

places of worship in Buena Park, Artesia, and Cerritos have continued to embrace the community around them and provide resources to their neighbors, regardless of ethnic backgrounds or religious affiliations. These communities should be kept together in the same interest. With common interest, the communities in these cities continue to care deeply for one another.

My community is different from the following neighborhoods:

My community is different from neighboring communities because of its size. Artesia, Buena Park and Cerritos have a very large South Asian population and a unique area in which community members are able to be themselves and express their culture.

What makes my community special is:

Its diversity and it's very specific needs. It is important that the voices and needs of the South Asian community are heard and understood by elected officials. South Asians are often perceived as affluent professionals. Yet many South Asians are living in poverty, hiding in the shadows, fearful of alienating immigration policies, unable to access resources due to limited language capacities. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted what many South Asians know - we need in language resources to access support like healthcare access, financial support, public health education, community and mental health support, and so much more.

In conclusion:

It's important that the South Asian community be taken into consideration in the new district maps. Our communities work together to support one another, share resources, and advocate for needs. It's important that these communities be kept together, to empower their voices, and to continue building these strong ties.