

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

**Date:** October 4, 2021

**Zone:** J (Orange County)

**Area:** Little Saigon

**Name:** Vincent Tran

**Organizational Affiliation:** VietRISE (People's Redistricting Alliance)

**Community of Interest:** Vietnamese Community

**Direction:** Keep Little Saigon and the Vietnamese community whole

### **Introduction:**

Hi, my name is Vincent Tran. I am writing on behalf of VietRISE, an organization that works to advance social justice and build power with working class Vietnamese and immigrant communities in Orange County. We build leadership and create systemic change through organizing, narrative change, cultural empowerment, and civic engagement. As part of our organizing and civic engagement work, we are a founding 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.

### **My community is:**

Our communities of interest include the Vietnamese and broader Southeast Asian communities, who share experiences associated with being both low-income and immigrants and refugees, as well as face challenges living in non-traditional housing and mobile home parks.

### **My community is located:**

- Little Saigon is located in Westminster, west Santa Ana, west Garden Grove, Midway City, and north Fountain Valley.
- West Santa Ana: West of Harbor Blvd between Westminster Blvd and Gloxinia Ave.
- West Garden Grove: City of Garden Grove west of West St between Oranewood Ave and Garden Grove Blvd. West of Newhope St between W Garden Grove Blvd and Westminster Blvd
- North Fountain Valley: City of Fountain Valley north of the 405 Freeway.
- Significant Landmarks
  - Bolsa Ave. (Goldenwest St. to Harbor Blvd.)
    - Asian Garden Mall
    - Temples & Churches
      - Our Lady of La Vang Church (Santa Ana)
      - Vietnamese Alliance Church (Midway City)

- Bất Nhã Temple (Santa Ana)
- Westminster Blvd. (Goldenwest St. to Harbor Blvd.)
  - Vietnam War Memorial (Westminster)
  - Temples & Churches
    - Vietnamese Catholic Center (Santa Ana)
    - Cao Dai Temple of Orange (Westminster)
- Garden Grove Blvd. (Beach Blvd. to Harbor Blvd.)
  - Vietnamese & Korean businesses
- Chapman
- Moran St., Westminster (known as Vietnamese Media Row)
- West of Harbor Blvd. and McFadden Ave.
  - Apartments, (HOA) communities, and senior mobile home parks with mostly Vietnamese senior residents
- Cities: Garden Grove, Westminster, Midway City, West Santa Ana,

**My community is similar to the following neighborhoods:**

The Vietnamese community is similar to the Korean community in West Garden Grove. Due to a long history of interaction amongst these communities starting in the late 1970s, when the Vietnamese community began to take root in Santa Ana and grew westward into Garden Grove, Westminster, and Fountain Valley, there is a commonality with shared education, working & living conditions, along with immigration experiences. For example, many residents work together in the service industry, such as restaurants, cafes, or supermarkets, and their children attend the same schools and partake in the same recreational activities.

**My community is different from the following neighborhoods:**

East Garden Grove, which consists of a large population of Latinx residents, aligns much more with the experiences of residents in Santa Ana rather than other parts of Garden Grove. Many residents in that part of East Garden Grove own businesses and work in the neighborhood cities of Anaheim and Santa Ana and their children oftentimes are enrolled in schools that fall within the Santa Ana Unified School District or the Anaheim Union High School District. Because of these lived experiences, East Garden Grove should be paired with neighboring cities - Anaheim and East Santa Ana - that they directly experience and have interactions with on a daily basis rather than the parts of Garden Grove which there is much less interaction with the Vietnamese majority population.

**What makes my community special is:**

Little Saigon, which includes the cities of Garden Grove, Westminster, West Santa Ana, Midway City, Fountain Valley (north of the 405 Freeway), and the encompassing areas contain the largest Vietnamese American community in the U.S. Today, there are approximately over 200,000 Vietnamese living in Orange County. The Vietnamese community within these cities are diverse in immigration history and lived experience, however, their shared culture is a defining characteristic that brings them together. Particularly,

because the majority of the Vietnamese community are foreign born, Little Saigon is especially important due to it being the epicenter of the community. In this epicenter, Vietnamese seniors are able to access their community resources, find social services, purchase their groceries, and receive culturally competent medical service. It also serves as an inflection point of community change between 1st and 2nd generation Vietnamese Americans.

Another side of the community that is not as publicly highlighted, however, is equally important are the large population of mobile home park residents who reside in Westminster, Central Garden Grove, and West Santa Ana. The majority of these residents are seniors and mainly rely on their Social Security income and/or disability check to be able to afford their housing expenses. Since 2010, there has been an increased threat towards the sustainability and survival of the mobile home communities. This is a result of mobile home sale offs, rent increases, and redevelopment. This has resulted in the senior Vietnamese residents at the Green Lantern Mobile Home park in Westminster and the Bali Hi Mobile Home Park in Santa Ana have joined together to protect their homes and prevent rent increases. These shared experiences, thus, show us that there is a great need to keep these communities together rather than separate.

**In conclusion:**

Our community of interest is the Vietnamese community, whose boundaries cross city lines and should be kept together in legislative districts. It is aligned with other low-income, immigrant, and refugee communities, as well as those who face challenges associated with access to affordable housing. Thank you.

## BOS TESTIMONY

Good evening honorable members of the Board and redistricting staff, my name is Vincent Tran. I am the Community Engagement Coordinator for VietRISE, a non-profit organization based in Garden Grove, advancing social justice and building power for working class Vietnamese and immigrant communities. We build leadership and create systemic change through organizing, narrative change, cultural empowerment, and civic engagement. As part of the People's Redistricting Alliance, VietRISE continues to actively mobilize and organize our Vietnamese community members to participate in statewide and local redistricting efforts.

Our communities of interest include the Vietnamese and broader Southeast Asian communities. Orange County is home to the largest Vietnamese population in the world outside of Viet Nam. Our communities have shared experiences associated with being both low-income and immigrants and refugees and face related challenges like access to affordable housing, with many living in non-traditional housing and mobile homes. According to the US Census, over 60% of the Vietnamese community countywide and over 70% of the Vietnamese in the city of Westminster are foreign born; thus, they face many challenges including language accessibility, access to mental health care, and immigration services.

Our communities of interest are primarily located in the cities of Garden Grove, Westminster, and Fountain Valley. They are similar to both the Korean community in West Garden Grove.

In conclusion, our community of interest is the Vietnamese community, whose boundaries cross city lines, especially between the cities of Garden Grove, Westminster, and Fountain Valley. It is aligned with other low-income, immigrant, and refugee communities, as well as those who face challenges associated with access to affordable housing. We ask that you keep these areas together as you draw new supervisor supervisorial districts in Orange County. We also believe a federal Voting Rights Act district centered in Santa Ana will be required for the Latinx community and that creating that district might require separating Santa Ana from Garden Grove and Westminster. Doing so will create opportunities for both communities to have a greater voice in county government. Thank you.