

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

Date: October 5, 2021

Zone: J (Orange County)

Area: Santa Ana

Name: Karen Alvarado

Organizational Affiliation: Orange County Congregation Community Organization (People's Redistricting Alliance)

Community of Interest: Low-income Latinx residents of Santa Ana, working-class immigrants, and mixed status communities.

Direction: Keep the Latinx community in Santa Ana (East of Harbor Blvd) whole

Introduction:

Hi, my name is Karen Alvarado. I am writing on behalf of Orange County Congregation Community Organization (OCCCO). OCCCO works to empower individuals and congregations to use their voice to make positive, lasting change within low-income communities of color. Since 2017, we have trained more than 200 faith-based community members through our Leadership Academy. We've had over 30,000 conversations with voters in low-income communities of color during the past five years and involved hundreds of youth in civic engagement. Our current work focuses on Housing with Dignity, Education Justice, and Immigration Rights. We are also 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.

My community is:

Our communities of interest are in most of Santa Ana for the exception of the west-most portion divided by Harbor Blvd. Which is predominantly marginalized low-income Latinx residents of Santa Ana, especially working-class immigrant and mixed status communities. Unfortunately, what brings our communities together is seen far too often in working-class minority communities; a lack of representation, double standards in housing equity, and a lack of code enforcement. Nevertheless, with all of these multi-generational and systemic misfortunes, our communities have been part of monumental achievements, including the implementation of district-based elections citywide. As Santa Ana grows and demographics change, our communities continue to fight development that takes away from our culture in Santa Ana.

My community is located:

Our community boundaries are Santa Ana east of Harbor Blvd. Santa Ana is home to the University of California Irvine (UCI) county medical clinic and Santa Ana Regional Transportation Center. Its rail lines are used by Amtrak's Pacific Surfliner and Metrolink's Orange County Line and Inland Empire-Orange County Line trains. It is also a Greyhound station and a hub for the Orange County Transportation

Authority (OCTA) bus system as well as a terminal for several Mexican bus tour companies. Santa Ana is home to Historic Downtown Corridor is the Historic 4th Street (currently known as Calle Cuatro Marketplace). The West End sits across from the Ronald Reagan Building and consists of lounge cafes, breakfast, lunch and dinner dining, coffee shops, jewelers, craft breweries, bars, retail, barber shops, and movie and concert theaters.

My community is similar to the following neighborhoods:

Santa Ana is similar to parts of the city of Anaheim west of the 55 freeway. This area includes historic Latinx neighborhoods such as the Anna Drive community (bounded by the 91 freeway to the north, S State College Blvd to the east, Sycamore St to the south, and N East St to the west) and the Ponderosa community (bounded by Katella to the north, the 5 freeway to the east, E Orangewood Ave to the south, and Haster St to the west).

My community is different from the following neighborhoods:

Our communities of interest in Santa Ana are much different than those in areas to the east such as the Anaheim Hills neighborhood (the city of Anaheim east of the 55 freeway) and the city of Yorba Linda.

What makes my community special is:

The Logan Barrio in Santa Ana is one of the several original Mexican barrios in Orange County, with roots going back to 1886. Logan Barrio was platted by H. E. Stafford in 1886, while it was still Los Angeles County. It became home to many Mexican working families that developed long lasting bonds for generations, bonds that included pride in their history and culture. Throughout its history, Logan Barrio has struggled to survive. A few years ago Sam Romero was quoted saying, "If you're going to kick us out, it ain't gonna be like Chavez Ravine," referring to the community in Los Angeles that was wiped out to make way for Dodger Stadium.

In conclusion:

Keep the Latinx community in Santa Ana together in legislative districts is imperative for low-income Latinx communities throughout the city, who need to speak collectively with one voice. As Santa Ana continues to grow, the culture and history of these historic communities have to be preserved while also adapting to changes in their surrounding neighborhoods. Multigenerational Santa Ana residents have continued to fight gentrification; the only way for the needs of these communities to be heard and not ignored by legislators would be to not divide them.