



CHIRLA

Coalition for Humane
Immigrant Rights

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

Date: October 6, 2021

Zone: J (Orange County)

Area: Santa Ana/Anaheim, San Juan Capistrano/Laguna Niguel

Name: Karen Diaz

Organizational Affiliation: Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (People's Redistricting Alliance)

Communities of Interest: Immigrant families and low wage workers

Direction: Draw Santa Ana with West Anaheim and San Juan Capistrano with Laguna Niguel

Introduction:

My name is Karen Diaz, and I'm the Electoral Field Manager for the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights. 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.

For 35 years, it's been CHIRLA's mission of achieving a just society fully inclusive of immigrants, CHIRLA organizes individuals, communities, and coalitions in order to build power, transform public opinion, and change policies. CHIRLA has been deeply engaged in Orange County since 1997, starting with work done alongside Asian Americans Advancing Justice, Orange County Asian Pacific Islander Community Alliance, American Civil Liberties Union, and the Mexican Consulate in Santa Ana to win state-level protections for safety net programs and ensure that undocumented



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workers are protected from workplace raids, deportations, and massive worker violations.

In collaboration with the League of United Latin American Citizens of Orange County, CHIRLA organized Dream Chapters in the early 2000s at Cal State Fullerton, U.C. Irvine, and Fullerton College to provide resources for undocumented students on campuses, which are now part of the statewide California Dream Network (CDN) the youth branch for CHIRLA.

In the last decade, CHIRLA has had Orange County community education workers and organizers working in the region. In 2019, CHIRLA formally established our San Juan Capistrano office with community education, civic engagement, and legal services. Most recently in 2020 during the pandemic CHIRLA and Catholic Charities served as only two service providers in South Orange County who offered the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Disaster Relief Assistance for Immigrants (DRAI). CHIRLA provided service to 10,976 families and individuals to receive a one-time state-funded assistance to undocumented and mix status adults who were ineligible for other forms of economic assistance such as the CARES Act and pandemic unemployment benefits, because of their immigration status.

My community is:

CHIRLA has two primary communities of interest in Orange County:

- The first is immigrant families and low wage workers that reside in Santa Ana and West Anaheim.



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- The second is immigrant families and low wage workers in South Orange County that reside in San Juan Capistrano and Laguna Niguel along the south side of the 5 freeway.

In August, CHIRLA launched a COI survey to gain a better understanding of the communities that will be impacted by the redistricting process. The survey collected over 1,000 narratives from residents in impacted areas across Southern California. Because markers of their daily life shed light on similarities with their neighborhoods and contrast with residents across communities. An overwhelming majority are immigrants who are employed at some level and speak Spanish at home. Some other languages are reported as native including English, Tagalog, and Maya. Over half of them reported an income of \$5,000 and less than \$75,000 in 2020. The majority of the respondents reported having attained at least a highschool diploma (60%) and 15% have earned an associate degree.

In conclusion:

It's important that immigrant communities and low wage workers are centered. We look forward to continuing CHIRLA's vision to deepen our roots in the region and work alongside immigrants to educate them about their rights, increase their access to services, and engage them as active participants in the decisions that impact them.