



CALIFORNIA BLACK CENSUS
AND REDISTRICTING HUB



August 9, 2021

California Citizens Redistricting Commission
721 Capitol Mall, Suite 260
Sacramento, CA 95814

Sent via electronic transmission

Dear Commissioners:

We greatly appreciate your thoughtfulness and commitment to a participatory redistricting process as you develop your plan to gather public input during the line-drawing phase. We are writing with recommendations to ensure that the public has adequate opportunities to provide input on district boundaries.

Our organizations--NALEO Educational Fund, the Black Census and Redistricting Hub, and Asian Americans Advancing Justice - CA--are working to engage Californians across the state in redistricting, with a focus on engaging underrepresented communities. Our efforts include outreach and education to help communities understand redistricting and to encourage both organizations and individuals to submit community of interest information to the Commission. Additionally, we are working in coalitions to discuss district boundaries that comply with both the U.S. Constitution and the federal Voting Rights Act (VRA) and keep communities with shared interests together, in respective order of priority.

We commend you for offering many opportunities for the public to provide input in the form of community of interest testimony, and respectfully ask that you also offer hearings at which the public can provide input in the form of draft district map proposals. Community groups, coalitions, and individual members of the public will have ideas and suggestions for how to comply with the mapping criteria, including the VRA, and hearing these recommendations and their justifications will strengthen and enrich the Commission's own line-drawing process. The Commission will be balancing many competing interests and criteria when line-drawing, and will benefit from seeing how communities have found compromises and solutions in challenging areas.

We recommend that you set at least three hearing dates for the public to provide draft district map proposals, and add hearing dates if needed due to high interest. Members of the public will likely want to propose regional maps and statewide maps. Accordingly, we suggest setting a hearing date focused on small multi-district map proposals (two to four neighboring districts), allowing ten minutes for a small multi-district proposal. We also suggest that you set at least two hearing dates for statewide and large regional multi-district map proposals (five or more

neighboring districts). For statewide map proposals, we recommend allowing 45 minutes for Assembly district map proposals and 30 minutes each for Senate and Congressional district map proposals. For large regional multi-district proposals that do not cover the entire state, we recommend 25 minutes for Assembly map proposals, and 15 minutes each for Senate and Congressional map proposals. We also suggest working with groups that wish to present statewide or large regional multi-district map proposals for more than one level of government to allow them to provide a combined presentation.

We recommend that district map proposal hearings be held three weeks after the statewide database publishes the prison-population-adjusted census data, so that the public can create map proposals that use complete and accurate data. Members of the public working with a broad array of stakeholders or partners will need time to create maps with the updated data, and consult with those partners and stakeholders. At the same time, we urge you to hold the district map proposal hearings early enough in your line-drawing process that you can consider the proposals as you draft districts. We also suggest that you schedule at least one hearing date after your initial draft maps are posted so that the public can propose draft maps or amendments that respond to the Commission's initial drafts.

We hope that these recommendations are helpful and seriously considered for the Commission's future public input opportunities. Please contact Deanna Kitamura at deannak@advancingjustice-alc.org with Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Asian Law Caucus to provide you with more information.

Sincerely,

Asian Americans Advancing Justice - CA
The Black Census and Redistricting Hub
NALEO Educational Fund