



July 21, 2020

California Citizens Redistricting Commissioners
c/o California State Auditor
621 Capitol Mall, Suite 1200
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Commissioners:

The undersigned are members of the We Are CA, Somos CA Committee, a volunteer effort originally formed to coordinate activities commemorating the 25th anniversary of the passage of Proposition 187. Today, the Committee, which is comprised civic leaders from Southern California, continues to meet to address pressing issues affecting California Latinos.

We congratulate you on your selection to serve on California's Citizens Redistricting Commission (CCRC). One of your most important responsibilities is to choose the remaining six Commissioners, and under California law, you must choose them to "ensure the commission reflects this state's diversity, including, but not limited to, racial, ethnic, geographic, and gender diversity." Given the absence of any Latinos so far on the Commission, we urge you to fulfill your responsibility by selecting up to five Latinos for the remaining CCRC seats, and at least one in each of the CCRC partisan affiliation groups.

The undersigned organizations and individuals include a diverse group of civic organizations and leaders, community organizations, advocates and other stakeholders committed to a fair redistricting process in California which results in maps that provide Latinos and other underrepresented groups with the opportunity to elect the candidates of the choice. We have worked closely with the Latino community to help ensure that Latinos can fully participate in the economic, civic and social life of California.

Latinos comprise nearly 40% of California's population, and more than one of every four of its registered voters (27%). However, the selection process for the first eight CCRC members did not result in any Latino representation on the CCRC. Given the size of California's Latino population and electorate, the CCRC will simply fail to reflect the state's ethnic diversity and meet statutory requirements regarding the CCRC without a strong Latino presence.

The Voters First Act, which created the CCRC, has several provisions which highlight the importance of a CCRC which fully reflects the diversity of California. The Act sets forth a provision in the California Constitution requiring that the CCRC's selection process be designed to produce a Commission that is "reasonably representative of this State's diversity." The state's Government Code requires the State Auditor to initiate the CCRC application process in a manner that "promotes a diverse and qualified applicant pool." One of the criteria you were required to fulfill when you applied for the CCRC was to demonstrate an "appreciation for California's diverse demographics and geography." Finally, in recognition that the first phases of the selection process as a whole might not achieve the diversity needed, the Government Code requires that the initial eight Commissioners choose the final six to ensure the CCRC reflects the state's diversity.



To achieve full Latino representation on the CCRC, we believe you must also consider the partisan diversity of California's Latinos when choosing the remaining six. According to April 2020 voter file data, Latinos comprise a significant share of the state's Democrats (32%), Republicans (15%) and those not affiliated with either political party (28%). We believe that there must be at least one Latino chosen for seats in each of the three political affiliation groups on the CCRC, although we note this minimum level still would not result in a CCRC that fully represents the diversity of the Latino electorate. It would be more effective to reflect the diversity of the California's Latino population if up to five of the remaining Commissioners selected were Latino. In this connection, we emphasize that there are well-qualified Latinos in each of the remaining political affiliation applicant pools from which the CCRC will make its final selections.

The CCRC will draw lines that will shape the contours of California's representative government for the next ten years. The lack of Latino representation on the CCRC would undermine the confidence of all Californians in the CCRC's work, and ultimately, in the accountability and responsiveness of our democracy. It would prevent dedicated Latino civic leaders from contributing their wealth of talent and skills to the CCRC's efforts. It would be in direct conflict with the express goals of the Voters First Act, and would severely impair the ability of the CCRC to conduct a fair redistricting in California. The absence of Latinos on the CCRC poses an unacceptable threat to the health and future of our state's democracy.

We greatly appreciate the commitment to our state you have demonstrated by pursuing a seat on the CCRC. We also believe that you share our goal of achieving a robust and inclusive democratic process in California. We strongly urge you to advance that goal by complying with the mandates of the Voters First Act, and selecting at least one Latino for seats in each of the three political affiliation groups on the CCRC. Moreover, we urge you to consider selecting even more to fully ensure that the CCRC reflects the diversity of California's population.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we look forward to continuing our work together in the future.

Sincerely,

Committee Co-Chairs

Alex Padilla, CA Secretary of State

Antonia Hernández, President & CEO, California Community Foundation

Committee Members

Sonja Diaz, Founding Director, UCLA Latino

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