

From: contact@redistricting.wa.gov
To: [zzRedistricting Commission Voicemail](#)
Subject: Redistricting Contact Form
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Question:

Recommendation: My name is Nadine Shiroma. I live in the Juanita neighborhood of the City of Kirkland.

Tonight I urge the commission to draw Washington's Congressional and legislative districts according to the Unity Maps proposed by the United for Fair Representation coalition and promote fair representation, civic engagement and community empowerment for constituents in the proposed districts.

The communities of interest in the respective districts share common socio-economic demographics; and each district represents a majority people of color who, in prior decades and even today experience a disproportionate lack of access to resources around housing, education, health care, jobs, transportation and civic participation.

Does this mean there will be no representation for constituents of the districts who are not people of color? Consider the state's 11th and 37th legislative districts, which are currently represented by an African American, an Hispanic American, 2 Asian Pacific Americans and 2 Caucasians. This is what Democracy looks like! And to those who wonder how a person of color can represent multiple racial and ethnic communities I ask, "Isn't this what we currently expect of an elected official?"

People wonder, then, why it's important to have districts where there are majority-minority populations. It has to do with inspiration and hope and political districts where constituents will be inspired to support, elect, participate and hold accountable representatives who understand the needs of their community. In addition, experience in minority communities shows that elected of color are able to inspire and motivate community members from outside their districts on matters that impact their community and those who have been historically disenfranchised. To draw political boundaries that dilute the vote of minority communities weakens their voting power and sends the message that civic empowerment is reserved for others.

I would also ask the commission to carefully review the socio-economic demographics on the Eastside in South Redmond and East Bellevue, where a community of interest is currently diluted between the 48th and 41st legislative districts. This year the 41st LD is 5,486 over and the 48th LD is 6,813 under target population. While it may seem expedient to simply move the boundary between the two districts and shift population from the 41st to the 48th LD, I will remind commissioners of testimony presented ten years ago regarding the fact that there are stark, undeniable differences between the community of interest west of I-405 and the one east of I-405.

This assertion was made in 2001 and supported by Census 2000 data, King County Housing Authority data, and Bellevue and South Lake Washington School District demographics, free and reduced lunch participation and test scores. And the case is reinforced - not weakened -- by the most recent census, socio-economic and school district data. It should also come as no surprise that communities of color represent a larger percentage of the populations in the areas of South Redmond and Bellevue east of I-405. I ask the state redistricting commissioners to carefully review the data and comply with the Voting Rights Act to ensure that minorities on the Eastside have an equal opportunity to elect representatives of their choice.

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