From: Gustavo Alvarez
To: zzRedistricting Commission Voicemail
Subject: Communities of Interest: People of Color & Immigrants
Date: Thursday, October 06, 2011 4:22:48 PM

Dear Redistricting Commissioners,

Thank you for your work so far on the redistricting maps! I urge you to support important priorities for immigrant communities and communities of color in Washington State.

The decisions you make will have a dramatic impact on the political process in our state and have the ability to help or harm our communities. While many people consider these just lines on a map, for those who testified at hearings, these maps have real consequences. For example, there are real disparities in education, health and income that our communities have in common and that elected leaders need to address.

For this reason, I urge you to draw final maps that will encourage full participation of immigrant communities and communities of color, including the following:

- I support the creation of “Majority Minority” state legislative districts and urge you to create three such districts in King County, one in Tacoma and at least one majority people of color (by citizens of voting age) state legislative district in Yakima.

- A “Majority Minority” district in South King County, as drawn by Commissioner Huff. I believe this district—with no incumbent—presents the best opportunity for strong representation of immigrant communities and communities of color in Congress. I appreciate Commissioner Huff’s listening to our communities.

- I support a unified Pasco. All commissioners said during the release of the maps that keeping cities together is a priority. However, two of the four maps cut Pasco into two different districts which will only dilute the power of the large Latino and immigrants populations in the city.

- Create a state legislative district in Yakima County where a majority of citizens of voting age are people of color. Of the map drafts that have been released so far, I support the efforts of Commissioners Gorton and Ceis, who both created majority Latino legislative districts. However, the true measure of fair representation for this district is the percentage people of color by citizens of voting age.

As Commissioner Huff mentioned in his release of the maps, it is important for commissioners to listen to the “will of the people.” Thank you, again, for your work and I urge you to continue to provide us with the hope of fair representation.

Sincerely,

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