Vancouver

On behalf of OneAmerica and its members, we submit the following testimony concerning statewide redistricting and urge the committee to consider redrawing Congressional district lines in a manner that better reflects the growing presence and power of communities of color and immigrant and refugee communities in Washington State.

A member-based organization and the largest immigrant advocacy organization in the state, OneAmerica's mission is to advance the fundamental principles of democracy and justice through building power in immigrant communities, in collaboration with key allies. Our members are active in community base groups across Washington State, including in Mt. Vernon, Tacoma, Walla Walla, Tri-Cities, Yakima, and White Center/Burien, Kent, and right here in Vancouver. Our members are monitoring the redistricting process closely, since the redrawing of district lines across the state will have a profound impact on the representation of immigrant and refugee communities at different levels of government across Washington State.

The demographics of Washington State continue to change and the redistricting process must account for these shifts in population. One in four residents in Washington are people of color and about one in eight are immigrants. In fact, without the growth in Washington State's immigrant population and communities of color, the state would likely not have received an additional 10th Congressional seat. Despite representing a significant percentage of the statewide population and nearly all of its population growth, no single Congressional district is a majority people of color. As such, we urge the redistricting committee to support a majority people of color Congressional district in South King County.

While we are down here in Vancouver today, we still believe it is critical that communities of color and immigrants and refugees have a representative from Washington State that has issues of importance to those communities—like immigration reform—at the top of their agenda.

A majority people of color Congressional district will:

- **Lead to increased civic participation among immigrants and communities of color.** Many new Americans come from countries that are not democracies and we need to encourage their participation in the civic process. One important way to accomplish this is to create a majority people of color district where new Americans will feel that their vote counts and that those elected to represent them prioritize their issues.

- **Provide immigrants and communities of color with the opportunity to hold elected officials accountable for not just supporting their issues, but showing true leadership on those issues.** There are many people in our Congressional delegation who already support issues like comprehensive immigration reform; however, a majority people of color Congressional District will push the elected representative from that district to be a leader on critical issues facing immigrants and people of color.

We hope you will consider the impact of your decisions on the representation of communities of color and immigrants as you move forward in the redistricting process. Thank you for your consideration and please don't hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns.

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