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BY:

August 15, 2011

An affiliate of the
American Federation
of Teachers, AFL-CIO

Washington State Redistricting Commission
1063 Capitol Way South, Suite 16
P.O. Box 40948
Olympia, WA 98504-0948

Dear Commissioners:

AFT Washington strongly supports the proposal from “United for Fair Representation” coalition, establishing five legislative districts (three in King County, one in Yakima County, and one in Pierce County) and one congressional district in Washington State in which people of color are in the majority.

AFT Washington is a federation of 40 different local unions representing approximately 6,500 education professionals in early learning, K-12, and higher education schools, centers, and colleges around the state. Ours is a labor federation that stands for a system of political representation embodying equality, justice and genuine accountability. Specifically, our reasons for urging your support for the coalition’s proposal are that:

- *The recent Census in 2010 showed that people of color now make up 27% (better than one in four) of our state’s population, with higher concentrations in Pierce County (30%), King County (35%), and Yakima County (52%).*
- *The Census shows that Washington’s population grew by 830,419 since 2000 – the reason for our state gaining this new congressional district. Of that substantial population increase, over 65% is due to the growth in the population of people of color. In short, our state is gaining a more powerful political voice in Congress, thanks to the growth in the population of people of color.*
- *A new 10th Congressional district and five legislative districts in King, Pierce, and Yakima Counties in which people of color are in the majority will increase voter turnout and civic participation because communities will feel that their vote can make an impact.*
- *The redistricting will encourage elected law-makers to be genuinely accountable to the diverse needs and issues of the community.*

As a labor federation comprised of education professionals concerned about justice and a more democratic future for our students and their families, AFT Washington is especially supportive of the establishment of a new 10th Congressional district and five legislative districts in King, Pierce, and Yakima Counties in which people of color are in the majority.

Sincerely,

Sandra Schroeder, President

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