



1 September 2011

Washington State Redistricting Commission

Dear Commissioners:

APACE (Asian Pacific Islander Americans for Civic Empowerment) has been an integral part of the United for Fair Representation coalition and has sent representatives to many of the Commission's Redistricting Forums. We are in full support of the proposed Unity Maps. We are writing now to express a special concern as Asian Pacific Islander Americans: the 11th Legislative District must be kept as it is drawn in the submitted Unity Map proposal.

We understand there is consideration of moving the 11th District out of the city of Seattle and eliminating Beacon Hill, parts of SODO, and South Park from the District. The 11th Legislative District is currently represented by two people of color, Bob Hasegawa and Margarita Prentice. With the elimination of Seattle from the 11th District, we would lose Bob Hasegawa, a representative that has served his district extremely well. We are certain that you would agree with us that the point of effective civic engagements is to increase the participation and representation of our community's constituents. Redistricting should increase both participation and representation, not diminish it.

South Seattle currently is strongly represented in both the 11th District and the 37th District by three representatives of color: Sharon Tomiko Santos, Eric Pettigrew and Bob Hasegawa. They work well together to make sure that the diverse communities in their respective districts are well represented and they present a strong collective voice in the House of Representatives. Carving out the Seattle portion of the 11th District diminishes the current diversity of representation in the legislature that is not proportional to the percentage of people of color in the state, and diminishes the current voice of communities in south Seattle. Such a move could also pit communities against each other by forcing three sitting legislators to run for only two available seats.

Do not further marginalize communities of color by diminishing their numbers in the legislature. Keep the already-established communities of interest intact. Respect the districts drawn by the United for Fair Representation's Unity Maps. Draw boundaries to enhance the diversity in the legislature, not diminish it.

Washington State is gaining a congressional district because of the growth of communities of color over this past decade. Representation in the State Legislature of these diverse populations should appropriately reflect this growth. This must be encouraged and supported.

Board of Directors of APACE, please reply to c4board@apace-wa.org:

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