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**From:** applications.administrator@capitol.local  
**Sent:** Friday, February 26, 2021 2:56 PM  
**To:** Senate Redistricting  
**Subject:** INETMAIL: Redistricting Public Input  
**Attachments:** 2\_26\_21\_Joint Testimony Prepared by SVREP and WCVI\_Senate Committee on Redistricting.pdf

Date: 2021-02-26  
First Name: Lydia  
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Title: President  
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Affirm public info: I agree

Regarding: ALL

Message:

Joint Testimony Prepared by  
Lydia Camarillo, SVREP and WCVI President; and Chair of Texas Latino Redistricting Task Force,  
and Patricia Gonzales, Vice President of the WCVI and  
Operations Director of SVREP

For the Senate Special Committee on Redistricting

Saturday, February 27, 2021

Lydia Camarillo  
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Patricia Gonzales  
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Joint Testimony Prepared by

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For the Senate Special Committee on Redistricting

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Madam Chair Huffman, Vice Chair Hinojosa, members of the Senate Special Committee on Redistricting, we thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the 2021 redistricting efforts.

Ms. Patricia Gonzales, Vice President William C. Velásquez Institute WCVI and Director of Operations for the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project (SVREP), and I respectfully submit our joint testimony.

I am the Chair of the Texas Latino Redistricting Task Force as well as President of the SVREP and WCVI, my name is Lydia Camarillo. I served as the Chair of the Texas Redistricting Latino Task Force for the 2011 redistricting efforts.

We come before you today to urge the Senate Special Committee on Redistricting to protect the voting rights of the Latino community by redrawing fair lines representative of the Texas Latino population.

The redistricting process must be transparent and allow for community input throughout the legislative process.

Districts must be drawn complying with state and federal law.

Communities of interests must be kept intact, geography, topography, contiguity, cohesiveness, integrity, and compactness of territory, as well as race and ethnicity must be considered.

The U.S. Census Bureau will provide census numbers to the state extremely late, on September 30th, we ask that the community be given time to submit comments, particularly before the Senate Special Committee on Redistricting enacts the congressional, senate and state house maps. We recommend the Committee act with good faith, be fair, open, and transparent. SVREP and WCVI request that the state not attempt to pass maps under the “dark” of night. As important to adhere to federal law, the Committee must be diligent to allow the process to move forward with absolute community input.

We ask that the maps drawn at the congressional, senate and state house level reflect the Latino population growth. At the congressional level, we urge the committee to protect and maintain the (9) Latino-majority congressional districts. Furthermore, that at least two of the new districts be drawn as Latino-majority congressional districts. This request stands for the state house districts. We ask that the state house districts that were drawn as Latino-majority districts, for the last redistricting cycle, are maintained and that new Latino-majority districts are drawn to reflect the Latino population growth.

SVREP and WCVI are confident that Texas will gain at least three (3) new congressional districts. The state will likely grow from 25.5 million to 29.8 million. This represents an estimated 4.3 million in population growth over the last decade.

The growth of the Latino population has increased compared to the 2010 census count. Currently, over 9,741,000 Latinos reside in Texas. This is an increase of 2 million from the

2010 census count.

For the 2010 redistricting efforts the Texas population growth increased by 4.3 million, from 2000 to 2010. The population growth of which 65% of the increase resulted because of the Latino community. Texas gained four (4) new congressional districts. Yet, the Texas legislature drew maps that represented 6 congressional Latino-majority seats. It is important to note that congressional district 23 was retrogressed. Before the redistricting progress started, Texas had seven Latino-majority congressional districts. The Texas Latino Redistricting Task Force sued Texas. Congressional district 23, the San Antonio district that stretches to El Paso, was fixed. The final congressional maps included two new districts drawn as Latino-majority districts (CD 35 and CD 33), that state house also gained Latino-majority drawn districts.

Latinos are now the largest ethnic group in three of Texas's four most populous counties: Harris, Dallas/Fort Worth and Bexar, yet the proposed map does not create additional Latino opportunity districts in these regions. Additionally, it was not necessary to reduce the Latino population and reduce Latino ability to elect the preferred candidate in the current District 20 (San Antonio).

SVREP and WCVI urges the Texas Senate Special Committee on Redistricting to protect the voting rights of the Latino electorate by:

- Drawing congressional, senate and state house maps to reflect the Latino population.
- Ensuring that all redistricted political boundaries comply with the Voting Rights Act. Political districts cannot place Latino voters in a worse position, nor can they dilute the voting strength of Latino and other ethnic electorates by packing or cracking districts to prevent them from electing a candidate of their choice.
- Not repeating past violations of the Voting Rights Act. Texas has a history of minority voter discrimination including a violation of the Voting Rights Act in the last three to two rounds of redistricting as found the lawsuits. The 88th Texas Legislature should ensure the mistakes of the past are not repeated.

SVREP and WCVI seek that the final map be drawn to represent and support Latinos' interest. Latinos should be able to elect their candidates of choice for the next 10 years at the congressional, senate and state house levels.

We look forward to working with the Senate Special Committee on Redistricting to ensure the Committee provides true representation of the close to 9.7 million Texas Latinos with its final maps.

In 1974, Southwest Voter Registration Education Project (SVREP) was founded by the Late William C. Velásquez to empower the Latino community by organizing and mobilizing the Latino vote, preparing candidates to run for office, training organizers and protecting the vote. Since it opened its doors, SVREP has registered 2.8 million Latinos, trained 150,000 Latino leaders, and won 210 voting rights lawsuits.

William C. Velásquez Institute WCVI is a national non-partisan organization based in San Antonio, Texas. WCVI's mission is to increase Latino participation in America's democratic process. WCVI has a long-standing policy of educating Latino and non-Latino leaders (including government officials), the public, and the media on issues of importance to the U.S. Latino community, as well as relevant demographic, economic, political trends, and characteristics within the Latino community.

The Texas Latino Redistricting Task Force is a coalition of 23 organizations led by Latinos, working to empower the Latino community in Texas. Several of its member organizations have provided testimony before this committee including the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), JOLT, Mi Family Vota, and our legal counsel the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF).

During the 2011 and 2013 redistricting efforts, the Texas Latino Redistricting Task Force was made up of 8 groups. The Task Force sued the State of Texas to stop the state from violating voting rights of the Latino community and dilution of the Latino voting political power. Our legal challenge was based on the congressional and state house maps drawn by the 82nd Texas legislature and the 2013 retrogression of the state house 90 district. MALDEF was our legal counsel and represented the Task Force's interest before the Federal Court and the United States Supreme Court in 2011 and 2013 when we sued the state for its violation of our voting rights.

Chairwoman, Vice Chair, and honorable Members of the Committee thank you for providing the opportunity to testify before the Senate Special Committee on Redistricting.

[REDACTED]



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