

From: applications.administrator@capitol.local
To: [Senate Redistricting](#)
Subject: INETMAIL: Redistricting Public Input
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Date: 2021-09-30
First Name: Megan
Last Name: Sham
Title: N/A
Organization: OCA Greater Houston
Address: [REDACTED]
City: Houston
State: TX
Zipcode: [REDACTED]
Phone: [REDACTED]

Affirm public info: I agree

Regarding: Congressional

Message:

Thank you Mr. Chairman and Committee Members for giving me this opportunity. My name is Megan Sham, representing OCA Greater Houston, a nonpartisan nonprofit that aims to empower and advocate for the Asian American and Pacific Islander community. I would like to start by re-emphasizing the importance of this Committee's purpose: upholding the values of our society through laws that guide, protect, and empower us, including the Voting Rights Act. Fair maps should be drawn in consideration for all communities: every person, regardless of language, ethnicity, or any aspect of their identity, deserves a chance at fair and equal representation for the future. The creation of new opportunity districts would allow for stronger voices of minorities to permeate our local, state, and national governments.

I am a native Houstonian who grew up in Fort Bend County, in Congressional District 22. I felt fortunate to grow up in such a diverse community, attending schools where I met friends from many different cultures, languages, and socioeconomic backgrounds. In a majority minority school district, we were given lots of opportunities to grow and learn, but there was still a disparity in our schools' resource distribution. It was extremely competitive for funding for the schools in our district, so while the students were afforded many opportunities, the school boosted its competitive STEM classes to boost our rankings. While I luckily was able to benefit from this, I also recognize competition made the school's priority to boost students who were already excelling. Rather than making sure all students of all backgrounds had the same support, the schools focused on boosting the upper margin of test scores.

When the lines are being drawn and finalised for our congressional districts, I ask that this committee consider minority groups, such as the growing population of AAPIs in the current Congressional District 22. We deserve to have fair and equitable representation from those who are a part of our communities themselves. Gerrymandering has and will continue to let racial minorities slip through the cracks in our legislative system, preventing us from having representatives that live and work with the people directly in our communities. By having representatives directly from our communities, we will be able to have a stronger voice in the government and become a fuller part of the tapestry that makes our state and country strong and beautiful. We also will be afforded opportunities to reach out to others within our communities who may have misguided beliefs and judgements of others. Prejudice is alive and well, but I believe that it is rooted in fear and the lack of knowledge. By having representatives that represent the people who actually live and work in our neighborhoods, we

can actively work to educate each other and have effective dialogues to overcome the gulf that divides our communities from unity and progress.

According to the proposed maps, there isn't a single competitive seat in all of this state's districts. How are the legislators here not fighting for their constituents' right to choose, as we so often praise as being our strength? If these maps go forward, you all will be diluting the votes of the rapidly growing population that has made Texas a leading state in diversity, economic growth, and more. We need to have maps that accurately represent the data that has been gathered from the 2020 census, that will give us a more equitable future.

Thank you so much for your time.

