



How to build testimony of your Community of Interest

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Agenda

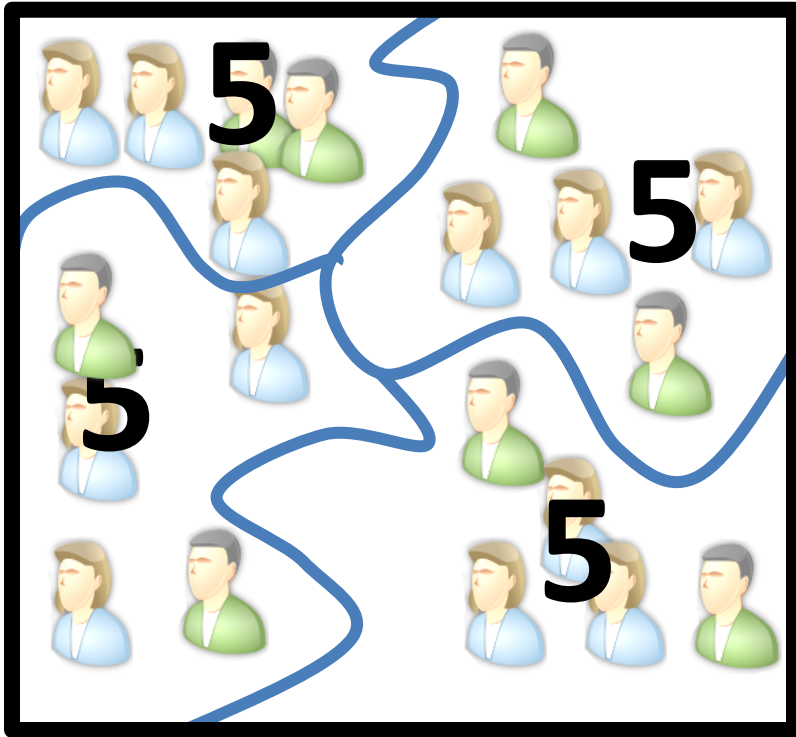
- Why Redistricting is important to the Latino community
- What is a community of interest?
- Building your community of interest testimony



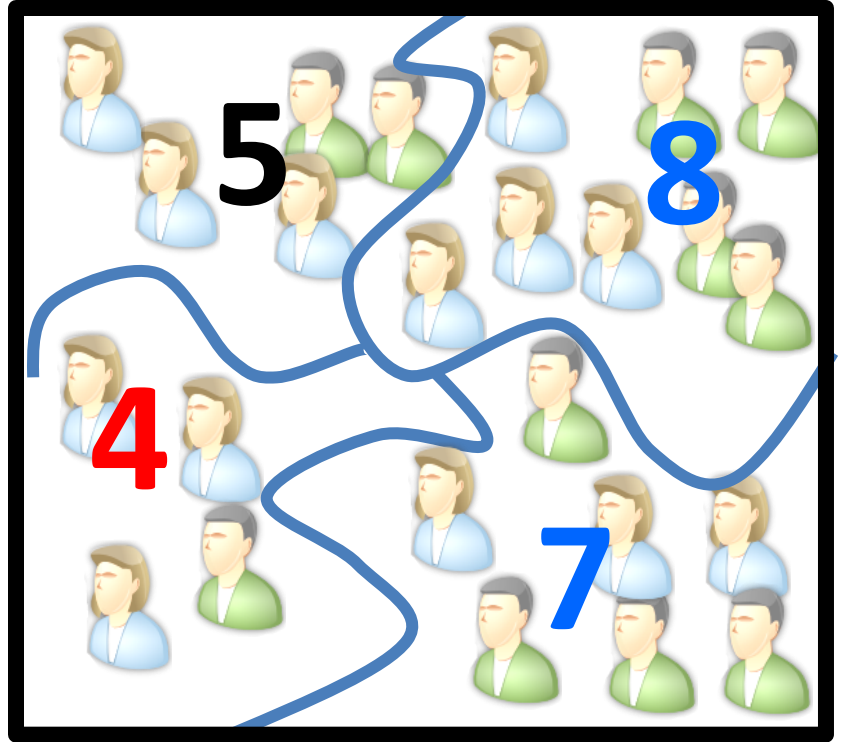
Why participate in the redistricting process ?

- This is the first time that Latinos are participating as the second largest population group in the US
- District boundaries last for the next 10 years
- District boundaries define our political representation
- The Voting Rights Act protects the interests of traditionally underrepresented groups
- By participating we define our communities, rather than let others define who we are

We redistrict to equalize population



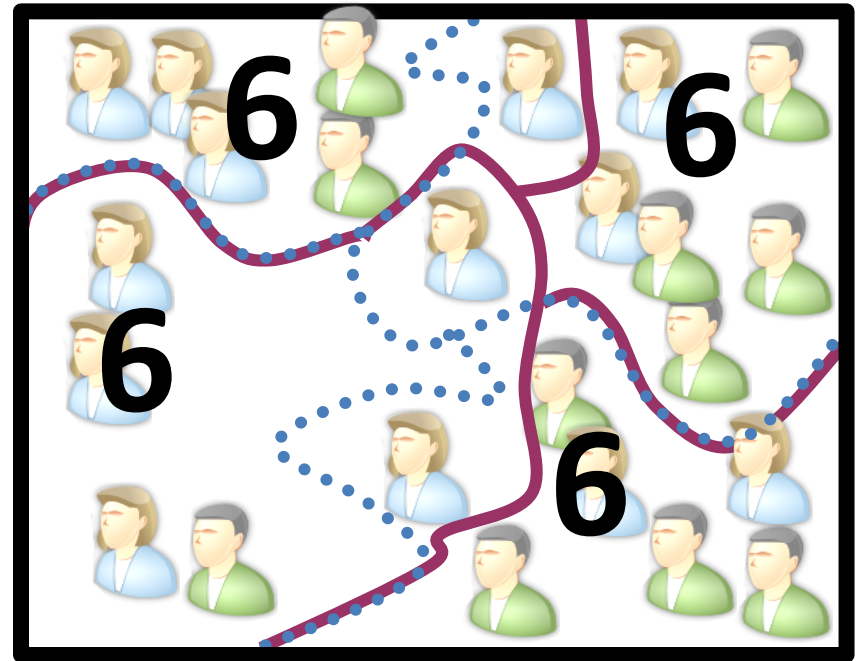
In 2000, districts in State A had equal population



In 2010, districts in State A have unequal population

Census data informs redistricting

- Every ten years, the district lines have to be redrawn to make each district even in size again
- The 2010 Census provides us new information about the size of the U.S. population
- We use this information to draw the lines for Congressional, state, and local government districts
- The responsibility of **who draws district lines varies from state to state**



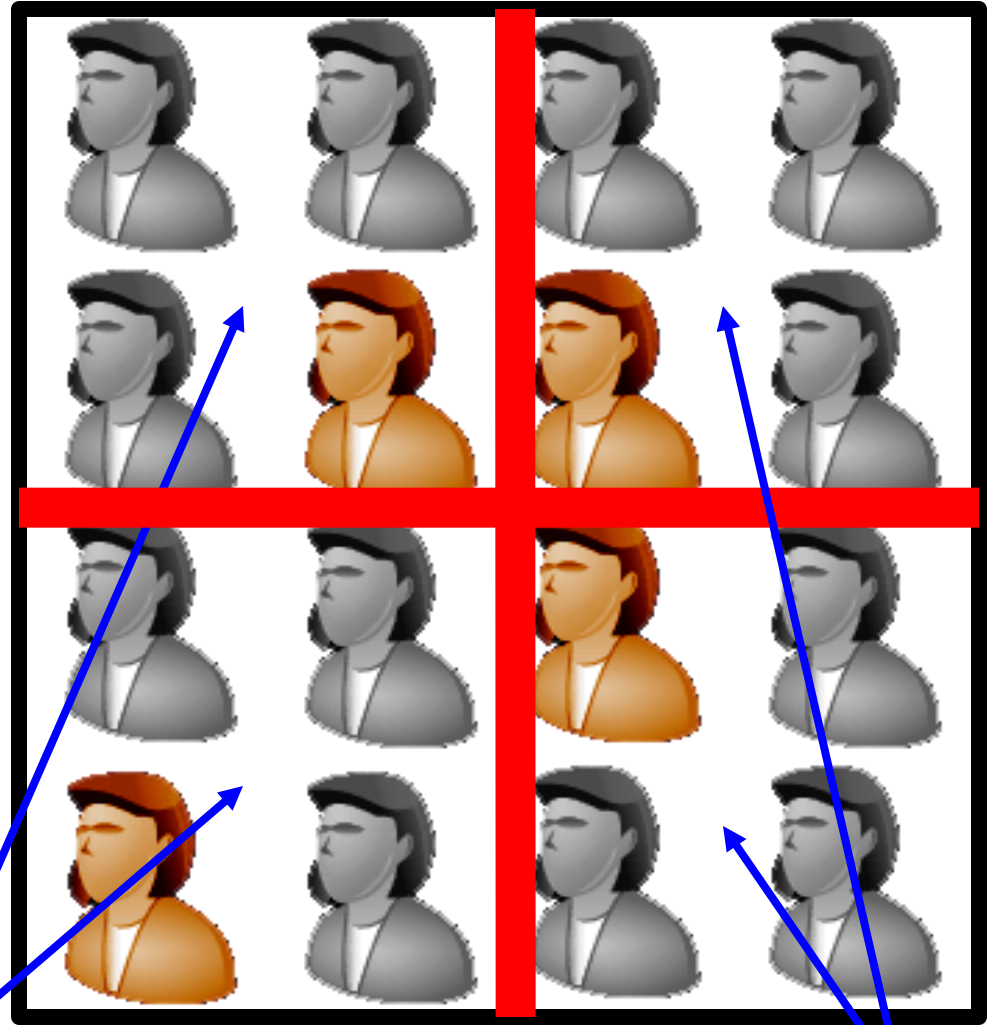
In 2011, the districts in State A will have equal population again

How lines are drawn matters

- District lines can divide communities
- Redistricting affects whether different population groups have a say in the outcome of elections

Example #1 →

Latinos make up only
 $\frac{1}{4}$ in all four districts

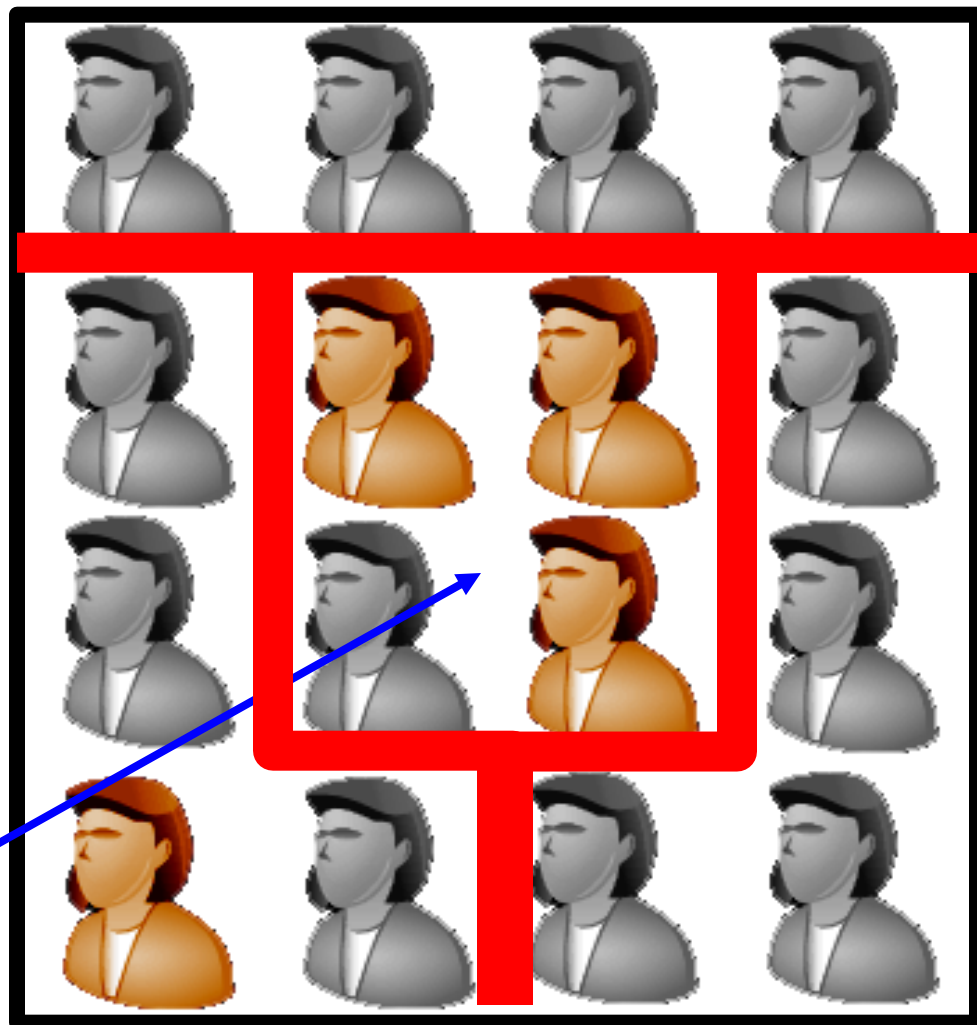


Redistricting can keep communities together

- Redistricting will determine whether Latinos have a fair opportunity to choose their representatives during the electoral process
- It is our responsibility as a members of this community to share with the redistricting entity information about our communities

Example #2 →

Latinos make up
 $\frac{3}{4}$ in one district



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- Why Redistricting is important to the Latino community
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Preserve Communities of Interest

- A Community of Interest (COI) is a neighborhood or **community that would benefit from being maintained in a single district because of shared interests, views, or characteristics**
- **A community of interest is a community of common interest**
- In order to remain together, the redistricting entity must learn
 - Where our communities are located
 - That our community shares too many common interest to be divided by district lines



If we do not define our communities, someone else will



COIs are part of traditional redistricting criteria

- Preserving communities of interest is part of traditional redistricting criteria
- The redistricting entity of your jurisdiction must comply with rules for redistricting which may include respecting communities of interest may be part of their rules
- Ensure that your redistricting entity is aware of preserving communities of interest as expressed in the rules for redistricting of the jurisdiction being redistricted



Our communities are more than just Latino

- A community of interest cannot be defined on race and ethnicity, we are more than Latino
 - The redistricting entity must learn that we are a community of interested because of our common traits and goals
- For the purposes of redistricting we need to be specific about the diversity of our communities
 - We are Central American, Mexican American, Oaxacan, Puerto Rican, Dominican, etc
- **Examples**
 - A Central American community in a certain area that have been working together to combat the lack of city services
 - A Mexican American community that formed around a cultural center or a school or school district

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Elements of a community of interest testimony

- 1. A map = location of your community**
- 2. Qualitative data = Anecdotes of your community story and shared experience**
 - Examples: Common lifestyle trends of the community, where does everyone go shopping, congregate socially or for religious purposes, largest employers, etc
- 3. Quantitative Demographic Data = Your community in numbers and statistics**
 - Examples: Graduation rates, median household income, access to technology, housing rates, language isolation etc



Building a strong community of interest testimony

- The strongest arguments for communities of interest contain both qualitative and quantitative components.
- There are no clear rules on what is needed to define a communities of interest so be comprehensive in your approach



1. Map = Know your community geography

- Identify **community geography and provide a map**
 - What are your boundaries: North? South? East? West?
 - Are you focusing on a neighborhood? city? region?
 - Are there defining features such as major highways, rivers, coastal, urban?
- You should be able to draw your community on a map. Try to be as exact as possible in drawing boundaries.
 - Thomas Guide
 - Google Maps
 - Mapquest

2. Know your community story

- **Collect qualitative data** for your community of interest
 - What is the community's history?
 - How has your community changed in the past decade?
 - Economic trends? Development?
 - What are your community needs and priorities?
 - Transportation routes
 - Do all students attend the same school districts?
 - Are there cultural festivals?
 - What are the common areas where your community congregates?
- Identify how your community is alike or different from communities around you

3. Know your community demography

- Identify **community demography**
 - What is the common languages spoken in your community?
 - Income level?
 - Educational level?
 - Employment? Industry? Small business? Business district?
 - Number/access to schools, libraries, hospitals, etc
- Identify how your community is alike or different from communities around you
- Collect data to demonstrate demography
 - US Census <http://2010.census.gov/2010census/data/>

Prepare in advance

- Prepare and coordinate your testimony in advance of public hearings
 - Provide written and verbal testimony
 - Present map with your community of interest boundaries
 - Prepare your data
- Have a common message
 - Many people saying a common message will add strength to your goal of keeping your community together
- Organize a large group to show up
 - Being in the room is always a stronger message than sending in your testimony
 - A large groups helps you cover the entire process and prevent meeting fatigue



Participate in the Process!

- Be proactive and get your community of interest into early maps
 - Connect with civil rights groups drafting maps to include your community
 - Participate in early meetings of the Commission
- Bring copies of your written testimony for the public hearings
- Your community coalition should expect to participate at all hearings
 - By being present throughout the process, your community can quickly respond to changes made and support decisions that promote your community of interest
 - If given a short time frame to present testimony divide sections among your coalition



Thank you!

Redistricting happens only once every 10 years. Let's participate and not be left out of this high stakes process!

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