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Citizens Redistricting Commission

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I want to thank the Members of the Commission for allowing me to testify. I also want to welcome you to the San Joaquin Valley. And although we are known as the breadbasket of the world and it has been said that if the valley were a nation we would be the 8th largest economy in the world. However, The United States Census Bureau issued a report entitled the American Community Survey in 2007, which found that six San Joaquin Valley counties had the highest percentage of residents living below the federal poverty line in 2006. The report also revealed that the same six counties were among the 52 counties with the highest poverty rate in the United States. I don't think much has changed since 2010 and if it could be heard, I am willing to bet that things are so much worst in the valley today. In fact today Fresno bee online carries an article that the Fresno County unemployment rate is 18.4 in March compared to 18.1 in Feb.

As a resident of the City Fresno, I come before you to offer you my views of my community of interest. You may have heard that in 2009 Fresno was found to be one the dumbest city of America by the Daily Beast because less than 20 % had four-year degrees and lack voter engagement. I would bet that most of this applies to my community of interest which lies south of Shaw Ave, north of North Ave. and east of highway 99 and west of Clovis Ave.

My community of interest includes several zip codes, most of which include low to middle income with people living up to 50% of the poverty level to approximately \$51,432.00 a year. Many of the people in my community of interest are renters after having lost their homes to foreclosures after losing their jobs. Many have relocated to the homeless area in our south/west areas. Many others are paying for substandard housing or sharing housing with other unrelated persons in room and board situations.

My community of interest is diverse, with high number of Hispanics, Asians, Blacks and poor Whites. I myself live have neighbors who are Hmong, Hispanics, Blacks and poor Whites in the Mayfair district. We try to take watch out for each other and the children in the neighborhood and not rely on the police unless necessary.

We have a young population and also have the highest number of elders living in poverty or near poverty south of Shaw Ave. and I would venture to state that most of these people depend on public transportation.

My community has fewer major supermarkets, many of us depend on the local mom and pop corner markets which often have higher prices in comparison to Sam's, or Cosco which are located in the north side of the city. There are more liquor stores than fresh fruit markets. Many of the green spaces that used to be managed by the city have been contracted out to non profit providers. We have fewer bicycle lanes and walking lanes than the north side. While the north side is pave or lined with trees the ones for us are next to treeless and fenceless canal banks.

My community of interest also has the highest numbers of PC 209s who are homeless and live in super substandard conditions near the rail road tracks with little support. I anticipate that when the prison doors on the Governor's orders open many will come to live in my community of interest. We also have the highest numbers of people registered on Megan's list.

We also have the highest concentration of environmental problems in our southwest and southeast areas.

Most of the youth in my community of interest relies on the free lunch program, otherwise they would go hungry. The last homeless census count was about 2,000. Which I find hard to believe as the Fresno unified school district has identified over 3,000 children living in homeless situations. Many of our youth are pushed out of school either by suspension never to return or expulsions.

The Fresno Unified School District had a grades 9-12 dropout rate of 6% in 2008. The national grades 9-12 dropout rate in 2007 was 4.4%. The Fresno Unified School District serves 26% English Language Learners (ELL). 7% of students are migrant students. Migrant students are the children of migrant workers and often relocate from school to school. The Fresno Unified School District recommended students for expulsion at a rate nearly four times higher than Oakland Unified. According to a 2010 study by Kids Data over 68.6% of Fresno county schools students are eligible to receive food stamps

Not everything is so negative in my community of interest, we have many shared interests, the Hmong New Years, community gardens, Mexican events at the Fulton Mall and fairgrounds, old cars cruising and car shows in our areas and several different cultural events in the tower district including the gay parade and some farmer markets. Although it may appear we are as diverse as can be coming from different parts of the world we are open to sharing our ways and supporting our small ethnic businesses who have chosen to survive in the community. In fact my favorite store is named the Big Asian, Hispanic, American Super Market.

I wish I had more time but I work full time and only learned about you coming today to Hanford on Saturday of last week. Having a full time job and other commitments I did not have to time to adequately prepare. I will ask you to draw lines for a district that will allow those of us who live in my community of interest to work together to better our community.