

- I. Introduction of SEARAC
  - a. SEARAC is a national non-profit and non-partisan organization that advocates on behalf of the more than 2.5 million Southeast Asian Americans who have resettled here in the United States. This population includes individuals and families who were displaced from the countries of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam as a result of the wars in Southeast Asia.
  - b. With more than 751,000 Southeast Asian Americans, California is actually the home to largest resettlement of refugees anywhere in the world. Thus, the decisions that this commission makes will have a dramatic impact on our community.
- II. *As the citizen commission deliberates on applicants for redistricting technical consultants, SEARAC strongly urges the commission to consider two key points.*
  - a. *First the commission must work to ensure that the contracted consultant have a demonstrated history of understanding and inclusion of ethnic minority communities.* Historically, SEAA communities have either been entirely ignored as a demographic or conveniently grouped with the larger Asian and Pacific Islander community – sometimes into the “other Asian category.” Failure to actively include this significant population marginalizes our community’s voting ability.
    - i. *For example:* Any analysis or report produced by the consultant regarding the Central Valley ought to include some analysis on the large Hmong and Cambodian populations that live there. In fact, the Central Valley is home to the largest Hmong population in the United States. So while indeed the Central Valley’s largest growing population is Latinos, Southeast Asians also represent a significant and growing demographic in the area.
  - b. *The second point SEARAC urges the commission to consider is the importance of public trust. Historically, many members of the SEA community, because of their experiences with war, have a general skepticism of government entities.* Thus, it is paramount that the commission sets a strong precedence when awarding contracts to seek groups that have a record of advocating for ethnic minority communities and work to uphold and defend the Voting Rights Act.
- III. I understand that the commission has a difficult and contentious discussion ahead. Please note that that SEARAC is committed to work with the commission and other stakeholders to uphold the Voting Rights Act and build public trust as our State moves forward on redistricting.