From: ████████████████████
Date: Tue, Mar 22, 2011 at 2:56 PM
Subject: Community of Interest-Whittier
To: votersfirstact@crc.ca.gov


March 22, 2011

Honorable Commission Members:

I am **Dr. Barbara Stone**, an Emerita Professor of Political Science at California State University, Fullerton. My area of expertise is California state and local government. I served on the Little Hoover Commission and was an elected trustee of the Rio Hondo Community College District for twelve years, including a redistricting year.

I also am a long time resident of the city of **Whittier,** which is my primary focus for this communication. I believe it is important that the Commission hear from people in the various regions about what they perceive to be their communities of interest.

The partition of Whittier after the 2001 census was unconscionable. The city of about 85,000 was divided among three Assembly districts and three congressional districts. Partisan interests seemed to be the primary motivators, though rumor had it that the final Assembly lines had much to do with which Democrats wanted which particular voters. I assume that, under the new laws governing the Commission, this will not happen again. But Whittier is not just a unique entity. It is part of a regional community that deserves to be preserved in your process.

Communities of interest are difficult to define. Ethnicity is an obvious factor, but there is much more.  Common educational institutions, public safety organizations, regional governmental units such as supervisorial districts, and even shared local media can and do produce bonds that can best be defined as communities of interest. Looking at these criteria, Whittier is part of a larger community in eastern Los Angeles County that should be kept together.

Like most of eastern Los Angeles County, Whittier (67.5%) is heavily Latino.  But there are unique ties that bind it to some cities more than others. For example,   all or parts of Whittier, unincorporated Whittier, La Mirada, La Habra Heights, and Santa Fe Springs constitute the Whittier Union High School District. The only local newspaper coverage of Whittier, La Habra Heights, Santa Fe Springs and La Mirada is the <u>Whittier Daily News</u>. The Whittier police department provides police protection for Santa Fe Springs. Whittier, La Mirada, La Habra Heights, and parts of unincorporated Whittier are all parts of a single county supervisorial district. In the huge county that is Los Angeles, these cities and unincorporated areas have so much in common that they should be considered a community of interest for redistricting purposes.

Obviously, Whittier, unincorporated Whittier, La Habra Heights, La Mirada, and Santa Fe Springs are not sufficiently large to constitute any state or federal district. The Commission might look then to our north, where the Puente Hills run along a ridge line that connects Whittier and La Habra Heights to Hacienda Heights, Rowland Heights, and Diamond Bar. This is a wildlife corridor where the interests of all these areas coincide. At this moment, the Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Preservation Authority consists of the Hacienda Heights Improvement  Association, Los Angeles County, the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County, and the city of  Whittier. The city of La Habra Heights has just asked for a place on the board, since the Authority owns about 30% of the property in that city. While the convergence of interests is not as clear as it is with the cities and areas I mentioned earlier, the hills are a much closer connection than Whittier in particular has to any of the other cities in the eastern part of the county.

I want to thank the Commission and its staff in advance for its consideration of these thoughts. Numbers and boundaries appear on maps, but it is difficult for outsiders truly to understand any area without input from residents. My husband and I have lived in Whittier for 38 years and care deeply about the city. I hope these insights will aid you in your deliberations.

Sincerely Yours,

Barbara S. Stone, Ph.D.