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Mary Helen Barro

04.14.11.C -

April 13, 2011

California Citizens Redistricting Commission
1130 K Street, Suite 101
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Commissioners:

I wish to submit comments for your consideration regarding the redistricting of Congressional District 22, located in Kern County. At present, our community of interest is divided into two districts, the 20th and 22nd Congressional Districts. Throughout the years, our community has suffered due to lack of a cohesive, united representative voice. We therefore request that our community of interest be reunited within one Congressional District, the 22nd District.

My opinion is based on decades of serving on various local boards and commissions, as well as my experiences as a broadcaster in Kern County. Additionally, for approximately ten (10) years (1986-1995), I was the owner/operator of KAFY Spanish Radio (970 AM), which served the greater Bakersfield, Arvin and Lamont communities as a cohesive unit. Residents in these cities continually participated in, and continue to enjoy a strong bond due to shared experiences, including:

- All students attend Kern High School District schools
- Common shopping at the Mercado Latino, an extremely large shopping complex in East Bakersfield
- Numerous cultural events and parades (Oaxacan, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Black History and Good Neighbor Festivals)
- A common soccer league, with participation by over 150 teams
- Extensive investments in commercial core and senior housing complexes
- Kern Regional Transit links all three cities

There is general agreement of the importance to preserve this community of interest, which is bordered by the following boundaries:

- North boundary – Columbus Street in Northeast Bakersfield
- South boundary – below the cities of Arvin and Lamont
- East boundary – El Tejon Mountains
- West boundary – Highway (Freeway) 99



A map outlining our community of interest is attached for your reference.

Other pertinent criteria/unifying data affecting our community of interest has been sourced from various county, state and federal agencies (ACS, Census, school enrollment, free lunches, etc.), as follows:

- The community needs jobs, better education, access to better healthcare, improved roads, better flood control, access to public transit, greater teen pregnancy prevention
- The primary employment is in agriculture
- The three largest employers in our community are Grimmway Farms, Bolthouse Farms and Giumarra Vineyards
- The majority of the residents earn less than \$30K annually
- The majority of the residents are largely Mexican American, Oaxacan and Puerto Rican, and the majority of Kern's Black residents also reside within this area
- The majority of homeless people and services they need, not just in Bakersfield but throughout all of Kern County, are located/concentrated in the Southeast Bakersfield area, which falls within the reconfigured district proposed herein.

It is our urgent hope that our community of interest will be kept intact under one Congressional District in order that we may work toward having a stronger and united voice with our elected officials in the state legislature and in Congress, so that we can improve the quality of life for our families.

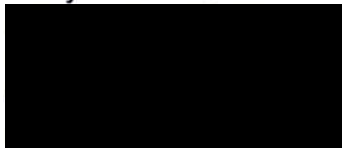
If you or your staff have any questions regarding my written testimony, which I request be entered as part of the public comments regarding the 2011 Redistricting for California's Congressional, State Senate, State Assembly and Board of Equalization districts, you can reach me at my contact information included below.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Mary Helen Barro

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Attachment – Map of Kern County Community of Interest

Map of Kern County Community of Interest

