

To: Citizens Redistricting Commission

My name is Kathryn Black. I reside in the foothills of the southern Sierra Nevada, in Tulare County, at [REDACTED] Springville, CA. I spoke briefly at the public meeting in Bakersfield, addressing my concerns.

I am familiar with the goals, processes, and Constitutional requirements of redistricting, having applied to be on the CRC. I was one of the final 60 applicants.

It is my request that the Commission draw lines to reflect the reality of the situation in the San Joaquin Valley counties, which have been historically gerrymandered, and lack true representation of the unique needs and characteristics of this area. Today Tulare County has nearly enough people to warrant an Assembly district of its own. Furthermore, increased population leaves no reason to reach out of the valley counties to draw Senate districts. In addition, new Congressional Districts should also maintain the rural, agriculture-based characteristics of the SJV, and avoid linking us to coastal or Southern California regions.

In the past, Tulare County Assembly and Senate districts have been joined to San Bernardino, Los Angeles, and even Ventura Counties. This makes no sense from ANY of the standards one is to take into account when drawing lines. Neither common areas of interest, nor geographic commonalities, nor economic similarities unite us to those areas of the state. And our ethnic and social communities are much different.

I urge you, once again, to maintain County unity wherever possible, and when needed, to link counties that share geographic, economic, and ethnic characteristics. It is time for the people in the vast, under-represented, and economically challenged southern San Joaquin Valley and its counties to be fairly represented.

Despite the strenuous efforts of the applicant review panel, the Commission is made up almost entirely of Coastal and urban members from a very small area of the state. It is my sincere hope that the fact that the population of over 75% of the land mass of California has no representative on the Commission will not interfere with a good outcome. Remember to adhere to the values that each of you claimed in your interviews and applications. Represent the best interest of all of the voters of our state, and you can't go wrong. I have been greatly encouraged by the hearings, and the sincere efforts of the Commission to listen to the people. Thank you for your efforts to this point.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Black

May 23, 2011