

Subject: Aref Aziz-Public Testimony for 7/8

From: Aref Aziz <[REDACTED]>

Date: Fri, 8 Jul 2011 07:17:51 -0700 (PDT)

To: [REDACTED]

I'm here to address you today because of the troubling turn the discussion took yesterday evening with regard to the Tri-Cities. Yesterday, the commission gave the direction to revert back to the 1st draft maps, even though your first draft maps literally strips the Tri-cities of crucial political representation at the federal level.

We have known all along that the commission would have to make difficult choices. And because of that, members of our community came out in full force to alert you all to the fact that the first draft maps do not respect our area's history, our people, or our economy. Specifically, splitting the 4th largest city in the Bay Area in Fremont in two out of the three proposed maps, and lumping pieces of the city in with unlike communities in Santa Clara County and East San Jose. This proposal makes the least sense, since it splits the anchor of south Alameda County, and places it with Santa Clara County. Most offensively, it dilutes the fast-growing South Asian community in the Bay Area, which has never had representation in the state Assembly, state Senate, or Congress, even though it's one of the most concentrated areas of this community in the United States.

The decision to revert back to the first draft of the maps discounts the hundreds of voices from the Tri Cities and all throughout the Bay Area who have take the time to come before you and testify to on the matter.

We want to work with you to create a map that reflects our community of interest testimony while respecting surrounding communities of interest. To that end, we have proposed a map that shows how, using your first draft maps as a starting point, you can create a congressional district with the tri-cities anchored in an Alameda County district. Our map shows that it is completely possible given the framework you've given us. I, too, have been keeping track of the community of interest testimony from surrounding areas, and our map greatly took this into consideration.

If you have an issue with specifics like, whether to include San Ramon, or whether to include Milpitas, we completely understand and we are open to compromises. But reverting back to the first draft map is deeply troubling, and discounts ALL of the voices of the people who came before you here, even multiple times.

Our community has struggled greatly with the redistricting issue. Knowing that we needed to make tough choices, we expressed that our top priority was the congressional map. Because we want to be reasonable and respect that the commission has difficult decisions, our community even held its tongue at the Assembly District map, which arbitrarily slices up Fremont and that looks like a dog! While this really doesn't make sense in the slightest, we wanted to send a strong message that our focus is on getting a Congressional District that has the Tri-Cities unified in an Alameda County anchored District.

I hope that the commission doesn't send the message that hundreds of voices that have called for keeping Fremont and the Tri Cities together in a congressional district in Alameda County are something to be ignored. Please reconsider our proposed map as a starting point for the congressional district.

Thank you.

Best of Regards,

Aref Aziz