



CALIFORNIA SENIOR ADVOCATES LEAGUE

October 28, 2020

California Citizens' Redistricting Commission
901 P Street, Suite 154-A
Sacramento, CA 95814
(Submitted Via Email)

Re: Public Participation During Commission Hearings

Dear Commissioners,

As our name implies we are a non-partisan organization focused on issues through a lens that looks at the impact to seniors, our families and the communities in which we live. Redistricting decisions will have decades-long impact on all Californians, including seniors.

We look forward to the organizational planning work now being undertaken bringing outcomes that reflect the rich diversity of our state and our communities. We are already heartened by your unanimous dedication to transparency, engagement and accessibility – themes evident throughout your meetings to date.

As a follow-up to comments at your meetings (October 14 – 16), we just wanted to again reiterate how important public participation and accessibility is during this historically significant time. Of the many politically seismic events happening across the country, only one affects everyone – regardless of gender, ethnicity, age, or political party – namely the challenges brought on by COVID-19.

COVID-19 risks among seniors are greater than for some and many are appropriately taking significant precautions to stay home as much as possible. Greeting and visiting family and friends feels like a distant memory, not an anticipated joy as the holidays approach. Clearly attending group events such as redistricting townhalls are even further in the distance. But said politically seismic events have motivated us to master virtual participation and advocacy. Thus our ZOOM and virtual meeting skills expand.

Because of these risks we ask that you continue to allow for remote options of participation and weight remote participation equally (in content and timeliness) throughout the deliberation process. While we greatly appreciate your call-in opportunity, the system is a bit bulky. As you all discussed and heard at your last meeting, an investment in technology now will pay dividends later. Commissioner Sinay's recommendation to engage civic technology seems wise and we hope you

will consider accepting real-time written comments in addition to real-time oral comments submitted over the phone.

We further appreciate dedicated times on the agenda for public comment. Like you, many of us are juggling numerous responsibilities – from our jobs to our doctor’s appointments and in some cases, helping our grandchildren with remote learning – we greatly appreciate ample time to participate in this very important process.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Deborah Howard
Board President

cc: Dan Claypool, Executive Director, California Citizens’ Redistricting
Commission