

My name is AFM Haque and I live in Plainsboro. I am addressing the Committee today to give reasons why Plainsboro should be kept in a substantially similar 14<sup>th</sup> legislative district.

Since 1981 (over 40 years), Hamilton, Plainsboro and Cranbury have been the anchors of the 14<sup>th</sup> District. They have in effect become communities of interest, as stated in the redistricting standards, because they have shared economic, environmental and other interests over the years. Plainsboro has been very close to Mercer County, having shared a school district with West Windsor since 1969. Cranbury has sent its children to Princeton High School in Mercer County since 1988.

There have been many Plainsboro and Hamilton candidates of both parties who have run for the Legislature for 40 years. Many have been successful. Hamilton has been represented by three Plainsboro residents, including two women of both parties, for over 30 years. Plainsboro has been one of the most politically active towns in the 14<sup>th</sup> for 40 years, including fielding multiple Assembly candidates in the 1980's.

On the issue of trying to create a new "Asian district", the 14<sup>th</sup> is now 18.7% Asian. Most of the towns in the 14<sup>th</sup>

are increasing in Asian population and that will only continue. Robbinsville now has 28% Asian, East Windsor 23%, Monroe 27% Plainsboro 57% and Cranbury 21%.

We are a district where Asians can successfully compete for political office.

In addition, we have an excellent "farm team" of minorities, especially Asians, coming up through the ranks. Plainsboro has Councilman Nuran Nabi, Cranbury has Councilwoman Eman El-Badawi, Monroe has Councilwoman Rupa Siegel, and there are minority group members on both the Mercer and Middlesex Boards of Commissioners. At least 9 school board members in our area are Asian.

If Plainsboro is removed from this district, we are likely to lose our ability to continue this trend, and 40 years of progress will disappear.

# NEW JERSEY [REDACTED] POLICY PERSPECTIVE [REDACTED]

## TESTIMONY OF PETER CHEN, SENIOR POLICY ANALYST, NEW JERSEY POLICY PERSPECTIVE (NJPP), BEFORE NEW JERSEY APPORTIONMENT COMMISSION, JANUARY 26, 2022

Good morning. I'm Peter Chen and am a Senior Policy Analyst at New Jersey Policy Perspective (NJPP).

New Jersey Policy Perspective (NJPP) is a nonpartisan think tank that drives policy change to advance economic, social, and racial justice through evidence-based, independent research, analysis, and strategic communication.

As former coordinator of the 2020 Census non-profit outreach campaign for New Jersey, I am keenly aware of the importance of the redistricting process and have contacted a wide range of communities across the state. Each of these communities sought to ensure that their voices are heard by their elected representatives.

I testify today to raise three points for the Commission to consider as you deliberate on how to conduct redistricting in an equitable way. In particular, I'd like to focus on the changes in New Jersey's ethnic and racial diversity that highlight the need to carefully consider how to ensure all communities get fair representation in the state legislature.

### **1. Overall increase in diversity**

As the Commissioners are no doubt aware, New Jersey's Hispanic/Latinx and Asian/Asian-American communities continued to grow dramatically since 2010. The combination of AAPI and Hispanic/Latinx growth of more than 650,000 residents actually exceeds New Jersey's overall growth (497,000) during the past decade.

This is also reflected in the overall population not identifying as white. Roughly 48 percent of the state now identifies as a race or ethnic category other than white non-Hispanic. (Note that although this has been framed as a "decline" in white population, people may also be identifying their race differently than before.)

Based on current legislative district maps, the median legislative district is 57% non-Hispanic white, while the state as a whole is only 52% white.

The new map should ensure that districts broadly speaking reflect New Jersey's diversity but also that racial or ethnic communities of interest are not unnecessarily split in ways that dilute their voice.

For example, current maps often carve pockets of minority racial-group populations into multiple districts. For example, the predominantly Asian-American municipalities of

Plainsboro, West Windsor and South Brunswick are split among three different districts. Similarly, Edison, Piscataway, and Woodbridge each occupy three different districts.

**2. Need for differentiation within categories**

The racial and ethnic categories in the Census continue to be categories of convenience rather than accurate descriptions of community self-identification. For example, the continent of Asia contains more than half of the world's population, including hundreds of languages and dozens of nations. Yet these groups are lumped together as "Asian or Asian-American."

Although the decennial Census does not provide a deeper breakdown within these groups, the American Community Survey does. The following are based on the 2015 5-year detailed tables.

The largest national origin groups (alone or in combination) within Asian populations were:

- Asian Indian (353,215)
- Chinese (incl. Taiwan) (164,443)
- Filipino (156,833)
- Korean (104,696)
- Pakistani (29,902)
- Vietnamese (28,671)
- Japanese (21,065)

One notable feature among Hispanic/Latinx national origins is the diversity of nativity (i.e., whether the person was born in the United States).

Population Groups	Total Population in NJ	U.S.-born	Foreign-born
Puerto Rican	471035	463993	7042
South American	375657	131912	243745
Dominican (Dominican Republic)	243255	102382	140873
Mexican	231902	108697	123205
Central American (excludes Mexican)	203842	69545	134297

Diversity within and among groups of different national origin is extremely important in considering how communities identify. Digging deeper than surface-level racial and ethnic categories is critical to ensuring just representation.

As just one example, the Ecuadorian population of New Jersey made up approximately 123,000 residents in 2015. If this community were its own municipality, it would be the

state's 6th largest, larger than Edison, Woodbridge or Toms River. The state's Peruvian population (82,000) is greater than the total population of Camden or Cherry Hill. The state's Salvadoran population (67,000) is as large as Middletown or Old Bridge.

### 3. "Some Other Race" and "More than One Race"

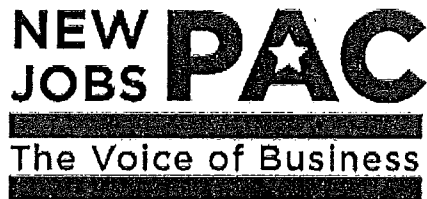
New Jerseyans increasingly view their racial identity as more complex than preexisting categories. Yet these categories have historically been the only metrics of diversity: the previous shapefiles for New Jersey's 2012 apportionment commission only included four demographic categories – white only, Black/African-American only, Asian/Asian-American only, and Hispanic.

In 2020, 11.2% of New Jerseyans identified as "Some Other Race alone", while 9.7% identified as more than one race.

Hispanic/Latinx identity also intersected heavily with these two groups. Roughly 93% of "Some Other Race alone" respondents also identified as Hispanic/Latinx, while 68% of those identifying as more than one race also identified as Hispanic/Latinx.

I encourage the Commission to look beyond the four historical categories to identify which communities are represented. At the very least, I encourage the Commission to look at individuals identifying as "race in all combinations" rather than one-race alone, particularly for non-White populations.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify today.



To: Co-Chairs Jones and Barlas, 11<sup>th</sup> Member Carchman & All 11 Members of the New Jersey Legislative Apportionment Commission

From: Chrissy Buteas – Executive Director of NEW JOBS PAC

Date: January 26, 2022

RE: **NEW JOBS Business PAC Seeking Balance in New Jersey's State Legislative Districts**

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Good afternoon! My name is Chrissy Buteas, Executive Director for the NEW JOBS PAC. NEW JOBS is composed of businesses from every industry sector and region of New Jersey, and the PAC advocates for pro-business legislators. NEW JOBS appreciates and respects the guiding principles that Judge Carchman presented to this Commission, and towards that, we felt compelled to present the business community perspective on the task in front of all of you – reapportioning New Jersey's 40 legislative districts with some of those principles in mind.

The business community can be best described as neutral on many of Judge Carchman's principles, but the key principle of competitiveness fits into the recurring theme for NEW JOBS, what we routinely ask legislators, and what we are requesting today from you - **BALANCE**. Balance is important both among the various guiding principles and within districts to ensure competitiveness. Judge Carchman called for harmonizing competing interests with the public interest at its core, and that public interest is competitive elections and balanced public policy representing all sides of an issue. While the competitiveness principle should not dominate to the exclusion of Judge Carchman's other principles, NEW JOBS believes it should be prioritized to improve our democratic process.

The business community believes that competitive districts lead to competitive ideas and strong, balanced public policy. Noncompetitive districts lead to a lack of healthy dialogue and discussion among our policymakers across the aisle, resulting in less thoughtful policy and choices made by inertia. To avoid leaving the state as an outlier when evaluating our state's overall economy, strong policy-making is critical so New Jersey is better positioned to be a leader in all areas of public policy, from innovation to education to infrastructure.

The facts speak for themselves as we are one of the most indebted states in the nation and an outlier in many costs of doing business. Our chronic debt has continuously exacerbated our state's fiscal challenges and has often fueled our high costs. To find that better balance in the future where New Jersey can be pro-business on tax policy but still have adequate revenue to invest in workforce development, infrastructure, and innovation, pro-jobs on environmental policy but still protect the environment, and pro-employer on labor mandates but still protect workers; we need more

moderate legislators to execute those more nuanced and middle-of-the-road policies that will prevent us from being anti-business outliers. Not surprisingly, NEW JOBS sees evidence that moderate legislators are often the ones from competitive or swing legislative districts, so we are requesting that you make more of these balanced districts that create moderate legislators.

If legislators have a similar number of constituents that are concerned about affordability and controlling debt as concerned about investing more in government programs, then we are more balanced on the appropriate use of government dollars and less likely to be an outlier on taxes. If the constituents wanting to protect worker rights and the environment are similar in size to those that care about ensuring there are good-paying jobs and fewer needless mandates that other states don't have, then New Jersey is more likely to be balanced with our regulatory climate. If legislators are worried about national and state trends impacting the voting patterns of their local legislative district and their chances to win elections, then they will be less likely to only cater to one side or the other in policy debates.

Conversely, if a legislator routinely gets more than 60% of the vote, then they are less likely to be balanced and worry about both sides of a policy debate. New Jersey currently has too many of those legislative districts where legislators are insulated from bad policy decisions on both sides of the political spectrum, and limiting those districts is better for the district's constituents as the legislators are likely to be more responsive to them and push for moderate policy overall.

It can be a challenge to define a competitive district, but I think it would be beneficial to make as many districts as possible more balanced. I think this Commission should have the simultaneous goals of 1) making those non-competitive districts where legislators expect to get 65-70-75-80% of the vote (unfortunately about half of all districts) closer to 60% districts, 2) taking the districts where the victor often gets 55-60% of the vote and making them single-digit races, and 3) keep the handful of districts that are routinely competitive such as today's 2, 8, 11 and 16, as those districts are evidence that legislators in competitive districts have often brought more balance and moderation.

The NEW JOBS PAC on behalf of the New Jersey business community requests that you create a legislative district map that fosters more balanced districts and competitive races that will moderate New Jersey's policies and make our legislators more responsive to all of their constituents – laudable goals for all New Jerseyans, not just the business community. It will also have a side benefit of hopefully increasing civic participation across the state as more New Jerseyans will feel that every vote matters. Thank you for considering our perspective, and if you have any questions, you may contact me at [cbuteas@newjobspac.com](mailto:cbuteas@newjobspac.com) " [cbuteas@newjobspac.com](mailto:cbuteas@newjobspac.com).

## **Testimony to NJ Redistricting Commission**

Patricia Campos-Medina, President Latina Civic Action

Jan 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022

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Good evening Chairman Jones and members of this Commission

For a state that boasts a Latino population that comprises almost 21% of our state's total population, the lack of Latinx representation on this Commission was always a problem.

So on behalf of the Board of Latina Civic, we are thankful that you Chairman LeRoy Jones, choose to fix this exclusion. Just like my brother from Camden stated earlier, Latino leaders across this state had a celebration of joy today when we learned that you have made this courageous decision to return representation to the Latino population in NJ.

Laura Matos was born in Burlington County and has dedicated her professional life to public service.

She was recently unanimously confirmed as the Chair of the Pinelands Commission, a commission that oversees 1.1 million acres of land in Southern New Jersey.

Laura currently lives in Monmouth County, the fifth most populous county in New Jersey, and part of the shore community that encompasses Monmouth and Ocean. As we know from the 2020 census, Ocean County had the second largest population growth in the state.

And Laura Matos has been a courageous voice state-wide advocating for women representation in all aspects of public service; she has been a member of the Bi-Partisan Commission on Women Appointments at the Center for American Women and Politics advocating for women representation in all areas of public life in both political parties. She also has a record of advocating for



Latina women to receive training, run for office and advocate for issues that impact Latino families. As one of the leaders of Latina Civic, she has advocated for Latino families from the South to the North of NJ, for Latinas in Atlantic County, Warren County to Bergen County. Laura understands the needs of the Latino community because she is engaged with its leaders and cares about their issues. We at Latina Civic are proud that she has been chosen to join this commission because she has the experience, training and respect of leaders across NJ who knows her intellect and commitment will bring a needed perspective of inclusion to this commission deliberations.

NJ Latino growth was marked in the last count by its spatial growth—more Latinos move out of urban areas to the center of the state, to new districts who need the resources to properly serve this population. Those new districts need political voices from our communities to drive our community's interest and policy priorities.

This is especially important for a new generation of Latinx voters; Latinx youth today comprise 21.8% of all NJ's school-age children.

Latinos continue to be disproportionately affected by NJ's lack of affordable housing, trapped in segregated school districts, and lack access to their basic every day civil rights such as language and translation in courts and healthcare. The most recent example of the impact of structural racism on Latino communities in NJ includes Latino men who represent 43% of coronavirus deaths in people under 50<sup>1</sup>. Latino workers continue to be the essential workers who kept working while middle-class New Jerseyans stayed at home. They have gotten sick, watch loved one die, and have lost uncountable amounts of generational wealth. Latina women need assistance with daycare, after-school care, paid family leave, paid sick days and they need good jobs that allow them the opportunity to give their children a future with dignity.

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<sup>1</sup> Yi, K. (10 Mar 2021). 'Whole Generations Of Fathers' Lost As COVID-19 Kills Young Latino Men In NJ. <https://gothamist.com/news/whole-generations-of-fathers-lost-as-covid-19-kills-young-latino-men-in-nj>

In order to address all this policy needs, we need our community to count in the political decisions that determine who receives resources, when and how they get distributed. For that to happen, we need our leaders to have the opportunity to be heard, to be given the opportunity to influence elections, and to have the opportunity to run for office.

Redistricting does not guarantee equal representation, it guarantees fair representation.

Fair of course is arbitrary.

But is not defined just by those who are in power.

Unfair practices come into play when the drawing of a new district boundary is driven solely by the political interest of those in power.

But is the role of this commission to raise above political interest and focus on our democratic process and the interest of all New Jerseyans. Because after all, fair is determined on how the choices you make land on the impacted communities.

Every ten years we in America have an opportunity to put forward a fair and accurate redistricting effort that can respect the power of impacted communities who have grown and have new needs. It is an important moment to recognize the growing impact of new voters, or minority voters, and for us in the case the importance in NJ of the Latino population.

Because Latino pop growth has been spatial across the state, we as leaders would like to see a legislative map that increases the influence of Latino voters in more districts in the center of the state—Middlesex Co, Mercer County, Somerset County and Monmouth County.

In South Jersey, Latinos must keep their influence in Camden Co and in Burlington County and the map should expand its influence in Atlantic County.

Latinos want to see their current political representation grow from less than 8%, to more accurately reflect our population growth to the double digits.

We also want Latino representation to return to Bergen County, and specifically to the area now comprised by LD 33. We lost representation in Bergen County four years ago and as the new map is drawn, representation must return to Bergen.

Quoting from Mayor Sayed today, Patterson minority population expanded, and therefore Passaic County needs more representation of its diversity, so we hope to see increase influence of minority representation in Passaic as well.

We at Latina Civic working closely with the Latino Action Network Foundation to crunch the numbers and offer a community of interest map that empowers our community and increases resources to all the counties where Latino population has grown.

We are glad you announced that unlike congressional side, you will make the maps available to the public for input. We look forward to reviewing the maps as you make them public.

We need competitive maps with Latino influence of 30% or more, and we need fair competitive primaries. For Latinos to run, they have to have a fair opportunity to influence local elections and be encouraged to run.

Latina Civic looks forward to continuing engaging in this discussion. After all, Democracy only works when all voices are engaged in the process.

Thank you, Chairman Jones for including the Latino community in the process of redistricting.

Respectfully submitted on the record by

Patricia Campos-Medina,  
President, Latina Civic Action  
Jan 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022

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**From:** Matt Dragon  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 27, 2022 6:49 AM  
**To:** OLSaideAPPC  
**Subject:** Testimony form 1/26 Apportionment Commission Hearing

Good evening.

My name is Matt Dragon, I live in West Orange, in Essex County and I'm a co-chair of the Essex County Chapter of Our Revolution.

Thank you to the commissioners and staff for serving on this commission and welcome to Commissioner Matos. Chairman Jones, thank you for taking action today, and your statement. I appreciate the focus on diversity as you'll see reflected in my comments.

The Voting Rights Act spells out that states cannot provide protected groups "less opportunity than other members of the electorate to participate in the political process and to elect representatives of their choice." When we look at a state as diverse as New Jersey, we need to consider how that diversity reflects through our Legislative Districts.

According to the Census, NJ is 21% Hispanic or Latino, 15% Black, and 10% Asian, and we know these groups are more likely to be undercounted. While it's not possible to have that map perfectly into Legislative districts, any map you consider adopting should be approaching 50% majority-minority districts.

It is probably hard for the white members of the commission and our predominantly white Legislators to fully grasp what these communities mean when they say: "Representation matters." But as a white, male voter let me put it this way. My vote has been inflated at the expense of others, ever since it was first legally defined, Its value was inflated by appropriating the power of women's votes and stealing the power of Black and brown votes. It is on that historic foundation of systemic racism, the systemic racism that endures through to today in our districts, that continues to over value my vote.

So your role on this commission is to devalue my vote and the votes of people that look like me. That's not to say you should undervalue them. This isn't about penalizing white voters, but rather to acknowledge the history, allow yourselves to see how it has affected NJ and our current map, and to re-balance the power to make sure it's fair and equitable.

You must allow voters to reclaim their power in choosing representatives and participating in the process and restoring power to those we have historically marginalized, as a country and a state. The apportionment process should be about ensuring fair and equitable representation for all NJ residents. Not just those of us that have traditionally seen ourselves represented in the State House.

Thank you.

Matt Dragon  
West Orange

Tala Ismail – Testimony  
Representing the Palestinian American Community Center (PACC)  
26 January 2022

My name is Tala Ismail. I'm an aspiring attorney from Essex County, born and raised in Bloomfield. I led the Palestinian American Community Center Census work in 2020 as their Civic Engagement Coordinator. My work during the Census gave me a unique experience in directly seeing how my community has grown over the last decade and how we expect to continue to grow in the coming decade. Additionally, most recently, I completed a course called Legislation at Rutgers Law School Newark, which emphasized the important role adequate representation plays in upholding constituent trust in the legislative process, and how districting decisions directly impact that representation.

As such, it saddens me to see my community is not taken into consideration during the redistricting process, as the process primarily uses Census demographic data, which categorizes Arab/MENA communities as White. Because we are not counted in the Census as our own racial or ethnic category, we are invisible in government processes, cutting our ability to get funding, or our policy concerns addressed. You have heard from others in my community, and you will hear from even more, about these policy concerns. As a community, we are excluded in many government and policy issues that impact our lives daily, in ways that are often unique from the impact felt by the very same policies within different communities.

Additionally, this inability to count our community as a unique ethnic/racial category limits the data available to demonstrate disparities and to address needs. For example, language access needs are a big concern for my community. PACC specifically confronted language access needs in state government when we realized that voter registration forms were not available in Arabic, and we know this problem exists at every level of state government when the public seeks information or services.

My community of interest is concentrated in Essex County, primarily in the townships of Montclair, Bloomfield, Nutley, and West Orange. My community originates from culturally, geographically, and religiously diverse countries, embodying many experiences and narratives that cannot be distilled to a singular experience or partisan lines- still, there are commonalities and shared experiences among all Arab Americans that must be considered.

I hope you consider the information we have provided in your map making process, to ensure we can address language access, healthcare disparities, and other social service's needs.

Good evening and thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony as a part of tonight's hearing. My name is John Lyons and I am a resident of Hammonton in Atlantic County. I've lived in Hammonton for my entire life, and voted in every general election here since I turned 18.

I want to address you tonight about the 8th legislative district and specifically why Hammonton should remain in it. As I am sure you are all aware for many years, well before I was born in fact Hammonton was a part of the 2nd legislative district which covered Atlantic County in its entirety.

As south Jersey grew, and Hammonton changed from a small agricultural community to a thriving bedroom community our population grew with it. In more recent years, the political winds shifted and we found Hammonton placed into the 9th District. During our time in the 9th District our legislators did their part to support Hammonton but there were significant differences between Hammonton and many of the shore communities that made up the 9th District during that time.

In 2011, Hammonton was placed into the 8th district where it remains today. Over the past decade Hammonton has enjoyed the benefits of close ties with our sister communities in the 8th district which not only share our values but also have many other things in common.

Hammonton is primarily an agricultural community, providing a convenient commute to Atlantic City, Philadelphia, and other areas in the region. Places like Shamong, Medford Lakes and Medford share these similar features which positions them to benefit from a legislative agenda that can cover several communities in the district that as I mentioned have similar features.

Hammonton is also a growing arts community, anchored by our Eagle Theater located in our scenic downtown which draws thousands of visitors each year. Fortunately, downtown Hammonton has benefited from private investment, state funding and grants which have allowed for improvements and provided opportunities for our community. Again our downtown has many similarities to other 8th district communities including Mount Holly, Lumberton and Medford.

Moreover, in the last three elections in the 8th District the winner of each election at both the Senate and Assembly level has been decided by only a few thousand votes. These razor thin margins are a testament to the fact that the 8th District is appropriately balanced allowing for continuously competitive elections. In fact, Hammonton's own Michael Torrissi, Jr. won a seat representing the 8th District in the Assembly this past November.

Much of the testimony tonight has focused on the representation of New Jersey's Latino community. I'd submit that maintaining Hammonton in the 8th District would continue to promote Latino diversity. In fact, 23% of Hammonton residents who were a part of the census here identified as hispanic. In our public schools 1 in 4 of our students come from a Spanish speaking ESL household.

If you have ever visited Hammonton we are known for our Italian restaurants, businesses and culture. But Hammonton's Puerto Rican and Mexican communities are a vibrant part of our community. Our downtown is filled with first and second generation Latino owned businesses that add to the character of our community. Hammonton represents a commitment to Latino diversity in the 8th District.

In closing, Hammonton is appropriately placed in the 8th district and should remain there. The 40,467 Republican, Democrat and Independent voters who chose Michael Torrissi, JR this past November would see their votes disenfranchised only a few months after casting them if Hammonton were to be moved into another district. While the commission certainly has many choices to make, moving Hammonton out of the 8th District is not, and should not be one of them.

Thank you for your time this evening.



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**From:** Fedah Mohammed  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 26, 2022 10:11 PM  
**To:** OLSaideAPPC  
**Subject:** Written Testimony 1-26-22

Good evening,

Thank you once again for the opportunity to testify tonight. I want to also thank the commissioners for allowing me the opportunity to address the concerns of my community.

My name is Fedah Mohammed. I grew up in Hudson County, and currently live in Secaucus. I am a part of the Arab American community and a recent college graduate working closely to engage my community as part of The Palestinian American Community Center. The diverse Arab, Middle Eastern, and North African populations may trace their ancestry to different countries, speak different dialects or languages, practice different religions and fall into a broad range of socioeconomic categories. However, we have much more in common and wanted to be represented by leaders that understand our community ethnic diversity and unique needs.

My community of interest includes people with Egyptian, Lebanese, Syrian, Palestinian, Yemeni, Sudanese, Jordanian, Moroccan, and Chaldean ancestry to name a few. We share a community with a rich history of economic development, and social concerns that need to be addressed by policies that reflect our communities needs. In Hudson County where I live, the Arab American community is concentrated in Jersey City (The Heights Area) Bayonne, North Bergen, Gutenberg, Union City, West New York, Fairview mainly centered around Bergenline.

We can trace our economic contributions to New Jersey by Syrian immigrants that established silk manufacturing soon after the city was founded in 1792 and by 1924 there were 25 Arab American owned factories in Paterson and Hoboken. There are an estimated 113 Islamic nonprofits organizations in New Jersey and many Arab organizations throughout NJ. Some of these include Wafa House, Islamic Center of Passaic County, Arab American Counseling Services, United Arab Community Center, Muslim Women Coalition, CAIR New Jersey, Egyptian American Professional Society, NJ Arab- American Network, etc. These organizations have become a home and a safe haven for thousands of people seeking assistance and connection with their community. But we are also limited in our ability to provide social services, as many funding streams are limited to data and government sources of information that do not track my community.

We have many shared concerns, including labor conditions, discrimination, civil rights, equality, access to health care, culturally sensitive integrated health and social services, language accessibility, political representation, safe infrastructure, environmental justice, ancestral homeland conflicts, and immigration issues, in addition to the constant work of being accepted as part of the American society and its politics.

This community of interest shares a uniquely immigrant experience with specific community needs that can only be addressed by someone that understands the complexity of my community.

I really hope you consider the community of interest maps we have provided as you continue your work for fair representation in New Jersey. Thank you again for your time.

Best,  
Fedah Mohammed  
Office Administrator

**Palestinian American Community Center**

973-253-6145

[www.paccusa.org](http://www.paccusa.org)



Good evening, my name is Layla Odeh. I live in Bergen county and I am here with The Palestinian American Community Center as the lead of our GOTV team. I am also a college student at Montclair State University.

My Arab American community in Bergen county is concentrated in Bergenfield, Dumont, Fair Lawn, Paramus, Hackensack, Teaneck, Bogota, Garfield and Elmwood Park.

The city of Hasbrouck Heights where I grew up neighbors these towns but has a predominantly white community where I felt constantly left out and misunderstood, especially at school. I deeply understand not being seen or represented, this is not a unique sentiment in my community as our U.S. government does the same when The U.S. Census counts people who hold Arab ancestry or other Middle Eastern or North African (MENA) origins within the "White" racial category.

The Arab/MENA community, though lumped into the White racial category by the U.S. Census, is quite distinct from White populations.

Being lumped into the White race category has real and detrimental effects on our community: health, socioeconomic relief, admission into schools, psychological effects, and impact on immigration issues.

The fact is, Arab/MENA Americans have distinct issues, and experiences and national-level data on Arab/MENA Americans obscure regional variations, such as disadvantaged communities in Passaic County.

Yet despite us largely finding ourselves in such disadvantaged positions, our contributions to New Jersey continue to be strong and significant and need to be taken into account by our government and established political processes.

The South Paterson Arab American community is a great example of our economic contributions to New Jersey as it is currently leading economic development for the entire city of Paterson.

An estimated 10,000 Arab American residents throughout New Jersey visit the South Paterson Arab business corridor nearly every weekend bringing in huge economic opportunities to our community.

Additionally, there are over 100 Mosque and religious centers that service the growing Arab population of New Jersey. Constituents within the Arab American community have created a sense of empowerment within themselves and for other community members

through these businesses and religious spaces. It can only be preserved if we are kept together and receive the representation needed to address policy change and unique community needs.



# LATINO ACTION NETWORK

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TESTIMONY BY  
LATINO ACTION NETWORK  
New Jersey Legislative Reapportionment Commission  
January 26, 2022

DELIVERED BY:

Ana "Cuqui" Rivera, Board Secretary  
Latino Action Network

My name is Cuqui Rivera, I am the Board Secretary for the Latino Action Network.

First, I want to thank New Jersey Democratic Party Chairman LeRoy Jones for appointing a Latina to this Commission. Laura Matos is a prominent member of our community and has a long, successful track record in state politics and public affairs. Latinos represent more than 20 percent of the New Jersey population, and from the beginning of this process we have called on the Commission to properly represent our state's diversity.

*While this appointment is a good first step toward representation, it is critical that in the coming weeks the Commission work closely with advocates to develop a set of state legislative maps that properly represent our state and our community and build on the gains we made during the last legislative reapportionment process. Our state is one of the most diverse in the nation, and our Legislature must reflect that fact.*

Following the 2020 Census count, Latinos comprise 20.9% of New Jersey's total population. However, Latinos continue to lag behind in Latino representation in the State Legislature and in top political appointments. Latinos make up only 7 percent of the State Senate and only 8 percent of the General Assembly. Lack of representation has huge consequences for underserved communities.

As a growing segment of the state's population, Latinos continue to have little voice in decisions made in Trenton. Latinos are left out of many important conversations and having little power to influence decisions that are made due to a lack of representation. However, there is now an opportunity for NJ to put forward a fair and accurate redistricting effort that reflects the power of the Latino vote. In the last 10 years, our communities have continued to grow across the state and that needs to be represented in the future map.

The Latino Action Network is working with a coalition of organizations that represent New Jersey's communities of color to draw a map that present the best opportunities for representation for our communities while also meeting the other requirements that this Commission must consider. According to the latest Census, people of color represent almost half of the State's population. We have been working on a map with our coalition partners that demonstrates how at least half of the state's 40 legislative districts can be drawn with majority minority populations.

We will be sharing this map with you in the coming week. We ask that you take our recommendations seriously and make every effort to maximize the number of majority minority districts in a manner that truly represent the diversity of our state.

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Sunday, January 23, 2022 5:35 PM  
**To:** OLSaideAPPC  
**Subject:** From Web Form Equitable Apportionment for the 25th Legislative District

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Karol Ruiz

Dover, New Jersey 07801

Wind of the Spirit

My community of Dover is currently in the 25th legislative district. We're a working class immigrant community. We are rich in culture and history. Financially, we are the poorest municipality in Morris County. Our collective concerns and power are drowned out by concerns of upper-class Bernardsville, Washington Township, and Mendham residents. Bernardsville, Washington Township, and Mendham are three of the wealthiest communities in the entire state. The Dover community has more in common with Parsippany, Morris Plains, and Rockaway township, but those municipalities are currently in the 26th legislative district. Dover should be in the same legislative district as other communities in Morris County with significant immigrant populations and working-class communities. Madison, which is in the 27th district, has a growing population of immigrants and should be in the 25th.

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 26, 2022 8:40 PM  
**To:** OLSaideAPPC  
**Subject:** From Web Form LD25 Apportionment

Karol Ruiz

Dover, New Jersey 07801  
Wind of the Spirit

My name is Karol Ruiz. I'm a resident of Dover, Morris County. I serve as the Co-President of Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center. We're a non-profit, non-partisan, faith-based human rights advocacy organization. I also serve on the Dover Board of Education. I don't speak for the Dover Board of Education. I share this fact only to demonstrate that I have a full understanding of the needs of the Dover School community. As the poorest community in Morris County with the highest COVID-19-related death rate in the county, and as an underfunded school district without access to SDA funds, our community has dire needs.

Dover is in LD25. Dover shares a school district with Victory Gardens and Mine Hill, as well as geographic borders with Randolph and Wharton, so it makes sense for us to be in the same legislative district as those municipalities. Morristown, Morris Plains, and Morris Township share a school district, but Morris Plains has been left out of the LD25. Our neighbors in Rockaway Township, with whom we also share a border, are not in LD25.

Dover is a working class, immigrant community that includes unhoused residents. In sharp contrast, the Mendhams, Washington Township, and Bernardsville are some of the wealthiest communities in the entire state. The lack of affordable housing exists everywhere in the 25th legislative district. However, the 25th legislative district representatives seem to hear only the NIMBY arguments against affordable homeownership and rentals coming from wealthy municipalities while ignoring the LOUD calls to end homelessness from Dover residents.

Bernardsville is not even in Morris County. The rest of the LD25th municipalities are in Morris County.

Dover is small and suburban, with some urban characteristics. Washington Township is large with rural characteristics. Dover is a community with a majority of new immigrants from Latin America. Nearby Parsippany is also home to a large community of new immigrants from Latin America and Asia, but Parsippany not in LD25.

The impact of this UNFAIR apportionment is that Dover is ignored while representatives pander to wealthier communities. The potential collective power of immigrants, Black folk, and People of Color, is diluted when Morris Plains, Parsippany, and other nearby communities with similar racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic status and common interests are left out of LD25.

After the murder of George Floyd, Wind of the Spirit partnered with Black Lives Matter Morristown to present a series of 8 marches, rallies, and Teach-ins calling for racial justice in our Morris County communities, particularly in our schools and between our residents and the police. Black Lives Matter Morristown and Wind of the Spirit marched in Madison, Chatham, Dover, Rockaway Township, Morristown, Morris Township, Roxbury, and Boonton. These municipalities are part of OUR community, yet Madison and Rockaway Township are not part of LD25.

Please ensure that Parsippany, Morris Plains, Rockaway Township, and Madison join Dover in LD25. Should this require moving municipalities out of 25th, move Bernardsville, the Mendhams, and Washington Township, for the reasons already stated.

Please visit our vibrant Dover Community, perhaps after you take the Paterson mayor up on his invitation. You will fall in love with Dover, as I have. Come see for yourselves the beautiful resistance our community has built in response to the past 10 years of ignoring and diluting our voices in the 7th Congressional District and in the 25th legislative district. I'm grateful that Dover is now part of the 11th Congressional District and I look forward to welcoming our neighbors in Rockaway Township, Parsippany, Morris Plains, and Madison, to the 25th legislative district.

I cannot thank you all enough for listening to NJ residents and refraining from making the legislative apportionment decisions in back room deals.



Thank you Judge Carchman, Chairman Jones, Chairman Barlas, and all of the members of the Legislative Reapportionment Commission for allowing me to speak again today. My name is Yash Shah, and I am the Executive Director of the South Asian Registration Initiative. I spoke a few months ago regarding what I believe should be notable considerations that must be taken into account when creating the new map with respect to protecting the representation of the Asian community within the legislative processes of the state, but I believe it's important to stress other key points as the Commission continues to hear public testimony. Also, before I begin, I'd like to also commend Chairman Jones on his recent decision to appoint Laura Matos, the only Latina on the entire commission. This is an important step to ensuring the voices of underrepresented communities are in the room when the decisions are made.

We all know how important it is to unify communities of color so that those communities of interest are merged. Sometimes that leads to more minority legislators but most importantly, it leads to communities unified. For example, in District 11, Monmouth County's communities of color near the shoreline in Red Bank, Asbury Park, Neptune, Long Branch, Ocean Township, Eatontown and Tinton Falls form a 34% minority population. The investment and representation along the shore towns deserves a champion who will fight for those constituents. I have heard various stories from friends and family members living in Long Branch and Asbury Park who struggled from the magnified effects resulting from the simultaneous occurrence of COVID and environmental issues. These issues and communities of interest are just as important as any historically underrepresented ethnic group and therefore require just as much representation as any other community.

Many other districts around the state presently unify minority communities such as the AAPI community without packing them together to dilute their overall representation.

Today, I would also like to extend these same principles in proposing that the Apportionment Commission put Freehold, Marlboro, and Colts Neck within the same district due their clear status as communities of interest. These three towns all have considerable Asian populations within them at this current point in time, but more importantly, their Asian populations are without a doubt going to increase significantly within the next 10 years through multiple factors. With a shared high school district serving as a backbone between these towns, Freehold, Marlboro, and Colts Neck's current notable Asian populations, coupled with the ongoing added investment in the Wooleytown Temple as the only place of worship in the area for the South Asian subset of the Asian population, both serve as key indicators that predict drastic increases in Asian populations within not only these towns, but also nearby towns. Therefore, I urge you to join these towns under a single district as one means of ensuring Asian representation not only today, but also during the next decade. They are currently in two different legislative districts and that is not helpful. We should also be looking at communities such as Manalapan and Holmdel nearby, also in 2 other legislative districts that have significant AAPI populations.

The AAPI community is important and is clustered throughout Monmouth County and other parts of the state. This was reflected in the recent victories last year. But on the other hand, we must also consider the other communities of interest that directly affect not only the AAPI community, but also many other minority communities, to truly have sustained representation. I thank the commission for your consideration on this.

As a former Cumberland County Commissioner, I was happy to hear that Commissioner Matos had been appointed to the NJ Legislative Apportionment Commission.

Cumberland County is a very diverse county, with a significant Hispanic population. The appointment of Commissioner Matos, a Latina Commissioner with roots in South Jersey, adds an important voice to the Commission for our residents.

I believe that the interests of South Jersey will be well represented by Commissioner Matos, and the current membership of this Commission.

Thank you

Jack Surrency  
Former Cumberland County Commission

Whalley testimony to Legislative Reapportionment Commission  
January 26, 2022

Good evening, commissioners,  
Thank you for allowing me to speak to you this evening.

First, thank you, Chairman Jones for appointing Laura Matos to this commission, and thank you Laura for agreeing to serve.

For the past 12 years, I have lived in Spring Lake, one of the small beach towns in southern Monmouth County. For the past 5 years, I have served as a member of the Spring Lake Council, and I was just re-elected to serve another 3-year term. Tonight, however, I am not speaking on behalf of the Borough of Spring Lake, but as a private citizen, and a resident of a small beach town.

I have a professional background as a registered nurse and a public interest attorney, so I like things organized, and I like to see systems working the best for people.

I understand that there are many, many factors that you must consider when re-drawing the legislative districts. I appreciate and value the focus on diversity of many of the previous speakers. But I am going to talk about geographical considerations.

I would like to encourage the commission to consider creating a legislative district that encompasses the shore towns in Monmouth County, from Atlantic Highlands to Manasquan to better serve the similar interests of these communities.

Let me explain – the towns along the Jersey Shore share many unique issues:

- our very fragile beaches, subject to normal winds and storms, and now the potentially devastating effects of climate change
- unique watershed environments, with many bays, rivers, streams, lakes, etc. affected by various storms as well as tremendous development upstream from us
- the swelling of our summer populations, creating a strain on our transportation system including our roads and highways, as well as our bus and rail systems, which go through all our towns.  
Other infrastructure, such as hospitals, public safety, utilities, are also impacted by the summer population
- the predominance of small businesses, often dependent on the tourism industry, who could benefit from shared leadership.

The towns work together as much as possible now, both informally, where we just call each other on the phone, and formally through shared service agreements. Our first

responders provide mutual aid. Our Shade Tree Commissions and our Environmental Commissions compare notes when possible. But having shared state representatives who to provide the leadership to address problems will help us solve them more efficiently.

A great example of how we come together is the Coastal Lakes Consortium created a few years ago by the Urban Coast Institute at Monmouth University. [Deleted due to time: The southern Monmouth towns pool data about the small lakes in the towns from Deal to Sea Girt, and we are realizing that we all have the same general environmental problems with our lakes. We have a desperate need for dredging, which is tremendously expensive. If we could work together under the leadership of elected officials who could guide us through the funding process, we could stand a chance of finding the money to pay for the dredging and protect these beautiful small lakes.]

If we were able to take our common concerns to representatives who had experience with these shared problems, we could more efficiently solve the problems by sharing our successes, as well as our failures, in addressing problems.

We are currently in a district that includes Wall Township, Howell Township, Lakewood, and Farmingdale, all of which are much larger, but not coastal, like Spring Lake. My family has had a business in Wall for over 50 years, so I am very familiar with the town, and have many friends there. That being said, I feel that Spring Lake would benefit from being with towns who have shared interests- specifically as it relates to the Shore and shoreline.

In closing, I urge the commission to put forward a map that unites the shore line from Atlantic Highlands to Manasquan.

Thank you.