

- **8/4/2021 Testimonies**

- Ana Charco

- Hello, my name is Ana Charco and I am a program associate with the Civic Engagement and Advocacy Program at Latino Health Access. As a program associate, I work with the Policy Coordinator in researching policies and data on social determinants of health and other topics relevant to LHA's policy campaign of focus, monitor city policies and public meetings that are relevant to LHA's policy platform, and recently helped in approving 1.3 million in rental assistance through the City of Santa Ana's Emergency Rental Assistance Program. While I am a part and here on behalf of Latino Health Access, I am ultimately a resident of the City of Santa Ana, who wants her community and needs to be acknowledged, advocated, and taken into account when setting the district lines. The city of Santa Ana is a city of hard-working families with many employed in "essential jobs" that are unfortunately often overlooked and underpaid. Many families in Santa Ana are low-income Latinx families and have mixed immigration status, who also share a very strong sense of community, with a large number of community organizations and resident-led organizations that have come together over the years to promote equitable policies and celebrate the Latinx culture through events, activities, and workshops. From a very young age, I have been heavily involved in community service and community organizing with the hope to achieve long-lasting and equitable change in the city of Santa Ana. However, after graduating college and returning to Santa Ana, the fact of the matter is that Santa Ana is far away from achieving long-lasting and equitable change despite it being one of the youngest, progressive, and most diverse cities in California. It is, therefore, that I ask of you today to take into consideration communities of interest that include our most vulnerable communities such as low-income communities, immigrant populations, uninsured populations, and youth during the redistricting process. I believe that a federal Voting Rights Act district exists in and around Santa Ana and that creating that district might require separating Santa Ana from Garden Grove and Westminster. It is decisions like this that contribute to making lasting and meaningful change.

- Laura Pantoja

- Good afternoon Supervisor Do, my name is Laura Pantoja. I am here on behalf of Latino Health Access or LHA, a community organization that has provided health education and prevention services to Orange County residents since 1993. Our mission has two areas of focus:
 - 1) Provide culturally appropriate health programs and services to address priority health problems; and
 - 2) involve low-income people with opportunities in transforming their environments, providing tools, training, and mechanisms for civic engagement and participation.

We believe that redistricting is critical to achieving our community health goals. We are part of the **People's Redistricting Alliance**, a coalition of 15 community organizations established to promote a greater voice in the community. in the state and local redistricting processes here in Orange County. Our community of interest is the low-income Latinx families in the city of Santa Ana. Many are families with mixed immigration status, including undocumented, US residents, and citizens. They are extremely hardworking, and many are employed in "essential jobs" which, sadly, are also poorly paid. Our main office building and park/community center are located on Calle Cuatro (Calle 4) in Santa Ana, in the middle of downtown. "La Cuatro," as it is known, has Latino restaurants and small businesses that have historically been a gathering place for many families who want to enjoy Latinx cultures. It is also surrounded by residential neighborhoods that connect to the city center and are affected by downtown business, unfortunately negatively with gentrification in more recent years. Downtown Santa Ana is where we see a concentration of low-income renter families in Santa Ana. Our community of interest has many shared needs. Low-income Latinx families need accountability and transparency for public officials and city departments, especially the police department. They need strong protections for renters and immigrants through policies, funds, and programs to support community demographics and needs. They need the city to invest in affordable housing for existing residents. They need the right to participate in local city and school district elections, regardless of their immigration status. They need community control and decision over public lands. They need to stay in the city without fear of being displaced or separated from their families by deportations. They need access to health care regardless of their immigration status. Santa Ana has significantly lower incomes compared to other cities in the county, often affecting its access to funding for programs and resources. Dividing this community of interest would prevent these already affected families from having access to the public resources that many depend on to survive and would prevent them from having a voice in many policies that affect directly and indirectly.

- Sarai Arpero
 - Good afternoon my name is Sarai Arpero and I am the Lead Promoter in Santa Ana Latino Health Access that has served the Santa Ana community for more than 25 years. During my years of direct work in the community in which I also live, I bought and paid taxes. The community I serve is mostly migrant, extremely low income, mixed immigration status, with

very low wages, very high rents, homes in very poor condition, and with the zip codes with the most contagions of CV 19. It is important to recognize that housing problems, the homeless community, extreme poverty, lack of access to mental health resources, lack of open spaces and opportunities for our children and youth did not come with the pandemic. The pandemic only aggravated and gave more light to all these problems that have not been addressed for many years and due to lack of representation in our districts and our representatives have not been able to solve in all these years. Many families were greatly affected during this pandemic due to not having access to a doctor, not being able to pay rent during these months of the pandemic. Our community has debts that are practically not payable due to the loss of jobs as a result of the pandemic. Since federal support to pay rent is not enough and accessible to the entire community, our people have had to ask for very high-interest loans or credits to survive, which has put many families under stress that has affected their mental, physical and emotional health. Today I ask for your vote for redistricting by choosing maps that truly represent the community that I serve and in which I live. We deserve to have a voice and that the decisions of those who represent us have consistency. We are a very young growing community and we are the ones working to build the economy in this county. We deserve to live with equity, health services for all, access to mental health services, decent housing, and to be taken into account as we recover from this pandemic. Thank you.

- Araceli Robles
 - Good afternoon, my name is Araceli Robles and I am a Health Promoter at LHA in the Civic Engagement and Advocacy Department and a resident of the city of Santa Ana for 20 years. My zip code is 92701. As an LHA employee, I work organizing different community groups formed mainly by mothers in the Pio Pico Lowel / King School neighborhoods, which have been one of the most affected neighborhoods by the COVID-19 Pandemic. The main motive of these groups is to strengthen community leadership and to advocate for the needs of the community. Different workshops are shared using the skills of the participants so that they can learn about dressmaking, jewelry, flower arrangements, among other activities. This in turn allows them to contribute a little money to their home. Ten years ago I participated in a meeting on how to use funds in our

county using the census data but we would never have imagined that we would experience a pandemic as terrible as COVID 19 and see the inequity that exists in our community. Unfortunately, Santa Ana was the most affected and had high numbers of infection and mortality rates in the county. What you should never forget is that these numbers have a face and name that are parents, grandparents, children, siblings, great-nephews, friends who left their family in a more difficult economic situation, especially without their presence. At this time you have the decision to redistribute the districts where equity can be seen and allow the most disadvantaged communities to have sufficient resources in the coming years to continue living after this pandemic. It is very sad and unfortunate that we are all affected by the pandemic but even so that the Board continues to grant funds to the Sheriff's Department instead of our community. These funds would have made a difference in the community and would have allowed families to have food on their tables, take care of their children, and thus continue to work for us. Santa Ana residents were mainly considered essential workers during this time but were not eligible to have quality health care and decent housing throughout the pandemic. I just want to remind you that the funds you manage are from the community as they are our taxes. You can make a difference by supporting the redistricting proposal that we support as a coalition. My community is very culturally diverse, multi-ethnic, but above all, we take action to improve our community, and not just being spectators we are part of the solution. I invite you to meet the families of the community cafeteria and realize that we are a community that will never be indifferent to the pain of our neighbors, friends, and family. Thank you.

○ Maria Victoria

- Good afternoon, my name is Maria Victoria. I have been a resident of Santa Ana for 14 years. I live in the 92703 zip code, one of the codes most impacted by the COVID 19 pandemic. The area I live in is between Bristol and flower. I represent a group of mothers who meet in a community cafeteria at Lowell and King Schools, where we hold meetings and create spaces for crafts and conversation, but we also agree to support our community. Together with Latino Health Access during the pandemic, we organized to distribute food to our areas since the pandemic affected us a lot. For instance, we had entire families infected with covid who could not go out to buy food and basic things such as diapers, soap, and medicines.

We the mothers of the community distributed food and everything else we could to ensure that the families had food and stayed inside their homes with their children and family safe. Indeed, many of these expenses were covered with our income. I am from a low-income and mostly undocumented migrant community, where many families live in cramped spaces with very expensive rents and very little access to health insurance. I ask that the recommended redistribution of districts by the People's Redistricting Alliance is approved. This will begin the construction of working towards a more equitable and better representation. For this reason, you must support this redistricting so that communities of interest such as mine: Latino, working-class, low income, mixed immigration status families have better representation and are taken into account. This will allow us to ultimately improve the quality of life for those of us who live, work, and build the economy and workforce of this county.

■ Adela Montanez

- Good afternoon, my name is Adela Montanez, a community worker in the Civic Engagement and Advocacy Department at LHA. The community it works with is a Latino, hard-working, mixed-status, low-income, and youth community. This community is located in the Lacy Area code 92701. Downtown enters Grand Street, First Washington Street, French, and First Street. This area was greatly impacted by the pandemic with the highest rate of infections and suffered from a lack of jobs especially in service workers such as restaurants, hotels, school workers, babysitters, garden workers, and the area of construction, etc. The primary needs of this community are:
 - health insurance.
 - Resources to pay the rent.
 - Resources to put food on their tables.

In my experience working with the Lacy community, the frequent challenges I hear are:

- Lack of work
- The high cost of housing.
- Lack of accessible housing.
- Lack of medical insurance.
- The large debts they have acquired so as not to be evicted.
- Uncertainty towards the future.

Despite the circumstances, it is a very united, hard-working community. For these reasons, we are asking you to support the

districts drawn by the People's Redistricting Alliance. The communities of interest that need to be taken into account are

- Youths
- Mixed migrant families
- And communities without health insurance