

ORAL TESTIMONY (AUGUST 5 OCBOS COI PUBLIC HEARING)

Hi, my name is Christina Nguyen and I represent the Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance or OCAPICA. OCAPICA is the largest Asian American and Pacific Islander nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing the well-being of Asians and Pacific Islanders in Orange County. While our main office is in Garden Grove, we are housed and provide services throughout the county, including Irvine. This has allowed us to serve more than 55,000 community members annually across diverse racial and ethnic groups.

One of the many issues we work on is redistricting as a member of the People's Redistricting Alliance. Our communities of interest in Irvine include low-income, limited English proficient, Asian American, Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern, and Latinx communities. In the last couple of decades, Irvine has become home to the largest AAPI community in Orange County, including a diverse mix of Chinese, Korean, South Asian, Vietnamese, and other immigrant families. They are joined by a large number of students, who live near UC, Irvine.

Irvine is similar to Costa Mesa, which is home to many important low-income Pacific Islander communities and where many working-class Latinx and Asian American families live. As the cost of housing skyrockets, these cities face common challenges associated with access to affordable housing, especially the availability of Section 8 assistance. The populations we serve in these cities are also impacted by poverty. Many families live in overcrowded conditions, need access to food and transportation, and have social service needs such as access to Medi-Cal and free and reduced lunch. Language access is another common need. Asian, Latinx, and Middle Eastern community members in these areas speak a language other than English at home, with many in need of translation and other bilingual services. Particularly in the wake of COVID-19, these in-language options are crucial to ensuring that our immigrant communities have access to potential resources, government assistance, and healthcare.

In contrast, Irvine is very different from areas to the north like Yorba Linda or the Anaheim Hills. While Irvine is disproportionately immigrant and most are renters, most Yorba Linda residents are native-born and homeowners. Yorba Linda also has a higher median household income and lower poverty rate. As a result, it has less need for social services and language access programs.

We ask that you respect these communities of interest and prioritize residents' needs as you consider how to draw supervisorial districts. With this in mind, Irvine should remain whole in a supervisorial district and be drawn together with Costa Mesa. The city should not be drawn into the same district with areas that have very different needs, like Yorba Linda and the Anaheim Hills. Thank you.