

# Public Testimony to the Illinois Senate Redistricting Committee

Presented by Valerie F. Leonard

May 21, 2011

Good afternoon. My name is Valerie Leonard. I am a resident of North Lawndale and Co-Founder of the Lawndale Alliance. The Lawndale Alliance is a neighborhood association of local residents who come together on an ad hoc basis to address issues of concern to the community through grassroots community organizing, advocacy and community outreach.

We would like to thank the Senate Redistricting Committee for hosting a public hearing on Chicago's West Side, and for fully considering concerns voiced by the Lawndale Alliance during previous hearings. We have had the opportunity to review the Senate's proposed maps, and have outlined outstanding issues below.

## Issues

### **1. Need to Optimize the Ability of African Americans from Chicago's West Side and Western Suburbs to Elect Candidates of Their Choice to the State Legislature**

We are very pleased that you have honored our request to keep the North Lawndale and East and West Garfield communities intact, and have created a proposed Senate District 5 with a majority of its voting age population being African American. The Legislature's proposal draws a new Senate District 5 with 50.47% of its population being African American. Currently, about 47% of the District's voting age population is African American. While the Legislature's proposal represents an increase of about 3 percentage points over the current situation, we respectfully request that you revisit the map to optimize the voting age percentage of African Americans in Senate District 5.

We are also concerned that the Legislature proposes a Senate District 4 with 48.59% of its voting age population being African American. This represents a 10 percentage point decrease in the number of African Americans from 2000, and a 9 percentage point decrease from the current situation.

The United Congress of Community and Religious Organizations (UCCRO) has been able to demonstrate the potential to draw 2 majority African American districts on Chicago's West Side with 57% African American population. The UCCRO proposal includes boundaries for Senate District 4 resulting in 56% of its voting age population being African American and boundaries for Senate District 5 resulting in 52% of the voting age being African American. We respectfully request that you consider amending

your proposal to optimize the potential for African Americans in Senate Districts 4 and 5 to elect candidates of their choice. We also urge you to adopt UCCRO's proposed Unity Map, which provides 56 majority minority, coalition and influence districts around the state of Illinois. The Unity Map, more than any other proposal in the State, respects minority communities of interest and optimizes opportunities for us to elect candidates of our choice.

### Comparison of Illinois Senate Districts: 2000 vs. 2010

Senate District	Currie II Districts, 2000 Census			Currie II Districts, 2010 Census					SB1175 Population Comparison			
	Pop	AAVA%	Latino VA%	Pop	Pop Chg	AA VA%	Asian %	Latino VA%	Pop	AAVA%	Asian%	Latino VA%
4	210,497	58.60%	9.19%	191,499	-18,998	57.04%	2.30%	15.90%	217,468	48.59%	2.49%	11.96%
5	210,497	58.62%	9.59%	208,308	-2,189	47.31%	7.03%	10.22%	217,468	50.47%	6.04%	10.15%

Source: ILGA

### UCCRO Proposed West Side African American Senate Districts-2010 Census Data

DISTRICT	Area	District	Legislator	HISPANIC	H18_POP	NH_BLK	NH18_BL K	NH ASN	NH18_AS N	NH WHT	NH18_W HT
BNB	Chicago	4	Lightford	11.53%	10.01%	57.03%	56.29%	2.20%	2.41%	27.54%	30.05%
BNA	Chicago	5	Collins	12.01%	11.30%	57.10%	52.08%	4.65%	5.59%	24.54%	29.47%

Source: UCCRO

## 2. Loss of Congressional Seat Presents a Challenge to the Ability of African Americans from Chicago to Elect Candidates of Their Choice to the U.S. Congress

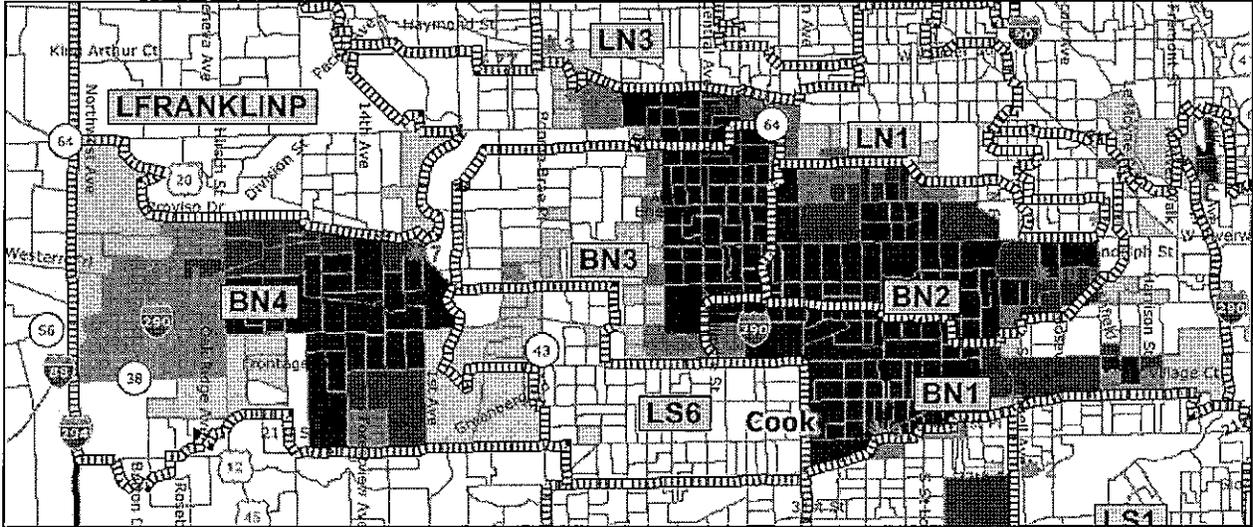
Because the State of Illinois' population grew at a slower rate than most states in the country, we will be losing a Congressional seat. Chicago's three Congressional Districts headed by African Americans have each lost population and must expand boundaries. We were disappointed to read in Crain's Chicago Business that the proposed map for Illinois' Congressional districts would create 3 majority African American districts with 51% African American population. Our conversations with UCCRO have indicated that the potential exists to draw 3 majority African American Congressional districts with over 55% African American population.

We respectfully request that the Legislature ensures that Congressional district boundaries be drawn with an eye towards protecting the voting rights of African Americans. This would include optimizing the opportunity for us to elect candidates of our choice in each of the majority African American districts in the Illinois Delegation. We also request that the lines be drawn to enhance the chances of African Americans on the West Side to elect candidates of choice from the West Side of Chicago.

In closing, we thank you for your time and consideration, and hosting this public forum. We have attached proposed maps for African American districts for Chicago's West Side and Western Suburbs. These maps have been drawn taking into account considerations from neighboring Latino communities. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Valerie F. Leonard at 773-521-3137 or [valeriefleonard@msn.com](mailto:valeriefleonard@msn.com).

# Chicago-Westside Region Legislative Map

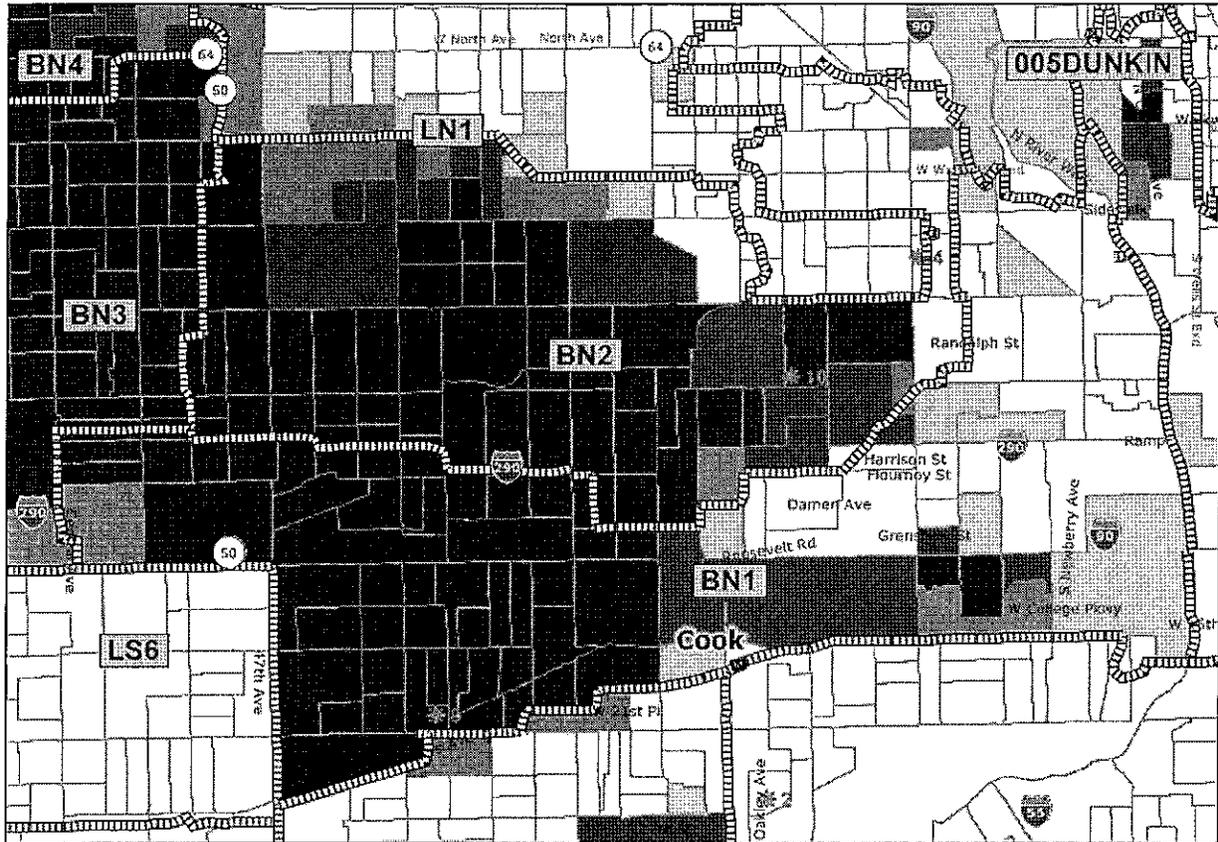
The overall situation is that although there was significant Black population loss, there is still enough Black population to draw four majority-Black districts on the west side. These districts will have lower percentages than past districts—all around 57 percent. In general, the areas included in these four districts are needed to keep these percentages as high as possible—but the lines of the individual districts within this area are more flexible. So, any feedback on these lines would be great.



Source: United Congress of Community and Religious Organizations.

# Potential Majority-Black House District: West Side

BN1 (This is currently Turner's District)  
 BN1 and BN2 make up UCCRO's proposed Senate District 5

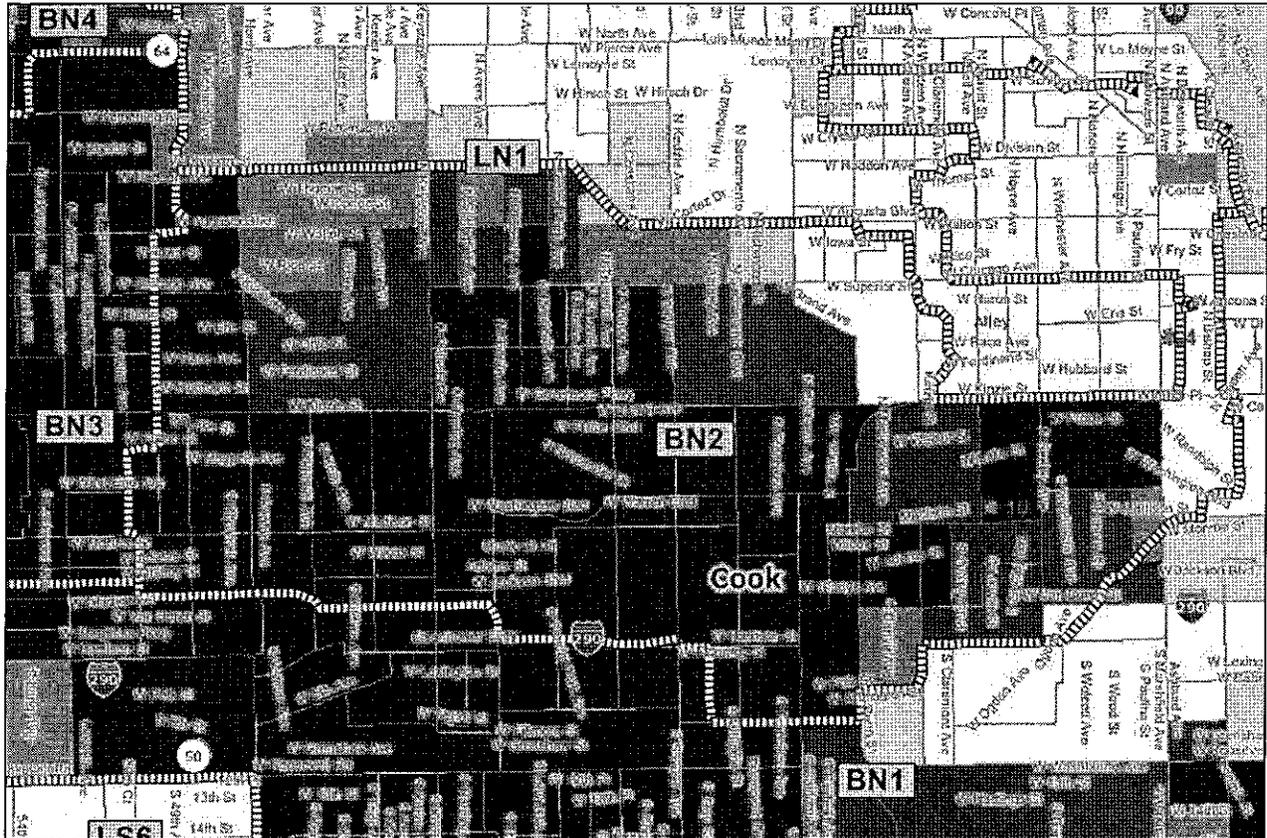


DISTRICT	POPULATION	LATINO	WHITE	BLACK	ASIAN	LATINO 18+	WHITE 18+	BLACK 18+	ASIAN 18+
BN1	108734	8.00%	26.17%	56.62%	7.35%	7.75%	31.13%	50.69%	8.69%

Source: United Congress of Community and Religious Organizations

# Potential Majority-Black House District: West Side

BN2 (This is currently Smith's (formerly Collins') District)  
 BN1 and BN2 make up UCCRO's proposed Senate District 5

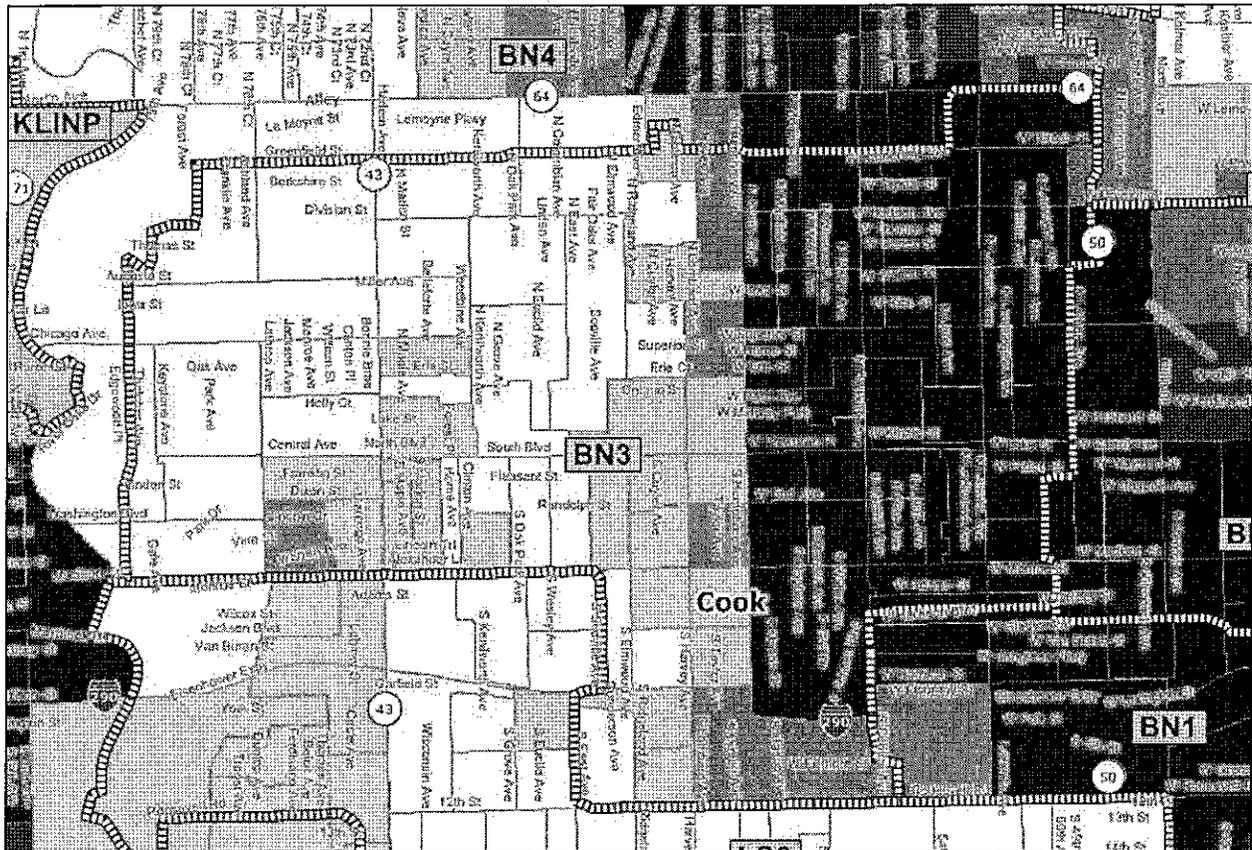


DISTRICT	POPULATION	LATINO	WHITE	BLACK	ASIAN	LATINO 18+	WHITE 18+	BLACK 18+	ASIAN 18+
BN2	108734	15.81%	23.62%	56.97%	2.07%	14.78%	28.56%	52.79%	2.50%

Source: United Congress of Community and Religious Organizations

# Potential Majority-Black House District: West Side

BN3 (This is currently Ford's District)  
 BN3 and BN4 make up UCCRO's proposed Senate District 4

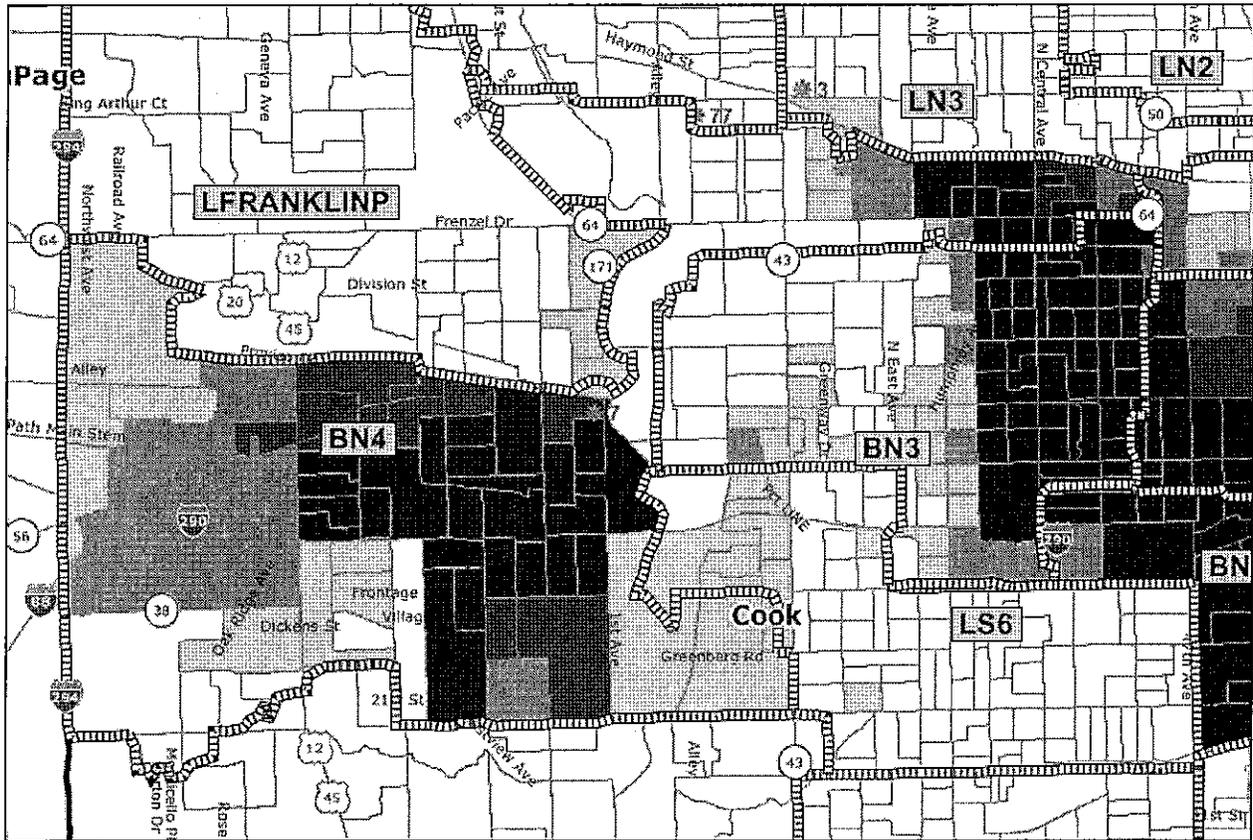


DISTRICT	POPULATION	LATINO	WHITE	BLACK	ASIAN	LATINO 18+	WHITE 18+	BLACK 18+	ASIAN 18+
BN3	108736	5.77%	32.21%	57.52%	2.52%	5.16%	34.29%	56.40%	2.75%

Source: United Congress of Community and Religious Organizations

# Potential Majority-Black House District: West Side

BN4 (This is currently Yarbrough's District)  
 BN3 and BN4 make up UCCRO's proposed Senate District 4



DISTRICT	POPULATION	LATINO 18+	WHITE 18+	BLACK 18+	ASIAN 18+	LATINO 18+	WHITE 18+	BLACK 18+	ASIAN 18+
BN4	108733	17.22%	22.99%	56.47%	1.90%	14.78%	25.96%	56.11%	2.09%

Source: United Congress of Community and Religious Organizations