

18:31:48 Welcome to the League of Women Voters day of action on People Powered fair maps. This is a national event and Leagues across the country are hosting events on redistricting today.

18:32:00 I am Laura Ladd Biermann executive director of the League of Women Voters of New York State.

18:32:07 The league is a nonpartisan membership organization with 47 local leagues across New York State, and over 3700 members. We strive to educate the public and advocate on key issues in our communities, the state and the country.

18:32:24 Tonight we're talking about redistricting in the league's first ever people's hearing redistricting impacts all aspects of policy, since it determines voters' power to elect candidates that best represent their communities, interests.

18:32:41 This is a league sponsored hearing, and we appreciate all who are participating. We want to especially thank our co-sponsors APA voice and Latino just justice PRLDEF.

18:32:55 To start the program, I'm going to turn it over to Jeff Wice adjunct professor of law and senior fellow with the census and redistricting Institute at New York law school for a brief overview of what redistricting is and how it works in New York State.

18:33:12 Jeff. Well thank you very much Laura and good evening everybody across New York State, it's a pleasure to be with you. This has certainly been a busy week in the world of reapportionment and redistricting since New York learned that we're going to lose

18:33:25 one congressional district, and I'll just start off with some food for thought that we all know and are you know hurting over the loss of one district by 89 people, but we also have to look at the, the interesting numbers that New York state's population

18:33:42 in the last decade, grew by 4% by 830,000 people. Since 2010 that doubles the rate of growth from 2000 to 2010, where the state only grew by 4% by about 300 400,000 people, and we won't see the final vocalize data, until August or September, but as we

18:34:09 lost one congressional district by a straight render the numbers by 89 people. We have to wait and see in August, whether New York State's numbers were so high that we might have actually been over counted, and that helped us save the less of a second

18:34:26 congressional district. We don't know that yet. We always assume from census taking that there is a great differential undercount, especially in the hard to count communities so the numbers are a bit perplexing, and it certainly gave us a lot to think

18:34:42 about between now and when the data comes out, but I'll take a few minutes and just give you an overview of the new redistricting process that New York State will undertake this year.

18:34:54 I think as many know a constitutional amendment adopted by the voters in 2014, created a new independent redistricting commission tasked with recommending congressional and state legislative district lines to the legislature that commission of 10 members

18:35:12 is now has been convened, it's been meeting, just earlier this month, it received \$4 million in funding and the commission will begin moving forward with outreach plans with hearings with all sorts of activities.

18:35:31 Starting next meeting. On May, 6.

18:35:34 The Commission is tasked with reporting a draft plan to the public for Congress and the legislature. By September 15 it being mindful that because of the Census Bureau delays caused by the pandemic.

18:35:51 And the Trump administration's efforts to change things around with the Census Bureau, the PL 94 171, or the block by block data that includes information by race, age, and ethnicity will first arrive on August 16 in draft form.

18:36:12 And then the final data will arrive by September 30, but we're told that the raw data may arrive in mid August, will be unquestionable so to speak, by experts to make that data available both to the commission and to the public through various public mapping

18:36:29 websites that you'll have access to. So, a lot of things are going to happen very quickly. Unlike the nine month period that the state constitutional amendment passed in 2014 envisioned the commission will only have about three or four months to an enact

18:36:44 a plan, not the nine months that it had originally planned to take. Also in November of this year, you the voters of New York will be asked to approve or reject a another constitutional amendment that will change some of the deadlines, as well as the

18:37:01 voting requirements that the Commission and the legislature with need to an enacted plan, as well as a few other things including the size of the State Senate, prison gerrymandering, and other items that you'll learn about which I don't have the time right

18:37:17 now to fully discuss.

18:37:20 So the commission there are four democrats and republicans and two independence. There are 10 members all together. There is no tie breaking 11th member, which makes the task, a bit challenging to reach consensus, since under current work, you need

18:37:35 to have seven of the 10 members vote to approve a plan and requires that minority party, meaning Republican Party members of the Commission support the plan.

18:37:47 So as New York loses one congressional district, and has to reconfigure the shapes of the senate assembly and congressional districts there's a lot to head the commission, as I mentioned has supposed to have a draft map out for the public to review by

18:38:05 September 15.

18:38:06 The Commission is also tasked with a deadline of having this first plan submitted to the legislature for approval by January 1 and under current law, the legislature has a period of time to accept or reject the plan, governor of course has to sign it or

18:38:23 veto it. If the first plan is rejected by the legislature, or vetoed by the governor, the Commission has until February 28 to submit a second plan that if the first plan fails in the legislature can draw a plan of its own.

18:38:37 However, as we know, the New York primary has been moved from September to June, making it important that the deadline be moved up to a more realistic deadline, not a second plan.

18:38:50 In February, but we're nowhere near that point yet, and the amendment, if it passes in November. I won't get into the merits of it will change the schedule.

18:39:00 My sense is that the final plan needs to be enacted by Congress and the legislature. By the end of January, next year that's not set in stone yet that in the book, but it generally takes two or three weeks minimum for the county boards of elections to,

18:39:18 to make sense of the maps to change the current election districts into the new assembly districts require about what to conduct an election, because as we know, the spring primary petitioning for 2022 begins generally in late February or early March,

18:39:37 so I hope I provided a very quick succinct overview of the process it's new. it's different.

18:39:44 The Commission has a lot of work ahead of it, and we'll be learning more about that over the days and weeks ahead, and I'm very pleased to join with the New York State league in providing education and training programs, and please feel free anytime to

18:40:01 contact me at New York was school, very easily google. So thank you very much and I look forward to watching my friends and colleagues and people I don't know, make presentations for the next hour and a half.

18:40:14 Thank you so much, Jeff. I'm actually going to put the link to the panelists list in the chat right now so anyone who wants to follow along as we go through our 20 panelists can use that link to do so.

18:40:26 Our first testifier tonight will be Fulvia Vargas De Leon, associate counsel to Latino justice PRLDEF.

18:40:35 Thank you, Jennifer, good evening everyone, as Jennifer mentioned my name is Fulvia Vargas De Leo and I am associate counsel with Latino Justice PRDEF and I'd like to express its profound appreciation to the New York, League of Women

18:40:47 Voters for organizing this event, and inviting us to testify. Our redistricting work spans over four decades of ensuring districts are drawn in a manner which fairly and accurately reflect community population demographics, redistricting is a

18:41:01 complex process, but is an essential component to our democracy to enabling our communities and having a voice and going for candidates of their choosing to represent them.

18:41:12 If redistricting is done fairly and transparently, we are then more likely to have a government that is truly representative of the people it serves. If redistricting is intertwined and partisan political shenanigans to facilitate incumbent gerrymandering

18:41:25 we're then more likely to end up with districts that provide our community with less electoral power than others.

18:41:31 Latino Justice PRLDEF, originally established as a Puerto Rican legal defense and Education Fund in 1972. It's one of the country's leading nonprofit civil rights public interest law organizations, we work to advance promote and protect the legal rights

18:41:44 of Latinos throughout the nation.

18:41:46 As part of our ongoing work to protect the rights of Latino voters, we have advocated and litigated against practices that seek to dilute the vote of minority communities such as voter purchase.

18:41:56 Failure to provide language systems at polls sites and redistricting practices that seeks to dilute the voting power communities of color, the redistricting fight is well underway.

18:42:06 And as Jeff mentioned this week we learned that New York will lose one congressional seat. We know that this will begin a discussion about where the loss should occur, do we push the loss of the congressional representatives of the Greater New York City

18:42:17 metropolitan area or Long Island, or those of upstate or Western New York where there has been diminishing overall population numbers. So we consider what it would be fair for the last of a district to occur upstate where there's a greater population

18:42:30 laws in order to prevent the disenfranchisement of downstate district borders redistricting is complicated but it does not excuse practices that tactically cancel out the collective voting strength of certain communities.

18:42:42 During the last redistricting cycle after the 2010 census, that they know justice bought ties. This lead to ensure that New York's congressional and senate districts where a true reflection of our communities.

18:42:51 This meant going into federal courts initially address lack of progress or a timely drawn congressional district plans in time for 2012 primaries and a subsequent equal protection challenge in the States Senate plants which created an overpopulated districts

18:43:05 districts downstate and underpopulated districts Upstate and the creation of the 63rd senate seat in the Capital District area as it means to try and preserve a partisan political stronghold in our nation's government States Government was elected officials

18:43:17 and legislative bodies are given exclusive unfettered power to manipulate district lines Buddhist.

18:43:23 While we are entering a new redistricting cycle with the newly created, New York State Independent Redistricting Commission in place for the first time.

18:43:30 We are well aware of the partisan manipulation to draw maps with favorite parties over the people. This is also the first redistricting cycle without the preclearance protections contained in this section five, the Voting Rights Act checks and balances

18:43:40 on the any electrical changes in the coverage jurisdictions like Bronx kings in New York counties in New York Latinos representing every 20% of the state's population with redistricting efforts occurring every 10 years it is imperative that any portion

18:43:52 of process include the voices and demographics of Latino communities, Latino justice PRLDEF wants to ensure that this redistricting process is equitable in a way that districts are drawn and that's transparent decisions are made with lightning communities

18:44:04 of color, Latino justice pro that stands by redistricting process that is one open the public's ability to actively engage every step of the process to draw some maps in the manner which accurately reflects changes in the population, and three focuses

18:44:17 on safeguarding racial minority groups from math which have the effect of diminishing their ability to like candidates of their choice.

18:44:24 We must take affirmative steps to ensure that this redistricting cycle does not run counter to the protections offered by the Constitution and the Voting Rights Act, as well as the essence of democracy guaranteed by the principle of one person, one vote.

18:44:37 Thank you.

18:44:39 Thank you Fulvia. Next we have Liz Yang coordinator for APA voice redistricting Task Force.

18:45:00 Liz.

18:45:11 Well, I'm sorry. That's okay.

18:45:15 Apa voice stands for Asian Pacific American voting and organizing, to increase civic engagement.

18:45:24 It's redistricting Task Force is a coalition of 15 leading APA civic engagement groups throughout the city.

18:45:33 The range of our members include long time community based social service organizations with offices in multiple boroughs, a health clinic in Sunset Park Brooklyn, to an all volunteer woman's advocacy group in Richmond Hill queens, educating our communities,

18:45:55 and the importance of civic engagement and exercising our right to vote unites us collectively we provide culturally sensitive critical services. Legal Assistance housing advocacy immigration advice and representation, senior citizen and youth programs

18:46:18 ESL classes, job training, and more.

18:46:23 The APA population has grown over the past 10 years. According to the 2019 American Community Survey. It predicts the Asian American community will constitute 14.9% of the city, up from 11.8% in 2010.

18:46:46 This represents an additional 51,000 plus Asian Americans to the city's population for an estimated total of 1,186,608 Asian Pacific Americans, 75% of this growth is in Brooklyn and Queens alone, our growing numbers demand that our voices be heard.

18:47:14 We are involved in redistricting to ensure the reduced 2020 redistricting cycle is accessible and fair, the Voting Rights Act is complied with, and our communities of interest are kept intact, where possible.

18:47:33 The shocking increase in hate crimes against Asian Americans in New York City is alarming. Since 2019, the number of hate crimes against Asian Americans have increased over 2,700%.

18:48:06 In the first three months of 2020, alone, the number of suspected hate crimes against Asian Americans tripled the number of hate crimes against Asian Americans In 2019, we must be able to elect candidates who will protect our communities, and enact effective

18:48:18 policies that will ensure peaceful integration in a city that represents the most diverse immigrants in the country. We need to elect representatives who appreciate the benefits of multiculturalism.

18:48:36 Tonight you will hear the voices of six of APA voice redistricting Task Force organizational members that serve thousands across the city.

18:48:47 In order to maximize our participation in democracy.

18:48:54 Our communities need to be able to let the candidates have our choice.

18:49:01 If the law requires it. And our communities of interest, must be kept intact on a local level, our communities need to be kept together, so we can better advocate for closer covert vaccination sites, more affordable housing, improve police Community Relations

18:49:21 recreation centers and Deacon chest traffic on a national level, at a time when your state is losing one congressional seat, coupled with the attacks on our nation's capital.

18:49:35 On January, six. We need to be able to elect fearless representatives who will fight for affordable health care equitable policy, fair immigration policies and protect our voting rights.

18:49:49 We look forward to a 2020 redistricting cycle, that is inclusive and fair that will enable our communities to elect candidates who will protect them and be held accountable.

18:50:05 Thanks to the League of Women Voters for allowing us to be part of this. Thank you.

18:50:14 Thank you, Liz.

18:50:16 Next we'll hear from Howard long Civic Engagement Manager for the Chinese American Planning Council.

18:50:22 Hi, um, the mission of Chinese American Planning Council is to promote social and economic empowerment of Chinese Americans immigrants and low income communities CPC was founded in 1965 as a grassroots community based organization and in response to the

18:50:42 end of a Chinese Exclusion Act and the passing of the Immigration Reform Act of 1965 services have expanded since our founding including three key program areas, including education family support and Community and Economic Empowerment CPC is a member

18:51:04 of an organization of APA voice redistricting Task Force CBC is the largest Asian American social service organization in the US, providing vital resources to more than 60,000, people per year through more than 50 programs at over 30 cities across Manhattan,

18:51:27 Brooklyn and Queens CPC employs over 700 staff, whose comprehensive services are linguistically accessible culturally sensitive and highly effective in reaching low income and immigrant individuals and families with the firm belief that show how services

18:51:46 can insight show how change CPC strives to empower our constituent as an agent of social justice with overarching goals of advancing and transforming our communities, CPC provides Childhood Education infant and toddler services, Senior Services Career

18:52:05 Services. Nutrition Services and more all funded in significant part by reduce resources directed and tied to the sudden your senses and its data. The coven 19 pandemic have reinforced and emphasize the fact that are marginalized community or in need

18:52:23 of resources in New York City one in four Asians live in poverty, even before the covert 19 pandemic hit this crisis has only worsen as a result of the pandemic unemployment within the API New Yorker community increase over 6,900%, which has made affordable

18:52:46 necessity like food rent and utilities challenging around 106,000 Asian Americans in New York, do not have access to health insurance. These statistics alone do not scratch the surface of experiences of API community members.

18:53:10 In order to address these issues our community are facing. We must have a fair and independent redistricting process unfair redistricting process will divide out deeply rapidly growing communities, minimize our concern and deprive them of effective representations

18:53:29 for years to come.

18:53:31 The Greater New York Metropolis is home to the largest ethnic Chinese population outside of Asia, and is the largest metropolitan Asian American group in the nation is also home to the largest Asian national Seborga in the Western Hemisphere we're

18:53:50 Flushing, Queens being one of the largest, fastest growing API communities in the world. Despite this explosion of growth is there only a handful of API elected officials in the new york city, state, and federal representation, and only in 2017 was an

18:54:10 Asian Pacific American Task Force transform at the state level to represent community interest, Asians are the fastest growing racial group, there is a need to be serious consideration to be given to ensure that those numbers, and the community in which

18:54:28 they share multiple interests are respected and kept hold, and that Asian Americans have the political influence that they're entitled to our community should be able to have an equal opportunity to participate in the political process, and then like

18:54:45 the candidate of their choice. In order to ensure their fear lines are drawn. The Independent Redistricting Commission should prevent partisan and ratio gerrymandering into keep, ethnic, racial, and language minority community groups in tact.

18:55:04 Identify communities of interest and other crucial information. Seek public opinion and input, during the map thing and rejoining district thing process, any member of the public should be able to submit maps and provide or common for consideration by

18:55:23 the Commission CPC appreciate the opportunity to testify on this issue that greatly impacts our community.

18:55:32 Thank you.

18:55:39 Thank you, Howard next rule here from Jerry Vattamala, Director for democracy programs for the Asian American legal defense and Education Fund.

18:55:55 Thank you, Jennifer and thank you to the League of Women Voters of New York for this opportunity to participate in this really wonderful event. I am the director of the democracy program at the Asian American legal defense and Education Fund out if we

18:56:03 We were founded in 1974 in New York City. And our mission is to protect the civil rights of Asian Americans and we do that through litigation education, community education, organizing, we are a member of the APA voice redistricting Task Force, and we're

18:56:19 a member of the Unity map coalition along with Latino justice PRLDEF, and the Center for Law and social justice at Medgar Evers college out of has been involved in redistricting for at least the last three redistricting cycles.

18:56:32 We are calling on the Independent Redistricting Commission to follow the requirements of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. There are special protections for communities of color, including Asian Americans because of historical racial discrimination and voting

18:56:49 against these communities.

18:56:51 Asian American communities of interest are geographically compact and defined, and must be capital at all legislative levels.

18:56:59 Asian American communities of interest have traditionally not been able to elect candidates of its choice. Like other communities were asking for equal treatment, not special treatment, we seek to be put on equal footing, as other communities.

18:57:15 So that Asian Americans can elect candidates of their choice.

18:57:20 The Asian American growth rate has been far up paid outpacing the growth of New York City's borrows overall, and we expect similar results for this census, the new districts should reflect this growth within the Asian American community, several decades

18:57:37 ago, out of litigated a federal redistricting litigation for DSP silver, where the court agreed that there was an Asian American community of interest between Brooklyn Sunset Park and Manhattan's Chinatown.

18:57:53 We expect that this precedent will continue as it was in the last round, and that the seventh congressional districts boundaries will reflect this community of interest.

18:58:04 We also expect that the that the process will preserve other districts that finally, in some cases for the first time allowed Asian Americans to elect the candidate of their choice, including the sixth Congressional District, which was drawn by the court

18:58:19 and the last redistricting round, you know, prior to 2012 despite having over 1 million Asian American residents in New York City, New York State had never elected, an Asian American to Congress only after the court drew a fair district centered in Flushing

18:58:38 that kept Asian American communities of interest together and whole.

18:58:43 Where was the very first time Asian Americans were able to elect a candidate of its choice, which happened to several months later after that district was drawn.

18:58:51 And as a sixth professional district.

18:58:53 We also unfortunately.

18:58:55 Prior to the last redistricting round had several Asian American communities of interest that were divided, unlike any other communities in the city. You have a community like Richmond Hill, and South Ozone Park.

18:59:08 And so then Queens in Lindo Caribbean community, that was divided into six. Six assembly districts Elmhurst queens which is divided into five assembly districts.

18:59:21 This voter disenfranchisement cannot continue and we call them the Independent Redistricting Commission to write these wrongs and put the Asian American community on equal footing, as other communities.

18:59:31 We call on the commission to comply with the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to draw Asian American majority districts at the state assembly state senate congressional level, where appropriate, and where compliance is required.

18:59:46 We call them the commission to follow one person, one vote, we know of all the problems that occurred in the last round from the severe mal apportionment that discriminated against downstate voters of color, residents of color and resulted in one in one

19:00:01 seven state senate districts being migrated upstate where there was less population growth and there was downstate.

19:00:09 We are simply asking that Asian American communities be kept whole at all legislative levels. So that Asian Americans can be treated equally as other groups, and can elect candidates of its choice in compliance with the Voting Rights Act, US Constitution

19:00:25 in New York State Constitution.

19:00:28 We thank you, the League of Women Voters for your time and for having this event.

19:00:34 Thank you Jerry. Next we'll hear from Perry Grossman Voting Rights Project Attorney for the New York Civil Liberties Union.

19:00:44 Thanks so much, Jennifer, it's a pleasure to be invited in the pleasure to be here.

19:00:49 With so many August colleagues and certainly I want to make sure that I echo a lot of what they say but to avoid redundancy. I'll keep it brief. So, the New York Civil Liberties Union is obviously deeply dedicated to protecting the voting rights of all

19:01:06 New Yorkers. We are glad to finally see the principles of section to the Voting Rights Act expressly reflected in the New York State Constitution, including the requirement that the Commission and any subsequent ledger redistricting reflect.

19:01:27 Consider whether the lines would result in the denial or abridgement of racial or language minority voting rights, and to ensure that voters of color have an equal opportunity to participate in the political process until that candidates of their choice.

19:01:44 Obviously, we will have more thoughts on this as we get the census data that Jeff referred to, which is a little bit delayed.

19:01:52 But, We look forward to a transparent process where members of the community are able to describe the interests that their communities have with specificity and the hearings required all over the state.

19:02:08 We expect the commission to be fully and adequately funded, so that data is able to be used in the most transparent and useful possible way to produce an equitable map, and I'm just like the take the opportunity to command, all of the community groups

19:02:27 and outreach workers who put so much effort into getting new yorkers to come out for the census, because what we've heard several times that New York will his congressional seat.

19:02:39 And while it is disappointing that New York is about 89 people shy of not losing any congressional seats. It is a testament to everyone who puts so much effort into the cloud that we're not losing to congressional seats.

19:02:53 So happy to look on the bright side of things there.

19:02:56 But overall, we look forward to a transparent and inclusive process that ensures that the voting rights act as respected that the values and trying to the New York State Constitution are respected.

19:03:12 And we look forward to working with our partners to hold the commission of the legislature accountable for a fair amount. Thanks so much.

19:03:20 Thank you, Perry. Next we'll hear from Julio Rivera, civic engagement program manager for national programs for NALEO Educational Fund.

19:03:29 Thanks so much, Jennifer and thank you to the League of Women Voters for giving us an opportunity to provide some comments today.

19:03:37 Jennifer said my name is Julio to bed I'm the civic engagement program manager for NALEO Educational Fund. NALEO Educational Fund is the nation's leading 501 c three nonprofit organization that facilitates the full participation of Latinos in the American

19:03:51 political process. And a key part of that process is the decennial census and redistricting.

19:03:58 Since 1990 NALEO Educational Fund has engaged in campaigns to promote a full and accurate count of the Latino population in the dissemble census, and in 2020 we held our largest campaign to date known as our sequence but now that we have received

19:04:12 the initial census data and a portion of accounts, all of those efforts must now translate into ensuring the Latino community is accurately and fairly represented in the redistricting process or Latinos draw the lines campaign is working to protect the

19:04:26 voting rights and the electoral opportunities of the Latino community in redistricting.

19:04:32 We began our efforts here in New York to ensure fair representation, by advocating for the appointment of a Latina to the Independent Redistricting committee mentioned, we collaborated them, and we continue to work closely with groups, such as Latino

19:04:46 justice PRLDEF in order to mobilize Latinos and support their efforts in unity mapping.

19:04:52 We believe the most important principles in the redistricting process are one, keeping elected officials accountable to their communities to compliance with the constitution compliance with the federal Voting Rights Act.

19:05:07 The preservation and respect for communities of interest. And lastly the transparency and the meaningful opportunities for the public to participate and be heard, who represents you matters, and it affects your family, your neighborhood, and your community

19:05:20 redistricting and how the lines are drawn determines whether different population groups have a say in the outcomes of elections redrawn state legislative and congressional maps must provide Latinos a fair opportunity to choose their representatives.

19:05:35 So as we collectively begin working to mobilize communities to engage on redistricting. Organizers should keep a few things in mind.

19:05:44 First redistricting is a relatively complicated form of civic engagement.

19:05:48 It requires some knowledge of what can be a highly technical process.

19:05:52 So the census, and non partisan voter engagement is a valuable starting place, we want to avoid what can be known as democracy burnout.

19:06:00 This process is coming a year after a year of engagement on the census and on elections, and for places like New York City, it's also in the midst of ongoing municipal elections is therefore important to begin with the values behind our work.

19:06:15 The importance of having accountable, elected officials and how this affects your community.

19:06:20 This should come before talking about what the process is and how to become involved.

19:06:26 It's also important to use plain language in your materials and presentations is using jargon will create barriers to engagement as well.

19:06:34 And lastly, please ensure that your outreach work is culturally and linguistically competent.

19:06:40 So as this process unfolds groups such as ours, and others on this call will need to continue close collaboration.

19:06:48 New York's complex demographics means drawing maps that ensure a fair outcome for all underrepresented communities will be challenging.

19:06:56 So transparency about difficult choices and open communication will be necessary to ensure all communities of interest, a respected and fairly represented.

19:07:06 So thank you once again to the League of Women Voters for this opportunity.

19:07:13 Next we'll hear from Helen Hellmuth senior advocate for Disability Rights New York.

19:07:19 Thanks Jennifer.

19:07:22 Disability Rights New York is a protection advocacy agency for New York State, DRNY advocates for the civil and legal rights New Yorkers with disabilities.

19:07:37 Our Protection and Advocacy promoter access program serves to make the voting process accessible for people with disabilities and educate individuals with disabilities, about their rights as voters.

19:07:43 Before this testimony. I've reached out to individuals with disabilities, and other members of the disability community to ask about the most common issues they are currently facing overwhelmingly people mentioned issues involving direct support staff

19:07:57 and home health care aides direct support staff work for individuals with disabilities and assist them with activities of daily living like bathing, dressing toileting cooking meals and feeding, as well as other supportive services.

19:08:11 These workers provide an intimate essential service, however, home health care aides are only typically paid about \$12 to \$15 an hour, which creates a negative domino effect.

19:08:24 To start the community based direct workforce is at a crisis level shortage, because of the workforce shortage, it is difficult to find quality staff for self directed services, community activities are frequently cancelled because there are not enough

19:08:37 staff available to accompany House members, creating a sense of cabin fever.

19:08:43 Lastly, staff are forced to work overtime, which results in them becoming tired and less patient with the people they serve reading to workplace burnout.

19:08:53 Police Brutality is another unfortunate common issue affecting people with disabilities, individually. Individuals with untreated mental illness or 16 times more likely to be killed during a police interaction than other civilians approached or stopped

19:09:06 by law enforcement in a minimum of one in four fatal police encounters and the life of an individual with severe mental illness. People with disabilities are disproportionately more likely to be victims of police violence.

19:09:21 Ultimately, people with disabilities continue to face a barrage of barriers on a daily basis, including being paid sub minimum wage, not having reliable access to accessible transportation, lack of affordable, accessible housing options barriers to employment

19:09:38 in general and accessibility of the streets and buildings in New York state, including polling places.

19:09:45 As we know, section to the Voting Rights Act mandates that electoral district lines, must be drawn in a way to protect minority rights. During why recommends that the redistricting commission also committed to driving electoral lines to protect the interests

19:09:58 of the disability community. This will involve the redistricting commission advocating that the disability census data be released at the same time as the race census data.

19:10:10 If the disability community wants to have an equal chance of elected officials who advocate for the changes most impacting their community, including increasing budgets for direct support staff and mindful appointment of city police chiefs, and I'll look

19:10:34 districts must be drawn in a way where people with disabilities are fairly represented. Thank you for taking the time to listen to my testimony. Thank you, Helen.

19:10:36 Next we'll hear from Asher Roth, Senior strategist, to the New York immigration coalition.

19:10:43 Thanks Jennifer and thank you to the League of Women Voters for organizing this meeting, and this hearing. I'm Asher Roth senior strategist and NYIC action, which is a 501 c four organization and the sister organization of the New York Immigration coalition

19:10:58 NYSE action was founded in 2007 to increase the political power of the immigrant vote. And for the next two years will be heavily engaged in redistricting through a campaign that we're calling mapping our future.

19:11:10 Over the next two years we have an opportunity to redraw New York, political maps, and partisan gerrymandering and build the decade of political power for the roughly one in four New Yorkers who are immigrants, the redistricting fight is census 2.0.

19:11:24 It's a major reason why we fought so hard to get a complete count a fair count enables the drawing of fair districts, which leads to a fair representation.

19:11:34 As with the census, the opportunity to drop fair districts, only comes every 10 years, there are no do overs. If we don't get this right, our communities have to live with the consequences of that for the next decade prior redistricting cycles, elected

19:11:49 officials have both parties engaged in gerrymandering tactics such as packing and cracking.

19:11:54 This results in districts that are designed to dilute the voting strength of communities of color, prevent competitive elections and otherwise keep incumbents safely in their seats.

19:12:05 If candidates and elected officials know they can safely ignore certain communities they often do just that.

19:12:10 Districts maps that make it impossible for communities to elect their own members often mean a decade of having the needs of that community de prioritized.

19:12:20 Additionally, it means that some incumbents simply don't feel the pressure that advocacy organizations can bring our work on fair and humane immigration policies, affordable housing police reform and so much more is made harder, because some

19:12:34 incumbents feel untouchable.

19:12:37 But good redistricting processes can remedy that well john districts that keep communities of interest together can protect New York, immigrants and communities of color, about challenges challengers to have a fair shot at winning elections and energized

19:12:52 civic engagement.

19:12:54 Our goal at NYIC action is to mobilize our statewide and regional grassroots members and partners, and to elevate the voices and the needs of immigrant New Yorkers in the redistricting process will be working with traditional and ethnic media

19:13:09 to highlight redistricting effort in all communities across the state. Organizing Community Education events, creating educational materials mobilizing around all hearings of the redistricting commission and engaging with elected officials.

19:13:24 We have a lot of work ahead of us that this is a great start to remedying some of the mistakes of the past and mapping a future that works for all New Yorkers.

19:13:33 Thank you again to the League of Women Voters and the many partners who are in this fight.

19:13:38 Thank you after next we'll hear from Emely Paez as director of government affairs and civic engagement to the Hispanic Federation.

19:13:47 Hi, good evening. Thank you so much, Jennifer.

19:13:56 Again, as you mentioned, my name is Emely Paez and I am the director of government affairs and civic engagement with Hispanic Federation. Thank you and to the National League of Women Voters for the opportunity to testify today at the people's hearing

19:14:03 on redistricting. Since its inception, Hispanic federations mission has been to empower and advance the Hispanic community, and several decades later Hispanic Federation continues to be a leading force in the battle to have a fair and accountable government

19:14:19 as one of the nation's top up you know nonprofit organization, Hispanic Federation works it's not work of Hispanic nonprofits grassroots leaders and media partners to empower and advance Latino Latinos across the United States through our programmatic

19:14:34 efforts Hispanic Federation serves our community in areas of civic engagement health, education, economic empowerment and immigration.

19:14:43 Following Eastern central senses Hispanic Federation has been on the front lines, advocating for Latino voices to be heard and include it in the appropriation and redistricting process.

19:14:54 This includes educational advocacy across around census participation in 2020 alone Hispanic Federation reached out to millions of Latino New Yorkers using culturally competent outreach measures and the height of a global health pandemic Hispanic Federation

19:15:10 work with vulnerable Latino immigrant communities to be counted in spite of the fear and still by misinformation reassuring them that census participation would not only be well not only not be used against them, that the data collect data is protected

19:15:25 by federal law. Adding to the importance of federal resources and representations needed in our communities.

19:15:33 New York State loses is going to be losing a congressional seat, and many have lost their representation at a federal level because of 89 seats. Excuse me, people not being counted as has been mentioned, despite this being the best of the worst case scenarios.

19:15:49 This is a result of poor investments and resources provided to communities that need them the most through the throughout the entire state.

19:15:56 In the last 20 years the state of New York has lost five seats in Congress, and whether those seeds come from upstate or the city. The effect is the same dilution of power and less representation, especially in communities of color.

19:16:10 We can do better.

19:16:12 New York State has seen a dramatic growth in Latino population over the last few decades, with 3.5 million or 19% of

19:16:22 population identifying as Hispanic.

19:16:26 It is not except an exaggeration to say that redistricting will affect millions of Latinos in the state. And yet it is not a topic that is top of mind for our community, communities, communicating directly with grassroots leaders is critical and important,

19:16:42 as they are trusted messengers in our communities, New York state should be compelled to advance the process for redrawing district boundaries that puts our communities first by investing in resources capacity and time necessary for drawing district boundaries

19:16:57 that puts our community. First, we must ensure that our communities are included, at every level of government and decision making processes that the systems and processes by which they choose to draw the lines are transparent, their representative.

19:17:11 And there are shared information and culturally competent matters.

19:17:17 The start is closely monitoring the development and efforts of the newly established Independent Redistricting Commission, alongside other Latino organizations joined here today, Hispanic Federation decried the lack of Latino representation in the commission.

19:17:33 While we applaud the addition of the only Latina member in the commission. We also acknowledge that her representation is part of the outcome of the advocates and organizations banding together to demand inclusion and more representation within the commission.

19:17:49 We must also ensure that funds allocated to the Independent Redistricting Commission are sufficient and distributed in a timely manner, this is critical for the functionality of the independent redistricting.

19:18:04 And the intent to break through historical inadequate inadequacies and sustain and editable unethical practices like gerrymandering. We must hold them accountable to that commitment.

19:18:16 We look forward to collectively working together towards achieving a fair and ethical medical redistricting process that is reflective of the dramatic growth of communities of color in New York, allowing all communities the opportunity to have a fair

19:18:30 representation and to have candidates that reflect their ideas, and that help meet the needs of their community. Again, Thank you all, and have a great evening.

19:18:40 Thank you, Emely.

19:18:44 Next we'll hear from Sandra Choi civic participation manager for the MinKwon Center for Community Action.

19:18:49 Good evening, everyone. Thank you to the League of Women Voters for bringing us all together here tonight. My name is Sandra Choi, and I am the Civic Participation manager at the MinKwon Center for Community Action, MinKwon is also the convening organization

19:19:04 for the APA voice redistricting Task Force, since our founding in 1984 main one has had a profound impact on the communities that we serve, based in Queens, we provide direct social services to low income and limited English proficiency residents and

19:19:22 and cultivate the next generation of civic leaders. We want also empowers and organizes our members on key issues including comprehensive immigration and housing reform, through our organizations, civic participation advocacy and outreach, we build community

19:19:40 and immigrant power by protecting and elevating the voices of the most marginalized, to keep elected officials accountable. We know redistricting will have an a measurable impact on how, and which communities are represented on each level of government,

19:19:57 the redistricting process must be rooted in preserving our communities together because they dividing them will dilute the voice and power of our communities.

19:20:07 This week, while the Census Bureau announced that New York State last one congressional seat due to national demographic shifts Asian Americans continue to be the fastest growing population here in Queens and in New York State.

19:20:22 In Queens Asian Americans alone make up 26% of the populations borough. And over a 10 year period, the population has grown from 548,000 to 589,020 19 in New York State.

19:20:37 The Asian American population has exhibited a similar demographic shift with the population growing from 1.4 million to 1.6 million during the same time period.

19:20:49 As a result of the 2010 redistricting cycle downtown flushing was preserved in one state assembly district, because our community is located within one geographic area, and made it possible to coordinate more efficiently with advocates neighborhood groups,

19:21:05 government agencies and leaders to do voter and census outreach. More recently, this configuration also allowed us to develop an implement coordinated pandemic response to meet their needs with our partners.

19:21:20 We also recently launched the flushing community fridge, that serves as a food pantry for local residents to address food insecurity in our neighborhoods, we witness firsthand how the pandemic has exacerbated the existing inequalities throughout

19:21:36 our housing healthcare, economic and education systems. Many members we serve work survival jobs in the hospitality industry or as home care attendants taxi cab and rideshare drivers nail salon technicians and small business owners, one in four Asian

19:21:53 American elders live in poverty and many working class immigrants and neighborhoods like flushing are at grave risk of displacement with predatory landlords and development projects that accelerate gentrification, with over 80% being foreign born linguistic

19:22:09 isolation is high, along with high rates of uninsured or underinsured residents, our communities need to stay together in order for us to advocate collectively for their resources and policies better address these needs mean one stands with our AP voice

19:22:25 task force members to ensure that this process, results in fair maps that builds the power of communities of color not dilute it, we should be able to elect the candidate of our choice.

19:22:39 Who will be the most responsible and accountable to the people. Thank you.

19:22:45 Sandra, next we'll here from Aminta Kilawan-Narine founder and executive director of South queens Women's March.

19:22:55 Good evening, everyone. My name is Aminta Kilawan-Narine and I am a lawyer and organizer and the founder and executive director of South queens Women's March, a local grassroots gender justice organization founded right before the pandemic hit and

19:23:09 inspired by a global and national women's rights movements, South Koreans Women's March amplifies the voices of South Koreans is diverse Women and Gender expansive people.

19:23:17 We are an all volunteer multi generational intersection platform, working to foster women's empowerment, through dismantling norms, practices, and institutions that support patriarchy and gender and justice.

19:23:32 We take our sisterhood to the streets to unify Women and Gender non conforming individuals in our community and connect them to the tools and resources necessary to empower their lives and to thrive.

19:23:44 Women have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, and we recognize the need to meet women, girls and gender fluid people where they are, community members have ended up practically trapped at home with their abusers reprieve is far from reachable

19:23:58 and resources become that much more critical. So we provide food pantries and essential distributions to meet our community members where they are reaching several thousand local families.

19:24:08 We have hosted monthly workshops on health, health, healthy relationships and wellness to support survivors coping with trauma, fostering self love addressing street harassment and how to have healthy intimate relationships.

19:24:20 We offer youth and professional development workshops to immigrant families who don't have access to quality information to support their educational and career development.

19:24:29 They are often in first generations families learning for the first time, how to navigate complex systems and bureaucracies.

19:24:37 And finally, we're building political power from the ground up, utilizing ethnic and Community Media as a platform for civic engagement and education street canvassing to register voters and raising our voices to educate our communities and decision

19:24:53 making bodies on how we have been historically oppressed.

19:24:58 And that includes placed in multiple districts that dilute our power.

19:25:03 To that end, South queens Women's March is a proud member of APA voices redistricting Task Force.

19:25:08 Much of our work, which has grown exponentially over the short year plus of our existence has been based in Richmond Hill samples on Park Ozone Park, and the Jamaican neighborhoods of South queens, home to a vibrant and sprawling South Asian and indo

19:25:22 Caribbean population that census data unfortunately cannot fully account for these communities have been gerrymandered for far too long.

19:25:31 I began to organize in my community, a decade ago, actually during the 2010 redistricting cycle and 10 years later I find myself asking for the same thing.

19:25:40 please don't divide us keep our communities of interest together.

19:25:44 If you take a look at the district minds at every level of government for these neighborhoods, you will see a blatant disregard for the natural communities of interest that exist, you'll see lines that don't uphold the voting rights act but instead run

19:25:57 afoul of them, not compact, nor contiguous by any means, the communities that are fragmented into 2345, and yes six more districts are interwoven, they're linked by strong ties, whether those be cultural culinary familial religious educational economic

19:26:14 and more.

19:26:15 We take the same trains and buses we go to the same schools, we face the same financial struggles we are even extensions of the same families, yet the lines, divide us in a way that dilutes our ability to be a stronger voice.

19:26:29 For instance, if our communities of interest for kept whole we wouldn't be struggling to get the adequate sanitation garbage bins on our major thorough fares if our communities of interest were kept whole we could advocate more to effectively address

19:26:41 the housing crisis that prices are people out of becoming homeowners in our own neighborhoods, or living in basement apartments because there really is nowhere else to go.

19:26:50 If our communities of interest recap whole, we would have a true community and recreational center, and not be forced to find alternatives like the local Burger King, or our local libraries which themselves are in need of capital repairs.

19:27:03 This is not about identity politics, it's about protecting disenfranchised populations. This is about eradicating voter dilution. This is about community empowerment.

19:27:15 So thank you so much to the League of Women Voters for creating this platform. And as we say, always at South Koreans Women's March, our voice is our power.

19:27:24 Thank you.

19:27:26 Thank you meet the next we'll hear from Ramdat Singh, Director of civic engagement for the Caribbean equality project.

19:27:34 Thank you, Jennifer. My name is Ramdat Singh, I'm a proud public school teacher, and I'm the director of civic engagement for the Caribbean equality project CP is a proud coalition member of AP voice redistricting passports, founded in 2015 and respond

19:27:50 to anti LGBT q plus hates and Richmond Hill Queens, New York, CP is a community board based organization that empowers black and brown LGBT q plus Caribbean immigrants in New York City, through public education, community organizing civic engagement storytelling

19:28:08 and cultural and social programming, the organization's work focuses on advocacy for LGBT q plus people. We work to promote and defend immigrant rights gender equity racial justice mental health services and ending hates violence in the Caribbean diaspora

19:28:27 for the past five years, the Caribbean quality projects, civic engagement work has focused on building political power to voter education campaigns co hosting candidate forums and voter registration drives the Caribbean LGBT q plus community is part of

19:28:43 part of the larger Caribbean and in the Caribbean diaspora, and 2020. We launched our own culturally responsive census outreach to get the count out in our Caribbean communities around New York City.

19:28:57 This year our civic engagement, organizing includes redistricting because we understand what it takes and means to be excluded, while experiencing housing discrimination and employment disparities.

19:29:10 New York City is home to the both the largest South Asian and in the Caribbean Guyanese Trinidad in Jamaican certain amines etc diasporic populations, a contributor to the city's economy language and cultural diversity, and a growing political power machine

19:29:28 to the British colonialism, in the Caribbean, where all of South Asian descent were forced into indentured servitude by unclear contracts and lack of language access.

19:29:40 After surviving decades of displacement quest struggles ancestral trauma and harm the Indian diaspora, has used their bodies voices music and other interdisciplinary mediums to preserve religious traditions and culture, including right here in the Bronx,

19:29:55 and Queens. The in the Caribbean population has grown exponentially in Queens and the Bronx, Richmond Hill, also known as Little Guyana is home to the largest in the Caribbean community with the castle health section of the Bronx coming in second.

19:30:11 Unfortunately, as a mentor, as I mentioned the census data will not adequately reflect the total indo Caribbean population in New York City.

19:30:20 This complex history of belonging and a migration have let inadequate census count because some in the Caribbean are forced to classify themselves as Asian, while others, select other on government documents.

19:30:33 Due to this complicated history. There are discrepancies been locating the total number of in the Caribbean and Caribbean in New York City.

19:30:41 In the area known as little town and Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park, the district is divided into six legislative districts, which are Assembly District, 2324 2831, and 32, and the early 2000s, there was a housing mortgage crisis for thousands of homeowners

19:30:59 in the area.

19:31:01 Because our community was divided into several assembly district. These homeowners could not get the necessary help from their elected officials, because their numbers were smaller, the elected officials ignored their concerns, and these homeowners did

19:31:15 not receive the help, until it became a national housing crisis. This is one example, when a community with shared culture, values and socio economic backgrounds is split and dilutes their political power.

19:31:28 It has a negative impact on the community and the residents living in that community. We want the Independent Redistricting Commission to keep our communities of interest together in Richmond health also part in Queens and soundview Castle Hill in the

19:31:42 Bronx. We must have a fair and transparent redistricting process with our representation at the center of the dialogue with fair maps. Thank you so much and we thank the League of Women Voters for inviting us as panelists.

19:31:58 Thank you for I'm done. Next we hear from Mon Yuck Yu Executive Vice President and Chief of Staff to the Academy of Medicine medical health and public services.

19:32:10 Thank you to the League of Women Voters for the opportunity to testify tonight. My name is Mon Yuck Yu I'm the Executive Vice President at the Academy of Medical public health services, otherwise known as amps.

19:32:28 amps is a not for profit public health organization in Sunset Park Brooklyn and a member of AP way streets district and Task Force, we bridge to health equity gap mom communities of color by providing free clinical screenings bilingual mental therapy

19:32:36 individualized health education and social services for immigrant populations and inland next and Chinese communities, regardless of their immigration status or ability to pay.

19:32:45 South Brooklyn is perhaps one of the most divided in terms of Senate assembly districts Sunset Park itself is divided into two Assembly District, 5149, which also includes Bensonhurst and Dagger heights.

19:32:58 We support keeping sense of parking customers in the same Assembly District, at 49.

19:33:03 The Asian community in this district is essentially large compact and cohesive, to be able to let the candidate of choice. However, there are opportunities for the expense Asian population at once be consolidated with at 49.

19:33:16 Sunset Park is currently divided into three separate senate districts with the Asian community the violence to district 20, which currently consists of Brownsville and Crown Heights and district 17, which primarily consist of borough Park and Midwood

19:33:29 because of language barriers and lack of a direct subway line connecting Sunset Park cities neighborhoods. They're limiting their limited connecting factors between them.

19:33:39 Moreover, the culturally sensitive services, our communities rely on are located in Sunset Park in Bensonhurst divided Sunset Park will receive fewer resources.

19:33:49 We have seen that transit into overcrowded schools, lack of affordable housing increased homelessness rates and rising food insecurity and employments.

19:33:58 We recommend unifying and communities of interest in Sunset Park Bensonhurst and home crest in one state senate district, working in a community for the past 11 years, we have observed a considerable growth in the Asian community in the Asian immigrant

19:34:12 community since redistricting a decade ago, across the city 78% of the APS are foreign born.

19:34:19 So social challenges created by language disparities are consistent across neighborhoods, a large majority of non citizens in Sunset Park Bensonhurst home crest have low English proficiency, at 85% 82%, and 72%, respectively.

19:34:35 These separate communities are connected by a need for linguistically and culturally appropriate services during coven a team for example, our organization, located in Sunset Park, we see hundreds of calls from community members from across these three

19:34:47 neighborhoods, seeking assistance with public benefits vaccine appointments and testing, because we were able to offer help in their language.

19:34:55 And will you learn going, and the federally qualified health centers in Sunset Park one of the largest hospitals in South Brooklyn. Similarly offers in language services that attract Chinese because across these communities.

19:35:07 And these neighborhoods are also holds a bustling array of educational programs that attract Chinese students across Brooklyn, three popular weekend Chinese school program teaching young children to embrace your culture heritage and language are spread

19:35:20 out across a park in Bensonhurst nearly a third of our amps ESL students, health and Bensonhurst and 10% from home crust, though, again we are located in Sunset Park, many of our clients also find work opportunities across communities, connected by the

19:35:35 end dr subway lines and 65th and 60 streets by car, the markets her nature of these communities reflect the growing need of our community stay together through fair and cohesive presentation.

19:35:48 And finally the recent anti Asian hate crimes perpetrated against our communities appointment urgent needs have a voice that represented and protects us a more equitable redistricting process will mean that we can train my resources in a time when our

19:36:01 communities are most vulnerable. Thank you again for this opportunity to share our thoughts with you all.

19:36:16 Thank you, Mon Yuck.

19:36:15 Next we'll hear from Lurie Daniel favors Executive Director for the Center for Law and social justice at Medgar Evers college.

19:36:25 Good evening and thank you so much for having me. My name is Lurie Daniel favors and I'm a racial justice attorney and the Interim Executive Director at the Center for Law and social justice at Medgar Evers college CUNY.

19:36:35 Our mission at CLS j is to address racial justice issues by providing quality legal advocacy conducting community education campaigns, facilitating research, I'm building organizing capacity on behalf of New Yorkers of African descent and the disenfranchised,

19:36:49 and we very much appreciate the work that the League of Women Voters New York put into this event, and for the ability to present our testimony this evening. CLSJ launched into this redistricting cycle propelled by our advocacy and the 2020 senses campaign

19:37:04 and by the depth of institutional knowledge that we bring to bear as a result of our involvement in three previous redistricting cycles where our organization played a pivotal role in advocating on behalf of New Yorkers of African descent, in order to

19:37:15 protect their right to live in districts that are drawn equitably and which keep our communities of interest in tact and which give our communities, the ability to attract candidates of their choice that history includes I, one of my favorite ongoing

19:37:35 which is a collaboration with our partners at the Asian American Legal Defense Fund, and Latino justice PRLDEF in the unity maps project. We were also motivated by our knowledge that this redistricting process is not going to be protected by the section

19:37:41 five preclearance provision of the Voting Rights Act and as a result of that, communities of African descent communities of color and the disenfranchised frankly are exposed vulnerable and at risk.

19:37:51 Building on our census coalition which took place under the banner of the New York City black leadership advisory Coalition for census 2020 CLSA provided redistricting trainings conducted community informational meetings and met with hundreds of people

19:38:03 both as we're winding down our sentence campaign and thereafter when we launched our redistricting project in order to fully prepare our community to participate in this process.

19:38:13 Why, because communities of African descent like all New York City communities deserve equitably drawn districts that empower voters of African descent to elect candidates of their choice without having the strength of their votes diluted and under the

19:38:25 full protection of the Constitution. But as we all know, deserving rights as people of color in the society means absolutely nothing if we are not prepared to fight for them.

19:38:35 We have seen repeatedly how communities of African descent Latinx communities and Asian American API communities all across this country have been driving population growth in states all across this country, and yet due to a lack of community familiarity

19:38:48 with the redistricting process, our population growth is rarely rewarded with equitably drawn maps that reflects that growth and which protects our communities in that effort which is ongoing and is going to be launching in phase two, and just a month

19:39:02 or so CSJ recently concluded a six week community redistricting course called draw maps and build power, which was led by our projects head of research, doctors a Zulema Blair at the Medgar Evers college.

19:39:14 The goal of this course was to ensure our community knows how to access and how to use census data for community advocacy during redistricting and understanding the basics of the redistricting process and how to fully and equitably participate.

19:39:27 We continue to gather data to submit to redistricting authorities and intend to be wholly involved in the process for redistricting in the state and the city.

19:39:35 It is vitally important that the redistricting commission have accurate information, and that communities of interest are protected and not harmed in this process, we need and will indeed fight for and be fair and equitable redistricting that does not

19:40:03 very much look forward to working with the organizations present here as we continue to ensure that all New Yorkers are able to live grow, breathe play work and function in communities that are whole and that are sustained and protected and are not disassembled

19:40:16 through the process we all come to know and love as redistricting thank you so much for the opportunity to speak with you and to contribute to this event.

19:40:22 Thank you, Lurie. Next we'll hear from Sue Ruff advocacy director for the Southern Tier independent center.

19:40:34 Thank you, League of Women Voters for this opportunity tonight.

19:40:40 Why does redistricting matter to people with disabilities. Well let's start by looking at challenges and barriers to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, if you have a disability.

19:40:52 Southern Tier independent center. Established in, 1983 is based in Binghamton, but we provide programs and services for people with all types of disabilities.

19:41:06 In, we work in the south central area of New York State.

19:41:11 At this time, our greatest needs revolve around keeping people with disabilities in their own homes and out of nursing facilities and other segregated can't get settings.

19:41:23 More than 15,000 people and state have died of covid in the settings.

19:41:30 Finding affordable and accessible housing is extremely difficult, and in some communities, it's impossible.

19:41:36 Finding home care workers is even harder,

19:41:43 partly because of state policies and partly due to the lack of fair pay for them.

19:41:48 In July, the minimum wage for fast food workers is going up to \$15 an hour, but to pay for home care workers north of Westchester is staying at \$12.50.

19:41:59 This means the very real and serious shortage of personal care workers will become even greater.

19:42:05 Without home care workers people end up institutionalized.

19:42:09 There's another group of people who are also struggling.

19:42:13 They are the individuals with disabilities who end up in county jails.

19:42:17 Some because their support needs are not met in the community.

19:42:21 For perspective.

19:42:23 Last month, there were 10,141 on sentence people residing in New York State jails, most of whom are eligible to vote.

19:42:33 Last November when most of us went to the polls that number was 9561.

19:42:39 We have heard from district attorney's public defenders, and even the justification memo on New York State bill as 20 2098 540, that more than 80% of the people who are incarcerated have disabilities.

19:42:56 I'm sentence but in jail means they are not adjudicated and not out on bail.

19:43:01 Most likely lost jobs apartments and sometimes their children. Although legally able to vote. There are almost no provisions to register and vote by absentee ballot, and almost all the states jails.

19:43:15 With these perfect potential voters affect local, state, and federal elections. Yes.

19:43:24 We have worked very hard to assist people with their voting rights to make polling place locations accessible to find employment opportunities. Because 70% of people with disabilities who want to work cannot find jobs, health care needs housing searches

19:43:41 Educational Rights transportation community access.

19:43:47 However, our biggest challenge. More than 30 years after the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act remains the ongoing battle for people to live in their own homes in their own communities for the support and services that they need this as a

19:44:06 While some elected officials have heard our voices many continue to ignore the nearly 20% of New York citizens with disabilities.

19:44:16 We are your family members, your neighbors, your students, your employees, and your fellow citizens, but for very many of us, the future does not hold the promise of freedom, or self determination.

19:44:31 It holds the threat of institutionalization whether we live in urban or rural areas.

19:44:37 We care about the fair and objective drawing of district lines, because we understand how hard we will have to continue to educate the people who will be elected to serve us all the people who decide.

19:44:53 Every year, what is included in local, state, and national budgets and legislation. And what is left behind on the cutting room floor.

19:45:02 Thank you again League of Women Voters for this opportunity.

19:45:06 Thank you. Sue. Next we'll hear from April Land, member of the capital region, one person, one vote coalition.

19:45:36 April we see you but we can't hear your audio.

19:45:50 Oh, I heard you sorry.

19:45:56 I'll start again if that's okay.

19:46:01 Good evening. My name is April land and I represent the one person, one vote coalition of the Capital District. As a member of the capital area, and since 2018, the coalition has been committed to the adoption of an equitable redistricting plan produce

19:46:20 three transparent participatory and fair process. Let me first describe our community where we share common interests, such as damage to our environmental resources, resources, and the location of our state capitol.

19:46:38 In the Capital District, there are three distinct and geographically separated cities Albany, Troy and Schenectady, all share common issues, including poverty inadequate housing, poor schools and policing, there has been a failure to meet the needs of

19:46:56 low income residents in all areas, including and smaller municipalities, located in our expansive Peri urban, suburban and rural areas. Also there is a lack of reliable and affordable broadband, especially in rural area high speed internet connectivity

19:47:16 is fundamental for economic activity, and to bridge the digital divide. What is unique about our community is that ours, includes the state capitol, making it the center of state government.

19:47:32 Our major employers or state government and educational and healthcare institutions, much of that is exempt from real property taxes.

19:47:40 While many upstate areas have lost population. We've seen significant population changes in recent years, there's been an influx of immigrants and people relocating from New York City.

19:47:53 Also, tech companies are increasing

19:48:02 the demographic changes have exacerbated pre existing unaddressed issues like the lack of support underfunded municipal governments, including unfunded mandates significant systemic issues have also impacted.

19:48:20 Historically, corporate and political interests have obstructed, the ability of our voters to have a meaningful voice and equal representation, are diverse community needs to be able to define an address issues in its own way.

19:48:34 The new redistricting process gives us an opportunity to correct the mistakes of the past where voices of people were not equally heard or waited highest and best hope for this process is that is that it challenges those who've been silent, or silence.

19:48:53 In the past two voices to voice their concerns are political leadership needs to reflect the community. So participation and decision making comes from the electorate.

19:49:05 Our groups purpose is to educate the public on the importance of redistricting and encouraging engagement, provide training partner with represented able to initiate community mapping drives were historically underserved communities, to

19:49:22 the information and tools that they need to participate fully and meaningfully and redistricting identify issues that impact communities of color the environment and social justice, and to advocate for transparency and equity throughout the redistricting

19:49:37 process.

19:49:38 We expect to review maps, submit our own and hold the commission accountable for paramount.

19:49:47 And, Urban League member coined the term kitchen table map, the one person will vote coalition has adopted.

19:49:53 We believe that our voters should be at the at the table drawing or old maps, determining fair and equitable districts that ensure one person, one vote.

19:50:04 Thank you.

19:50:07 Thank you. April. Next we'll hear from Kathy Stein president for the League of Women Voters of St. Lawrence County.

19:50:16 Thank you, Jennifer and I'm going to try to share my screen here are my

19:50:26 slideshow. Well greetings from the North Country.

19:50:29 St Lawrence County is could be New York's poster child for gerrymandering at the state level with for assembly in three states Senate seats, the county has been sliced and diced into small parcels without regard to the integrity of the community, its

19:50:45 economic resources or its partisan disposition voters with common interests have no way to express them in a politically coherent way through their elected representatives.

19:50:55 St Lawrence whose population is just under 108,000 is divided among four assembly districts, not one of our currently elected set assembly members lives in our county, with the exception of Jefferson County to our immediate east.

19:51:12 No other counties in the North Country are or less in our more other counties in the North Country are more or less intact in their districts. We are divided as I said, among three senate districts, only one of our state's senators called St Lawrence

19:51:41 home. Again, no other North Country county is as subdivided as we are the two largest non agricultural employers in the county or education and health. with our 17 school districts parceled out among seven electoral district is impossible to politically

19:51:47 consolidate our interest regarding primary and secondary education.

19:51:52 We have four major universities within a 10 mile radius yet their division among three assembly and two senatorial districts, effectively disenfranchises are higher education community or major health care providers are similarly split between several

19:52:08 state representatives.

19:52:10 The county is the center of gravity for none of these legislative districts. So the only time we see most of our elected representatives, if at all during election season.

19:52:21 They don't need the votes from our county to retain their seats, so they tend to ignore us all but one of our state representatives are Republicans. This is not accurately reflect the political demographics of the county, which is more evenly split between

19:52:36 Republicans, Democrats, independents and other parties. If our political boundaries conformed to those of our county candidates seeking to represent St Lawrence would have to address the concerns of a broader swath of the electorate.

19:52:52 The problems, St. Lawrence, Lawrence County faces are those common to other rural counties in New York, including inadequate public transportation high poverty rate inadequate childcare and eldercare food deserts, scarcity of accessible and affordable

19:53:08 broadband, not enough good paying jobs, high cost to the county for Medicaid and other services needed to supplement, Emily incomes.

19:53:17 Nevertheless, we are compelled to contact seven different state representatives on any issue of countywide concern, to say the least. This situation does not foster effective advocacy.

19:53:30 According to the most recent poll by Jefferson County Community College, St. Lawrence County alone, among neighboring counties showed a mark drop in residents opinion of the overall quality of life.

19:53:42 Oral quality of life in their community.

19:53:45 Due to the pandemic pollsters expected a drop. If you know look for all three of the counties that were surveyed, but instead found only in St. Lawrence, a drop.

19:53:57 Clearly, the residents feel that their county is a distinct entity.

19:54:02 We therefore petition the redistricting commission to factor in the geographical integrity of our county. When considering the revision of district boundaries.

19:54:10 The current electoral map denies us, the coherent political identity that St Lawrence County needs.

19:54:18 Thank you and I got my share here.

19:54:24 Thank you, Cathy. Next we'll hear from Kathy Meany president of the League of Women Voters of Westchester County.

19:54:45 Good evening, yes I'm popping up, president of the League of Women Voters of Westchester County.

19:54:38 I want you to appreciate this opportunity to comment on the redistricting efforts, that will take place for all US congressional districts, and our New York State Senate and Assembly districts, and you'll note that several of our west of Westchester County

19:54:53 districts include Rocklin Putnam orange Dutchess and Bronx counties. We think the League of Women Voters of New York State for being steadfast stewards and advocating for the development and funding of the Independent Redistricting Commission and providing

19:55:10 our members with additional information and insight.

19:55:14 While our league recognizes the legal constraints involved in shaping legislative districts, we oppose partisanship gerrymandering because it strips rights away from voters.

19:55:26 The Westchester league on all levels is laser focused on this descending exercise following the census, with the goal to combat gerrymandered districts, which benefit politicians and political parties, rather than citizens, we are actively working

19:55:45 here in Westchester to help create. People Powered fair maps. Our message is to get everyone to think about the priorities of communities of interest.

19:55:56 So that elected representatives truly represent their constituents constituency, and work for them.

19:56:05 Our message for legislators and the members of the IRC, your leadership will be key and consulting with communities of interest, hearing from the people and drawing fair maps.

19:56:19 Why is fair mapping important to Westchester County. Well, we're a diverse County, and we offer much variety, with many communities of interest that cross meanness municipalities, community groups and organizations have particular interests, and want

19:56:42 to have their elected representatives prioritize those interests, those interests can center around geography, such as the Long Island Sound and the Hudson River, or cities in the southern part of our county, as well as the heavily wooded areas in the

19:56:53 north, or could even be institutions such as schools prisons medical facilities, or even concerns such as economic development, affordable housing racial equity high tax rates, environmental issues, transportation concerns food insecurity, just to name

19:57:13 a few.

19:57:14 We recommend being aggregated with others in the community who share interest.

19:57:20 I'll share a few examples with you, Larchmont Mamaroneck or Long Island Sound short communities, and environmental issues relating to the Long Island Sound are really important to those citizens.

19:57:34 But the northern parts of the Senate and Assembly districts and 95% of congressional districts 17 don't share those concerns to the same extent Ossining town and village in West Chester is a diverse community that faces economic challenges.

19:57:53 Why would Senate District 38, the interest in interested in that small community on the other side of the Hudson River 90% of this district encompasses Rockland County.

19:58:08 And another example White Plains White Plains as a city within West Chester County, yet is divided into two senate districts, 35 and 37. How can I interest and challenges be addressed.

19:58:22 When divided.

19:58:25 Currently CDA team comprises four counties, West Chester Putnam orange and Dutchess. How could not mapping fairly meet the needs of those communities cd 17 split down the middle by the Hudson River.

19:58:41 Get it includes both Westchester Rockland County.

19:58:44 How can that fairly meet the needs of those diverse communities, and cd 16 shares its map with Bronx County of New York City. How can that map fairly meet the needs of those diverse communities, the League of Women Voters of West Chester asked that legislators

19:59:02 and the IRC focus upon the needs of community citizens by actively listening to them and not holding a political lens upon mapping.

19:59:14 The people want their voices heard and expect those who may elect to represent them to actively listen accurately represent their voices and take actions to meet their needs.

19:59:28 Thank you.

19:59:32 Next, we'll hear from Eileen Lilly, member of the League of Women Voters of Nassau County.

19:59:52 Eileen if you're speaking you're on you.

20:00:07 I'll start over.

20:00:09 My name is Eileen Lilly.

20:00:21 In 2011, as a new member of the League of Women Voters of Long Beach, I attended the Nassau County legislature meeting on redistricting. I had become involved in the League of Women Voters after working in a school district as the district clerk, where

20:00:30 I was responsible for school board and library board budget votes and elections redistricting would be another lesson for me to learn and how democracy functions.

20:00:41 It was an opportunity to learn to support league of women voters and the city of Long Beach my community and Nassau County, the League of Women Voters is a nonprofit, nonpartisan political organization whose primary purpose is to promote the formed and

20:00:58 active participation of citizens in their government league sponsored candidate events, serve to educate the public, motivate voters to participate in the elections and give voters a chance to hear the views of the candidates, the league never supports

20:01:14 or poses candidates or political parties in 2011, as we lead members set in the crowded NASA county legislators public hearing room, honesty, integrity and respect for community, we're clearly not the underpinnings of this process at one o'clock in the

20:01:34 morning disappointment, was the underlying feeling, and those community advocates in attendance, who spoke for their communities of interest, one iteration proposed by the majority side of the Nassau County legislature, called for drawing a line around

20:01:52 the city of Long Beach and attaching it to Merrick.

20:01:57 We aren't contiguous with Barrick at all.

20:02:01 Another example of the dysfunction drew a line around a legislators home block, and wrote him out of his own district.

20:02:11 Both of those farcical ideas were eventually dropped at a subsequent meeting when public outcry could not be updated.

20:02:19 But the cracking and packing of a minority community in southwest NASA reflected the selfish disingenuous and arrogant abuse of power by elected representatives in the legislature.

20:02:32 I am referring to the five towns, he'll it wouldn't be a cedar Hearst Lawrenson in would guidelines enjoying districts called for compact contiguous communities of interest being kept together in what is it geographically is geographically connected to

20:02:48 the five towns, Lawrence, and see the Hearst and Inwood are a community of interest, carrying a school district bus and railroad routes.

20:03:01 And they are aligned with each other.

20:03:05 Geographically, in what is also a diverse community, the legislature correct this community of shared interests of Family Education religious affiliations and transportation and connected them with Valley Stream North Valley Stream and Elmont.

20:03:22 This is cracking and packing on fair.

20:03:27 I rejoice that the League of Women Voters stand for the rights of the people be represented fairly democratically. My hope is that the lines will be drawn fairly in 2021.

20:03:38 Thank you.

20:03:39 Thank you.

20:03:41 And last but not least, we will have Constance Stirling -Engman, member of the League of Women Voters of Tompkins County.

20:03:48 Hello, can you hear me.

20:03:50 Yes we can.

20:03:52 Good evening. My name is Connie Stirling -Engman, and I'm speaking on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Tompkins County.

20:04:02 As a nonpartisan organization. It is extremely important that the league ensures that New York State, and our county government identifies and listens to all communities of interest, and not just the political parties as our state undertakes redistricting.

20:04:19 Thompson Tompkins County is very diverse and includes urban, suburban and rural communities with a geographic heart at the southern end of Cayuga Lake, the county's communities of interest include agriculture, health, agricultural and cultural tourism

20:04:40 sustainability and the environment, focused around Cayuga lake which unifies, rather than divides the county, our higher education institutions reach out to and link all these communities, socially and economically.

20:04:59 And through Cornell University. We even have a strong connection to New York City.

20:05:05 The US, we have little in common with James town, and the western southern tier, which are in our current district and far more with Cortland County, which is not at the State Senate level communities of interest should be able to come together to speak

20:05:22 with one voice.

20:05:25 But Tompkins County is currently divided between three separate districts.

20:05:32 At the local level, it community of interest in competence county can be as small as an elementary school community, a group of non English speaking refugees and the homeless population, or as large as the academics who live near the colleges, and the

20:05:50 farmers who live outside of the city.

20:05:54 Every community should have a voice that can be heard all deserve representation or an effective voice when that community is kept together as a whole, and not divided amongst awards, or C or districts.

20:06:13 Before the redistricting that followed the 2010 census. Tompkins counties congressional district was described as Abraham Lincoln, on a broomstick.

20:06:25 This was symbolic of the ways in which our state has been gerrymandered when districts are formed as we learn about the loss of a congressional seat in New York State.

20:06:36 So as a result of the census.

20:06:39 It is more important than ever that we ensure no gerrymandering takes place as district lines are redrawn.

20:06:48 The way districts are drawn will impact voters for the next 10 years.

20:06:54 They should be drawn with the best interest of voters in mind, not as in the past when districts were drawn to deliberately thwart the effort to effect change because have benefited politically.

20:07:07 Those drawing them to do so.

20:07:10 The process of drawing district maps at all levels of government should be open and transparent and include avenues, such as this meeting for meaningful public input.

20:07:24 It is the League of Tompkins counties hope that the new independent commission will read district sauce to allow everyone to have a voice at every level of government.

20:07:37 And that when elections are over those in power will represent all the people in their district, and give voice to minority opinions when possible.

20:07:49 That is what the league is all about helping people vote, helping them know the issues and helping them have as clear as possible, a picture of the candidates they can choose from.

20:08:03 Assessing which candidates will actually represent, everyone. Thank you.

20:08:11 Thank you, Connie and thank you to all of our incredible speakers, we're all equal parts passionate and succinct and I can't thank you enough for that.