



March 23, 2021

Dear Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, Assembly Speaker Heastie, Senate Minority Leader Ort, and Assembly Minority Leader Barclay,

We write to thank you for prioritizing funding for New York State’s first Independent Redistricting Commission in your FY 2021-2022 one-house budget proposals, and to urge you to ensure this funding is included in the final state budget.

Over the last several months, our joint organizations have become increasingly concerned over the lack of independent funding for the Redistricting Commission. This continued delay in funding has limited the Commission’s ability to begin its critical work and stifled the ability of the public to provide input into this new process.

Last month, \$1 million was made available to the Commission, but the funds were linked to SUNY Research Foundation and did not allow the Commission true independence in the hiring of staff or procurement of contracts for services. Additionally, the \$1 million in funds was reduced to \$650,000 by setting aside 10% to SUNY Research Foundation and \$250,000 for legal fees. This final allocation was insufficient for the Commission to conduct its work.

The appropriations included in the Senate and Assembly budgets will ensure that New York's first Independent Redistricting Commission is adequately funded and able to fully comply with the new mapping guidelines set forth in our state constitution. These funds should be appropriated to the Commission independent of outside agencies or public authorities so that the Commission can fulfill its mandate to the people of New York State without outside influence.

We again thank you for including new funding for New York State's Independent Redistricting Commission in your one-house budget proposals, and we urge you to ensure this funding is included in the final state budget without ties to other state agencies or entities.

Sincerely,

APA VOICE

Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)

Center for Law and Social Justice at Medgar Evers College

CPC - Chinese-American Planning Council

Citizens Union

Dominicanos USA

Hispanic Federation

LatinoJustice PRLDEF

NALEO Educational Fund

League of Women Voters of New York State

New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU)

New York Immigration Coalition

Reinvent Albany