



April 29, 2021

Via Electronic Mail

California Citizens Redistricting Commission
721 Capitol Mall, Suite 260
Sacramento, CA 95814
votersfirstact@crc.ca.gov

Re: Concerns with the Redistricting Timeline

Dear Commissioners:

On behalf of the ACLU of Northern California and ACLU of Southern California (collectively, ACLU), we thank you for your service and dedication to an independent, fair, and inclusive redistricting process for the residents of California. Through coordinated litigation, policy, and organizing strategies, the voting rights team at the ACLU works to ensure that all Californians have meaningful and fair access to engage in our democracy, and that, in particular, people of color, people impacted by the criminal legal system, Californians with limited-English proficiency, people with disabilities and other underrepresented communities are not intentionally or inadvertently excluded from our democracy.

We write to respectfully request that the Commission adopt a redistricting timeline that: (1) provides all Californians with real opportunities to engage in the redistricting process after draft maps are released; and (2) provides the Commission with sufficient time to edit and assess draft maps and to ensure that the final map complies with the federal Voting Rights Act. The current timeline jeopardizes these critical parts of the process.

First, we are extremely concerned that overlap of the post-map process with the holiday season will shut out many Californians. Community-based organizations that serve historically underrepresented and hard to reach communities have already expressed it will be difficult, if not impossible, to keep their communities engaged during the holidays. Holding post-map public hearings and adopting a final map during this time will no doubt prevent many Californians from being able to attend hearings, submit proposed maps, and review and provide input on the maps you ultimately adopt, including on whether the maps capture their communities of interest. The current timeline threatens the very purpose behind the establishment of this Commission: having a transparent and inclusive process. We therefore urge the Commission to schedule the post-map portion of the process during a time when the public can realistically engage in the process.

Second, we are concerned that the current schedule does not provide the Commission with adequate time to ensure compliance with the federal Voting Rights Act (VRA). Redistricting is an iterative process, and, after the Commission releases the first set of draft maps, the public will need time to assess whether the maps comply with the VRA and propose amendments to the maps or even propose their own maps. In response to public input, the Commission will then tweak existing draft maps and/or propose entirely new maps. At every step of the way, the Commission will need to assess whether it is necessary to draw

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majority-minority districts. The Commission will also have to confirm that any majority-minority districts it does create are in fact effective in providing minority communities the opportunity to elect candidates of choice. These analyses take time. The current timeline makes these tasks difficult, and rushing through this process may make the final maps vulnerable to legal challenge. We therefore urge the Commission to set a schedule that provides adequate time to confirm that none of the final maps dilute the vote of minority communities in California.

We thank you for your leadership in finding the necessary solutions to these challenges, as well as your commitment for a fair and inclusive redistricting process.

Sincerely,



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