

Latino Educational Issues Roundtable

September 27,2021

**TO: Fresno County Board of Supervisors
& Fresno County Advisory Redistricting Commission**

**RE: Latino Educational Issues Roundtable Support
for the Equitable Map Coalition (EMC) Map**

My name is Venancio G. Gaona, chair of the Latino Educational Issues Roundtable (LEIR) organization. The Latino Educational Issues Roundtable organization is an advocate for the advancement of the socio-economic and educational programs and services for the Chicano/Latino residents in the County of Fresno. The LEIR advocacy is conducted before federal, state, municipal, and county agencies and offices.

The LEIR organization has carefully studied the map developed and proposed by the Equity Map Coalition for Supervisorial district boundaries. We are in full support. The proposed districts are compact and easily understandable.

We have also reviewed the U.S. Census data, which confirms the significant demographic changes that have transformed the County of Fresno. The Chicano/Latino population has increased dramatically over the past 30 years, yet the opportunity for disadvantaged communities of interest to elect candidates of their choice for supervisorial seats has not kept pace.

The proposed supervisorial redistricting map complies with our review of all mandated federal and state laws, especially the California Fair Maps Act (A.B. 849) passed in 2019 to standardize the local redistricting process, to ensure fairness and prohibit gerrymandering.

We particularly support the grouping of communities of interest and the division between the rural areas of the Eastside and the Westside of the County, at Highway 41. There is a significant difference between the two mentioned areas. Each deserves to have its own supervisorial representative. The proposed map by EMC attempts to keep the whole Westside together for the first time, including all the area served by West Hills College, Westlands Water District, and Fresno County Rural Transit's Westside routes.

We believe incorporating Southeast Fresno with the rural towns in District 4 makes sense, as residents are bound together by work, family, ethnicity, income levels, language, and face the similar socio-economic challenges and living conditions.

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We also strongly support the concept of the City of Clovis having its own Supervisor, along with the new growth, foothill, and mountain areas. Furthermore, we especially support Willow Avenue as the border between not only the City of Fresno and the City of Clovis, but also between District 2 and District 5, respectively.

Conclusion: The Equitable Map Coalition map proposal is fair, research-based, meets all federal and state legal requirements, and provides a democratic opportunity for fair representation for a significant underrepresented numbers of citizens with the right to vote.

Respectfully,

Venancio G. Gaona, Chair
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