

Testimony of Victor Martinez (Southeast Regional Hearing)

I would like to thank the committee for this very important opportunity. My name is Victor Martinez and I live, work, and raise a family in Allentown, Pennsylvania. I am the owner of the only independent Spanish Broadcasting Company in Pennsylvania and I'm proud to say that I own three Spanish language radio stations inside of this great Commonwealth. That's one in Philadelphia, one in Reading, and one in Allentown. As a part of these radio stations, I host the morning show every day -Monday through Friday- and this gives me the unique opportunity to speak with and engage my fellow local residents on many issues.

I have been involved with and have rallied the Hispanic community around several outstanding Hispanic Candidates running for office these past few years. We've come so close each time. You see, the legislative lines are drawn every ten years but somehow the Hispanic Community is divided between these lines making it near impossible to elect someone of their choice. But that's a topic I covered during my testimony before the LRC.

In your case, the body in charge of drawing congressional lines, I want to share that even when our community is not big enough to anchor one congressional district by itself, we have been able to develop enough influence to be engaged and have some influence with the current congressional map. That's why I would like to respectfully urge you to please keep the Lehigh Valley together in a single congressional district. With a relatively large and growing Hispanic population, this area should be kept in one district to keep us together as a community of interest.

According to the newest Census, we have grown to more than ONE MILLION strong, representing the biggest increase in the Commonwealth. We represent 55% of the population in Allentown, 29% in Bethlehem, 69% in Reading and 15% in Philadelphia just to mention a few. These numbers, and the population decline in Western Pennsylvania, justify the argument that the new map for Eastern PA should see minimal changes from the 2018 court-ordered map.

Our Community, the Hispanic community in Pennsylvania, deserves more representation in Washington, DC, or at least the same level of representation. Our small businesses, our school's children (67% Latinos in the Allentown School District) need a voice and need to be represented. I ask you on behalf of the fastest growing community in our Commonwealth, to give us that opportunity.