

Testimony to the Oregon Redistricting Committee

Good afternoon Chair and members of the committee.

My name is Levi Herrera-Lopez, I've been a resident of Marion County and of Salem for 30 years. I'm also Executive Director of Mano a Mano, a Salem-based nonprofit with three decades of existence, whose mission is to strengthen families and reduce toxic stress among the people we serve. We have supported more than 3,000 families in Marion and Polk Counties, since the beginning of the pandemic, through the wildfires, and through the recent ice storms. In 2020, our organization partnered with dozens of community based organizations to support an equitable roll-out of the Census 2020 across Oregon. We are now partnering with many of these organizations to ensure our communities help Draw Oregon, by raising awareness and engagement about redistricting.

I want to share with you about my community of interest, which is the Latino community of Salem. I included a map of this community along with my testimony. This map was created by a group of about 25 Latinos, who live, work and have intimate knowledge about this area.

Our community lives our daily lives around the entirety of the Lancaster Drive Corridor. The majority of all Latinos in Salem live within the area we highlighted in the related map. As many as 90% of all Latino-owned businesses and other important institutions for our community are also in this area. If you live in or visit Oregon's capital, and you want to try some great Mexican food or buy Latin American groceries, you come to the East Side. If you want to visit a clinic whose patient base is majority people of Color, you come to the East Side. If you want to visit a Latino-led community based organization, you come to the East Side. If your children attend a majority-Latino elementary school, you live in the East Side.

Splitting this community in any way other than the one we presented will result in further exclusion from the many decision making processes that affect our lives.

Not by coincidence, but very much by design, the area we highlighted in this map is also home to most of Salem-Keizer's other populations of color, immigrants and refugees, such as Pacific Islanders, Asians, and others.

As you move forward with this process it is imperative that you do so in a way that allows you to hear this type of information from other communities of interest, throughout the entirety of the state.

That's my message to you and my ask, that the process allow for all Oregonians to be involved.

The voices I am representing today, not just Latino but also others, have been essential frontline workers. Our communities continue to lift up Marion and Polk Counties, and the rest of Oregon. We are what makes Oregon's future vibrant. Our voices deserve to be heard, and included as the Redistricting process moves forward.

Thank you for your time and consideration. And if you have any questions or comments, please feel free to reach out to me.

Sincerely and respectfully,

Levi Herrera-Lopez
Executive Director
Mano a Mano Family Center
2921 Saddle Club ST SE #1009
Salem, Oregon 97317
levi@manoamanofc.org
503-389-0822 mobile phone