



**Prepared Remarks by Andrea Young**  
Executive Director of the ACLU of Georgia  
Atlanta Redistricting Town Hall  
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Good afternoon. I am Andrea Young, Executive Director of the ACLU of Georgia, and a daughter of Georgia, born in Thomasville, raised in Atlanta. The ACLU of Georgia is a non-partisan organization dedicated to protecting the civil liberties of each and every Georgian. The right to vote is one of the most sacred civil liberties we have as Americans. We believe voting should be easy, for every citizen and each vote should count the same. Fair maps are crucial to ensuring that every vote counts equally.

**PUBLIC INPUT FROM ALL**

Fair maps will require making sure that people of color have a voice in this process. Georgia has a history of undermining the influence of voters of color through the redistricting process. I've seen this play out right in front of me, when my dad, Andrew Young, was drawn out of the Fifth Congressional District right here in Atlanta following the 1970 census. It took federal oversight to correct that-- federal oversight that we won't have during this redistricting cycle because of *Shelby County v. Holder*, the 2013 Supreme Court decision that gutted the Voting Rights Act.

**GREATER ATLANTA AREA**

The Greater Atlanta Area is one of the most diverse areas of the state, and it has only become more diverse over the last ten years. Preliminary data from the 2019 American Community Survey shows that between 2010 and 2019, while white voting population in the Greater Atlanta area grew only by 3.7%, Black voting age population grew by 24.3%, Asian voting age population grew by 36.0%, and Hispanic voting age population grew by 10.2%.

Because Atlanta is so densely populated, it means that small manipulations in the way that lines are drawn can have dramatic effects in disenfranchising voters of color. And given the unprecedented power that individual legislators have to initiate a state takeover of local elections after the passage of SB 202, these district manipulations can not only have an impact on where voters cast their ballots, but how their votes are counted.

**FAIR MAPS REQUIRE FAIR PROCESS**

Fair maps also require a fair process. And the process we've seen so far has been anything but fair. Two weeks ago, I attempted to testify before this committee at the first public town hall on redistricting. I signed up to testify well before the hearing, and then on the day before the town hall, I was abruptly told that I couldn't testify because there were 60 speakers who were already slated to speak. But on the day of the town hall only 23 speakers provided testimony, and public comment took less than an hour. In fact, the town hall wrapped up nearly forty minutes early. If this committee is truly committed to fair maps, it must do better. This means providing more opportunities for public hearings across the state *after* the full

Census data has been released in the fall, and having a robust mechanism for citizens to provide feedback on proposed maps. The voices of Georgians must be heard.

### **TRANSPARENCY**

Fair maps also require that legislators conduct the redistricting process transparently. Simply put, legislators must show their work when drafting maps. The public is entitled to see the criteria used to draft maps and provide substantive feedback on draft maps before a final vote takes place. Transparency also requires that the public receive adequate notice of when any meetings regarding redistricting take place before and during the special session. In the current atmosphere, with so much misinformation, transparency is key to preserving faith and confidence in our democracy.

As you think about drawing the districts, I ask you to consider:

- How would you draw districts if you believed that Black voters had elected leaders that created prosperity for Georgia?
- How would you draw districts if you believed that white and Black citizens working together made the decisions that resulted in the world's busiest airport?
- How would you draw districts if you believed that the leaders elected by Black voters brought the Olympics to Georgia -- bringing people from across the globe across Georgia- from Metro Atlanta, to Columbus to Savannah?
- How would you draw districts if you believed that voices and needs of all Georgians-- White, Black, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American were essential to the prosperity and well-being of our state?
- How would you draw districts if you believed that the diversity of our state is our strength?

Thank you again for this opportunity.