



Prepared Remarks
Rahul Garabadu
Voting Rights Attorney
ACLU of Georgia
Redistricting Town Hall
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Good afternoon. My name is Rahul Garabadu, and I am the Voting Rights Staff Attorney at the ACLU of Georgia. 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 that each vote should count the same. Fair maps are crucial to ensuring that every vote counts equally.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES IN CUMMING

We are here in Cumming today, a community that represents the growing diversity of our state. Preliminary data estimates show the seismic demographic shifts that have taken place just between 2010 and 2019. While white voting age population in Forsyth County grew only by 21.9%, Asian voting age population grew by 174.5%, Black voting age population grew by 102.4%, and Hispanic voting age population grew by 34.3%. The maps that are drawn in 2021 need to take that diversity into account and ensure that voters of color have the same opportunity to elect candidates of their choice as white voters do.

TRANSPARENCY

Fair maps also require that legislators conduct the redistricting process transparently. Simply put, legislators must show their work when drafting maps, and show it every step of the way. Transparency means that legislators have public hearings not just months before the Census Bureau releases its data, but also after the data is released which is when maps are actually being drafted. Transparency means members of this committee go to each judicial district in Georgia to show their proposed maps to the public, explain how they got those maps, and meaningfully consider feedback on them. Lastly, transparency means that all meetings concerning redistricting are done openly before the public, with plenty of notice and access provided for Georgians.

These are just a few of the baseline standards that this committee should adopt to ensure that the redistricting process is open, democratic, and representative of the interests of all Georgians. In the current atmosphere, with so much misinformation about voting and elections, transparency is key to preserving faith in our democracy.

Thank you for your time.