



**Prepared Remarks**  
**Ashlee Bruner, Policy Advocate**

ACLU of Georgia  
Augusta Redistricting Town Hall  
August 11, 2021

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Good evening Chair Kennedy, Chair Rich, and members of the Joint Committee. I'm Ashlee Bruner, Policy Advocate at the ACLU of Georgia. We are a non-partisan organization and believe the right to vote is a sacred civil liberty.

The ACLU of Georgia believes that voting should be easy and accessible to all and that every vote should count the same. Fair maps ensure that voters of color have the same opportunities as White voters to elect candidates of their choice.

**DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES**

The voting age population in the state of Georgia has grown to include 45% people of color. The demographics of the Greater Augusta area (which includes 10 counties) have also changed tremendously. The total voting age population has increased by nearly 8%.

Preliminary data from the 2019 American Community Survey indicates that while the White voting age population in Greater Augusta has increased by nearly 3%, Black voters have increased by just under 11%, Asian voters have increased by almost 22%, and Hispanic voters have increased by nearly 42%. The voting age population of color overall has grown by 14%.

The maps that are drawn by this body must account for this growth in our diversity.

**TRANSPARENCY & PUBLIC INPUT**

Fair maps require that legislators conduct this process transparently and involve the public at every step. It is not lost on us that this town hall was rescheduled from August 30th to today, 24 hours before Census data becomes available.

This committee must adopt and share guidelines for drawing the maps informed by public input, such as the per district data packets sent by the ACLU of Georgia to all 236 state legislators. After the maps are drawn, there must be an opportunity for public review and feedback *before* any vote takes place.

These are a few of the standards that this committee should adopt to ensure that the redistricting process is open, democratic, and representative of the interests of all Georgians--to preserve faith in our democracy and the sacred ideal of "We, the People."

Thank you for your consideration.