

THE AAPI & AMEMSA STATE REDISTRICTING COLLABORATIVE PROPOSED SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CONGRESSIONAL PLAN

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I. INTRODUCTION TO THE AAPI & AMEMSA STATE REDISTRICTING COLLABORATIVE

Background

The AAPI & AMEMSA State Redistricting Collaborative (AASRC) is a nonpartisan coalition working to uplift the voices of the Asian American, Pacific Islander, Arab, Middle Eastern, and Muslim communities in California's 2021 redistricting process. AASRC's approach has two main components. The first is to support community participation in redistricting by educating community members and leaders about redistricting, demystifying the process for them, and helping them provide communities of interest input to the California Citizens Redistricting Commission. The second is to use the priorities and feedback identified by local residents and leaders to create assembly and congressional district map proposals that respect the integrity of and empower AAPI & AMEMSA communities.

AASRC is based on the prior work of the Coalition of Asian Pacific Americans for Fair Redistricting, which carried out outreach and advocacy efforts with AAPI communities during the previous three redistricting cycles. Given the often overlapping interests between AAPI and AMEMSA communities, AASRC broadened its network to include AMEMSA organizations in this redistricting cycle.

Principles

- I. District boundaries should comply with the VRA to ensure that minority populations have an equal opportunity to participate in the political process and elect candidates of their choice.
- II. Districts should respect the integrity of communities of interest and neighborhoods.
- III. Proposals should be created in collaboration with other stakeholders, such as Black, Latino, LGBTQ, and environmental communities, to find district line configurations that respect the integrity of other historically disenfranchised communities while also uplifting AAPI and AMEMSA communities.

Structure and Participants

AASRC worked across six regions, with anchor partners based in each region driving the work forward among their communities by engaging local community groups and individuals. See the list of regions and anchor partners below.

- Sacramento - Hmong Innovating Politics, Jakara Movement, Council on American-Islamic Relations - Sacramento Valley/Central California
- San Francisco Bay Area - Asian Law Alliance, Council on American-Islamic Relations - SF Bay Area, Jakara Movement, Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Asian Law Caucus
- Central Valley - Hmong Innovating Politics, Jakara Movement, Council on American-Islamic Relations - Sacramento Valley/Central California
- Orange County - Orange County Civic Engagement Table (OCCET)
- San Diego - Asian Solidarity Collective

- Los Angeles - Asian Pacific Policy & Planning Council (A3PCON), Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Los Angeles
- Statewide - AAPIs for Civic Empowerment - Education Fund (AAPI FORCE-EF), Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC)

Process and Activities

AASRC held a total of 34 online workshops to educate local residents and leaders on redistricting concepts, explain California's process, highlight opportunities for engagement, and help people submit community of interest testimony. During these workshops, AASRC also identified community mapping priorities and shared mapping proposals for feedback. Our workshops were attended by local residents and community leaders, including members or staff of more than 100 different local community organizations such as community centers, worker centers, youth groups, cultural centers, and business associations. In many regions, AASRC held additional follow-up conversations with partners and/or additional local stakeholders to clarify how to balance competing priorities or to gather additional information about key communities of interest.

After the final set of workshops, AASRC brought its COIs, community priorities, and proposed assembly and congressional district lines to mapping discussions with leaders working to similarly engage other communities of color and underrepresented communities in California's redistricting process, including MALDEF, the Black Census and Redistricting Hub, and the IVE Redistricting Alliance. AASRC used input from these stakeholders to create a statewide mapping proposal that incorporates other communities' priorities while respecting the integrity of AAPI and AMEMSA communities.

AASRC also offered individual support to workshop participants testifying at the regional commission COI input hearings. This support included creating maps and pulling demographic information to provide additional context for their testimony.

About AASRC's Anchor Partners:

AAPIs For Civic Empowerment-Education Fund (AAPI FORCE-EF) is an alliance of community organizations serving Asian American and Pacific Islanders across the state of California. AAPI FORCE-EF builds organizers, organizations, and networks to form a far-reaching, powerful AAPI political bloc.

Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council (A3PCON) is a coalition of community-based organizations that advocates for the rights and needs of the Asian and Pacific Islander American (AAPI) Community in the greater Los Angeles area, with a particular focus on low income, immigrant, refugee and other disadvantaged sectors of the population.

Asian Law Alliance, established in 1977, is a non-profit organization providing equal access to the justice system for Asian Pacific Islander and low-income populations in the Silicon Valley.

Our mission is through providing legal counseling, community education and community organizing, we promote self-sufficiency, self-reliance, and a better quality of life for all.

Asian Solidarity Collective (ASC) is a grassroots organization in San Diego whose mission is to activate Asian American social justice consciousness, condemn anti-Blackness, and build Asian solidarity intersectionally with Black, Brown and Indigenous folks, people with disabilities, queer and trans people of color, and all oppressed communities. Our work includes political education, community building, and collective action.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3), grassroots civil rights and advocacy group. CAIR is America's largest Islamic civil liberties group, with regional offices nationwide. The national headquarters is located on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. The California offices are located in San Francisco, Sacramento, San Diego, and Greater Los Angeles. In the Sacramento and Central Valleys, CAIR's presence has been essential in ensuring that vulnerable immigrant, refugee and minority communities – Sacramento being home to some of the most diverse and dense in the nation – are equitably represented and served. Through providing civil rights and immigrant rights legal services, as well as the widespread community education and advocacy efforts, CAIR – Sacramento Valley / Central California is able to give a voice to the over 100,000 Muslims in the valley.

Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC) was established in 2009 by a group of young Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander (NHPI) leaders who recognized the urgency to address the growing needs of NHPI families. With experiences ranging from grassroots organizing to higher education administration, the founders prioritized building a strong and unified advocacy voice for Pacific Islanders. EPIC advances social justice by engaging Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islanders in culture-centered advocacy, leadership development, and research.

Hmong Innovating Politics (HIP) is a grassroots organization whose mission is to advance social justice and build power with Hmong youth and families through leadership development and multi-generational community organizing. HIP is based in Fresno and Sacramento, CA — home to two of the largest Hmong American populations in the state and nation. HIP continues to serve as the largest Southeast Asian American power building organization in the Central Valley.

Jakara Movement is a grassroots community-building organization working to empower, educate, and organize Punjabi Sikhs, and other marginalized communities in California. We strive to create a Gurmat-inspired community, rooted in the struggle of our foremothers and forefathers, to develop powerful, informed, and organized youth leadership, locally-rooted residential power, and community capacity that will be a key partner in building a better future for all. The Jakara Movement has offices and staff in Bakersfield, Fresno, Livingston, Turlock/Ceres, Tracy, Union City, Sacramento, and Yuba City, as well as have collegiate chapters on 25 UC, CSU, and community colleges to complement their 70+ clubs on high school campuses in 12 California counties.

The Orange County Civic Engagement Table (OCCET) is a progressive AAPI-Latinx-Labor-Environmental Justice Alliance that seeks to build progressive transformation of our region. The eight organizations that anchor OCCET serve the emerging majority of the county – low income immigrant Latinx and Asian American communities that work across issues of immigrant, economic, and racial justice across the county. Through this innovative partnership, OCCET is committed to increasing the quality, scale and effectiveness of civic participation in communities of color and among low-income populations in Orange County.

Asian Americans Advancing Justice Background and Role:

A joint team from Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Asian Law Caucus (Advancing Justice - ALC) and Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Los Angeles (Advancing Justice - LA) facilitated the AASRC network. This role includes providing workshop facilitation, educational resources, and mapping support.

Advancing Justice - Asian Law Caucus - Founded in 1972, Advancing Justice - ALC is a nonprofit, public interest organization that promotes, advances, and represents the legal and civil rights of Asian Pacific American communities. Advancing Justice - ALC strives to create informed and educated communities empowered to assert their rights and participate actively in American society, through the provision of legal services, educational programs, community organizing, and advocacy. Advancing Justice - ALC also helps set local and state policies on voting rights, language access, and census taking.

Advancing Justice - Los Angeles - Since 1983, Advancing Justice - LA has been a leading legal and civil rights organization for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs). Today, Advancing Justice - LA serves more than 15,000 individuals and organizations in California every year. The mission of Advancing Justice - LA is to advocate for civil rights, provide legal services and education, and build coalitions to positively influence and impact AAPIs and to create a more equitable and harmonious society. Pursuing that mission includes advocating on behalf of AAPIs and other underrepresented people for full and fair representation in all levels of the political process.

Asian Americans Advancing Justice Affiliation (Advancing Justice) is a national affiliation of five civil rights nonprofit organizations. Though independently led, operated and funded--we share a common mission to promote a fair and equitable society for all by working for civil and human rights that empower Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other underserved communities.

II. NARRATIVE SUMMARY OF THE AAPI & AMEMSA STATE REDISTRICTING COLLABORATIVE (AASRC) SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CONGRESSIONAL PLAN

Highlights of the AASRC Southern California Congressional Plan

AASRC's Southern California Congressional Plan includes 20 congressional districts and covers districts in Los Angeles County (metro Los Angeles, San Gabriel Valley, west Los Angeles, and South Bay), all of Orange County, and all of San Diego County.

The general themes of AASRC's Congressional plan are that the plan (1) respects the Voting Rights Act interests of AAPIs, Black, and Latino communities, (2) respects communities of interest and neighborhoods, and (3) respects other traditional redistricting criteria such as contiguity and respect for cities and counties.

AASRC's plan was drawn from the Commission's perspective, always keeping in mind the question of how proposed district lines are justified under and comport with the Voters First Act's ranked criteria.

Respect for the Voting Rights Act (VRA)

AASRC's plan maintains or creates seven districts in which Latinos make up more than 50+% of the citizen voting age population (CVAP). While AASRC's plan does not include Imperial County, the San Diego districts were drawn taking into account a potential Latino VRA district in Imperial County.

Respect for communities of interest

AASRC has engaged local and statewide stakeholders from the AAPI and AMEMSA communities throughout Southern California to understand how leaders and residents define their communities. After developing an understanding of their COIs and district preferences, AASRC worked within the IVE Alliance (which includes the Black Census & Redistricting Hub) and with MALDEF to understand the priorities of other communities and collaborate on mapping proposals. The IVE Alliance includes nonprofit organizations representing AAPI, Black, Latino Native American, LGBTQ, and environmental communities. The Southern California proposal submitted by AASRC has similarities with those submitted by the Black Census & Redistricting Hub, MALDEF, and the People's Bloc and is intended to amplify the interests of various communities and generally balances immigrant, communities of color, low-income, LGBTQ, and environmental interests. AASRC's Orange County districts are intended to be identical to the Orange County districts submitted by OCCET because OCCET is our regional lead partner in Orange County.

Respect for population equality

Districts in AASRC's plan are drawn within +/- 5 residents from the ideal population of 760,066 persons per Congressional district.

Respects the requirement of contiguity

All districts in AASRC's plan are contiguous under the Commission's definition of contiguity except for one district that includes islands to which no means of transportation by land exist.

Respects cities and counties

Districts drawn to keep together communities of interest are also drawn to avoid city and county splits to the extent possible. However, where strong communities of interest cross city or county boundaries, where portions of cities and/or counties are required for the VRA, or where population equality is required, cities and counties have been split.

AASRC's Congressional plan splits 64 cities.

AASRC Priorities for Congressional Districts¹

Los Angeles County - Metro Los Angeles

- In CDs 28 and 34, keep the AAPI ethnic neighborhoods of Chinatown, Historic Filipinotown, Koreatown, Little Tokyo, and Thai Town whole and in two districts.
 - All five AAPI neighborhoods have been recognized by the City of Los Angeles and have strong historic preservation goals of protecting and celebrating AAPI culture and heritage. Each should be kept whole. Chinatown and Little Tokyo in particular share common interest due to its low-income immigrant renters fighting gentrification issues in and around their neighborhoods and should be kept together in one district. (Supporting testimony: Ivy Hong, Aquilina Soriano Versoza, Eunice Song, Grant Sunoo, Matthew Lum, and June Lim)

Los Angeles County - San Gabriel Valley

- In CD 27, keep whole the AAPI COI in the west San Gabriel Valley, including the cities of Alhambra, Arcadia, Monterey Park, Rosemead, San Gabriel, South Pasadena, and Temple City.
 - As discussed in the Assembly Summary, these cities share policy interests with other working-class cities in the area. They should be paired with those with similar socioeconomic characteristics while still respecting the potential neighboring Latino VRA districts. (Supporting testimony: Michelle Freridge and input from AASRC workshop participants)
- In CD 38, keep whole the AAPI COI in the east San Gabriel Valley, consisting of Hacienda Heights, Rowland Heights, Diamond Bar, Walnut, and do not pair with communities west of the 605 to the extent feasible. (Supporting testimony: Sara Rohani and June Lim)

¹ Supporting testimony can be found attached at Appendix B.

Los Angeles County - South Bay and West Los Angeles

- In CD 42, keep Gardena whole and with the non-coastal portion of Torrance and with communities with similar socio-economic interests.
 - The residents of Torrance and Gardena are economically diverse. While both have a solid middle class, many low-income AAPI seniors reside in both cities. Because of this, Gardena and the non-coastal portion of Torrance should be paired with South Los Angeles rather than the high income areas on the coast. (Supporting testimony: Grant Sunoo)
- In CD 42, keep Hawthorne, Inglewood, and Lennox whole and together.
 - Many Tongan community members have lived in the Lennox, Hawthorne, and Inglewood area since the 1970s. The three cities have the largest concentration of Tongan churches in the area. Tongan residents cross the borders of the three cities to attend their church. (Supporting testimony: Mele Raiva Manu-Blagojevich)
- In CD 43, keep West Carson whole and keep Carson whole and keep the two together.
 - In AASRC's Assembly Plan, Carson was split into two districts due to population equality limitations. However, the Pacific Islander COI in Carson as well as Carson's Filipino American COI believes that the City should be kept whole whenever possible. And given the larger population in Congressional districts, Carson should be kept whole at this level of government. (Supporting testimony: Roselyn Ibanez, Romeo Hebron, and June Pouessi)
- In CDs 39 and 43, keep the Cambodian COI in Long Beach and Signal Hill whole to the extent possible. If not whole, cut the COI based on Signal Hill boundaries and keep the portion southwest of Signal Hill in an LVRA district.
 - In AASRC's Assembly Plan, the Cambodian COI was split essentially following the Signal Hill boundary. Because of a potential LVRA district in Long Beach, the Cambodian COI in our congressional plan is once again cut essentially along the Signal Hill boundary with the southwest portion in the LVRA district in order to pair the lower income Cambodian COI with the Latino community in which it share many policy concerns often related to language access and low-income. (Based on email discussions with staff from Khmer Girls in Action. See the heatmap submitted for poverty rate and limited English proficiency.)
- In CD 33, keep whole the two Japanese American enclaves located in west Los Angeles.
 - As discussed in the Assembly Plan, both Sawtelle Japantown and Venice-Culver City are home to Japanese American residents and cultural institutions. For example, Sawtelle Japantown has the West LA Japanese American Community Center and Venice has the Venice Japanese Community Center. Residents in the neighborhood congregate at those facilities as well as the other Japanese American institutions in the neighborhoods. (Based on email discussions with staff at Little Tokyo Service Center. See submitted shapefile.)

Orange County

- In CD 46, keep the AMESMA immigrant/refugee COIs with the Vietnamese refugee COI.
 - As part of their daily lives, AMEMSA communities in Orange County (Buena Park, La Palma, and Cypress) cross into Los Angeles County (Cerritos and Artesia) to shop in ethnic markets, dine in restaurants, worship, and access social services in Artesia and Cerritos. To the south, Vietnamese American communities in west Garden Grove, Westminster, west Santa Ana, and north Fountain Valley share common refugee experiences and the need for social services and affordable housing. The two COIs share experiences as immigrants/refugees and common needs such as language access. (Supporting testimony: Hina Ahmad, Fayaz Nawabi, Caroline Nguyen, Charlene Kazner, and Vincent Tran)
- In CD 44, keep Irvine and Costa Mesa whole, drawn together with parts of Tustin, and apart from more affluent coastal communities like Newport Beach and Laguna Beach.
 - Irvine is one of the fastest growing cities in the state fueled by ongoing growth in immigrant communities. With growing numbers of Asian American, Pacific Islander, and AMEMSA residents, the city is also home to an emerging low-income population with needs similar to those of Latino communities in Costa Mesa. Recognizing common needs related to affordable housing, language access, and other concerns, public programs providing rental assistance and workforce development target communities in both Irvine and Costa Mesa. These needs are much different than those of affluent coastal communities like Newport Beach and Laguna Beach. (Supporting testimony: Mary Anne Foo)

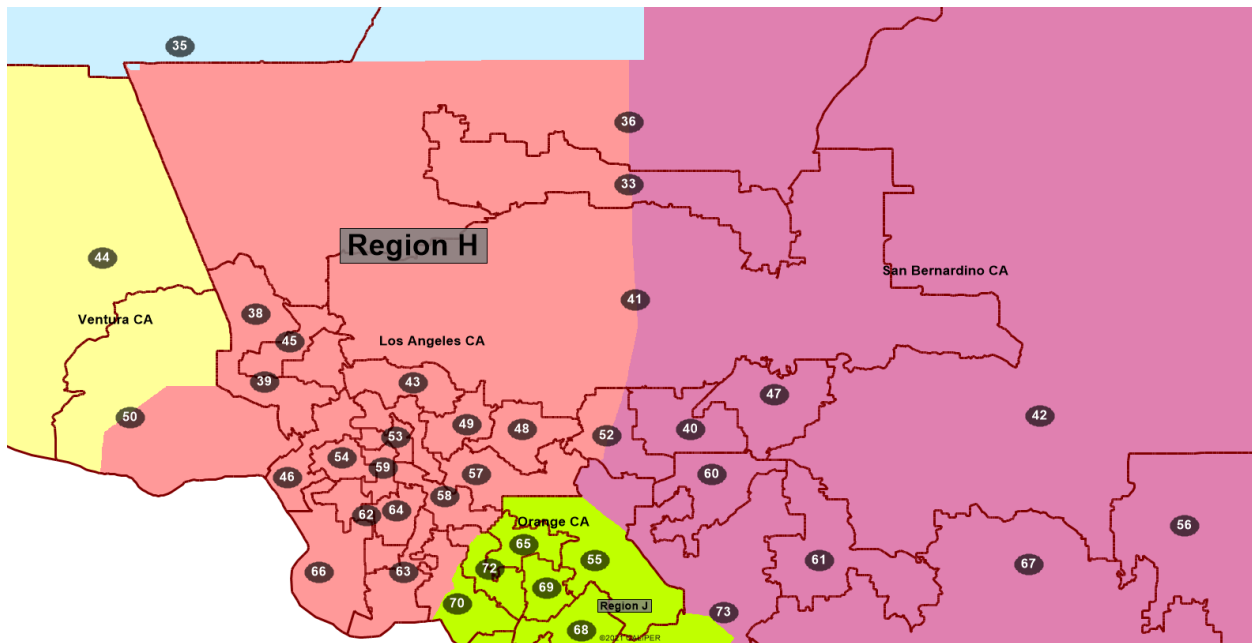
San Diego

- In CD 52, respect the integrity of the Convoy District within the larger Kearny Mesa neighborhood and keep it in a district with Clairemont, Linda Vista, and Mira Mesa while preserving the boundaries of each of these neighborhoods.
 - The Convoy district is a crucial business and cultural center for the AAPI community in San Diego, and is home to many small businesses and community centers. (Supporting testimony: Kristina Mananquil, Lauren Garces)
- In CDs 50 and 52, keep the broader City Heights refugee community whole to the extent feasible.
 - The City Heights neighborhood has spilled beyond its historic boundaries, extending east all the way to La Mesa and overlapping with the Oak Park neighborhood. As mentioned in our Assembly plan, the refugee community shares challenges and priorities like high levels of limited English proficiency, extremely low income, and the need to access culturally competent, in-language supportive services. If the neighborhood does have to be cut to respect the Latina VRA district, it should be cut at 54th St. and Chollas Parkway. (Supporting testimony: Kristina Mananquil, Nao Kabashima)

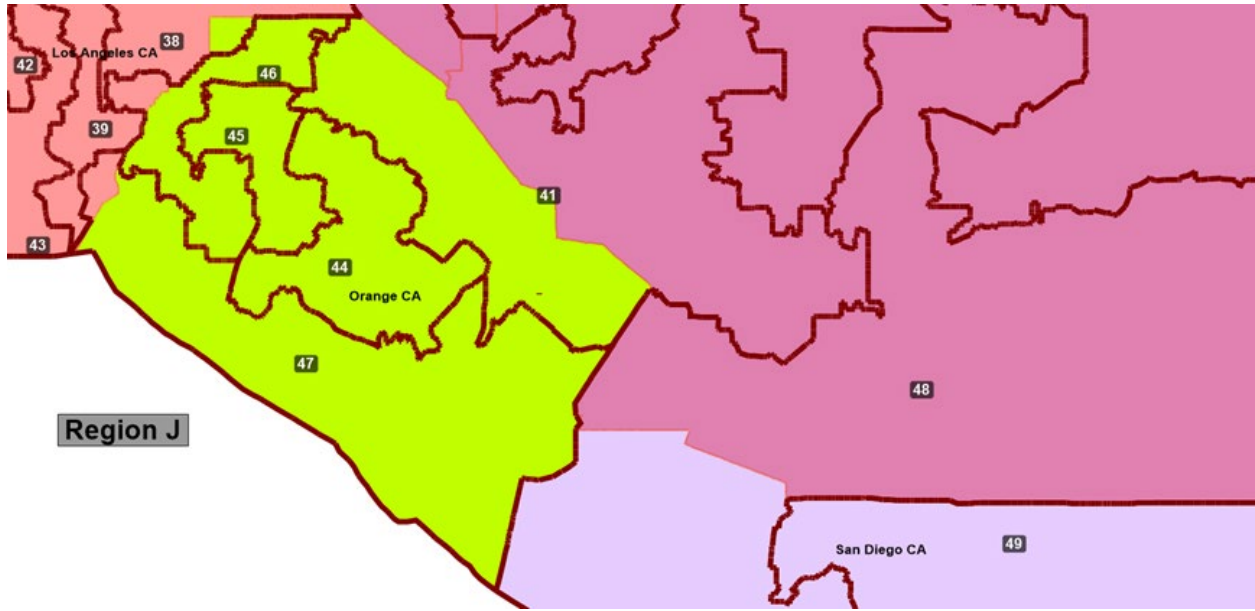
- In CD 50, keep the northeastern section of National City with the Paradise Hills neighborhood in southeastern San Diego.
 - The AAPI community in the northeastern corner of National City, bounded by D Avenue and 16th Street, is strongly connected to the community in the Paradise Hills neighborhood. They share common businesses, community centers, and schools. (Supporting testimony: Kristina Mananquil, Mark Leo)

VIEW OF MAPS BY REGIONS

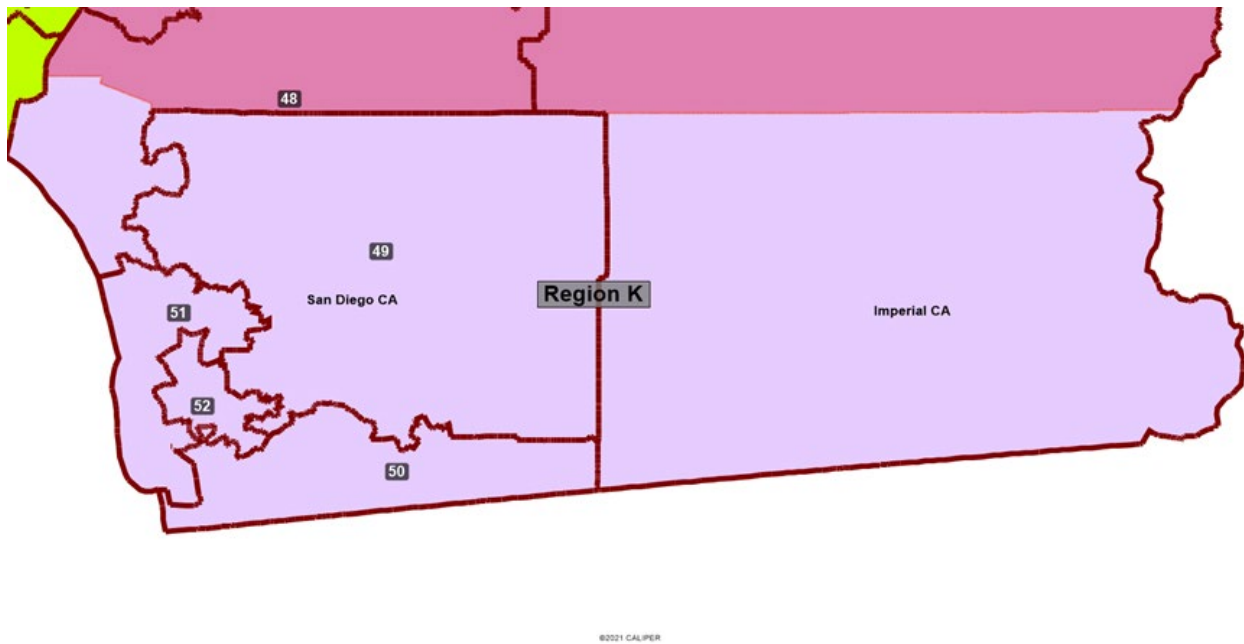
View of Congressional Districts in Region H



View of Congressional Districts in Region J



View of Congressional Districts in Region K



AASRC Southern California Congressional Plan – Population Equality

All districts, including Section 2 VRA districts, are +/- 8 residents of the ideal population size for Congressional districts. Congressional District 47 is the least populated district, 5 residents less than ideal population (with 706,061 total population) and Congressional District 51 is the largest district, 8 residents more from ideal population (with 760074 total population).

AASRC Southern California Congressional Plan – Compliance with Federal VRA

This plan contains seven VRA Districts drawn to protect Latino voters. Below is a chart listing the districts by type and covered group.

VRA District	Covered Group
32	Latino
34	Latino
38	Latino
39	Latino
43	Latino
45	Latino
50	Latino

Individual district summaries include information on the racial composition of districts drawn from Census 2020 and citizen voting-age population information drawn from the University of California, Berkeley’s Statewide Database. All race groups are not included in the table, therefore totals for race groups will not sum to 100%.

AASRC Southern California Congressional Plan – Contiguity

All districts in the plan are contiguous except for CD 33, which contains islands to which there is no means of transportation by land. Other than the non-contiguous islands, the CD 33 is contiguous.

AASRC Southern California Congressional Plan – Cities, Counties, Communities of Interest and Neighborhoods

Cities are defined to include both incorporated cities and unincorporated areas (census designated places). This proposal splits 70 out of 264 census places, only 26.5% of all census places in this region. Most census places were split in 2, however 8 cities were split multiple times, due to the size of many cities and, in many cases, VRA district compliance. Census places include cities and census designated places. Appendix A identifies each city or census designated place (unincorporated areas) that are whole or split in each proposed district.

None of the 5 counties of focus in this proposal is kept whole because the population of four of the five counties is larger than the ideal population of 760,066 persons per Congressional district .

As described in the AASRC Priorities section above, the proposal keeps together numerous communities of interest and neighborhoods. See Appendix B for detailed community of interest testimony from AASRC Collaborative participants.