



April 27, 2020

Applicant Review Panel
c/o California State Auditor
621 Capitol Mall, Suite 1200
Sacramento, CA 95814
Sent via electronic mail

Re: Diversity of the Citizens Redistricting Commission finalists

Dear Applicant Review Panel,

We write to urge you to select a final applicant pool that includes sufficient racial and ethnic diversity to fairly reflect the diverse population and interests of our state. We applaud your efforts thus far to create a strong applicant pool, particularly within the disrupting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. While we know you are weighing the merits of many strong applicants, we want to emphasize the importance of considering overall racial and ethnic composition as you select the final pool for review by the Legislature.

As you well know, the panel is tasked with creating an applicant pool which will result in a commission that reasonably represents the diversity of California.¹ We recognize that it is difficult to balance the many facets of California's considerable diversity, including demographic traits and geographic regions. As you seek to fulfill that goal, we would draw your attention to the notion expressed in Section 60805 of the California Code of Regulations that:

"California benefits by having effective participation in the electoral process by persons of all demographic characteristics and residing in all geographic locations, including, but not limited to, participation by those persons who in the past, as a consequence of sharing certain demographic characteristics, such as race and ethnicity, have had less opportunity than other members of the electorate to participate in the electoral process."²

Racial and ethnic minorities have experienced systematic exclusion from many stages of the electoral process in the past, and disparities in participation and access to the vote continue. To avoid reproducing the injustices of underrepresentation and disenfranchisement, it is crucial that members of these communities are able to participate in the decision-making process that will draw the lines of power in California for the next decade to come. As the panel winnows the final pool, we ask that you balance demographic and geographic diversity, and make sure to include members of racial and ethnic communities that have historically had fewer opportunities to participate in our state's democracy.

¹ 2 CCR § 60850(e)

² 2 CCR § 60805(a)(3)

We are grateful for your service and tireless efforts over the past year and are confident that you will maintain this diligence and thoughtfulness in the remaining months of this process. While you process input from many directions, we hope that this is a helpful reminder of the importance of including racially diverse candidates to most effectively strengthen the future of our diverse California electorate. Thank you in advance for your time in considering these issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julia Marks". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julia Marks
Attorney, Voting Rights & Census
Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Asian Law Caucus

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adria Orr". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Adria Orr
Senior Project Coordinator, Voting Rights & Census
Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Asian Law Caucus