

Communication from Public

Name: Laura Krell

Date Submitted: 11/05/2021 07:54 AM

Council File No: 20-0668-S7

Comments for Public Posting: Council President Martinez and fellow Councilmembers, Thank you for all of your time and effort to create an equitable map for LA City. We advocate on behalf of the Jewish community and not at the expense of any other community. We ask that you protect the 70-year-old historic Jewish Council District 5 which has given this community a collective voice in fighting anti-Semitism as well as the voice to uplift our culture City wide. Please keep Bel-Air, Westwood, Beverly Wood, Pico-Robertson, Fairfax-Beverly area, Mid-Wilshire/Labrea, and Hancock Park together in CD5 in the final map to be voted on by the LA City Council. Thank you, Laura Krell

Communication from Public

Name: Elizabeth Cooper

Date Submitted: 11/05/2021 08:41 AM

Council File No: 20-0668-S7

Comments for Public Posting: I am writing regarding redistricting. I live in Harvard Heights which is in Council District 10. Over many years we have developed excellent relationships with the Council staff, have received great services from the Council office, and remain connected to historically linked nearby neighborhoods in West Adams which are also in Council District 10. Being moved to another district unfamiliar with our needs and community leadership like Council District 1 would be detrimental to our neighborhood. Please keep us together in CD 10 Thank you,
Elizabeth Cooper

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 11/05/2021 08:42 AM

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Communication from Public

Name: Rebecca Mittman

Date Submitted: 11/05/2021 08:46 AM

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Communication from Public

Name: Miriam Lax

Date Submitted: 11/05/2021 08:56 AM

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Communication from Public

Name: ron kaminker and family

Date Submitted: 11/05/2021 09:04 AM

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Communication from Public

Name: Kalman Topp

Date Submitted: 11/05/2021 09:07 AM

Council File No: 20-0668-S7

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Communication from Public

Name: Eric S

Date Submitted: 11/05/2021 09:07 AM

Council File No: 20-0668-S7

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Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 11/05/2021 09:28 AM

Council File No: 20-0668-S7

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Communication from Public

Name: Dr. Irving Lebovics, Agudath Israel of California
Date Submitted: 11/05/2021 12:17 PM
Council File No: 20-0668-S7
Comments for Public Posting: see uploaded file

November 5, 2021

LA City Council Redistricting Ad-Hoc Committee
200 N. Spring Street, Ste. 470
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Practicing Jewish Community and Redistricting

Honorable Council President Martinez and fellow Council Members,

We are writing on behalf of Agudath Israel of California, The Orthodox Union and the Rabbinical Council of California, three of the largest Orthodox Jewish Community umbrella organizations in California. We are part of the grassroots group the LA Jewish Communal Redistricting coalition made of individuals and organizations of varying levels of Jewish cultural identification. The members of this coalition represent close to 200 institutions, hundreds of Rabbis and tens of thousands of orthodox Jewish residents in Los Angeles.

Our organizations are involved in serving Jewish residents across the City, but the majority of those we serve live within the neighborhoods of Westwood, Hancock Park, Pico-Robertson, Beverly-Fairfax, Mid-Wilshire, Beverly wood and Cheviot Hills, Century City, Valley Village and Sherman Oaks. These neighborhoods, with the exception of the valley neighborhoods, have resided wholly or in portions within Council District 5 for some 70 years. We are asking that you hear our plea to keep the West LA portion of these communities cohesive inside Council District five.

We recognize that your task to make the final map equitable is great and we thank you for taking the time to consider our request and to learn about the diversity and history of the Jewish community in Los Angeles. We recognize the need for equity for all marginalized groups in LA, and particularly speak up for our Armenian brothers and sisters who have shared a history so similar to ours. We look forward to seeing a less divisive map come to fruition under your leadership.

Los Angeles is the second largest Orthodox Jewish community in North America. The Orthodox Jewish communities in Pico-Robertson, Beverly-Fairfax, Hancock Park, Westwood, Cheviot Hills and Century City constitute a “community of interest” because they are “a contiguous population which shares common social and economic interests that should be included within a single district for purposes of its effective and fair representation.” The community qualifies as a “community of interest” under every legal standard: “needs and interests,” geography, social interaction, trade, political ties, living patterns, religious characteristics, cultural and ethnic ties, and common interests. Under California law, consideration of communities of interest is required legally during redistricting in order to provide a meaningful and fair chance to elect officials who best represent the community’s concerns, interests, and priorities.

Understanding the Los Angeles Jewish Communities is deeper than matching a state definition of a community of interest. Jews have lived in Los Angeles close to 200 years like many other minorities. Today there are thriving Jewish communities all over Los Angeles, but due to redlining and discrimination this was not always the case. In fact official mandates all across Los Angeles were aimed at creating districts for which minorities, including Jews would have difficulty gaining a collective voice and or the ability to hold office. Further, land deeds had restrictive covenants against Jews and many other minorities. Even where there were no formal restrictive covenants "gentlemen's agreements" among realtors kept Jews and other minorities out of communities. Los Angeles had widespread anti-Semitism--beginning in the 1880s and increasing after 1900 as the Jewish population grew. Discrimination in housing, employment (insurance, banking, corporations, professions excluded Jews), admission to universities and professional schools. Hospitals would not give admitting privileges to Jewish doctors. "White shoe" law firms would not hire Jews--it took until late 1960s for firms like O'Melveny to finally have a Jewish partner.

During this time the LA Times used openly anti-Semitic language. Later, pro-Nazi and KKK affiliates terrorized Jews and other minorities. The Home Owners Loan Corporation, a Federal New Deal agency intended to increase housing and home loans, called Jews in Boyle Heights and West Adams "subversive" and described foreign-born Jewish families as "infiltrating" and so engaged in redlining. In addition, Jews and other minorities were excluded from social and country clubs, where business networks were formed.

Jews have also been a part of helping to build important Civic and Cultural organizations like Jewish Family Services, Menorah Housing, Bet Tzedek, The Museum of Tolerance, Our Big Kitchen, Jewish Free Loan Association, Tomchai Shabbos, Hatzala and Bikur Cholim, just to name a few. All these organizations serve and welcome anyone in need of their services in Los Angeles regardless of their cultural or religious affiliation. Keeping our agencies together with our residents allows a cohesive vision of service and giving to thrive across Los Angeles.

Further, Los Angeles is home to the largest population of Jewish refugees from the Middle East, outside of Israel. This community includes Jews who were indigenous to Iran, Iraq, Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia, Syria, Lebanon, and Turkey and unlike the persecution that forced Eastern European Jews to flee; this is a community whose collective trauma goes largely untold. Many of these first generation immigrants to Los Angeles come from authoritarian regimes in which they were persecuted for being Jewish. Most of them left everything behind to start over in America. Living in cohesive communities in Los Angeles offers support and the ability to elect representative government, which would never have been possible for a Jew in their home countries.

In addition, there are 3000 holocaust survivors who live below the poverty line in current CD5. These survivors as well as thousands of other orthodox families depend on social service agencies for food and rent from CD5 institutions like Tomchei Shabbos and The Los Angeles Jewish Federation's, "Jews in Need" program.

According to LAPD Hate Crime reports for 2020, the largest amount of hate acts against any single religion were committed against Jewish people. In addition, the ADL notes that 2020 and

2021 have shown the highest number of anti-Semitic hate incidents since they started tracking these acts in the 1970s. Further, a national poll shows that close to 71% of Jews in America have been the victims of Holocaust denial.

There is a lot of history and too much to cover, but we hope this gives some depth and diversity to the story of our people and why we are asking for district 5 to be kept together as the Jewish representative district. We are not monolithic or parochial, and though our population in Los Angeles is 18%, worldwide Jews constitute less than .2% of world population, and we live knowing how few we truly are and how anti-Semitism continues to rise. For this, and all the other reasons in this letter are why keeping the one Jewish seat in CD5 where we have an opportunity to elect representative leadership is truly important. Just like so many communities of interest, in Los Angeles we are in need of a collective voice and the ability to heal our collective trauma together.

We want to be partners with you in creating a more equitable map for all in Los Angeles. We would be happy to meet and discuss any items mentioned in this letter in further detail. Thank you for your consideration and for taking the time to learn a bit more about Jewish Angelinos.

Thank you for your huge effort in this task and for considering our community respectfully in your decisions.

In appreciation,

Dr. Irving Lebovics

Chairman, Agudath Israel of California

Rabbi Avraham Union

Rabbinic Administrator, Rabbinical Council of California

Rabbi Adir Posy

West Coast Executive Director, Orthodox Union