Good Afternoon,

My name is Patricia Avery, I'm here today speaking as the 1st Vice President of the NAACP Champaign County Branch, accompanied by our President Reverend T.A. Burks, I'm also the Executive Director of the Champaign-Urbana Area Project an organization that serves at risk youth and families. On average we serve 150 African American families annually. I want to thank the commission for hosting this important public hearing.

10 years ago I served on the Champaign County Board and had the opportunity to be involved in redistricting. I learned then the importance of having a map that is compact and contiguous and one that is representative of various interest groups. I also learned that gerrymandering tactics appears in maps that attempting to dilute the minority vote or lines were drawn to make it difficult, if not impossible for targeted candidates to win. (example) It was truly an important learning experience for me as it relates to our democratic process. The NAACP and CUAP serve the same constituency and I am here to ask that during this redistricting procedure this commission will keep it "fair and balance" and that lines are drawn to increase diversity not reduce it. I've done a pleminary search from some pretty reliable sources to see if there has ever been an African American to represent the 103rd 104th and 52nd districts and so far I've come up with "No." In January the Illinois Voting Act of 2011 was passed specifically to create special districts to achieve better minority representation. The act calls for crossover districts where minority groups are large enough with help from a majority group of voters to elect or at least have some influence on who will represent us. My experience is our current district lines allow for some influence to occur. Therefore in my estimation not a lot

has to be done to the current map. At least currently our State Representatives are accessible and people in the African American community seem to know. When the new lines are drawn and because of Champaign counties population growth our districts will be smaller and the lines are most likely to shift. I think my colleague Teresa Haley President of the Springfield branch NAACP could not have said it more clearly "The NAACP want to be sure there is no packing, stacking and cracking going on in Illinois because, one the law doesn't allow it and two we know the commission will be fair and impartial. The NAACP does not want to see any disparate gerrymandering "we want to increase our opportunity to have a truly representative democratic process not less, and if you keep the law that was enacted in March central to the process, we should be just fine. Thank you.