

A Testimony Guide for

# Senate Redistricting Hearings 2023



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Last week, the Senate took steps to start the redistricting process once again. Senator Huffman filed legislation (SB375) that would "ratify" the exact same senate map that was passed last fall in a special session. This is, in part, due to their interpretation of the state constitution that says redistricting must occur in a regular, legislative session.

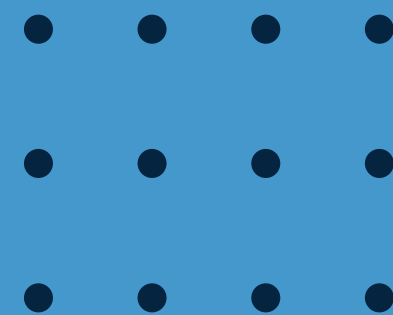
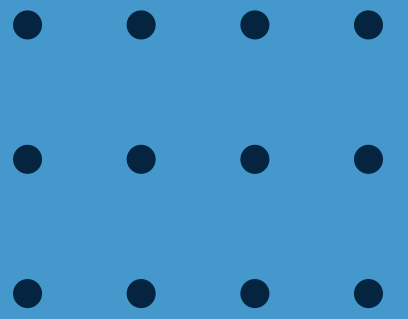
On Wednesday, the Texas Senate adopted Senate Resolution 2 (SR2), which calls for virtual, regional public input hearings to be held to collect public input on the map. The question is why hold multiple public hearings when you plan to adopt the exact same map? These hearings are nothing but a sham. They are an illusion of a fair and open process.

We do not want to lose some of the legislative record that was created during the special session (testimony, committee layouts, floor debates, etc.). Much of this previous work was included in the record for the lawsuits that have been filed challenging the current map.

It is crucial that you provide testimony once again, in case we have to recreate the legislative record.

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Important to call  
out the sham  
hearings &  
process!



# Define Your Community

- Who lives there?
- The physical boundaries: name of community, street names, water district, etc
- Neighborhood groups: issue-based, faith-based, school-based
- Languages spoken
- Shared resources: water sources, weather patterns, etc



# Issues facing your community

Please mention if your area is diverse & you're facing the same kind of issues.

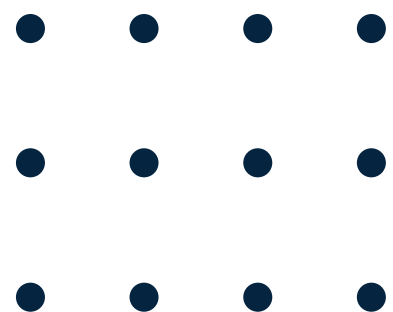
Important to note so we can explain why cracking your community has a negative impact - i.e do not want to crack diverse areas

- Flooding - Ex: Addick's dam in Houston, Hurricane Harvey, reservoirs
- Evictions - Serious problem in Houston and Dallas during pandemic
- Access to loans - southside of Dallas impacted
- Economic interests/barriers
- Hurricane recovery
- Access to healthcare - Where are hospitals and clinics located? Easily reachable?
- Access to childcare
- Food desert - problems in DFW, Houston, Bexar
- Environmental issues: Ex: polluted ports, Houston Air Alliance, 5th Ward cancer cluster, various pipelines across the state
- Transportation and Roads - problems with bus lines in Fort Worth, I-45 Corridor expansion in Houston, I-10 Expansion in El Paso
- Local school issues
- Problems with trash pickup
- Problems with stray dogs/animal control

# For communities of color

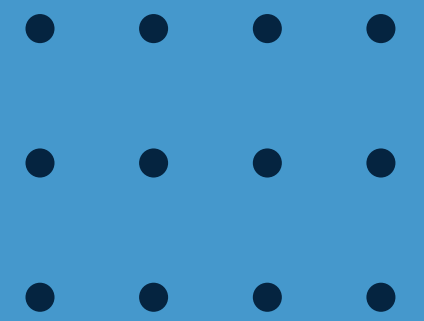
1. Highlight struggles experienced during voting this past year.

- Did you experience any language barriers at the polls?
- Did you receive any fraudulent or untrustworthy mailers?
- Did any candidates use racial appeals during the election cycle?
- Did a canvasser come to your home to verify how many voters lived in your residence?
- Did anyone ask you to sign an affidavit verifying if you voted recently or to verify your voter registration?



2. Highlight issues your community faced over the past year.

- Discrimination in the community
- Discrimination in housing (access to loans, continued problems due to redlining, access to healthcare)
- Language barriers in the community
- Problems with schools (high rates of expulsion for certain communities, language barriers, etc)





# What are some examples of discrimination?

- Bell County
  - extraordinarily high rate of school suspensions of Black children
- Fort Bend County
  - DOJ found higher rate of school suspension for Black students
- Beaumont
  - NAACP lawsuit to stop poll worker from harassing Black voters



# Discrimination Cont.

## Racial Appeals in campaign speech

*“Like West, Huffines hasn’t shied away from controversial remarks. Last month, he referred to COVID-19 as “the Wuhan” — a reference to the Chinese city where the virus was first discovered — while answering a question about vaccine and mask mandates.*

*Referring to the coronavirus by its place of origin rather than its scientific name has been derided as racist and xenophobic since the pandemic began. And Huffines’ references came after the number of hate crimes against Asian Americans skyrocketed during the pandemic.*

*Later during that panel, while answering a question about competition in the U.S. job market between domestic and international workers, Huffines without evidence accused Chinese international students of partaking in espionage.*

*“One thing we’ve got a lot in our graduate programs in the universities here, and our Ph.D. programs, is a lot of communist Chinese students,” he said. “They’re taking all of that information back.””*



# Problems

## *with your State Senator*

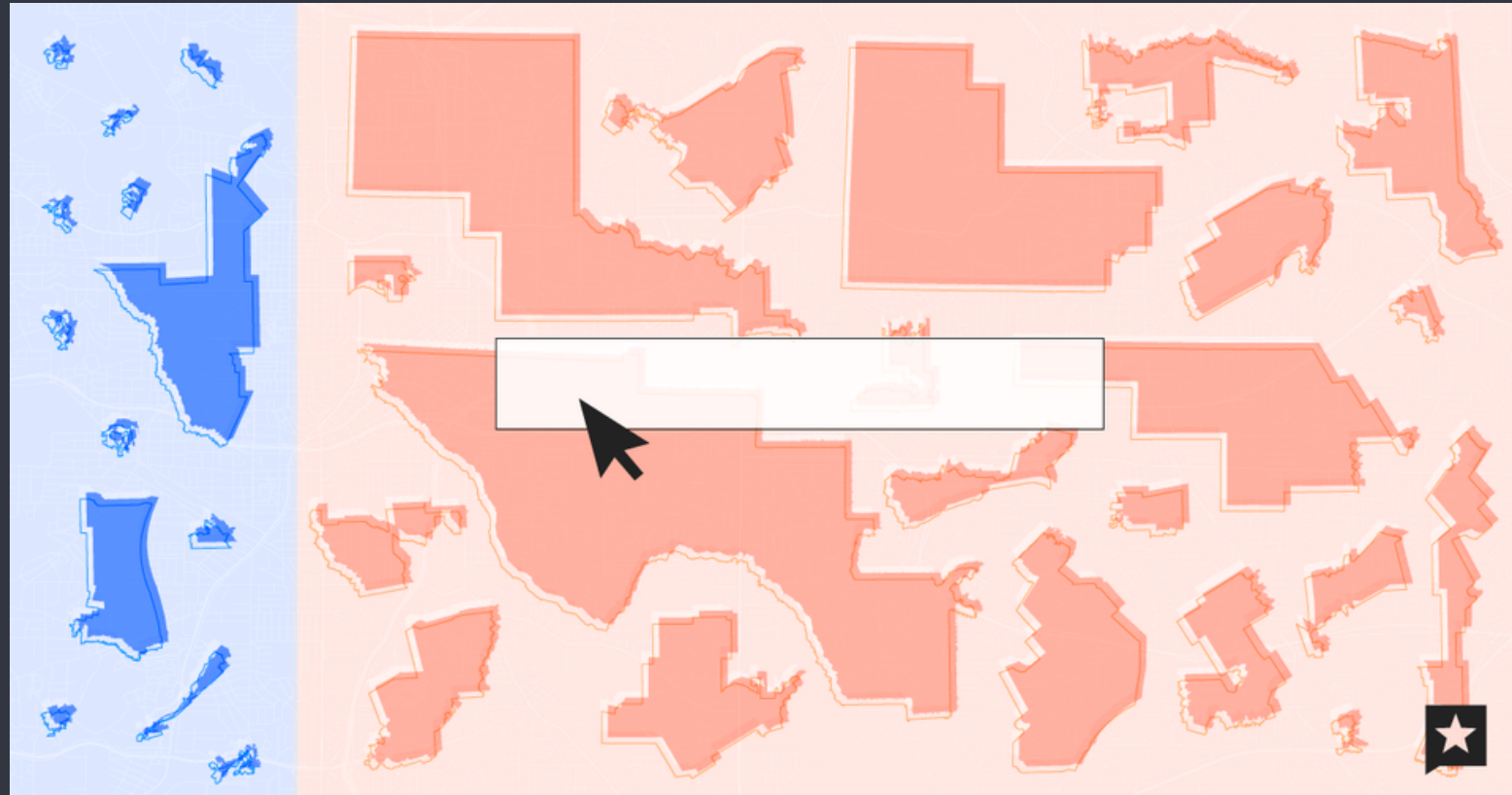
- Do you feel that your senator represents you and your community's needs?
- Has your senator ever refused to meet with you or your community group?

## *with new district map*

- Does it crack/divide or pack your community?
- Are you mixed in with rural areas that have different needs?



# Problems with the last redistricting cycle



- Did you previously warn the state that they were adopting a map that would prevent your community from electing a candidate of choice?
- Did the state take away your community's ability to elect a candidate of choice?
- Did you run into language access issues during any point in the redistricting process?
- Mention the past, repeated history of procedural problems: ex. late hearing notices, bill amendments (changes to the maps) were made the night before the hearing, inappropriate claims of drawing the map "race-blind", virtual testimony was not allowed during the special session in the Senate



Thank  
You

