

News

Civil Rights and Hispanic Leaders In Philadelphia Call For Fair Redistricting

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PHILADELPHIA (CBS) – Leaders of the Philadelphia’s Latino community came before City Council today, urging the lawmakers to create a primarily Hispanic district when the city’s map of Council districts gets redrawn.

Today, at the first public hearing on redistricting, Latino leaders including Jose Oyola (below right) said the current district boundary map splits up primarily Hispanic neighborhoods and denies Latinos a unified voice.

“For years, voting districts in Latino neighborhoods have been cracked, fractured, packed, and diluted, costing residents their true power and place at the table,” he told City Council.

At issue is the 7th District, which is now represented by Council’s sole Hispanic member, Maria Quinones Sanchez. Boundaries of that district under the current map are so chopped up that the 7th is considered the most gerrymandered in the country.

With the latest census figures showing a growing Hispanic population in the city, the Latino leaders want the 7th District to be reshaped so it is less fractured, and so it is 60 percent Hispanic.

“We are respectfully asking the Philadelphia City Council to draw new and proper lines to reflect the viable and growing Latino communities in our city, with the ultimate goal of allowing their political voices to take their natural course among the leadership of the City of Philadelphia,” Oyola said.

Council’s deadline to redraw the map is September 9th, and two more public hearings are scheduled before then.

Reported by KYW City Hall Bureau Chief Mike Dunn