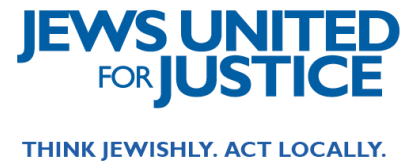


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Testimony in Support of Bill 41-21E - Elections - Council Districts - Boundaries

Good evening. My name is Devorah Stavisky, I'm a resident of District 5 in Silver Spring, and I am a Montgomery County Community Organizer with Jews United for Justice (JUFJ). JUFJ represents over 2,700 Jews and allies from across Montgomery County who, based on our shared values, work to advance economic, social, and racial justice in our local community. We support the map recommended by the Redistricting Commission and we applaud its prioritization of racially equitable representation.

In the upcoming *parshah*, or weekly Torah portion, we meet Jacob's twelve sons, who become the twelve tribes of Israel. The story of the twelve tribes is both a story of a powerful, united people and a story of division of land and allocation of resources. Just as the land was divided equitably to the tribes of Israel, each according to their needs, so too must our County support the division of districts to address the needs of the many communities in our County.

Last year, a harmful ballot question was introduced that would have reduced County Council representation. JUFJ was proud to help organize our County to vote against that harmful question and instead to vote for a question that increased representation by adding two seats to the Council. Now, as the County Council votes on a new district map, we are called to once again support the measure that creates the most equitable representation for our County's increasingly diverse population.

JUFJ supports the map recommended by the Redistricting Commission because six of seven districts would have communities of color in the majority, which is in alignment with the growth of non-white populations in our County. This map will create a district in the East County that will have a plurality of Black voters and will empower a historically, and intentionally, disenfranchised part of our County with unique needs. In addition, for the first time our County

would have a district with a plurality of Latino voters in the Wheaton area, which will provide a continued opportunity for the growing Latino community to have a meaningful impact on the future of our County.

Since the Redistricting Commission's map was approved, we have already seen candidates come forward who, across the board, will diversify our Council's racial and gender makeup. We urge the Council to approve the proposed map as a critical investment in the future of equitable representation in Montgomery County. Thank you.