



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas On LA County Redistricting

When redrawing the boundaries of the County, we have a constitutional obligation to follow the law, including and specifically the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Why is that particular piece of law so important for us to keep in mind? Because the Board has a record of failing to do so. We failed to be guided by its requirements in the 1990s and as a result, the courts re-drew the lines of our districts for us.

That should be a sobering memory.

We should make every effort to avoid having *any* other entity engage in what is the fundamental responsibility of the Board -- redistricting the County in a way that adheres to the law.

I understand the concerns engendered by the prospect of change -- by the prospect of new communities and new borders; these concerns are natural and understandable. The purpose of redistricting, however, is neither to preserve the status quo nor to engage in social engineering. It is to undertake a dispassionate appraisal of the County's population and to re-draw lines according to what is required by law.

So I want to address the recent accusations that the maps submitted by myself and Supervisor Gloria Molina -- maps that create a second Latino-majority district -- are the products of racial gerrymandering. There is no such effort or intention to do so. It is incumbent upon the Board, however, to acknowledge the growth of the Latino population in the County, to re-draw the lines in accordance with that growth and most importantly, to avoid a repetition of past mistakes.

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