



TESTIMONY BEFORE THE BOSTON CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON CENSUS AND REDISTRICTING
HEARING ON DOCKET # 1591, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CITY COUNCIL ELECTORAL DISTRICTS

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2011

Good afternoon. My name is John Hsieh, and I am the Executive Director of the Asian American Resource Workshop, or AARW, a member-based nonprofit that was founded in Chinatown. As one of the Boston area's first pan-Asian American organizations, we promote Asian American identity and community while developing new activist leadership and working for social justice. Before I read my prepared statement, I want to thank Committee Chairman Linehan, Vice Chairman Ciommo, Councilors Arroyo, Connolly, Pressley, and Yancey, as well as our other City Councilors, for your work in the redistricting process thus far.

AARW's roots are in Chinatown, and we have been active in our neighborhood for over three decades. Over the years, we have also seen tremendous growth in our work, membership, and ally base outside Chinatown. We strongly feel that the redistricting process can be a real opportunity for the City to engage a wide range of stakeholders, from different Boston communities, in a positive, productive, and open way.

AARW respectfully requests the Committee on Census and Redistricting not rush the City Council redistricting process. We encourage this Committee to allow for broader public input as well as active community participation in the development of the redistricting map. The map does not need to be completed immediately. As such, AARW believes that our elected officials have the time and the duty to fairly and comprehensively work with community members in this process.

AARW and other organizations have previously offered to assist with any planning logistics and community outreach necessary for additional public input sessions and overall public involvement. Our offer still stands. We urge this Committee to see the value in taking the time to allow for the fullest possible participation by all constituents in this extremely important issue. White, Asian, Hispanic or Latino, and African American – AARW sincerely hopes this Committee chooses to hear our diverse community's voices and allows us to play a role in our future.

Thank you again for your time, hard work, and commitment.

Respectfully Submitted,

John Hsieh
Executive Director