**United Hispanic Council**

**of Tarrant County**

Fernando Florez, Chairman**,** Redistricting Committee

2741 Hemphill; Fort Worth, Texas 76110; 817.239.0578

Fort Worth City Council Redistricting Task Force

 Public Hearing October 22, 2020 Public Hearing

FROM: The United Hispanic Council of Tarrant County

Ladies and gentlemen:

The United Hispanic Council of Tarrant County makes the following recommendations to the Fort Worth City Council Redistricting Task Force to send to the Fort Worth City Council.

**(1)   We recommend that the Fort Worth City Council create an "Independent Redistricting Commission" to do Fort Worth City Council Redistricting.**

We have reached this conclusion after observing redistricting activity during the past three census cycles. In a few words, redistricting for the past three census cycles has been about protecting incumbent interests and has been "ugly" at times, rather than accomplishing what's fair to all segments of our population. Fort Worth is not the city it used to be. We need more diversity on the city council to govern more effectively. To ignore this reality may result in future unrest. Citizen independent redistricting by an "Independent Redistricting Commission" is the best way to help us achieve the diversity we should have on the city council. It's time for the current Fort Worth City Council and the mayor to take a bold step and turn redistricting over to an independent entity.

**(2)  We recommend strict adherence to the Voting Rights Act when drawing city council maps regardless of which method of redistricting is used.**

Redistricting is about drawing maps while at the same time making sure that voting rights under the Voting Rights Act, Sec. 2, are protected.  The act was enacted to counter a long history of discrimination not only here, but in many parts of the U.S. In past census cycles there has been a discernable arrogance displaced by some city council members, indicating that since they control the drawing of districts they can do anything they wish without respecting the rights of every segment of the population. During the 2010 census cycle, at a public hearing, for instance, an incumbent city council member argued against race-ethnic "Communities of Interest" being at the top of the hierarchy—and thus having to be considered first when drawing maps. Such ignorance by someone drawing maps is another reason for the need to have an  "Independent Redistricting Commission" draw maps.

**(3)   We recommend that regardless of the redistricting method used, that the residence of incumbents not be protected to assure that no more than one incumbent ends up in the same district, if in doing so it's detrimental to drawing more fair maps. In other words, if two or more incumbents end up in the same district, so be it.**

**(4)   We recommend that regardless of the redistricting method used, roads and highways,  such as Interstate 20 (I20), Interstate 35 West (I35W), I20/820 and others, not be automatically used as council district boundaries if by do results in less fair maps.**