

Testimony of Dr. Maria Teresa Feliciano
President of The Dominican American National Roundtable

Hearing of the Paterson Ward Commission
Passaic County Administration Building
401 Grand Street Paterson, NJ 07505
Tuesday, November 29, 2011, 1:00PM

Members of the Paterson Ward Commission:

On behalf of the Dominican American National Roundtable, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee regarding the redistricting of Paterson' Six Wards.

The Dominican American National Roundtable is a national organization founded in 1997 with the mission of representing and advocating for the educational, economic and civil rights of the over 2 million Dominicans in the United States. Including the large population of Dominicans in the City of Paterson, which ranks fifth, among the 10 largest Dominican populations in the United States.

We understand that the issue before this Commission is the redistricting of Paterson' Six Wards, that demographic changes reported by the 2010 Census may be accurately reflected, communities of interest be kept together, and all Patersonians be properly represented.

This process must take place of course, observing the following state mandated guiding criteria:

Wards should be as compact as reasonably possible;
Contiguity must be striven for;
US Census Tract Boundaries must be respected wherever possible;
Physical Ward Boundaries such as rivers, railroads, major roadways, major land formations, etc. should be respected;

We request that the commission consider the following, in its quest to design maps that would lead to accurate representation of all Patersonians.

According to the 2010 US Census, there are 50.5 million Hispanics in the United States, composing 16 percent of the total population. Hispanics increased by 15.2 million (or 43%) between 2000 and 2010, which accounted for over half of the total population growth that occurred in the U.S. over the past 10 years. New Jersey is one of the states showing a large increase in Hispanic population, bringing it to --%. Paterson, specifically, lost 3,023 in its general population, but gained 4,767 Hispanics from 2000 to 2010.

The 2010 data regarding Hispanic residents revealed that the City of Paterson is currently 57.6% Latino, 31.7% Black, 12.6% White and 8.1% Other.

At the end of the redistricting process, the map of Paterson' Six Wards must reflect its population.

In observing the current map of the city, it is of concern to see that the map of the 4th Ward effectively divides the Riverside, a community of interest, in the middle. It places ½ in the 3rd Ward and ½ in the 4th Ward.

We propose a map of the 4th Ward that will keep this community of interest together. A map that takes into consideration, and respects the following areas of service and interest:

1. Socio-economic status
2. Mail delivery routes
3. Recycling schedules
4. Transportation routes
5. Public works service schedules
6. Bunker Hill Special Improvement District
7. Zip codes (07524 & 07514)

As a result of changing the boundaries of the 4th Ward, and accommodating the changes in population, the remaining wards' boundaries are also adjusted and submitted.

We look forward to working with the Committee to contribute in your effort to make sure that Paterson achieves a fair and constitutional redistricting.

Thank you,

Dr. Maria Teresa Feliciano, President
Dominican American National Roundtable

About DANR

The Dominican-American National Roundtable (DANR) is a non-partisan, non-profit corporation seeking to bring together the different voices of all people of Dominican origin in the United States. DANR is a national forum for analysis, planning, and action to advance the educational, economic, legal, social, cultural, and political interests of Dominican Americans. It aims to ensure for U. S. Dominicans the full exercise of the rights and freedoms guaranteed in the Constitution of the United States of America. With those objectives in mind, DANR is committed to enriching the quality of life in the United States by highlighting the contributions of Dominicans to the larger American society (www.danr.org).