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ELI DAVIS  
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AVRUM WEINFELD  
Executive Board

February 1, 2021

The Honorable J.B. Pritzker  
Office of the Governor  
207 State House  
Springfield, IL 62706

Re: Meeting to discuss redistricting and the Orthodox Jewish community

Dear Governor Pritzker,

We are grateful for your leadership, especially during these unprecedented times. We particularly admire your wisdom, compassion, and commitment to safeguarding the lives and livelihoods of all Illinoisans, regardless of race, color, or creed. Indeed, it is because of your sensitivity to the needs of disadvantaged groups and smaller communities of interest that we ask to meet with you to discuss an important issue.

This year, Illinois will draw a new legislative map that could shape the future for decades to come. You have pledged to ensure this map is fair and representative of our diverse and pluralistic population. It is important for our democracy that communities of interest have a voice in government. To achieve that goal, those with similar ethnic and racial backgrounds have often been grouped in the same legislative district.

Approximately 30,000 Jewish Illinoisans identify as Orthodox. This community, which has grown significantly over the last decade, is primarily concentrated in the West Ridge area of Chicago, spilling over into Skokie and Lincolnwood. Much of this area is contained within the 8th Senate District and 16th House District boundaries. Approximately 20% of Orthodox Jewish households, however, are in the 15th and 17th House Districts and 9th Senate District despite their contiguity, communal cohesion, and interdependence. Some district lines run right through the heart of our neighborhoods in Peterson Park and Skokie. In any new map, we would like to see our community consolidated as much as possible. While we are hopeful improvements will be made, we are very concerned about the possibility of experiencing the opposite. Our community may be at risk of being divided to the point of political irrelevance. It is to discuss this issue that we hope you can make time to meet with our community leaders in the near future.

It is our fervent hope and prayer that G-d continue to give you the strength and wisdom to lead our state with an understanding heart and a steady hand.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Shlomo Soroka  
Director of Government Affairs

Rabbi Yaakov Robinson  
Executive Director Midwest Council  
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Rabbi Yitzchok Ehrman  
Chief Executive Officer



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