



Prepared Remarks
Andrea Young
Executive Director of the ACLU of Georgia
Press Conference
June 15, 2021
4:30pm on Zoom

Good afternoon. My name is Andrea Young, and I am the Executive Director of the ACLU of Georgia. The ACLU of Georgia is a non-partisan organization dedicated to protecting the civil liberties of each and every Georgian. The right to vote is one of the most sacred civil liberties we have as Americans. We believe voting should be easy, for every citizen and each vote should count the same. Fair maps are crucial to ensuring that every vote counts equally.

FAIR MAPS REQUIRE FAIR PROCESS

But fair maps require a fair process. And what we see here is anything but fair. The town halls that have been scheduled for tonight and the next six weeks are nothing more than a dog and pony show without genuine opportunity for public input. First, they were scheduled with little advance notice. Second, they are being held before the state even receives the fundamental data that will go into drafting maps. And third, many speakers like myself who signed up in advance to provide public comments at tonight's meeting were told at the very last minute that we could not speak, without any mechanism to submit written comments. This is not how democracy works.

TRANSPARENCY

Fair maps also require that legislators conduct the redistricting process transparently. Simply put, legislators must show their work when drafting maps. The public is entitled to see the criteria used to draft maps and provide substantive feedback on draft maps before a final vote takes place. Transparency also requires that the public receive adequate notice of when any meetings regarding redistricting take place before and during the special session. In the current atmosphere, with so much misinformation, transparency is key to preserving faith and confidence in our democracy.

PUBLIC INPUT FROM ALL

Fair maps will require making sure that people of color have a voice in this process. Georgia has a history of undermining the influence of voters of color through the redistricting process. I've seen this play out right in front of me, when my dad, Andrew Young, was drawn out of the Fifth Congressional District following the 1970 census. It took federal oversight to correct that-- federal oversight that we won't have during this redistricting cycle.

The Georgia of 2021 is even more diverse than the Georgia of 50 years ago. Preliminary data from the U.S. Census Bureau shows that Georgia has undergone a seismic demographic shift just in the last ten years. Between 2010 and 2019, while the white population grew by 2%, the Black population in Georgia grew by 14%, the Hispanic population grew by 26%, and the Asian population grew by 40%. We must make sure that



Georgia

the maps drafted in 2021 give voters of color equal opportunities to elect their candidates of choice just as white voters are able to do. We must fight to ensure that the redistricting process is open, fair, and inclusive. Because the future of voter rights in Georgia depends on it. Thank you.