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March 4th, 2022

Re: ACER Inc. urges Brooklyn Park Charter Commission to Prioritize Community Needs in the Redistricting Process

For decades, Minnesotans have benefited from the judicial redistricting process, a process that has worked to guarantee that all Minnesotans have the chance to engage effectively in the democratic process. African Career Education and Resources, Inc (ACER) has done extensive work within the community; this work has shown that the redistricting process is directly tied to community interests and barriers, as well as collective action. Communities have joined together for a number of reasons. The communities we have talked to have expressed a desire to consider the following factors during the redistricting process:

- Immigrant communities and togetherness;
- Maintaining points of interest within the same district;
- Uniting communities that face a lack of public transportation within the same district;
- Communities in need of affordable housing.

Given that ACER has done work directly related to redistricting with the community, it is the hope of both ACER and the community we serve that the charter commission will:

- explicitly recognize that securing minority participation includes the use of coalition and influence districts;
- Recognize the preservation of communities of interest as a primary, objective criteria, rather than a secondary concern;
- Recognize that a compactness criterion does not have the same constitutional and statutory standing as drawing convenient contiguous districts;
- Recognize that political subdivisions can be split where necessary to ensure continuity and convenience, preserve communities of interest, and achieve population equality.

Additionally, ACER hopes that the Charter Commission will avoid:

- Changing the way redistricting panels operate in order to benefit one demographic population;
- Prioritizing the success of a political party or an incumbent victory over the expressed needs and interests of the community;



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- Overlooking public testimony in the redistricting process;
- Creating districts according to political deals or compromises, as opposed to points of interest, common community barriers, and collective interests.

Thank you to the Brooklyn Park Charter Commission for considering the needs of residents, the goals and barriers of the community, and fairness in the redistricting process. ACER remains committed to promoting the expressed interests and priorities of the Brooklyn Park community in the redistricting process and through our continued community action. We are grateful for the opportunity to connect residents and their priorities to this process.

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