

Kenneth J. Hopkins  
Mayor



Cranston City Hall  
869 Park Avenue  
Cranston, Rhode Island 02910

November 8, 2021

Dear Members of the Special Commission on Reapportionment:

Please accept my comments in opposition to all proposals to deviate from the U.S. Census and reallocate inmates living at ACI to other municipalities for reapportionment.

Let me start out by stating that the U.S. Census and the vast majority of states, including Massachusetts and nearly all New England states, count prison inmates at where they physically reside at the time of the census. In addition, the United States First Circuit Court of Appeals has declared that counting ACI inmates as part of Cranston's population for redistricting "easily passes constitutional muster" and "there is no showing, nor even a claim, that either racial or political groups have been fenced out of the process in Cranston."

Most importantly, prison inmates living in Cranston should be counted as part of Cranston's population because Cranston taxpayers pay for the municipal services provided to the inmates at the ACI. Cranston's Fire Department provides fire and rescue services to the prison inmates and the ACI facility. The Cranston Police Department responds to the ACI to assist the Rhode Island State Police and for their own service calls. The City of Cranston provides these services for the ACI and its inmates because they reside in Cranston. This nation fought a revolution over "no taxation without representation." To require Cranston taxpayers to pay taxes to provide local services to ACI inmates and then to give other municipalities the power to represent these inmates at the General Assembly goes against this core principle. If ACI inmates are to be considered residents of other municipalities for purposes of representation in the General Assembly, then the City of Cranston should be compensated by other municipalities for the services that the City of Cranston provides to these then so defined non-Cranston residents at the ACI.

I respectfully suggest that the responsibility of the Reapportionment Commission is to use the U.S. Census data to draw new legislative district maps. It is not to decide who is or is not a resident of Cranston. Year after year, legislation proposing to reallocate ACI inmates living in Cranston to other municipalities has not passed the General Assembly. The Reapportionment Commission should not try to override the General Assembly's policy decision on this issue. The consequences of such a decision could be far reaching, unforeseeable, and certainly unfair to Cranston taxpayers.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Kenneth J. Hopkins  
Mayor

