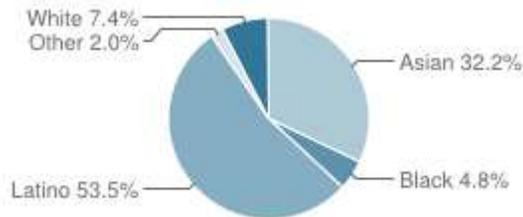


Koreatown Redistricting Lawsuit

The Los Angeles Koreatown and its community

Koreatown encompasses 2.7 square miles of land in central Los Angeles and is home to many ethnic groups. It is the most densely populated area of Los Angeles, and the second most densely populated area in the United States after Manhattan¹. Despite its name, it contains a majority Latino population in addition to the many Korean Americans that live there. While Koreatown is a diverse neighborhood, it is also a close-knit community with shared common interests.



Ethnic profile of Koreatown²

However, Koreatown is currently split into two council districts, CD 10 and CD 13. The lawsuit is asking the City to reconsider district lines and keep Koreatown whole in CD 13.

Koreatown's split community and lack of political representation

Koreatown has historically been split between many representative districts, hindering the community's ability to have political representation. Since Koreatown lacks a key political figure that represents the community as a whole, Koreatown has not received its fair share of public investment by city council, lacking affordable housing, public green space, and public community centers.

In August 2011, the redistricting commission was responsible for drawing district lines based on population changes in the 2010 census. Hearings were held between December 2011 and February 2012 for the public to advise the commission. Thousands of community members rallied together to keep Koreatown in one district through countless testimonies and petitions. There were several maps proposed that allowed Koreatown to be in one district while still adhering to the guidelines of the U.S. Constitution and the Los Angeles City Charter. However, the commission did not take into account the community's concerns, and the final map adopted on July 2012 split Koreatown into two districts. Instead of drawing district lines based on population changes and communities of interest, the commission manipulated district boundaries to form voter blocks based on race to advantage future council elections, an illegal act of gerrymandering.

Lawsuit against the City of Los Angeles

Five Koreatown residents filed a lawsuit against the City of Los Angeles in federal district court for violating the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and Charter Amendment 204 of the City of Los Angeles. Two law firms, Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld and Bird Marella Boxer

¹ <http://maps.latimes.com/neighborhoods/neighborhood/koreatown/#housing>

² <http://maps.latimes.com/neighborhoods/neighborhood/koreatown/>

Wolpert Nessim Dooks Lincenberg & Rhow P.C., represent the Koreatown plaintiffs. The trial date is set for Oct. 14.

Grounds of the Lawsuit

The lawsuit concerns the following points:

- *The violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.* “Defendant City’s use of race as the predominant line-drawing criterion subordinated traditional districting principles and conflicts with documented population shifts in the relevant area of Los Angeles, as evidenced by the data from the 2010 census.”
- *The violation of Section 204 of the Los Angeles City Charter.* “Section 204 of the City Charter mandates that ‘All [city council] districts shall be drawn in conformance with requirements of state and federal law and, to the extent feasible, shall keep neighborhoods and communities intact, utilize natural boundaries or street lines, and be geographically compact.’ ... the Redistricting Ordinance failed to keep neighborhoods and communities intact even though it was feasible.”
- *The violation of Article II, Section 11a of the California Constitution.* “California Constitution Article 2, Section 11(1) states that initiatives and referendum powers may be exercised by the electors of each city or county under procedures that the Legislature shall provide. Each plaintiff is prepared and willing to file a petition for a referendum to overturn the Redistricting Ordinance. By prohibiting Plaintiffs from pursuing such a referendum, the City Charter violates the California Constitution.”

Goals of the lawsuit

The purpose of the lawsuit is to convince the court that Koreatown district lines have been unfairly drawn and have the redistricting commission redraw CD 10 and CD 13 lines so that Koreatown is in one district. At the very least, the lawsuit will expose the injustice done to the Koreatown community, and will help deter future discrimination by City officials.

Community support

Dozens of Koreatown organizations are protesting the current district lines and are supporting the lawsuit. The plaintiffs have also garnered the support of many ethnicities including Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Latino, Mongolian, and Thai communities.

Funding needs for the lawsuit

Although our lawyers are providing legal services pro bono, we still need to cover expert fees, depositions costs, and other fees. With your generous donation to the Legal Defense Fund, you will be helping the plaintiffs win the lawsuit.

Contact info

Korean American Coalition
3727 W. 6th Street, Suite 305
Los Angeles, CA 90020
Phone: (213) 365-5999
info@kacla.org

The Korean American Coalition is a nonprofit, nonpartisan community organization that promotes the civic concerns, civil rights, and community affairs of the Korean American community through education, community organizing, leadership development, and coalition-building.