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EX-OFFICIO OF ALL COMMITTEES

CITY COUNCIL

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November 8, 2021

Dear Chairmen and Honorable Members of the Special Commission on Reapportionment:

I am writing in opposition to any proposal to depart from the U.S. Census and reallocate prison inmates located in Cranston to other communities for redistricting.

The issue of whether prison inmates should be considered Cranston residents for redistricting has come up before. In 2014, the ACLU brought a lawsuit against the City of Cranston claiming that the ACI prison inmates should not be included in Cranston's population for redistricting. The City of Cranston vigorously defended itself. In 2016, the United States Circuit Court of Appeals of the First Circuit ruled in favor of the City of Cranston, and determined that including prison inmates in the Cranston population for redistricting was constitutional.

Earlier this year, a member of the Cranston City Council introduced a resolution in support of pending state legislation (H 5285 and S 334), which would have reallocated prison inmates in Cranston to other communities. A majority of the Cranston City of Council voted against this resolution.

A reason why we oppose efforts to reallocate prison inmates living in Cranston to other communities is because Cranston taxpayers pay for municipal services provided for the prison inmates. The City of Cranston provides rescue services from its fire department for prison inmates. Cranston police respond to the prison complex to assist the Rhode Island State Police and to conduct their own service calls. The City of Cranston provides these services because the ACI inmates are residing in Cranston. It would be unfair to Cranston to be required to pay for services for ACI inmates because they are residents of Cranston but have other communities be allowed to represent them in the General Assembly. I sincerely thank you for your time, service to our state in regards to this important matter and for considering my comments.

Respectfully,

Christopher G. Paplauskas
Cranston City Council President

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