

The Honorable Robert S. Lasnik  
The Honorable David G. Estudillo  
The Honorable Lawrence VanDyke

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON  
AT SEATTLE**

SUSAN SOTO PALMER et al.,

*Plaintiffs,*

v.

STEVEN HOBBS, in his official capacity as  
Secretary of State of Washington, et al.,

*Defendants,*

and

JOSE TREVINO et al.,

*Intervenor-Defendants.*

Case No.: 3:22-cv-5035-RSL

INTERVENOR-DEFENDANTS'  
WRITTEN CLOSING ARGUMENT<sup>1</sup>

BENANCIO GARCIA III,

*Plaintiff,*

v.

STEVEN HOBBS, in his official capacity as  
Secretary of State of Washington, et al.,

*Defendants.*

Case No.: 3:22-cv-5152-RSL-DGE-LJCV

PLAINTIFF'S  
WRITTEN CLOSING ARGUMENT<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This Written Closing Argument is being filed concurrently in both *Soto Palmer v. Hobbs*, No. 3:22-cv-5035, and *Garcia v. Hobbs*, No. 3:22-cv-5152.

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1 **INTRODUCTION**

2 This case is about map drawing. What is required by law, and what is not. What this Court  
3 can do, as regards to remedy, and what it cannot. How the State’s redistricting Commissioners  
4 negotiated, and how they did not.

5 The Fourteenth Amendment prohibits redistricting on the basis of race, except in the  
6 extraordinary circumstance where there is good reason to believe the Voting Rights Act (“VRA”)  
7 might so require. But the VRA does not require a Democratic-majority district in the Yakima  
8 Valley, nor did the Washington State Redistricting Commission (“Commission”) have good reason  
9 to believe so at the time it drew its maps. This Court, under current law and the factual record  
10 created at trial, can—and should—order the Commission to redraw a map without considering  
11 race. However, this Court cannot legally require the Commission to draw a district that guarantees  
12 a certain partisan outcome. The members of the Commission (“Commissioners”) negotiated in  
13 good faith to reach a reasoned compromise, using race as a *sine qua non* criterion, but they did not  
14 conspire to dilute Hispanic voting power in the Yakima Valley region.

15 Mr. Garcia asks for a map of Legislative District 15 (“LD-15”) that does not sort  
16 Washington voters on the basis of their race or ethnicity but, instead, relies on traditional, race-  
17 neutral, districting criteria. Such a map is achievable.

18 Plaintiffs<sup>2</sup> ask for something novel—not a majority-Hispanic district, or even a majority  
19 Hispanic district by citizen voting age population (“CVAP”), which already exists in LD-15.  
20 Rather, what Plaintiffs have requested throughout this whole process is a map that would  
21 *guarantee* Democratic candidates would be elected in a different majority-minority district, as  
22 proposed by them and based on their tenuous allegation that Hispanics in the Yakima region vote  
23 cohesively for Democratic candidates—which here would mean the VRA requires that a Democrat  
24 win practically every election in LD-15. Asking for a new district where a CVAP majority-  
25 minority already exists is a novel claim. It is unclear whether VRA Section 2 jurisprudence even

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26 <sup>2</sup> To avoid undue repetition, this brief uses the term “Plaintiffs” to refer to the *Soto Palmer* Plaintiffs only. The Plaintiff  
27 in the *Garcia* case is referred to as “Mr. Garcia” or “the *Garcia* Plaintiff.”

1 applies to this claim, considering the *Gingles* preconditions are premised on the region’s minority  
2 population *lacking* a majority voting-age population in a district. Here, however, Hispanics in LD-  
3 15 already represent a majority of the citizen voting age population, possess equal and easy access  
4 to the polls (complete with bilingual voting materials), and thus have the opportunity to elect a  
5 candidate of their choice by voting as a bloc. This alone should defeat the Section 2 claim.

6 Plaintiffs’ alleged injury is that Democratic candidates cannot win in LD-15 under the  
7 version of the district enacted by the Commission (“Enacted Plan”). Their redress, then, can only  
8 be a map where Democratic candidates are assured to win. At trial, they did not show such a map  
9 can exist within the confines of the law. This Court can neither draw, nor order drawn, a  
10 Democratic-performing map that complies with the law. Even if redressability were realistic,  
11 Plaintiffs failed to satisfy each *Gingles* precondition, because of basic misunderstandings by  
12 experts of compactness and the variances in racial voting that depend on the identity of the  
13 candidates. And, above all, Plaintiffs failed to show that, looking at all the facts on the ground,  
14 Hispanic voters in the Yakima Valley region are denied an equal opportunity to participate in the  
15 political process. This Court could dismiss the *Soto Palmer* claims as non-redressable or deny  
16 them on the merits; in either event, it is impossible to draw a map that comports with both  
17 Plaintiffs’ requested remedy and the law.

18 *Garcia* offers a cleaner case and remedy. Trial confirmed that the Commissioners used  
19 Hispanic ethnicity as the essential condition of their negotiations over LD-15. Race was the  
20 uncompromisable criterion—explicitly and admittedly so. The Commissioners did not conduct  
21 any serious analysis on their own, or through experts retained by the Commission as an entity, to  
22 determine if such race-sorting was reasonably required by the VRA. The Democratic expert  
23 brought in by the Senate Democratic Caucus to advise the Democratic Commissioners provided  
24 only an anemic and conclusory PowerPoint presentation that came nowhere near the stringent  
25 evidentiary threshold required to satisfy a strong basis in evidence, as demanded by Fourteenth  
26 Amendment under the relevant strict scrutiny standard. Plaintiff Garcia respectfully requests that  
27

1 a special session of the Legislature reconvene the Commission for the purpose of redrawing the  
2 Yakima area legislative districts without sorting Hispanics on the basis of their ethnicity.

### 3 BACKGROUND

4 Although the basic facts of this case have been described in depth and needs no repetition  
5 here, some confusion arose during trial with respect to several factual matters—namely, the  
6 geographic scope, meaning and application of “Yakima,” and the process by which the  
7 Commission submits its final maps to the Legislature and how such maps may be amended.  
8 Additionally, the United States Supreme Court’s opinion in *Allen v. Milligan*, 599 U.S. \_\_\_\_, 143  
9 S. Ct. 1487 (2023), was issued shortly after the trial concluded and prompts a preliminary aside.

10 First, the Parties need to define their terms. Both the State and Plaintiffs used “Yakima” to  
11 mean different things at different times to support their legal conclusions. For example, the State  
12 suggested that *Montes v. City Yakima*, 40 F. Supp. 3d 1377 (E.D. Wash. 2014), found racially  
13 polarized voting in “Yakima,” and therefore could put the Commissioners on notice that *Gingles*  
14 preconditions were met for VRA districting purposes in “Yakima.” *See* Trial Tr. 499:16-18 (Fain:  
15 The State asking if *Montes* found racially polarized voting in “Yakima”). But those are not the  
16 same Yakimas. Semantics matter here—there is the *City* of Yakima (at issue in and limiting the  
17 scope of *Montes*), there is *Yakima County*, and there is the greater *Yakima region* at issue in these  
18 cases (periodically called by the other parties “Southcentral Washington” or the “Five-County  
19 Area,” of which the *Yakima Valley* forms a part). It is the last—and largest—of these that is the  
20 locus of this litigation. The questions about the legislative district in “Yakima” are about the whole  
21 five-county area in Southcentral Washington, which includes the Yakima Valley and regions  
22 beyond (like Othello and the Tri-Cities). The U.S. Census Bureau estimates the City of Yakima  
23 has approximately 97,000 residents, whereas the Yakima County alone—just one part of the five-  
24 county area—boasts an estimated 257,000 inhabitants, making it bizarre and misleading to conflate  
25 the two. *See Quick Facts*, U.S. Census Bureau, Yakima city, Washington,  
26 <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/yakimacitywashington/PST045222> (last accessed  
27 July 12, 2023); *Quick Facts*, U.S. Census Bureau, Yakima County, Washington,

1 <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/yakimacountywashington> (last accessed July 12, 2023);

2 Throughout this brief, we will be careful to delineate which is which.

3         Second, under Washington law, the Commission is the exclusive body responsible for  
 4 redistricting. *See* WASH. CONST. art. II, § 43(11) (“Legislative and congressional districts may not  
 5 be changed or established except pursuant to [article II, section 43 of the Washington  
 6 Constitution].”). The Legislature’s authority is quite limited with respect to redistricting: “Upon  
 7 approval of a redistricting plan,” the Commission “shall submit the plan to the legislature,” which  
 8 may only amend the Commission’s plan within the first thirty days of the next regular or special  
 9 legislative session by “an affirmative vote in each house of two-thirds of the members elected or  
 10 appointed thereto.” RCW 44.05.100(1)–(2); *see also* WASH. CONST. art. II, § 43(7). Amendment  
 11 or no amendment, the map becomes law at the end of the thirty days. *See* WASH. CONST. art. II, §  
 12 43(7); RCW 44.05.100(3). The Legislature’s authority to amend the Commission’s plan is  
 13 circumscribed, as any change “may not include more than two percent of the population of any  
 14 legislative . . . district.” RCW 44.05.100(2).

15         In 2022, the Legislature only amended LD-15 by adding seven census blocks and removing  
 16 two, with no net population change to the Commission-approved map. *See* H. Con. Res. 4407,  
 17 67th Leg., Reg. Sess., at 2:35–36, 71:9–77:26 (Wash. 2022) (“HCR 4407”). The adjustments made  
 18 to other districts were similarly minor, with the gross population change across all 49 legislative  
 19 districts totaling just 980 people. *See id.* at 2:5–4:4. During the legislative debate on the measure  
 20 amending the Enacted Plan, House Majority Leader Pat Sullivan described the changes as:

21             technical in nature and really important that we get that done. . . . As a legislature,  
 22 we really have two options in this redistricting process. If we do nothing, then the  
 23 maps come into being without our vote. But they come into being without those  
 24 changes that were recommended by the county commissioners. By making these—  
 by adopting this resolution, we adopt the maps as well as the changes that were  
 suggested by the county commissioners, which are important to get done.

25 Trial Ex. 1065, at 3:19. Likewise, Senate Majority Leader Andy Billig said the measure:

26             is not an approval of the redistricting map and the redistricting plans; it’s not an  
 27 endorsement of that plan. The Legislature does not have the power to approve, or  
 endorse, the redistricting plan that the Redistricting Commission approved. What  
 we do have the power to do is to make minor changes. And that brings us to what

1 this resolution does. This resolution makes over 70 small changes to the  
 2 redistricting plan. They're minor, mostly technical changes. Almost all of them  
 were recommend by the county auditors, who are the local elections officials. And  
 they help to make the maps work better.

3 Trial Ex. 126, at 0:55. These modest technical amendments by the Legislature in 2022 are typical  
 4 of the Legislature's historic approach to exercising its limited amendatory authority—in 2012, for  
 5 example, the Legislature's revisions to the 2011 Commission's legislative plan resulted in a gross  
 6 population change of 472. *See* H. Con. Res. 4409, 62nd Leg., Reg. Sess., at 2:1–4:4 (Wash 2012).

7 Lastly, the day after trial ended, the Supreme Court handed down *Allen v. Milligan*, 599  
 8 U.S. \_\_\_\_\_. The Court did not alter Section 2's *Gingles* factors jurisprudence, instead reaffirming  
 9 the old standard. *Milligan*, slip op. at 15–16. *Milligan*'s conclusions regarding Alabama's  
 10 congressional redistricting by its own express terms have nothing to add here. That's because the  
 11 “application of the *Gingles* factors is ‘peculiarly dependent upon the facts of each case.’” *Id.*, slip  
 12 op. at 11 (citing *Thornburg v. Gingles*, 478 U.S. 30, 79 (1986)). Section 2 determinations must  
 13 each be their own, and this Court is free—in fact, required—to make its own “intensely local  
 14 appraisal.” *Id.* (quoting *Gingles*, 478 U.S. at 79).

15 Washington is not Alabama, Yakima is not Mobile, and *Soto Palmer* is not *Milligan*.  
 16 *Milligan* makes no changes to the legal standards binding this Court, and *Milligan*'s “intensely  
 17 local” *Gingles* preconditions findings are limited to its unique circumstances, like all Section 2  
 18 claims. *Milligan* is merely about Alabama's suggested race-neutral benchmark theory. *Id.*, slip op.  
 19 at 15 (“The heart of these cases is not about the law as it exists. It is about Alabama's attempt to  
 20 remake our §2 jurisprudence anew. The centerpiece of the State's effort is what it calls the ‘race-  
 21 neutral benchmark.’”). That concept has no relevance to this case, as no party has proffered any  
 22 argument about a “race-neutral benchmark” for redistricting in the Yakima region.

23 Nonetheless, *Milligan* does reaffirm the baselines for the preconditions, including that  
 24 “compactness” refers to the compactness of the minority community. *Id.*, slip op. at 10. But most  
 25 importantly, the *Milligan* Court reminds the judiciary of what these claims are all about—whether  
 26 the minority community has equal access to the political process. *Id.*, slip op. at 5.



**ARGUMENT**

**I. At trial, Plaintiffs did not explain how a remedy map would be “substantially likely” to redress their alleged harm—*i.e.*, that a Democratic-performing HCVAP-majority district can legally be drawn in the Yakima Valley.**

As noted above, Plaintiffs are claiming an injury that Hispanic voters in the Yakima Valley region cannot elect a Democrat, their purported candidate of choice. While Plaintiffs avoid saying so explicitly—doing so would highlight a significant legal shortcoming of their claims—this can be readily inferred from their experts’ reports. *See, e.g.*, Trial Ex. 1, at 14–15 figs. 3–4 (analyzing Latino-preferred candidates in nine races, each of which candidate ran as a Democrat); Trial Ex. 2, at 4 fig. 1 (estimating the Democratic candidate in LD-15 state senate race was Latino-preferred).

In this Circuit, to establish Article III redressability, plaintiffs must show that the relief they seek is *both* (1) substantially likely to redress their injuries and (2) within the district court’s power to award. *See Juliana v. United States*, 947 F.3d 1159, 1170 (9th Cir. 2020). In redistricting cases, a district court’s “remedial authority” in ordering a remedial map is limited to ensuring plaintiffs are relieved of the “injuries the plaintiffs established” from legislative districts. *See North Carolina v. Covington*, 585 U.S. \_\_\_, 138 S. Ct. 2548, 2554 (2018) (per curiam). As such, Plaintiffs must show evidence that it would be “likely, as opposed to merely speculative,” that a remedy map would redress their harm—meaning, elect the Democratic candidates they allege Latino voters prefer—and that this Court can legally do so. *E.g., Friends of the Earth, Inc. v. Laidlaw Envtl. Servs. (TOC), Inc.*, 528 U.S. 167, 180–81 (2000); *Haaland v. Brackeen*, 599 U. S. \_\_\_, slip op. at 32 (2023) (“It is a federal court’s judgment, not its opinion, that remedies an injury; thus it is the judgment, not the opinion, that demonstrates redressability.”).

At trial, Plaintiffs failed to show the Court that their requested remedy was possible. *See, e.g., Lujan v. Defs. of Wildlife*, 504 U.S. 555, 561 (1992) (explaining that “the Plaintiff bears the burden” to establish redressability at all “successive stages of the litigation,” including “by the evidence adduced at trial”). Here, trial did not show how to craft a remedy that elects Democratic candidates in the Yakima region—based on the 2022 results—without breaking apart the Yakama

1 Nation, packing Hispanic Democratic voters from other districts, and making those districts less  
2 competitive, including in districts with large Hispanic communities, possibly violating both federal  
3 and Washington law. *See United States v. Texas*, 599 U.S. \_\_\_, slip op. at 22 (2023) (Gorsuch, J.,  
4 concurring) (“[T]he remedy that would ordinarily have the best chance of redressing the States’  
5 harms is a forbidden one in this case.”). And to the extent that Plaintiffs’ claim is naught more than  
6 a request that this Court craft partisan judicial relief, that request—VRA dressing  
7 notwithstanding—is not justiciable in federal court. *See Rucho v. Common Cause*, 588 U.S. \_\_\_,  
8 139 S. Ct. 2484 (2019).

9 Plaintiffs did not establish at trial just how many more Democratic-leaning voters would  
10 need to be packed into LD-15 to allow it to perform for Democratic candidates. After all, the  
11 Commissioners originally thought LD-15 in the Enacted Plan would lean Republican by only a  
12 few percentage points. *See, e.g.*, Trial Tr. 476:17–477:1, 747:16–23. Commissioner Sims even  
13 testified that she considered LD-15 “a swing district” that Republicans “would [not] necessarily  
14 win” and could “flip” with “enough organizing.” Trial Tr. 279:6–23. Yet in the 2022 general  
15 election state senate race—the only contested legislative election to have occurred in the LD-15  
16 enacted district—the Republican candidate defeated her Democratic opponent by thirty-five  
17 points. *See* Trial Ex. 1055. Despite this election taking place almost concurrently with the drafting  
18 of expert reports in *Soto Palmer*, not a single expert for Plaintiffs examined if, in light of the 2022  
19 general election, a Democratic-performing district could even be drawn in the Yakima Valley. *See,*  
20 *e.g.*, Trial Ex. 2.

21 Furthermore, Plaintiffs’ expert Dr. Collingwood explained that he had no idea if it was  
22 even possible to draw a majority-Hispanic district that both performs for Democrats and keeps the  
23 Yakama Nation intact. *See* Trial Tr. 89:11–17. Any remedy map ordered by this Court would likely  
24 break up the Yakama Nation, causing community of interest problems—not to mention  
25 overturning the express desires of the Yakama Nation, *see, e.g.*, Trial Tr. 87:7–20, that the  
26 Commission incorporated into the Enacted Plan following its first-ever formal tribal consultation  
27 policy, *see, e.g.*, Trial Tr. 338:9–21, 756:12–19.

1 Relatedly, both of Dr. Barreto’s “VRA Compliant” maps, *see* Trial Ex. 179, at 22–23,  
 2 Plaintiffs’ three “demonstrative plans” analyzed by Dr. Collingwood, *see* Trial Ex. 1, at 22–24  
 3 figs. 8–10, and the remedial map sought by Plaintiffs in conjunction with their motion for  
 4 preliminary injunction, (*see Soto Palmer* Dkt. # 54-1 at 3), were based on older, now-obsolete  
 5 electoral estimates. At trial, Plaintiffs failed to update their alternative maps with the new electoral  
 6 results from 2022, calling into question whether any of their proposed maps would come even  
 7 close to electing a Democrat. It was their burden to do so, and their silence on the matter renders  
 8 their requested relief merely speculative at best and completely unattainable at worst.

9 To be fair, the 2022 election put Plaintiffs in a tough spot. They were left with two options  
 10 at trial: (1) stay silent on the 2022 election, leaving to speculation whether any of their proposed  
 11 maps would still elect a Democratic candidate; or (2) provide supplements and remove all doubt  
 12 that their proposed remedial maps could not perform for Democratic candidates. Plaintiffs chose  
 13 the former.

14 Several witnesses were queried extensively about Dave’s Redistricting at trial. The Court,  
 15 using what we now know from the 2022 state senate election, could use that website to attempt to  
 16 create its own remedial map (since the Plaintiffs’ various maps do not do the trick) based on  
 17 Plaintiffs’ request for a majority-Hispanic CVAP district in the greater Yakima region that reliably  
 18 elects Democrats. The result would be an ugly, spindly, vortex-shaped district, stealing minority  
 19 populations with little in common<sup>3</sup> from neighboring districts and packing them into the new  
 20 district. If a 52 or 53 percent HCVAP district cannot come close to electing a Democrat,<sup>4</sup> it would  
 21 require a massive influx of Hispanic voters to raise the HCVAP high enough to elect a Democrat.  
 22 This would result in bizarre shapes, partisan imbalance, racial sorting, and more in violation of the  
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24 <sup>3</sup> Indeed, even aside from the question—discussed *infra* Part II.B.1—of what Hispanic voters in urban Yakima,  
 25 agrarian Othello, suburban Pasco and the small towns along the Yakima River have in common with each other, all  
 26 six demonstrative maps produced by Plaintiffs would draw some or all of the Yakama Indian Reservation into a  
 27 majority HCVAP district, without any analysis of what Native American voters have in common with Hispanic voters  
 other than an apparent tendency to prefer Democratic candidates.

<sup>4</sup> The Enacted Plan was originally calculated to have a 51.5% HCVAP, but many agree it’s likely more than that today.  
*See, e.g.,* Trial Tr. 279:24–280:16.

1 Fourteenth Amendment and the Washington Constitution. A “redress” to one violation that  
2 violates other laws is no redress at all.

3 After the 2022 election (when the Republican candidate defeated the Democratic candidate  
4 by 35 points in the only contested election to be held in the new LD-15) and after trial (where  
5 Plaintiffs failed to present any necessary evidence), this Court cannot look at Plaintiffs’ proposed  
6 or demonstrative maps and conclude that any of them is “reasonably likely” to elect a Democrat.  
7 Therefore, this Court does not have the ability to give judicial relief to Plaintiffs.

8 The *Garcia* prayer for relief creates a helpful contrast. The remedial map for Mr. Garcia’s  
9 claim would simply order the map drawers to create legislative districts without ethnic thresholds  
10 as the predominant criterion. The Article III harm alleged by Mr. Garcia was that he and others  
11 were racially sorted, and a remedial map could be drawn that does not resort to racial sorting. Such  
12 a map could be drawn quite easily to respect partisan competitiveness in accordance with the  
13 Washington Constitution, traditional redistricting criteria like maintaining communities of interest  
14 (including Yakama Nation), and the VRA. Any map doing what Plaintiffs demand could not  
15 satisfy all (or even any) of those criteria.<sup>5</sup>

16 **II. Under the *Gingles* two-step analysis, LD-15 does not thwart the Hispanic vote by**  
17 **submerging it in a larger White voting population.**

18 To prevail on their effects claim, Plaintiffs must satisfy all three *Gingles* preconditions: (1)  
19 the minority group must be sufficiently large and geographically compact to constitute a majority  
20 in a reasonably configured district; (2) the minority group must be able to show that it is politically  
21 cohesive; and (3) the minority must be able to demonstrate that the white majority votes  
22 sufficiently as a bloc to enable it to defeat the minority’s preferred candidate. *E.g.*, *Milligan*, slip  
23

24 \_\_\_\_\_  
25 <sup>5</sup> It should be noted that the inability of Plaintiffs to produce an adequate remedial map has been found by the Eleventh  
26 Circuit to be a part of the merits “*Gingles* threshold inquiry whether [the district court] can fashion a permissible  
27 remedy in the particular context of the challenged system.” *Nipper v. Smith*, 39 F.3d 1494, 1531 (11th Cir. 1994). The  
Ninth Circuit acknowledged *Nipper* but neither rejected nor adopted its *Gingles* no-remedy approach, *see Earl Old  
Person v. Brown*, 312 F.3d 1036, 1050-51 (9th Cir. 2002), leaving this Court free to hold that the impossibility of a  
remedy here defeats Plaintiffs’ claim either jurisdictionally or on the *Gingles* merits.

1 op. at 10. Should the Plaintiffs demonstrate all three, they must also show, under the totality of the  
2 circumstances, that the political process is not equally open to minority voters. *Id.*

3 **A. LD-15 is already a majority Hispanic CVAP district where Hispanics have**  
4 **equal access to voting, so Hispanic voters have the opportunity to choose**  
5 **whatever candidate they preferred if they voted as a bloc.**

6 Before proceeding to the *Gingles* preconditions, the Court may simply hold that, as a matter  
7 of sound logic, Hispanic voters have equal opportunity to participate in the democratic process and  
8 elect candidates as they choose because LD-15 is already majority Hispanic by CVAP. It is at best  
9 unclear how the *Gingles* preconditions apply to a district like LD-15. Each *Gingles* precondition  
10 refers to the “minority” group, based on the implicit assumption that the minority group in question  
11 lacks a majority of the voting population—hence the group’s lack of opportunity to elect a  
12 candidate of choice and the need for a remedy under Section 2 of the VRA. *See id.* But here, white  
13 voters in LD-15 are in the minority. Plaintiffs therefore are turning *Gingles* jurisprudence on its  
14 head; and were the Court to accept their claims, virtually all the case law built around the  
15 majority/minority distinction would need to be reworked.

16 Plaintiffs aver LD-15’s majority-minority CVAP is merely a “façade,” but the façade  
17 district discussed in the sole Supreme Court case they cite raised concerns because the district at  
18 issue in that case was majority *HVAP*, but not majority *HCVAP*. *See LULAC v. Perry*, 548 U.S.  
19 399, 429, 441 (2006). There, the Supreme Court found the Latino district to be a “façade” because  
20 the State intentionally drew the district to have a nominal Latino *voting-age majority* “without a  
21 *citizen voting-age majority*.” *Id.* at 441 (emphasis added). That is not the case here. Rather, the  
22 Commission did draw a Hispanic *citizen voting-age majority* district in LD-15. The whole point  
23 underlying *Perry*’s “façade” holding is that an *HCVAP*-majority district was missing.  
24 Consequently, Plaintiffs’ whole façade theory falls apart.

25 Also, the Supreme Court has elsewhere stated that the Section 2 showings “are needed to  
26 establish that the challenged districting thwarts a distinctive minority vote by submerging it in a  
27 larger white voting population.” *Grove v. Emison*, 507 U.S. 25, 40 (1993) (emphasis added); *see*  
*also Cooper v. Harris*, 581 U.S. 285, 302 (2017) (quoting *Grove*’s “larger white voting

1 population” language). Again, that’s not the case here; the Hispanic voting population (that is, the  
2 CVAP) is the larger voting population in LD-15.

3 As at least one circuit court has reasoned, as long as a minority group has “equal access to  
4 the polls and in fact represent[s] a majority of those eligible to vote in a majority of the election  
5 districts relevant to the governmental body at issue, the rights afforded by the . . . Voting Rights  
6 Acts are satisfied.” *Smith v. Brunswick Cty.*, 984 F.2d 1393, 1402 (4th Cir. 1993); *see also Perry*,  
7 548 U.S. at 428 (“[T]he ultimate right of § 2 is equality of opportunity, not a guarantee of electoral  
8 success”) (quoting *Johnson v. De Grandy*, 512 U.S. 997, 1014 n.11 (1994)).

9 Following the logic of that approach—and with no contrary imperative from the Ninth  
10 Circuit—this Court should hold that, because LD-15 is a majority Hispanic CVAP district, the  
11 district’s Hispanic population does not have “less opportunity to participate in the political process,  
12 and to elect representatives of [its] choice.” *Earl Old Person v. Brown*, 312 F.3d 1066, 1041 (9th  
13 Cir. 2002). “Though it may be possible for a citizen voting-age majority to lack real electoral  
14 opportunity,” *Perry*, 548 U.S. at 428, that is not the case here. Witnesses at trial presented no  
15 evidence that Hispanics lack “equal access to the polls,” *Smith*, 984 F.2d at 1402. On the contrary,  
16 Ms. Lopez and Soto Palmer and Mr. Portugal all testified as to the ease of registering to vote,  
17 receiving their (bilingual) election materials by mail, and casting their ballot. *See* Trial Tr. 37:24–  
18 38:11 (Lopez); 299:4–300:14; (Soto Palmer); 840:18–21 (Portugal: Voting in Washington is “very  
19 easy for me”). Indeed, voting has become so easy in Washington because the Legislature has  
20 enacted multiple laws to increase voter participation,<sup>6</sup> which counts in the State’s and Intervenor-  
21 Defendants’ favor. *See, e.g., McConchie v. Scholz*, 577 F. Supp. 3d 842, 862–63 (N.D. Ill. 2021)

22 <sup>6</sup> The examples are too voluminous to list compressively. *See, e.g.*, Wash. Laws of 2023, ch. 466 (automatically  
23 registering to vote any person who applies for, renews or updates an enhanced driver’s license or state ID card); Wash.  
24 Laws of 2023, ch. 363 (permitting online voter registration using only the last four digits of a registrant’s social security  
25 number); Wash. Laws of 2020, ch. 208 (permitting pre-registration by 16 and 17 year olds); Wash. Laws of 2019, ch.  
26 161 (requiring all ballot-return envelopes to include prepaid postage); Wash. Laws of 2019, ch. 6 (permitting voters  
27 to register using tribal ID cards and/or tribally-designated buildings as their address); Wash. Laws of 2018, ch. 112  
(permitting same-day voter registration); Wash. Laws of 2018, ch. 110 (authorizing automatic voter registration for  
clients of state agencies that provide services to persons with disabilities); Wash. Laws of 2011, ch. 10, § 35 (requiring  
counties to automatically issue a mail-in ballot to each registered voter every election); Wash. Laws of 2007, ch. 157,  
§ 1 (permitting online voter registration for holders of a driver’s license or state ID card); Wash. Laws of 1993, ch. 6,  
§ 3 (permitting any voter to vote by mail).

1 (three-judge court) (weighing against the plaintiffs that “[t]he General Assembly has enacted a  
 2 string of laws designed to increase voting access over the past two decades, and those measures  
 3 apply across the state.”); *see also Brnovich v. Democratic Nat’l Comm.*, 594 U.S. \_\_\_, 141 S. Ct.  
 4 2321, 2339 (2021) (explaining that, in Section 2 cases, “courts must consider the opportunities  
 5 provided by a State’s entire system of voting” because Section 2 refers to the “collective concept  
 6 of a State’s ‘political processes’ and its ‘political process’ as a whole”).

7 It is a mathematical tautology that Hispanics in LD-15 have the voting opportunity to turn  
 8 out to vote as a cohesive bloc to elect any candidate they so choose.<sup>7</sup>

9 **B. Plaintiffs have not shown each *Gingles* precondition was met.**

10 The mistakes and insufficiencies of the evidence presented by Plaintiffs and their experts  
 11 go to the hearts of the *Gingles* preconditions—compactness and racially polarized voting.  
 12 Incomplete and inaccurate analysis by Dr. Collingwood yielded incorrect results. Dr. Alford’s  
 13 expert report provided a more holistic analysis, noting the partisan polarization in the greater  
 14 Yakima region (although he retreated from his report during trial). But the actual data from the  
 15 only real-life election contested in LD-15 shows Dr. Owens’ report was the most correct.

16 **1. *Gingles* Precondition 1 – Compactness of the Minority Community**

17 The first *Gingles* precondition (“*Gingles* I”) requires the plaintiff to show that the “minority  
 18 group” is “sufficiently large and [geographically] compact to constitute a majority in a reasonably  
 19 configured district.” *Milligan*, slip op. at 15 (quoting *Wisconsin Legis. v. Wisc. Elections Comm’n*,  
 20 142 S. Ct. 1245, 1248 (2022) (per curiam) (alterations in original)). This matters because the  
 21 diverse Hispanic population spread across the greater Yakima region is not compact in the manner  
 22 required by *Gingles* I: “[T]he compactness inquiry considers ‘the compactness of the minority  
 23 population, not . . . the compactness of the contested district.’” *Perry*, 548 U.S. at 402 (quoting  
 24 *Bush v. Vera*, 517 U.S. 952, 997 (1996)). In addition, for the purposes of the compactness inquiry,

25 \_\_\_\_\_  
 26 <sup>7</sup> To the extent Plaintiffs insinuate that there was low turnout due to some kind of voter suppression, those issues  
 27 should be challenged under the *Anderson-Burdick* doctrine, *see Anderson v. Celebrezze*, 460 U.S. 780 (1983); *Burdick*  
*v. Takushi*, 504 U.S. 428 (1992), not used here as an end-run around Section 2’s requirements for vote-dilution  
 plaintiffs.

1 [A] State may not “assum[e] from a group of voters’ race that they think alike, share  
 2 the same political interests, and will prefer the same candidates at the polls.” In the  
 3 absence of this prohibited assumption, there is no basis to believe a district that  
 4 combines two farflung segments of a racial group with disparate interests provides  
 5 the opportunity that § 2 requires or that the first Gingles condition contemplates.

6 *Id.* at 433 (quoting *Miller v. Johnson*, 515 U.S. 900, 920 (1995) (internal citations omitted)).

7 Yet not one expert in this case looked at the compactness of the minority community, other  
 8 than Dr. Owens. Dr. Collingwood never even examined if doing so were possible. Trial Tr. 110:9–  
 9 14 (Collingwood). Dr. Alford admitted he only found the demonstrative district to be compact “in  
 10 appearance” but “without [conducting any] sort of extensive analysis.” Trial Tr. 857:3–14. But he  
 11 misapplied the *Gingles* I requirements by looking “to the compactness of the [demonstrative]  
 12 district itself, as opposed to the compactness of the Latino community within it.” Trial Tr. 858:14–  
 13 19. Dr. Barreto’s presentation, discussed *infra* Part IV.B, did not contain any analysis on the  
 14 compactness of the Hispanic population in the greater Yakima region, on communities of interest,  
 15 or of any traditional districting principles.

16 Only Dr. Owens correctly examined compactness with the proper legal definition in mind.  
 17 Trial Tr. 518:1–521:15. Indeed, while there are substantial Hispanic communities in the cities of  
 18 Yakima, Othello and Pasco, these cities form a rough triangle with fifty to eighty miles between  
 19 each. As a result, the enacted LD-15 features odd-shaped protrusions reaching out like fingers to  
 20 encircle the Hispanic enclaves in Yakima and Pasco on the exact opposite ends of the district. This  
 21 is not compact in the manner *Gingles* I requires. *Cf. Perry*, 548 U.S. at 434–35 (concluding that  
 22 communities 300 miles apart in a *congressional district*<sup>8</sup> were not reasonably compact,  
 23 emphasizing the distinction between the compactness of a district’s outer boundaries and the  
 24 Section 2 compactness inquiry). The limited evidence of compactness offered by Plaintiffs is basic  
 25 and conclusory. *See* Trial Ex. 4 (Dr. Estrada: identifying “a common language and cultural  
 26 traditions such as Cinco de Mayo celebrations” as evidence of “shared interests among the Latino  
 27 communities in the Yakima Valley and Pasco areas”); Trial Tr. 830:4–16 (Portugal: “Yakima and

<sup>8</sup> For scale, under the Enacted Plan, Washington’s congressional districts contain a population of approximately 770,152 people; its legislative districts contain a population of approximately 157,200. Trial Tr. 736:10–17.



1 Pasco have similar interests” because “eventually they’re going to be close”). On the other hand,  
2 several witnesses testified to a few of the many differences between Yakima and Pasco, including  
3 their geographic distance, their separate community groups (like chambers of commerce and  
4 LULAC chapters), and their unique political issues (like Hanford). *See* Trial Tr. 470:2–4, 471:14–  
5 472:12 (Fain); 734:4–735:13 (Graves); 844:23–845:11 (Portugal).

6 Finally, the finding of compactness in *Montes*, 40 F. Supp. 3d 1377, undercuts a finding of  
7 compactness here instead of supporting it. There, the minority community in the *City* of Yakima  
8 was compact because the majority of Hispanic voters in the city were in a small radius, surrounded  
9 by natural barriers. *See id.* at 1393 (noting a “substantial majority of the City of Yakima’s Latino  
10 population lives in an area east of 16<sup>th</sup> avenue” comprising “one-third of the City’s entire  
11 geographic area (9.78 square miles out of 28 square miles total)”). That is not the case here, where  
12 “the Hispanic populations [are] at the far edges of the district.” Trial Tr. 521:13–15 (Owens).

13 Plaintiffs have failed to establish that the compactness precondition of *Gingles* can be  
14 satisfied. Their experts either neglected to examine the question at all—or answered the wrong  
15 question—and they provided no reasoned analysis of what Latino voters in Yakima and Pasco, not  
16 to mention Othello and the small towns along the Yakima River like Granger and Mabton, have in  
17 common with each other besides race.

## 18 **2. *Gingles* Preconditions 2 and 3—Racially Polarized Voting**

19 The second and third *Gingles* preconditions involve racially polarized voting—essentially,  
20 the political cohesiveness of whites and Hispanics, which exists when a “minority group has  
21 expressed *clear* political preferences that are distinct from those of the majority.” *Gomez v.*  
22 *Watsonville*, 863 F.2d 1407, 1415 (9th Cir. 1988) (emphasis added). The second and third  
23 preconditions often run together because they concern the political cohesion among the relevant  
24 minority communities and the racially polarized voting (“RPV”) within those communities. *See*  
25 *LULAC v. Abbott*, 2022 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 224928, at \*10–12 (W.D. Tex. Dec. 14, 2022) (three-  
26 judge district court). The ultimate question is whether a minority group votes cohesively, with  
27 white voters overwhelming the choices of minority voters. *See id.*

1 But Section 2 is “a balm for racial minorities, not political ones.” *Baird v. Consolidated*  
2 *City of Indianapolis*, 976 F.2d 357, 361 (7th Cir. 1992). This flows from the text of Section 2 itself:

3 No voting qualification or prerequisite to voting or standard, practice, or procedure  
4 shall be imposed or applied by any State or political subdivision in a manner which  
5 results in a denial or abridgement of the right of any citizen of the United States to  
6 vote *on account of race or color*.

7 52 U.S.C. § 10301(a) (emphasis added). Failures of a minority group to elect representatives of its  
8 choice that are caused by partisanship, instead of race, provide no grounds for relief under the  
9 VRA:

10 Courts must undertake the additional inquiry into the reasons for, or causes of, these  
11 electoral losses in order to determine whether they were the product of “partisan  
12 politics” *or* “racial vote dilution,” “political defeat” *or* “built-in bias.” It is only  
upon concluding that a minority group's failure to prevail at the polls, that is, their  
failure to attract the support of white voters, was the “result” or “function” of “racial  
vote dilution” or “built-in bias,” that a court may find that minority plaintiffs have  
suffered “a denial or abridgement of the right . . . to vote on account of race or  
color.”

13 *LULAC v. Clements*, 999 F.2d 831, 853–54 (5th Cir. 1993) (quoting *Whitcomb v. Chavis*, 403 U.S.  
14 124, 160 (1971)) (emphasis in original); *see also Baird*, 976 F.2d at 361 (the VRA “does not  
15 guarantee that nominees of the Democratic Party will be elected, even if [minority] voters are  
16 likely to favor that party’s candidates.”).

17 Assuming these preconditions do apply in some manner, courts typically find cohesion in  
18 a minority coalition when the various minority groups have electoral variances of less than ten  
19 percent. *See, e.g., Perry*, 548 U.S. at 427; *Clements*, 999 F.2d at 864-65. Because “[p]olitical  
20 cohesiveness must be proven with statistical evidence of historical voting patterns,” *Montes*, 40 F.  
21 Supp. 3d at 1401, resolution depends on the experts, their reports, and their trial testimony.

22 Here, the Court determined Dr. Owens, Dr. Alford and Dr. Collingwood were all experts  
23 for the purposes of the *Gingles* analyses. And when all elections are looked at—as both Drs. Owens  
24 and Alford did—it is clear that partisanship drove voting—as both Drs. Owens and Alford  
25 concluded. Dr. Owens’ analytical framework for predicting electoral polarization does not conflict  
26 with, but rather builds upon, the findings of Dr. Collingwood, who chose to look only at elections  
27

1 tending to show racially polarized voting and ignored elections that did not. The robustness of Dr.  
2 Owens’ framework was demonstrated in the actual 2022 election in LD-15, which correctly  
3 predicted little-to-no polarization in a contest involving a Hispanic Republican.

4 a. *The State relies on an incorrect reading of the fractured Gingles*  
5 *opinions.*

6 The State told this Court that *Gingles* “makes clear” that “[i]t is the difference between the  
7 choices made by [minority voters] and whites—not the reasons for that difference—that results in  
8 [minority voters] having less opportunity than whites to elect their preferred representatives.”  
9 (State of Washington’s Trial Br., *Soto Palmer* Dkt. # 194 at 11). Indeed, the State cites *Gingles* at  
10 “478 U.S. at 63” to bolster this proposition. *Id.* But the State is wrong. That quote, and that portion  
11 of the *Gingles* opinions—despite the State’s misattribution of it to the majority in *Gingles*—is  
12 actually Justice Brennan’s plurality opinion, which is non-precedential and non-controlling. *See*  
13 *generally Gingles*, 478 U.S. 30 (Parts I, II, III-A, III-B IV-A, and V constituted the opinion of the  
14 court, but Part III.C was joined only by Justices Marshall, Blackmun, and Stevens); *see also Reed*  
15 *v. Town of Babylon*, 914 F. Supp. 843, 876 (E.D.N.Y. 1996) (“Justice Brennan’s holding with  
16 respect to the third precondition, however, did not have the support of a majority of the Justices.”);  
17 *Clements*, 999 F.2d at 856 (“Both Justice White and Justice O’Connor were united in their fidelity  
18 to [the] distinction between vote dilution and partisan politics and in their opposition to Justice  
19 Brennan’s attempt to expunge this teaching from the bloc voting inquiry.”).

20 Regardless, Intervenor-Defendants are not requesting an inquiry into the subjective or  
21 individualized “intent” of minority or white voters, but rather into whether the *aggregate cause* of  
22 voting differences is the political identity of the *candidates*. *See* Trial Tr. 861:7–21 (Alford: “We  
23 have no measure of the partisanship of voters. But there is a partisan signal, with a candidate.”).  
24 Due to some positional flip-flopping, the State now disagrees on this particular point with its own  
25 expert, Dr. Alford, who identified “a general pattern of partisan, rather than ethnic, polarization.”  
26 Trial Ex. 601, at 13. The nature of this polarization is meaningless according to the State, although  
27 the sole authority it cites for this proposition is not the precedential or controlling opinion of the

1 Supreme Court. Nonetheless, Dr. Alford found strong evidence of different voting patterns by  
 2 Hispanic and non-Hispanic voters relative to the party affiliation of a candidate, regardless of  
 3 whether the Democratic candidate has a Spanish surname or not. *Id.*

4 b. *Dr. Owens' analytical framework reveals voting polarization is due*  
 5 *to partisanship, not race.*

6 While Dr. Collingwood found that Hispanic voters exhibited cohesiveness in most of the  
 7 elections he examined, Trial Tr. 65:20–24, by analyzing *all* recent elections, rather than hand-  
 8 selecting which races to study, *cf.* Trial Tr. 105:5–106:3 (Collingwood: confirming he chose which  
 9 elections to include in his report), Dr. Owens' revealed a critical insight into the existence (or lack)  
 10 of racially-polarized voting in LD-15. Dr. Owens' conclusion wasn't that racially-polarized voting  
 11 *never* exists; rather, that it *only* exists under a very particular set of election circumstances—  
 12 specifically, partisan races between a White Democrat and a White Republican. *See* Trial Tr.  
 13 538:22–539:5. This is not inconsistent with the conclusions of Dr. Collingwood or Dr. Alford.

14 But Dr. Owens' key finding is that that whenever there is an election where those  
 15 conditions *don't* exist, racially-polarized voting patterns either reverse themselves or disappear  
 16 entirely:

- 17 • In partisan races between two candidates from the same party (a phenomenon that can  
 18 readily occur in Washington's "Top Two" primary system), Dr. Owens' analysis shows  
 19 that the Hispanic vote is split evenly. Trial Tr. 539:7–14; *see also* Trial Ex. 1001, at 9 tbl.  
 20 1; *but cf.* Trial Tr. 69:19–70:15 (Owens: noting that Dr. Collingwood's reports did not  
 21 include the 2020 lieutenant governor race involving two candidates from the same party).
- 22 • When a partisan race involves a White Democrat and Hispanic Republican, Hispanic voters  
 23 were much less supportive of the Democratic candidate. Trial Tr. 539:22–540:2; *see also*  
 24 Trial Ex. 1001, at 9, tbl. 1; *accord* Trial Tr. 69:19–70:15 (Collingwood: reporting that  
 25 racially polarized voting was not found in his analysis of an election of this type).
- 26 • For nonpartisan races, Dr. Owens reported that Hispanic voters were less cohesive. Trial  
 27 Tr. 541:22–542:15; *accord* Trial Tr. 69:19–70:24 (Collingwood); 861:22–863:25 (Alford:

1 reporting his findings that in nonpartisan elections, Hispanic voters are “slightly less  
 2 cohesive” and white voters show “essentially no evidence of cohesion at all.”); *see*  
 3 *generally* Trial Tr. 864:6–13 (Alford: explaining that nonpartisan elections are probative  
 4 for polarized voting analysis because it shows whether minority or Anglo reaction to a  
 5 minority-preferred candidate is “a function of the party of those candidates, versus the  
 6 ethnicity of those candidates”).

7 When trying to distinguish between correlation and causation, this pattern points to partisanship  
 8 as the driver of polarization, not race itself. *See* Trial Tr. 546:13–16 (Owens: “It most often is  
 9 going to be the partisanship of the candidates” that is driving the Hispanic vote, not race.).

10 But even if this Court were to take all of Dr. Collingwood’s framing and election choices  
 11 as correct, the Plaintiffs still cannot show the second and third *Gingles* preconditions are satisfied.  
 12 In the ten partisan elections analyzed by Dr. Collingwood, he finds that the Hispanic-preferred  
 13 candidate would be defeated by the White-preferred candidate “seven out of ten times.” Trial Tr.  
 14 72:23–73:3; *see also* Trial Ex. 1, at 37. And two of those seven “are very close[,]” according to  
 15 Dr. Alford’s analysis. Trial Ex. 601, at 16.<sup>9</sup> Thus, Plaintiffs have only shown, at most, that the  
 16 “preferred candidates” would be likely defeated in just half of the elections.<sup>10</sup> That hardly rises to  
 17 the level of “legally significant racially polarized voting” required by *Gingles*, 478 U.S. at 56, nor  
 18 does the VRA require that a minority group’s candidate of choice always win. *See Bartlett v.*  
 19 *Strickland*, 556 U.S. 1, 29 (2009) (“[T]he VRA was passed to guarantee minority voters a fair  
 20 game, not a killing.” (citing *Johnson*, 512 U.S. at 1016–17)).

21  
 22  
 23  
 24 <sup>9</sup> Those outcomes would easily fall within the margin of error, if Dr. Collingwood had included such a metric in his  
 report.

25 <sup>10</sup> As Dr. Alford also observed, small changes in the quality of the candidate or the policy platform could swing those  
 26 reconstructed elections. *See* Trial Ex. 601; *see also* Trial Tr. 37:7–10 (Lopez: agreeing with the Court that “the Latino  
 27 community would split” in an election where the “key issue” was abortion); Trial Tr. 279:17–23 (Sims: denying that  
 she thought “Republicans would necessarily win LD 15,” calling it “a true swing district” that “with enough  
 organizing” could flip).

1 c. *The sole contested legislative election held in the new LD-15 offers*  
 2 *the most probative value for this Court.*

3 Lastly, but most importantly, elections have already begun taking place within the new  
 4 LD-15 boundary lines. An actual election, by its very nature, is more probative than ones  
 5 reconstructed by any party's expert. *See, e.g., Milligan*, slip op. at 28 n.8 (“[C]ourts should exercise  
 6 caution before treating results produced by algorithms as all but dispositive of a §2 claim.”). In the  
 7 only contested legislative election held in LD-15, Nikki Torres—a Latina Republican—received  
 8 sixty-eight percent of the vote, winning by thirty-five points. *See* Trial Ex. 1055.

9 Both Drs. Collingwood and Owens supplemented their reports based on this election. *See*  
 10 Trial Exs. 2, 1002a, 1002b. Although Dr. Collingwood concluded that Democrat Lindsey Keeling  
 11 was Hispanic voters' candidate of choice, his estimated level of Hispanic support for Ms. Keeling  
 12 varied between 60 and 68 percent. *See* Trial Ex. 2, at 4 fig. 1. Dr. Owens, on the other hand, found  
 13 that the Hispanic voters “were split, and not cohesive,” with the Democratic candidate receiving  
 14 “an estimated 52 percent support” from Hispanic voters compared to 48 percent for Nikki Torres.  
 15 Trial Tr. 548:22–549:14; *see also* Trial Ex. 1002b at 3 tbl. 1.

16 The differences in each estimate stems from the ecological inference method each expert  
 17 used to produce the estimate, and how that methodology incorporates voter turnout into the  
 18 statistical model. Dr. Collingwood's approach involved taking the extra step of trying to predict  
 19 turnout by using CVAP estimates to generate an intermediate estimate that sums up “each voter's  
 20 estimated probability<sup>11</sup> of being white, and Hispanic, then divide[s] by the total number of voters.”  
 21 Trial Ex. 2, at 6; *see also* Trial Tr. 114:9–115:10. Dr. Owens, however, relied on actual “precinct  
 22 election returns,” meaning turnout was already implicit in the model he used. Trial Tr. 561:17–  
 23 562:12.

24 Dr. Owens has the stronger argument here, as the analytical framework he presented in his  
 25 first report, *see* Trial Ex. 1001, at 18, most accurately predicted the outcome of this state senate  
 26 election. In addition, Dr. Collingwood's critique of Dr. Owen's methodology—that Dr. Owens

27 <sup>11</sup> Despite his report indicating that his methodology relies on a “probability” to produce an “estimate,” Trial Ex. 2, at 3, Dr. Collingwood averred at trial that these numbers “don't produce a confidence interval,” Trial Tr. 113:18–20.

1 used “Goodman’s Regression,” which “does not bound the model between 0-100, so it is possible  
2 to get non-sensical values like negative voting and 130%,” Trial Ex. 2, at 5—is inapplicable in this  
3 case, as Dr. Owen’s model produced estimates well within the 0–100 percent range.

4 Finally, if Hispanic voters were voting more cohesively than not, the Democratic candidate  
5 would have won. Even if Dr. Collingwood’s most extreme estimate of Hispanic voters’ support  
6 for Ms. Keesling (68 percent<sup>12</sup>) were accurate, that falls below Dr. Alford’s 75 percent “non-  
7 arbitrary dividing line between things that are more cohesive than not, and things that are less  
8 cohesive than not.” Trial Tr. 863:10–13. Any cohesion over 75 percent would imply an implausibly  
9 low turnout rate for Hispanic Democrats. The 2022 election results were no surprise—they fit  
10 perfectly within Dr. Owens’ analytical framework described in his report submitted a week before  
11 the election, which he built from looking at *all* relevant elections, not just those that fit his  
12 presuppositions. Simply put, the facts on the ground support Dr. Owens’ conclusions.

13 **C. All things considered, and the preconditions notwithstanding, Plaintiffs have**  
14 **not shown sufficient evidence that Hispanic voters in the Yakima region have**  
15 **less opportunity to participate in the political process.**

16 Regardless of the *Gingles* preconditions, the entire purpose of a Section 2 analysis is to  
17 determine whether, under the “totality of the circumstances,” Hispanic voters in the greater  
18 Yakima region have less or equal opportunity to participate in the political process. *Earl Old*  
19 *Person*, 312 F.3d at 1041 (applying the seven factors identified in the Senate Judiciary Committee  
20 Majority Report accompanying the 1982 bill amending Section 2). This is no afterthought—  
21 although it might be the “unusual” case where a claim satisfying the three *Gingles* preconditions  
22 fails to establish a violation of Section 2 under the totality of the circumstances, it is by no means  
23 unheard of. *E.g.*, *Clark v. Calhoun Cty.*, 88 F.3d 1393, 1402 (5th Cir. 1996) (“[T]his is not that  
24 ‘unusual case’ in which the three *Gingles* preconditions are satisfied but the totality of  
25 circumstances fail to show a Section(s) 2 violation.”); *NAACP v. City of Niagara Falls*, 65 F.3d

26 <sup>12</sup> While the actual confidence intervals for Dr. Collingwood’s two estimates of Ms. Keeling’s estimates share of the  
27 Latino vote are not reported, *see also supra* notes 9 and 11, they do not appear to be overlapping in the graph presented.  
*See Ex. 2*, at 4 fig. 1. This suggests at least one estimate presented may be statistically flawed.

1 1002, 1020 (2d Cir. 1995) (affirming district court’s judgment that, “while there was substantial  
2 evidence of racially polarized voting dating back to elections in 1969, many of the other Senate  
3 Report factors weighed against a finding that the at-large system ‘operates to minimize or cancel  
4 out [the minority group’s] ability to elect their preferred candidates’” (quoting *Gingles*, 478 U.S.  
5 at 48)). The totality of the circumstances inquiry is no “empty formalism” and can be “powerful  
6 indeed.” *Clark*, 88 F.3d at 1397. The Ninth Circuit has approved a district court’s finding of no  
7 Section 2 liability when the *Gingles* preconditions were nonetheless met. *See Earl Old Person*,  
8 312 F.3d at 1051.

9       Accordingly, this Court must look for the “crucial” proof of “causal connection between  
10 the challenged voting practice and a prohibited discriminatory result.” *Smith v. Salt River Project*  
11 *Agric. Improvement & Power Dist.*, 109 F.3d 586, 595 (9th Cir. 1997). Put otherwise, a Section 2  
12 challenge “based purely on a showing of some relevant statistical disparity between minorities and  
13 whites,” without any evidence that the challenged rule causes that disparity between races, will be  
14 rejected. *Gonzalez v. Arizona*, 677 F.3d 383, 405 (9th Cir. 2012) (en banc); *see also NAACP v.*  
15 *Fordice*, 252 F.3d 361, 367 (5th Cir. 2011) (“Absent an indication that these facts actually hamper  
16 the ability of minorities to participate, they are, however, insufficient to support a finding that  
17 minorities suffer from unequal access to Mississippi’s political process.”) (cleaned up); *Clements*,  
18 999 F.2d at 866 (“Texas’ long history of discrimination [is] insufficient to support the district  
19 court’s ‘finding’ that minorities do not enjoy equal access to the political process absent some  
20 indication that these effects of past discrimination actually hamper the ability of minorities to  
21 participate.”); *Carrollton Branch of NAACP v. Stallings*, 829 F.2d 1547, 1561 (11th Cir. 1987)  
22 (“[A] history of official discrimination did exist in Carroll County but . . . the plaintiffs failed to  
23 establish there was a lack of ability of blacks to participate in the political process.”).

24       As to the factors themselves, the list truly is “non-exhaustive.” *Id.* Courts accordingly  
25 examine seriously all pertinent information. *See, e.g., McConchie*, 577 F. Supp. 3d at 862–63  
26 (carefully considering state ballot access and increased voting access). Recent progress, like  
27



1 modern legislative efforts to remedy past harms to a minority group and empower their footholds  
2 in the political community, *see supra* note 6, should count towards political opportunity.

3 In the end, this Court must make its own intensely local appraisal of the factual record with  
4 respect to voting in Washington state and the greater Yakima region. Unfortunately, Plaintiffs’  
5 expert Dr. Estrada presented little evidence to aid the Court in this analysis, performing no local  
6 analysis of his own, instead relying on work done by others. *Compare, e.g.*, Trial Tr. 135:8–9  
7 (“[I]n my research that I conducted, I found that Latino ballots are rejected in places like Yakima  
8 County.”) *with* 151:14–152:5 (admitting he “looked at” an article but did not “personally conduct  
9 independent analysis of ballot signature rejection rates”).

10 Were this Court to reach the totality of the circumstances analysis, it should hold that  
11 Plaintiffs have not carried their burden to show that, all else considered, Hispanic voters are not  
12 able to participate equally in the political processes in the greater Yakima region.

### 13 1. Proportionality

14 Proportionality, which the VRA does not require and the existence of which does not itself  
15 automatically doom a Section 2 claim, is preliminary in nature. *See, e.g., Perry*, 548 U.S. at 436;  
16 *Bartlett*, 556 U.S. at 30. Nonetheless, it remains obviously probative because “no violation of § 2  
17 can be found . . . where, in spite of continuing discrimination and racial bloc voting, minority  
18 voters form effective voting majorities in a number of districts roughly proportional to the minority  
19 voters’ respective shares in the voting-age population.” *Johnson*, 512 U.S. at 1000. This inquiry  
20 looks at the percentage of total districts that are Hispanic “opportunity districts” compared with  
21 the Hispanic share of the citizen voting-age population. *See Perry*, 548 U.S. at 436. Thirty-one of  
22 Washington’s forty-nine legislative districts are represented by at least one legislator with the same  
23 partisan preference as the candidates that Plaintiffs identify as “Latino preferred,” meaning 63  
24 percent of Washington legislative districts fit the strict definition of opportunity district, *see*  
25 *Bartlett*, 566 U.S. at 13, far exceeding Washington’s Hispanic CVAP proportion of 8.1 percent,  
26 *see* United States Census Bureau, *Citizen Voting Age Population by Race and Ethnicity*,  
27 <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/about/voting-rights/cvap.html> (last

1 visited July 12, 2023). Moreover, there are at least 14 members of the Legislature who identify as  
 2 Hispanic or Latino, Trial Tr. 196:23-197:11, representing 9.5 percent of all legislators, also  
 3 surpassing the state Hispanic CVAP percentage. So, statewide, proportionality exists already and  
 4 in no way requires the creation of another Democratic-majority district.

## 5 **2. History of Official Discrimination (Senate Factor 1)**

6 Plaintiffs failed to show that a history of official discrimination “resulted in Latinos having  
 7 less opportunity to participate in the political process and to elect representatives of their choice.”  
 8 *Gonzalez*, 677 F.3d at 407; *see also Gingles*, 478 U.S. at 36–37; *Fordice*, 252 F.3d at 367;  
 9 *Clements*, 999 F.2d at 866; *Stallings*, 829 F.2d at 1561. To be sure, Plaintiffs, through Dr. Estrada,  
 10 pointed to a litany of past miscarriages of justice earlier in Washington’s imperfect history. But  
 11 they never showed how those harms, many of which are decades old, work to deny Hispanics equal  
 12 opportunity to participate in the political process today. Indeed, Plaintiffs and Dr. Estrada ignored  
 13 the many steps taken by the State to ameliorate those sins. *See, e.g.*, Trial Tr. 158:24–160:2  
 14 (Estrada: “not sure” that the Washington State Legislature’s near-unanimous approval of funding  
 15 research about restrictive covenants would apply to Senate Factor 8); 161:9–162 (Estrada: “not  
 16 aware” that the Legislature appropriated \$3.5 million to KDNA Spanish-language radio—which  
 17 “provide[s] critical services to the Latino community”—the last five years, and that GOP  
 18 legislators from Legislative Districts 14 and 15 were responsible for these earmarks in the state  
 19 operating budget).

20 In this century, Plaintiffs pointed only to the *Montes*, 40 F. Supp. 3d 1377, decision and a  
 21 2004 consent agreement between Yakima County and the Department of Justice. But the *Montes*  
 22 case has limited applicability to this analysis, *see infra* at p. 42, and the near twenty-year-old  
 23 consent decree was by its nature an agreement by Yakima County to improve Latino registration  
 24 and voting, which it has. *See generally* Trial Tr. 38:3–11, 299:17–300:15, 839:6–840:20 (Lopez,  
 25 Soto Palmer and Portugal testifying to the ease of registering to vote and casting a ballot). If  
 26 anything, those changes, combined with the many recent strides by the State to encourage minority  
 27 political participation, *see, e.g.*, Washington Voting Rights Act of 2018, Wash. Laws of 2018, ch.

1 113; *supra* note 6, show just how much official forms of discrimination have been eradicated.  
 2 Indeed, other courts have found such progress can help atone for historic injustices. *See, e.g., Butts*  
 3 *v. City of New York*, 779 F.2d 141, 150 (2d Cir. 1985) (“[M]itigating factors [like steps to  
 4 encourage minority voting, mail registration, and a registration task force] further diminish the  
 5 force of this showing [of past discrimination.]”); *Aldasoro v. Kennerson*, 922 F. Supp. 339, 363–  
 6 64 (S.D. Cal. 1995) (“[N]umerous laws enacted by the California Legislature in the last 30 years  
 7 to improve minority voting participation and to liberalize the political process create an election  
 8 environment free of discrimination touching the right to vote.”) (cleaned up); *Romero v. City of*  
 9 *Pomona*, 665 F. Supp. 853, 861 (C.D. Cal. 1987) (“[E]vidence regarding any history of past  
 10 discrimination in California and in the City of Pomona touching upon the right of minorities to . . .  
 11 participate in the political process have been mitigated by intensive efforts of the California  
 12 Legislature to improve minority participate and to liberalize the political process.”).

13 At trial, Plaintiffs never came close to showing a causal nexus between their examples of  
 14 past discrimination and Hispanic political participation today.

### 15 3. Discrimination-Enhancing Electoral Practices and Candidate Slating 16 Processes (Senate Factors 3 and 4)

17 No evidence suggests that Washington or the political subdivisions in the greater Yakima  
 18 region use voting practices or procedures to discriminate against Hispanic voters. *See Gingles*, 478  
 19 U.S. at 37. On the contrary, the evidence was overwhelming that, for Hispanic voters, voting is  
 20 smooth and easy throughout the State and in the Yakima Valley. *See Trial Tr.* 38:3–11, 299:17–  
 21 300:15, 839:6–840:20 (Lopez, Soto Palmer and Portugal testifying to the ease of registering to  
 22 vote and casting a ballot); *see also supra* note 6 (recently-enacted voting legislation cited).

23 Finally, and relatedly, Plaintiffs presented no evidence regarding candidate slating process  
 24 (Senate Factor 4), which Washington does not utilize.

### 25 4. Socioeconomic Disparities (Senate Factor 5)

26 Plaintiffs’ expert Dr. Estrada presented charts of socioeconomic disparities between  
 27 Hispanics and whites but failed to show how any such disparities “hinder [Hispanics’] ability to

1 participate effectively in the political process.” *See Gingles*, 478 U.S. at 37. Again, a causal nexus  
 2 is required, *see id.*; *Gonzalez*, 677 F.3d at 407; *Fordice*, 252 F.3d at 367; *Clements*, 999 F.2d at  
 3 866; *Stallings*, 829 F.2d at 1561, and again Plaintiffs failed to establish one. For example, the  
 4 parties do not dispute that education disparities exist in the greater Yakima region. *See Trial Ex.*  
 5 4, at 51. But no expert testimony “connect[ed] the dots” as to how those problems negatively affect  
 6 Yakima Hispanics’ ability to participate in the political process and elect their candidates of choice.  
 7 *McConchie*, 577 F. Supp. 3d at 863; *see also Gingles*, 478 U.S. at 36–37; *Gonzalez*, 677 F.3d at  
 8 407; *Fordice*, 252 F.3d at 367; *Clements*, 999 F.2d at 866; *Stallings*, 829 F.2d at 1561.

### 9                   5.        **Racial Appeals from Campaigns (Senate Factor 6)**

10           Political campaigns in the greater Yakima region have not “been characterized by overt or  
 11 subtle racial appeals.” *Gingles*, 478 U.S. at 37. None of the isolated but lamentable experiences  
 12 Plaintiffs presented involved *political campaigns* using overt racial appeals to solicit votes, but  
 13 rather were racially-charged comments made by members of the general public. *See, e.g.*, Trial Tr.  
 14 293:24–25 (Soto Palmer: relaying out-of-court statement by voter that “I’m not voting for  
 15 [Hispanic candidate Munoz], I’m racist.”). Those vignettes, however distressing, are not legally  
 16 relevant. At no point did Plaintiffs adduce any firsthand testimony supporting this factor. For  
 17 example, Ms. Soto Palmer could not testify to hearing any racial appeals from candidates. *See Trial*  
 18 *Tr.* 301:6–7. The sole example connected to an actual campaign was one candidate’s Facebook  
 19 post opposing illegal immigration. *See Trial Tr.* 143:5–17 (Estrada). Illegal immigration has been  
 20 a hotly-debated political topic for decades, and a political candidate’s opinions on the issue is  
 21 hardly a “racial appeal” of the type contemplated by Senate Factor 6.

22           To find this factor in favor of the Plaintiffs would be to adopt their kook-empowering  
 23 approach. *See Trial Tr.* 164:24–165:1 (The Court: “if some kook yells something at a candidate,  
 24 just a voter or citizen, that’s not the same as an elected official or another candidate?”). Elevating  
 25 those types of remarks is not the purpose of this factor.

## 6. Minority Electoral Success in the Jurisdiction (Senate Factor 7)

This factor looks at “the extent to which members of the minority group have been elected to public office *in the jurisdiction*.” *Gingles*, 478 U.S. at 37 (emphasis added). Dr. Estrada misunderstood this, looking only specifically at legislative races in the historic 15<sup>th</sup> Legislative District (but still not the only contested election to take place in the newly-enacted LD-15). Trial Tr. 167:21–168:18. But all races “in the jurisdiction” are probative. And in this case, since Plaintiffs rely on populations spread throughout the greater Yakima region to support their *Gingles* I contention, it follows that this is the “jurisdiction” in which the success of minority candidates should be judged. Yet Plaintiffs not only ignored Hispanic electoral success in this region; they downplayed and dismissed it at trial.

For example, Representative Mary Skinner, from Legislative District 14,<sup>13</sup> was “born in California to migrant-worker parents and raised in the Yakima Valley” and became “[t]he first Latino legislator from the Yakima Valley.” Trial Ex. 1066. She was first elected in 1994 and served seven terms until retiring in 2009. *See id.*; Trial Ex. 1061, at 51. Legislative District 13 is currently represented in the State House by Intervenor Alex Ybarra, who is Latino. Under the Commission’s enacted redistricting plan, he represents 30,700 individuals in Yakima County, 8,293 of whom identify as Hispanic or Latino. Wash. State Redistricting Comm’n, 2022 *Washington State Map Book*, at 55–56, available at <https://www.redistricting.wa.gov/district-maps-handouts>. Moreover, numerous cities in Yakima County have Hispanic mayors and city councilmembers. *See, e.g.*, Trial Tr. 166:4–15; (Pls’ Reply in Supp. of Mot. for Prelim. Inj., *Soto Palmer* Dkt. # 54 at 10 n.7).

Dr. Estrada’s report lists a handful of Latino candidates who were not elected but fails to examine whether factors other than the candidates’ race might explain why they were unsuccessful. *See* Trial Ex. 4, at 69–70. For example, Ms. Soto Palmer’s loss in her 2016 campaign for State Representative in Legislative District 14—which is cited as an example in Dr. Estrada’s report, *id.* at 69—may more reasonably be attributed to her campaign’s lack of infrastructure,

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<sup>13</sup> Legislative District 14, as it existed from 1994 through 2008 when Rep. Skinner was running for and serving as State Representative, included much of the City of Yakima and Yakima County, and overlapped with the newly-enacted LD-15. *See, e.g.*, Trial Ex. 1061, at 186, 188.

1 rather than her ethnicity, *see* Trial Tr. 301:14–302:24 (Soto Palmer: failing to recall much of a  
2 campaign strategy in terms of advertisements, knocking doors, and fundraising).

3 And Dr. Estrada, even while looking at legislative races, refused to concede at trial that  
4 Sen. Torres’s 2022 victory was probative at all. Trial Tr. 168:11–18. This was typical of his pattern  
5 of ignoring or downplaying outcomes that did not fit Plaintiffs’ narrative that Latino candidates  
6 never win. *See, e.g.*, Trial Tr. 165:21–166:3 (disregarding city races because they have large Latino  
7 majorities); 166:16–167:1 (demonstrating a lack of awareness of the Latino composition of the  
8 mayors and city councils of multiple key cities in the jurisdiction, despite being retained to provide  
9 an expert opinion on this factor).

10 To the extent that Plaintiffs and their witnesses begrudgingly acknowledged that a Latina  
11 was elected to the State Senate in the first and only contested election in the newly-enacted LD-  
12 15, they seemingly attempted to discredit and discount her as a Hispanic elected official because  
13 of their policy disagreements with her. *See, e.g.*, Trial Tr. 846:9–848:16 (Portugal: Sen. Torres  
14 does not represent the interests of the Latino community in LD-15 because she was elected as a  
15 Republican). The ethnic insinuation here is repugnant and, thankfully, has no basis in our federal  
16 law.<sup>14</sup> No court, for obvious reasons, has created such an exception to the minority success Senate  
17 factor. Nor does this factor refer to “preferred candidates” of the minority group, which is the  
18 standard is for the *Gingles* preconditions, not Senate Factor 7. *Cf. Perry*, 548 U.S. at 425.

19 Despite Plaintiffs’ attempt to argue otherwise, Hispanic candidates have been elected to  
20 both legislative and local offices in the jurisdiction in question. The new LD-15 State Senator is  
21 Latina and there are numerous Hispanic mayors and city councilmembers throughout LD-15.

## 22 7. Significant Lack of Responsiveness by Elected Officials

23 Plaintiffs did not show a “significant lack of responsiveness on the part of elected officials,”  
24 another factor with “probative value.” *See Gingles*, 478 U.S. at 37. Rather than showing serious

25 \_\_\_\_\_  
26 <sup>14</sup> The difficulty for various Plaintiffs’ witnesses in describing exactly who counts as “Hispanic” is no surprise,  
27 considering that, as the Supreme Court recently noted, the racial category “Hispanic” is “arbitrary or undefined,” and  
cultural norms continue evolving. *See Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. Harvard*, 600 U. S. \_\_\_\_, slip op. at 25  
(2023) (citing M. Lopez, J. Krogstad, & J. Passel, Pew Research Center, *Who is Hispanic?* (Sept. 15, 2022)).

1 problems, Plaintiffs did not present any evidence supporting this factor beyond basic ideological  
 2 disagreements over policy, *see, e.g.*, Trial Tr. 290:8–16 (Soto Palmer: disagreeing with Sen. King  
 3 on the Washington State Voting Rights Act, which ultimately passed); Ex. 4, at 71–77 (concluding  
 4 that elected officials in the Yakima region are “not responding to the concerns of the Latino  
 5 community” based exclusively on the voting scorecard of a single self-organized, self-selected  
 6 advocacy group), or vague and conclusory testimony, *see, e.g.*, Trial Tr. 291:22–23 (Soto Palmer:  
 7 “I do not feel that they were responsive to our needs and our fear for safety”).<sup>15</sup>

8 Belying Plaintiffs’ non-responsiveness arguments—and the assertion by one witness that  
 9 when elected officials *were* being responsive, it was only part of a “show[,]” exemplary of “elected  
 10 officials [who] say one thing, then do another.” Trial Tr. 826:6–20 (Portugal)—is a robust record  
 11 of responsiveness by the Republican legislators representing the Yakima region. In fact, Yakima-  
 12 area legislators have demonstrated particular responsiveness with respect to many of the very  
 13 policies that Plaintiffs own witnesses highlighted as uniquely important to the needs of the Latino  
 14 community in the Yakima Valley:

- 15 • Dr. Estrada testified how research by the University of Washington and Eastern  
 16 Washington University found the use of “racially restrictive covenants” to be an example  
 17 of the “history of segregation of Central Washington.” Trial Tr. 127:13–128:9. In 2021,  
 18 the Legislature, by a nearly unanimous vote, passed a bill requiring the University of  
 19 Washington and Eastern Washington University to review property deeds for racially-  
 20 restrictive covenants and creating a process for property owners to remove such unlawful  
 21 covenants from their own property records. *See* Wash. Laws of 2021, ch. 256.

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22  
 23 <sup>15</sup> Ms. Soto Palmer claimed she did not know anyone who voted for Sen. Torres, Trial Tr. 305:19–22, an improbability  
 24 given that approximately half of Hispanic voters in LD-15 cast their ballots for Sen. Torres, *see* Trial Ex. 1002b, at 3  
 25 tbl. 1. Someone who does not know a single member of a massive portion of the Hispanic population has limited  
 26 probative testimony as to that population’s needs. Likewise, little probative help comes from witnesses like Sen.  
 27 Rebecca Saldaña, who (1) doesn’t represent the Yakima area, *cf.* Trial Tr. 170:21–25; (2) has never lived in the Yakima  
 Valley region, Trial Tr. 201:5–7; (3) testified mostly hearsay about what other people think about Sen. Torres and a  
 former state senator, *e.g.*, Trial Tr. 173:2–3 (“neighbors and folks feeling very worried”); and (4) made tenuous points  
 about “responsiveness” that she (and by implication, not Sen. Torres) was the only elected official who actually cared  
 about Hispanics in the Yakima Valley, Trial Tr. 201:14–17. Nothing was gained by her personal views towards  
 Republican elected officials nor through the hypothetical hearsay of the voters she said made statements to her.

- 1 • Dr. Estrada also testified how community institutions like KDNA, a Spanish-language  
2 radio station out of Granger, were formed in response to racial discrimination and  
3 inequality. Trial Tr. 129:6–12. During its past five sessions, the Legislature has  
4 appropriated over \$4 million to KDNA from the state operating budget—earmarks that  
5 were requested by legislators from Legislative Districts 14 and 15. *See* Wash. Laws of  
6 2023, ch. 475, § 129(50)(a) (appropriating \$750,000 to KDNA in the 2023–25 biennial  
7 budget); Wash. Laws of 2022, ch. 297, § 128(191) (appropriating \$500,000 to KDNA in  
8 the 2023 supplemental budget for a Spanish-language radio campaign aimed at reducing  
9 gang violence in Yakima County); Wash. Laws of 2021, ch. 334, § 222(44)–(46)  
10 (appropriating \$2 million to KDNA in the 2021–23 biennial budget for “Spanish language  
11 public radio media campaign[s]” aimed at providing COVID-19 education and “preventing  
12 opioid use disorders”); Wash. Laws of 2019, ch. 415, § 221(8) (appropriating \$800,000 to  
13 KDNA in the 2019–21 biennial budget for a Spanish-language radio campaign “aimed at  
14 preventing opioid use disorders”).
- 15 • Ms. Soto Palmer testified that she “volunteered with the Yakima County Dream team,” a  
16 group that was “pushing for the Dream Act in the State of Washington.” Trial Tr. 288:24–  
17 289:2. But even she was not “surprise[d]” to learn that all three legislators who were then  
18 representing her in Legislative District 14 had voted in favor of the Dream Act, and  
19 acknowledged that their support “could be” considered “evidence . . . of listening to folks  
20 in [the] community, and taking various viewpoints into account”. Trial Tr. 304:2–15; *see*  
21 *generally* The REAL Hope Act, Wash. Laws of 2014, ch. 1 (making undocumented  
22 students eligible for state college financial aid programs).

23 \* \* \*

24 As explained previously, *Milligan*, 599 U.S. \_\_\_, has little to add in these cases.  
25 Washington is not Alabama, and Yakima is not Mobile. But the inapplicability is so stark that it  
26 merits accentuation. In *Milligan*, the Supreme Court affirmed the district court’s factual findings  
27 under the totality-of-the-circumstances prong:



1 [T]he District Court concluded that plaintiffs had carried their burden at the totality  
 2 of circumstances stage. The Court observed that elections in Alabama were racially  
 3 polarized; that “Black Alabamians enjoy virtually zero success in statewide  
 4 elections”; that political campaigns in Alabama had been “characterized by overt  
 5 or subtle racial appeals”; and that “Alabama’s extensive history of repugnant racial  
 6 and voting-related discrimination is undeniable and well documented.

7 599 U.S. \_\_\_, slip op. at 14 (quoting district court decision below).

8 The elements noted by the district court in that case fail here. Hispanic candidates enjoy  
 9 electoral success in statewide and Yakima elections; political campaigns in Washington and  
 10 Yakima are not characterized by racial appeals; and Washington’s incidents of voting-related  
 11 discrimination have been thankfully relegated to the trash heap of history. To the extent this Court  
 12 looks to *Milligan* to assist its decision-making here, it should examine seriously the differences  
 13 between the totality of circumstances factors in that case and those in this one.

### 14 **III. Plaintiffs’ intentional vote dilution claim is dead.**

15 Plaintiffs’ contention that the Commissioners intentionally diluted Hispanic votes in the  
 16 greater Yakima region has been unsubstantiated throughout discovery, but trial underscored the  
 17 absurdity of the claim. It is a difficult claim to make. *See Brnovich*, 141 S. Ct. at 2349–50 (district  
 18 courts analyzing discriminatory purpose under Section 2 should look for evidence that the  
 19 lawmaking body “as a whole was imbued with racial motives.”). It is the intent of the  
 20 Commissioners that matters, *see* discussion *infra* Part IV.A.1, and Plaintiffs gave no evidence of  
 21 intent by the Commissioners to dilute Hispanic vote in the Yakima region. Evidence at trial gave  
 22 shape to what really happened—all four Commissioners negotiated in good faith to make a  
 23 politically-competitive statewide map that included a majority-minority district in the Yakima  
 24 Valley. *See, e.g.*, Trial Tr. 252:24–253:9, 282:13–18 (Sims); 326:22-24 (Walkinshaw); 474:10–13  
 25 (Fain); 745:7–12 (Graves). This was not a “façade,” it was reality.

26 And although the racial sorting was not ultimately justified, *see infra* Part IV, not a single  
 27 person working on the draft maps intended to dilute Hispanic voting power. On the contrary—at  
 trial, all four Commissioners averred, some with great passion, that they had no such intent, and  
 three specified that they were happy to try to empower and be responsive to Hispanic voters, not

1 harm them. *See, e.g.*, Trial Tr. 285:9–12 (Sims); 346:6-12 (Walkinshaw); 507:17–508:1 (Fain);  
 2 771:9–22 (Graves: “It’s not only wrong, it’s pretty insulting. I told you my story earlier, of my  
 3 experience talking with people about Hispanics in the Yakima Valley. It’s one of the reasons why  
 4 I was not dragged kicking and screaming to turn the 15<sup>th</sup> into a district that was majority Hispanic.  
 5 I thought it would be a really useful thing for Hispanic voters there, to be able to choose somebody  
 6 who they wanted as their representative. And the fact that in the very first election we’ve had under  
 7 that map, the Hispanic candidate received two-thirds of the vote, made me pretty proud, and stood  
 8 to me as pretty strong evidence that not only did we not intend – I certainly did not intend to  
 9 discriminate against Hispanics, but this district could actually be a really helpful, useful one for  
 10 Hispanics in the Yakima Valley.”). Either all four Commissioners perjured themselves, or this  
 11 unserious claim is dead. *See also Milligan*, slip op. at 3 (Kavanaugh, J., concurring) (“[A]s this  
 12 Court has long recognized—and as all Members of this Court today agree—the text of §2  
 13 establishes an effects test, not an intent test.”) (internal cross-references omitted).

#### 14 **IV. LD-15 was an unjustified and unconstitutional racial gerrymander.**

15 Good faith attempts at VRA compliance “cannot justify race-based districting where the  
 16 challenged district was not reasonably necessary under a constitutional reading and application”  
 17 of federal law. *Covington v. North Carolina*, 316 F.R.D. 117, 166 (M.D.N.C. 2016) (three-judge  
 18 court), *summarily aff’d*, 581 U.S. 1015 (2017) (quoting *Miller*, 515 U.S. at 921). The trial revealed  
 19 that the Commission—the only body whose intent is relevant in Washington—districted LD-15  
 20 primarily on the basis of Hispanic ethnicity and were not justified in doing so.

##### 21 **A. Race predominated because the voting Commissioners, who exclusively** 22 **carried out the substance of statewide redistricting, made Hispanic citizen** 23 **voting age population the criterion that could not be compromised.**

24 Laws—including redistricting laws—sorting citizens because of their race or ethnicity are  
 25 constitutionally suspect and deserve strict scrutiny. *See, e.g., Hunt v. Cromartie*, 526 U.S. 541, 546  
 26 (1999) (citing *Shaw v. Hunt*, 517 U.S. 899, 904 (1996)). Plaintiff Garcia brings a *Shaw* claim, for  
 27 which he must show race was the “predominant factor” motivating the primary line-drawers’  
 decision to place a significant number of voters within a specific district. *Cooper*, 581 U.S. at 291.

1 He has done so. It is the Commissioners’ intent that controls, and the Hispanic 50-percent-plus-  
2 one CVAP was their uncompromisable criterion in negotiating and adopting LD-15.

3 **1. Only the Commissioners’ intent is relevant.**

4 Precedent to analyzing predominance is the straightforward question of which map-  
5 drawers should have their intent scrutinized—the Commissioners who exclusively carried out the  
6 substance of redistricting or the Legislature that made a small number of technical amendments to  
7 that map? This Court has already surmised that it is “right” that “the Commission’s intent is the  
8 one that should be determinative in legal challenges” to the maps. Trial Tr. 195:21–196:3. This is  
9 based on sound reasoning in light of Washington’s redistricting procedures and Supreme Court  
10 precedent. The Commissioners—assisted by their respective primary staffers—substantially  
11 carried out redistricting for the State of Washington, and only their intent is relevant here.

12 In Washington, the Legislature has delegated its redistricting powers to the Commission  
13 through a voter-approved state constitutional amendment. *See* WASH. CONST. art. II, § 43, as  
14 amended by WASH. CONST. amend. 74, S.J. Res. 103, 48th Leg., Reg. Sess. (Wash. 1983) (enacted,  
15 approved by voters Nov. 8, 1983); *see generally* T. Thomas Singer, *Reappraising*  
16 *Reapportionment*, 22 GONZ. L. REV. 527 (1986-87). Under state law, “[l]egislative and  
17 congressional districts may not be changed or established except pursuant to” article II, section 43  
18 of the state constitution. WASH. CONST. art. II, § 43(11) (emphasis added). As the Court  
19 summarized during trial, the Legislature then has “[l]imited authority” to amend with “[t]echnical  
20 things.” Trial Tr. 202:21; 203:8.<sup>16</sup> In 2022, the Legislature only amended LD-15 by adding seven  
21 census blocks and removing two, with no net population change to the Commission-approved map.

22  
23 <sup>16</sup> *See also* RCW 44.05.100(2)-(3) (“(2) After submission of the plan by the commission, the legislature shall have the  
24 next *thirty days* during any regular or special session to amend the commission’s plan. If the legislature amends the  
25 commission’s plan the legislature’s amendment must be approved by an affirmative vote in *each* house of *two-thirds*  
26 of the members elected or appointed thereto, and may not include more than *two percent* of the population of any  
27 legislative or congressional district. (3) The plan approved by the commission, with any amendment approved by the  
legislature, shall be final upon approval of such amendment or after expiration of the time provided for legislative  
amendment by subsection (2) of this section whichever occurs first, and shall constitute the districting law applicable  
to this state for legislative and congressional elections, beginning with the next elections held in the year ending in  
two.” (emphasis added)).

1 See H. Con. Res. 4407, 67th Leg., Reg. Sess., at 2:35-36, 71:9–77:26 (Wash. 2022); see also  
2 discussion *supra* pp. 4–5.

3 This process is analogous to the facts in *Covington*, 316 F.R.D. at 125–29. In that case, the  
4 North Carolina House and Senate districts were created primarily by two Chairs, assisted by a  
5 map-drawing expert. *Id.* at 126–28. The drawn maps, however, became law only once passed by  
6 the full House and Senate—both making “modest revisions.” *Id.* at 127. The three-judge court,  
7 analyzing predominance and race-sorting intent, did not consider any argument that the full  
8 Legislature’s passing the plan somehow purged the map of any racial taint.

9 In other words, there can be no “map laundering,” where the Commission’s  
10 unconstitutional race-predominating map is washed clean through the Legislature’s limited  
11 amendatory process. *See id.* at 128 (“[B]ecause those maps were the work of [the map-drawer],  
12 who was in turn directed only by the two Redistricting Chairs, it is clear that three individuals  
13 substantially carried out North Carolina’s 2011 statewide redistricting.”).

14 Under this sensible standard, the racial gerrymandering predominance inquiry asks who  
15 “substantially carried out” the challenged redistricting. It is their intent that must be examined; if  
16 their work is merely adopted by the Legislature with minor changes, which is exactly what  
17 happened here, those legislative adjustments are disregarded in the racial gerrymandering  
18 predominance inquiry. The *Covington* court’s approach also avoids the egregious and absurd  
19 possibility that one body (like a legislature) could immunize the truly racist Fourteenth  
20 Amendment violations of another body (like an independent commission or legislative committee)  
21 by simply rubber-stamping the violative redistricting plan with a few minor technical, non-  
22 substantive changes. Were the Legislature’s intent relevant, such a racist map could pass  
23 constitutional muster, an outcome that cannot be right.

24 In *Covington*, the Supreme Court “affirmed the District Court’s ruling on the merits of the  
25 plaintiffs’ racial-gerrymandering claims,” *North Carolina v. Covington*, 581 U.S. 486, 487 n.\*  
26 (2017), giving the District Court’s decision in *Covington* the weight of Supreme Court precedent  
27 with respect to racial gerrymandering analysis. *See Ill. State Bd. of Elections v. Socialist Workers*

1 *Party*, 440 U.S. 173, 182 (1979) (“[T]he precedential effect of a summary affirmance” by the  
 2 Supreme Court extends to “the precise issues presented.”) (quoting *Mandel v. Bradley*, 432 U.S.  
 3 173, 176 (1977)).

4 Throughout the *Garcia* trial, the Commissioners and their staff testified that maps were  
 5 substantially crafted by the four Commissioners, assisted by respective staffers. *See, e.g.*, Trial Tr.  
 6 351:16-352:11 (Grose); 779:5-780:3 (O’Neil: “[I] assisted in the drawing and proposing of maps  
 7 and researching those maps, and the data along with those maps.”). In particular, Commissioners  
 8 Sims and Graves performed the brunt of the negotiation and drawing of the legislative map,  
 9 including LD-15, with assistance in the actual generation of the maps by their staffers Osta Davis  
 10 and Anton Grose. *See* Trial Tr. 394:16-395:5 (Grose); Dep. Designation of Osta Davis, *Soto*  
 11 *Palmer* Dkt. # 205-2 at 74:3-8, 80:15-19, 82:1-14. Their testimonies, then, are not only the most  
 12 probative but also the most legally relevant for the predominance inquiry. And conversely, the  
 13 Legislature’s amendments to the Commission’s final legislative map through HCR 4407 were  
 14 technical, perfunctory and non-substantive. *See* discussion *supra* pp. 4-5. Therefore, under the  
 15 *Covington* district court’s Supreme-Court-affirmed “substantially carried out” test, this Court’s  
 16 predominance analysis should look at the intent of the Commissioners—particularly  
 17 Commissioners Sims and Graves—not the Legislature.

18 **2. The fifty-percent-plus-one HCVAP was the uncompromisable**  
 19 **criterion for all four voting Commissioners.**

20 Democratic and Republican Commissioners alike testified that they recognized the gravity,  
 21 difficulty, and importance of their task at hand, and engaged in good faith in the constitutionally-  
 22 required bipartisan process to come to a reasonable compromise. *See Covington*, 316 F.R.D. at  
 23 129 (Racial predominance by no means signifies “that the legislature acted in bad faith or with  
 24 discriminatory intent in its redistricting.”). Unfortunately, that reasoned compromise gave primacy  
 25 to one factor in particular—race. And ultimately, the motive for racial sorting is irrelevant; the  
 26 “inquiry is satisfied” if the Commission “place[d] a significant number of voters within or without  
 27

1 a district predominantly because of their race, regardless of their ultimate objective in taking that  
2 step.” *Cooper*, 581 U.S. at 308 n.7.

3 Racial predominance exists when race was the criterion for the government that “could not  
4 be compromised.” *Bethune-Hill v. Va. State Bd. of Elections*, 580 U.S. 178, 189 (2017) (quoting  
5 *Shaw*, 517 U.S. at 907) (alteration in original). If the Commissioners “use[d] race as their  
6 predominant districting criterion with the end goal of advancing their partisan interests” by  
7 capitalizing on a more “sellable” VRA compliant district, that “still triggers strict scrutiny.” *See*  
8 *Cooper*, 581 U.S. at 308 n.7.

9 Here, again, *Covington* is instructive, laying out various probative examples of  
10 predominance that existed in the North Carolina maps as they exist here: Drafts denoting certain  
11 house districts as “VRA districts,” 316 F.R.D. at 127; Chairs instructing the map-drawer to draw  
12 all VRA districts to reach a “50%-plus-one” minority VAP threshold, *id.* at 130; drawing the VRA  
13 district before the other districts, *id.* at 131; describing race-based criteria as “primary,” and  
14 uncompromisable, *id.* at 134–35; and using a policy of prioritizing “mechanical racial targets . . .  
15 above all other districting criteria (save one-person, one-vote),” *id.* at 135 (quoting *Ala. Legis.*  
16 *Black Caucus v. Alabama*, 575 U.S. 254, 267 (2015)).

17 The Commissioners’ final map made a Hispanic majority CVAP in LD-15 a *sine qua non*  
18 requirement for their respective votes in favor of the maps. In other words, but for a majority  
19 Hispanic CVAP in the district, the map would not have passed. The Democratic Commissioners  
20 wanted the ethnic threshold for its own merit; the Republican Commissioners wanted the ethnic  
21 threshold to win the Democratic Commissioners’ votes. All four wanted it and voted for it, and  
22 none believed the final map would have passed but-for LD-15 meeting that threshold.

23 Sims: Commissioner Sims testified that creating a majority Hispanic CVAP district in LD-  
24 15 was “a priority” for her. Trial Tr. 253:16–19. She noted that the Commission’s final “agreement  
25 entailed a majority Latino CVAP district in the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislative District,” Trial Tr. 227:16–19, and  
26 believed that the Commissioners “weren’t going to reach an agreement on LD 15, unless” it  
27 contained a majority HCVAP, Trial Tr. 253:13–23.

1           Walkinshaw: Commissioner Walkinshaw recalled, when asked by the Court whether there  
2 were “discussion about racial situations” alongside competitiveness, that there was, alongside “a  
3 lot of different pieces.” Trial Tr. 333:3–14. He could not “recall all the specifics of” the  
4 Commission’s agreement with respect to LD-15, other than that “it reflected a bipartisan  
5 compromise.” Commissioner Graves believed the Commission would “need to draw a major [sic]  
6 Hispanic CVAP district in the 15<sup>th</sup> LD” in order “to secure [Walkinshaw’s] vote for the final plan.”  
7 Trial Tr. 739:19–740:2.

8           Fain: Commissioner Fain testified he would support a majority HCVAP district in LD-15  
9 to get to an agreement that furthered his statewide goals. Fain, like the other Commissioners, was  
10 incentivized by the deadline to find a compromise. Trial Tr. 457:18–21. He had specific goals for  
11 the Senate legislative districts, namely “statutory compliance on population size, and an increased  
12 sense of competitiveness.” Trial Tr. 438:13–16. Aware of the goals of all the Commissioners, Fain  
13 looked at racial composition during negotiations, focusing on both statewide competitiveness and  
14 race in LD-15.<sup>17</sup> Trial Tr. 438:4–10, 472:13–23. He testified Hispanic CVAP was “more widely  
15 discussed” in Yakima Valley than in other areas, Trial Tr. 510:19–511:3, and that racial  
16 composition for LD-15 was a “very important component of that negotiation[.]”—more important  
17 in LD-15 than in any other district. Trial Tr. 511:4–9.

18           For Commissioner Fain, VRA maps were “not incompatible” with his own personal  
19 priorities. Trial Tr. 437:9–14. Pursuant to his own goals and willingness to support a VRA district,  
20 Fain was willing to vote for a majority HCVAP district because “I was very interested in getting  
21 agreement, that furthered the priorities that I had.” Trial Tr. 438:13–16. And so it was; Fain  
22 considered it “[c]ertainly” true that increasing Hispanic CVAP was important to secure the final  
23 vote.” Trial Tr. 474:10–13.

24  
25  
26 <sup>17</sup> It is true and attested at trial that overall partisan competitiveness was a factor for the statewide map. But it was the  
27 ethnic composition of LD-15 that drove the negotiation for that part of the statewide map. In other words, partisan  
competitiveness might have been the uncompromisable districting criterion for the Commissioners for the statewide  
map, but ethnic composition was the uncompromisable criterion for LD-15. It predominated.

1           Graves: Commissioner Graves testified that he was happy to give the Democrats a majority  
2 HCVAP district, and his testimony bore out that he viewed the VRA compliance as making the  
3 map as a whole—including Graves’ partisan goals—more “sellable” to the Democratic  
4 Commissioners. A majority HCVAP in LD-15 was “something we were negotiating toward, that  
5 it would be a district where a majority of the eligible voters would be Hispanic.” Trial Tr. 703:8–  
6 11. During their deliberations, Graves concluded that a majority HCVAP LD-15 was necessary to  
7 win the votes of Sims and Walkinshaw. Trial Tr. 742:11–14; 740:13–18. Graves himself had his  
8 own specific goals of partisan balance, but he felt a “strong internal motivation” to make  
9 concessions, considering the impending deadline. Trial Tr. 723:19-724:1. When it came to where  
10 to give concessions, Graves noted that LD-15 stood apart as the only potential majority-minority  
11 district getting special attention in the State. Trial Tr. 744:2–9. He also testified that during their  
12 negotiations, “[t]he two predominant [metrics] we were discussing were the racial composition of  
13 the [LD-15] district, and its partisan performance.” Trial Tr. 736:18–737:2. And that HCVAP  
14 “probably” was the “primary one we were focusing on.” Trial Tr. 738:3–9. And in the time crunch  
15 leading up to the Commission’s deadline, the Commissioners indeed agreed to make LD-15 at  
16 least fifty percent HCVAP. Trial Tr. 703:25–704:8.

17           Anton Grose, the staffer for Commissioner Graves “often would draft the maps” Graves  
18 requested for his negotiations. Trial Tr. 394:1. In making the maps, Mr. Grose was “very cognizant  
19 of the racial composition for the map.” Trial Tr. 395:6–11. When the Court asked Mr. Grose if he  
20 was “designing the map to hit a certain racial minimum number[,]” he replied that, while not trying  
21 to hit a precise percentage number, “we’d be cognizant” because “we thought that a Hispanic  
22 majority CVAP district would likely be necessary, to get the votes of all four commissioners.”  
23 Trial Tr. 395:11–14. Mr. Grose looked at the racial composition in Yakima Valley “[b]ecause that  
24 was something Commissioner Graves was looking for.” Trial Tr. 395:24–25. In his view, this was  
25 because “that would be a requirement, to get all four commissioners to vote on that final version  
26 of a map. Essentially that was needed to pass a final map.” Trial Tr. 396:1–6.

27



1 Most revealing, Commissioners and staff representing all four legislative caucuses testified  
2 that the Enacted Plan, adopted on November 15, 2021 moments before the midnight deadline, was  
3 actually an unwritten, handshake “framework.” *See, e.g.*, Trial Tr. 320:13–19 (Walkinshaw). This  
4 framework was “an agreement upon the partisanship numbers in . . . four [or] five districts.” Trial  
5 Tr. 799:9–20 (O’Neil). The framework included “a combination of relative political performances  
6 in certain areas,” Trial Tr. 450:2–4 (Fain), and “a set of criteria . . . around geographic principles  
7 . . . like the Lummi Nation, and the Nooksack Tribe,” Trial Tr. 324:12–18 (Walkinshaw). The  
8 “final Hispanic CVAP [percentage] for Legislative District 15 [was] one of the components of this  
9 framework,” but this was the *only* district whose racial composition was stipulated in the  
10 framework—a clear indication that racial considerations predominated in LD-15, even if they did  
11 not in the rest of the Enacted Plan. Trial Tr. 743:13–744:4.

12 Commissioner Graves best summarized the feeling that all Commissioners conveyed at  
13 trial: “Very hard . . . to see three of the voting commissioners voting for a map that did not have a  
14 majority Hispanic CVAP district in the Yakima Valley.” Trial Tr. 745:10–12; *see also* Trial Tr.  
15 362:18–21 (Grose: “As time went on, it became apparent that a Yakima Valley district that was  
16 majority Hispanic, by citizens of voting age population, that that would be a requirement to get  
17 support from both Republicans and Democrats.”). That made race the one “criterion that . . . could  
18 not be compromised” in LD-15, meaning it “predominated.” *See Bethune-Hill*, 580 U.S. at 189.  
19 This was not “in bad faith or with discriminatory intent in its redistricting.” *Covington*, 316 F.R.D.  
20 at 129. Indeed, the Commissioners reached a reasoned, good faith compromise to create a  
21 politically competitive statewide map, all four attempting in their own way to follow Washington  
22 and federal law. But for the 50%-plus-one HCVAP in LD-15, however, that map would never have  
23 been approved. This racial threshold was the one factor above all that could not be compromised,  
24 without which the map would have failed.

1           **B.     The Commissioners never performed—nor had performed for them—any**  
2           **sufficient, actual VRA analysis to give them good reasons to think they would**  
3           **have violated the VRA had they not sorted voters by Hispanic ethnicity.**

4           Race predominated, so the State had to show at trial that the Commissioners “had ‘a strong  
5           basis in evidence’ for concluding that the” VRA “required [the] action” they took. *Cooper*, 581  
6           U.S. at 292 (quoting *Ala. Legis. Black Caucus*, 575 U.S. at 278). The evidence presented at trial  
7           did not establish that the Commissioners had “‘good reasons’ to think” they would transgress the  
8           VRA if they did not draw race-based district lines. *Id.*

9           Plaintiff Garcia notes that resolution of *Soto Palmer* is not a prerequisite to resolution of  
10          his constitutional claim because the relevant “standard does not require the State to show” that the  
11          Commission’s “action was ‘actually . . . necessary’ to avoid a statutory violation,” but only that  
12          the Commission had “good reasons to believe,” at the time it drew the maps, that “it must use race  
13          in order to satisfy the [VRA], ‘even if a court does not find that the actions were necessary for  
14          statutory compliance.’” *Bethune-Hill*, 580 U.S. at 194 (quoting *Ala. Legis. Black Caucus*, 575 U.S.  
15          at 278). In other words, the proper analysis is not whether the VRA demands a certain type of a  
16          district, but whether the map-drawers “had good reasons to believe” the VRA required such. *Id.*  
17          Even if this Court finds that LD-15 as presently configured violates the VRA, *but see* discussion  
18          *supra* Part II, Plaintiff Garcia can still prevail on his Fourteenth Amendment claim unless the State  
19          has demonstrated that the Commission had “good reasons to believe” it needed to elevate racial  
20          considerations in order to comply with the VRA.

21          Here, the State failed to show at trial that (1) the Commissioners “actually” analyzed the  
22          *Gingles* preconditions sufficiently before drawing the map; and (2) there was a strong basis that  
23          those preconditions were satisfied. *See Cooper*, 581 U.S. at 301–02. On the contrary, the trial  
24          demonstrated that the map-drawers did not actually consider whether the VRA required the  
25          creation of an HCVAP-minority district in the greater Yakima region, meaning they did not have  
26          “‘good reasons’ for thinking the [VRA] demanded such steps.” *Id.* at 301. Thus, the Commission  
27          lacked a strong basis in evidence for concluding all three *Gingles* preconditions were met.

1 As the trial did establish, racially-polarized voting, compactness, and other VRA analyses  
2 are intricate and intensive—hence why *Gingles* litigation includes testifying experts that create  
3 long and detailed reports. Casual or summary reports on racially-polarized voting, therefore, are  
4 not sufficient. *See Covington*, 316 F.R.D. 117 (finding “two racial polarization reports” provided  
5 by experts with PhDs were insufficient “to establish a strong basis in evidence”). Nor can a  
6 PowerPoint presentation summarizing findings and making broad conclusions—as the Barreto  
7 “report” frequently cited by the Plaintiffs and Democratic Commissioners turned out to be—create  
8 a strong basis in evidence. *See* Trial Exs. 178–179; *see also* Trial Tr. 235:17–236:1 (Sims); 459:2–  
9 12 (Fain: saw Barreto presentation but was not sure of which version). This presentation could not  
10 itself be used as an expert report in this or any other Section 2 litigation and is therefore *per se*  
11 insufficient to give the Commissioners “good reason” to believe that a VRA district was required.  
12 (Nor could Counsel for Plaintiff Garcia cross-examine Dr. Barreto as an expert witness with  
13 respect to the *Gingles* preconditions because he did not release the methodology or data used in  
14 preparing his slide deck. *Cf.* Fed. R. Civ. P. 26(a)(2).) Lastly, because “[a] group that wants a State  
15 to create a district with a particular design may come to have an overly expansive understanding  
16 of what § 2 demands . . . one group’s demands alone cannot be enough” to give the Commission  
17 “good reasons to believe” that predominating race was “necessary to satisfy § 2 of the Voting  
18 Rights Act.” *Abbott v. Perez*, 138 S. Ct. 2305, 2334 (2018) (quoting *Bethune-Hill*, 580 U.S. at  
19 194); *cf.* Trial Tr. 461:11–22 (Fain: Dr. Barreto “appeared to be” advocating “to push districts in  
20 a more Democratic direction.”); Trial Tr. 724:25-726:10 (Graves: “I read [Dr. Barreto’s] report”  
21 to be him “advocating for a particular partisan outcome” and thought “he might be having an  
22 overly expansive reading of what the VRA required.”).

23 Dr. Barreto’s presentation was flawed in other ways. He did not conduct a full “*Gingles I*”  
24 analysis in his presentation (nor apparently did he intend to). No analysis was performed on the  
25 compactness of the Hispanic population in the greater Yakima region, on communities of interest,  
26 or of any traditional districting principles. In *Milligan*, the Supreme Court’s *Gingles I* analysis  
27 focused on the unified and geographically-compact population in Alabama’s “Black Belt.” 599

1 U.S. \_\_\_, slip op. at 13. Dr. Barreto, while focusing on a five-county region surrounding Yakima,  
2 failed to make any showing that the Hispanic communities in that (large) area were geographically  
3 close or shared a cultural connection beyond race alone. *See* Trial Tr. 663:7-664:5. His analysis  
4 was especially anemic compared, for example, to the intricate spatial analysis on compactness  
5 conducted in *Montes*, 40 F. Supp. 3d at 1394–1401 (a case the State is partial towards). One would  
6 expect at least such an intensive spatial analysis for the whole of the greater Yakima area to make  
7 any compelling conclusions on compactness, but there was none. And there is no indication—  
8 whether from the slide deck itself or from Dr. Barreto’s testimony at trial—that the “VRA  
9 Compliant” districts depicted in his slide deck even contained a population remotely close to the  
10 157,200 population target for legislative districts or could be lawfully adopted by the Commission  
11 under Washington law without significant revision. The Commissioners thus had no basis, let  
12 alone a strong one, to believe Latinos in that area were sufficiently compact.

13 Dr. Barreto’s “*Gingles II*” analysis, meanwhile, did not look at any races beyond White  
14 Democrat versus White Republican races, did not look at any primaries, did not look at nonpartisan  
15 general elections with minority candidates, and did not look at general elections with two  
16 candidates from the same party. *See* Trial Exs. 178–179. This mirrored Dr. Collingwood’s self-  
17 fulfilling prophecy approach of only looking at elections that support a preformed narrative. *See*  
18 discussion *supra* Part II.B.2. Yet despite these manifest flaws, the State wrongly contends that the  
19 Commissioners could rely on this supposed “compelling evidence” from Dr. Barreto to conclude  
20 racially polarized voting existed in the Yakima Valley region. (*Soto Palmer Dkt. # 194 at 27.*)

21 The Commissioners did not hire their own expert to analyze VRA compliance, *see, e.g.*,  
22 Trial Tr. 249:2–6 (Sims); *see also* (Dep. Designation of Lisa McLean, *Soto Palmer Dkt. # 205-1*  
23 *at 96:7–9*) (confirming that the Commission ultimately did not hire a consultant to conduct a VRA  
24 analysis), even though the Commission “probably” had the funding to do so, Trial Tr. 729:5–8  
25 (Graves); *see also* 462:6–8 (Fain: affirming the Commission had the power to hire a nonpartisan  
26 expert). In the absence of a sufficient outside expert’s analysis, the individual Commissioners did  
27 not perform *Gingles* analyses on their own. *See, e.g.*, Trial Tr. 462:1–5 (Fain); 249:2–9 (Sims); *see*

1 *also* Trial Tr. 359:18–361:11 (Grose: “Other than what was in the Barreto report” no analysis was  
2 completed by Commissioner Graves, Sims, or their staff regarding the size, distribution or political  
3 cohesion of Latino’s in the Yakima Valley region). The Democratic Commissioners relied on Dr.  
4 Barreto for everything. Trial Tr. 250:17–20 (Sims); 235:17–236:1 (Sims: thought Barreto was  
5 correct that VRA required “above 50 percent Latino voting age population”); *see also* Trial Ex.  
6 174 (Dr. Barreto email to Senate Democratic Caucus staffer: “To be Section 2 compliant, it has to  
7 be over 50.1% CVAP.”) Meanwhile, the Republican Commissioners, worried about Dr. Barreto’s  
8 established partisan leanings, did not rely on Dr. Barreto at all, but looked to a brief legal memo  
9 prepared for them by the law firm Davis Wright Tremaine. *See* Trial Tr. 462:9–22 (Fain); 726:11–  
10 727:3 (Graves). The analysis contained in this memorandum was “predominantly legal, rather than  
11 factual,” and was not based on “factual research regarding demographic trends, voting behavior,  
12 election results, or the other factual assertions in the [Dr. Barreto] Assessment.” Trial Ex. 225.

13 At trial, much was made of the existence of previous litigation in the region that the  
14 Commissioners knew of, such as *Montes v. Yakima*, 40 F. Supp. 3d 1377. But these lawsuits—  
15 brought against cities and counties that comprised only a small subset of the greater Yakima area—  
16 cannot have put the Commissioners on notice about racially polarized voting or compactness for  
17 the entire region. *Montes*, for example, addressed at-large elections for the Yakima City Council,  
18 not state legislative races; the compactness of the Latino population in the *City* of Yakima, not the  
19 entire greater Yakima region; and voting patterns in the *city*, not the whole region. So it makes no  
20 sense to hold that such inapposite cases could provide a “strong basis in evidence” for the  
21 Commissioners to think the *Gingles* preconditions were settled for the entire Yakima area.

22 The result of all this—a conclusory slide deck from a single non-retained partisan expert  
23 presented to only half the Commissioners, a legal memorandum delivered to the other half of the  
24 Commissioners, a smattering of litigation challenging different voting systems in different  
25 jurisdictions, and the absence of any formal VRA analysis conducted in-house or by outside  
26 experts—was rank uncertainty about the requirements of the VRA among Commissioners, far  
27 from the “goods reasons” and “sound basis” that strict scrutiny requires. Commissioner Sims

1 “didn’t get a whole lot of clarity about whether [the Commission] had to create, to comply with  
 2 the VRA, a district with a particular Democratic lean,” Trial Tr. 269:23–270:2, and her staffer was  
 3 not aware of any racially polarized voting analysis performed with respect to the final map, Dep.  
 4 (Dkt. # 205-2 at 208:11–19) (Designation of Osta Davis, *Soto Palmer*). Ali O’Neil, a staffer for  
 5 Commissioner Walkinshaw, testified that Commissioner Walkinshaw “would vote for maps that  
 6 [he] knew were not VRA-compliant.” Trial Tr. 791:7–16. Commissioner Fain found the Davis  
 7 Wright Tremaine memo—which concluded that “§ 2 [of the VRA] does not require the creation  
 8 of the majority-minority district advocated by [Dr. Barreto’s] Assessment,” Trial Ex. 225, at 1—  
 9 to be “persuasive, as another data point and another point of view in that discussion . . . but not  
 10 dispositive,” Trial Tr. 462:25–464:5. Commissioner Graves testified the requirements of the VRA  
 11 were “still unclear to [him],” that he felt there was “a lot of uncertainty [and] vagueness about both  
 12 what the law allows or requires . . . and how it would actually apply to a particular district,” and  
 13 that his only “clear understanding” of what the VRA requires “was that it’s uncertain.” Trial Tr.  
 14 683:21–22, 727:8–14, 730:1–6. His staffer, Anton Grose, didn’t feel there was enough  
 15 compactness of those populations” to require a majority Hispanic CVAP. Trial Tr. 364:8–365:6.  
 16 None of this is sufficient to create “a strong basis in evidence” for the second and third *Gingles*  
 17 preconditions. *See Covington*, 316 F.R.D. at 168 (holding the map-drawers lacked a “strong basis  
 18 in evidence for the third *Gingles* precondition” because they did not actually assess the effect of  
 19 white bloc voting and “misconstrued what the third *Gingles* factor requires”).

20 **V. As remedy, the Court should order the State to adopt, through the Redistricting**  
 21 **Commission and pursuant to existing state law, a new legally-compliant legislative**  
 22 **district map by November 15 that maintains the same overall statewide partisan**  
 23 **balance as the Commission’s original 2021 legislative map but does not sort voters**  
 24 **on the basis of race or ethnicity.**

25 “Federal-court review of districting legislation represents a serious intrusion on the most  
 26 vital of local functions. It is well settled that ‘reapportionment is primarily the duty and  
 27 responsibility of the State.’” *Miller*, 515 U.S. at 915 (quoting *Chapman v. Meier*, 420 U.S. 1, 27  
 (1975)). That’s why “[t]he [Supreme] Court has repeatedly held that redistricting and  
 reapportioning legislative bodies is a legislative task which the federal courts should make every

1 effort not to pre-empt.” *Wise v. Lipscomb*, 437 U.S. 535, 539 (1978) (citing *Connor v. Finch*, 431  
 2 U.S. 407, 414-15 (1977); *Chapman*, 420 U.S. at 27; *Gaffney v. Cummings*, 412 U.S. 735, 749  
 3 (1973); *Burns v. Richardson*, 384 U.S. 73, 84-85 (1966)). “When a federal court declares an  
 4 existing apportionment scheme unconstitutional, it is therefore appropriate, whenever practicable,  
 5 to afford a reasonable opportunity for the legislature to meet constitutional requirements by  
 6 adopting a substitute measure rather than for the federal court to devise and order into effect its  
 7 own plan.” *Wise v. Lipscomb*, 437 U.S. at 540; *see also Reynolds v. Sims*, 377 U.S. 533, 586 (1964)  
 8 (“[L]egislative reapportionment is primarily a matter for legislative consideration and  
 9 determination, and . . . judicial relief becomes appropriate only when a legislature fails to  
 10 reapportion according to federal constitutional requisites in a timely fashion after having had an  
 11 adequate opportunity to do so.”).

12 This deference to state legislatures to devise a substitute redistricting map applies both to  
 13 apportionment plans that are found unconstitutional, and to plans that violate Section 2 of the VRA.  
 14 *See, e.g., Singleton v. Merrill*, 582 F. Supp. 3d 924, 1032-33 (N.D. Ala. 2022) (per curiam), *aff’d*,  
 15 *Allen v. Milligan*, 599 U.S. \_\_\_\_\_. “Following a determination that a redistricting plan violates  
 16 Section Two [of the Voting Rights Act], ‘[s]tates retain broad discretion in drawing districts to  
 17 comply with the mandate of § 2.’” *Id.* (quoting *Shaw*, 517 U.S. at 917 n.9). States need not rely on  
 18 a plaintiff’s remedial plan, nor must they “draw the precise compact district that a court would  
 19 impose in a successful § 2 challenge.” *Bush*, 517 U.S. at 978 (cleaned up). Instead, “States retain  
 20 a flexibility that federal courts enforcing § 2 lack, both insofar as they may avoid strict scrutiny  
 21 altogether by respecting their own traditional districting principles, and insofar as deference is due  
 22 to their reasonable fears of, and to their reasonable efforts to avoid, § 2 liability.” *Id.*

23 Also, while the relevant caselaw refers generally to “the legislature” as the proper body to  
 24 redraw defective maps, “[f]or redistricting purposes, . . . ‘the Legislature’ d[oes] not mean the  
 25 representative body alone.” *Ariz. State Legis. v. Ariz. Indep. Redistricting Comm’n*, 576 U.S. 787,  
 26 805 (2015) (citing *Ohio ex rel. Davis v. Hildebrant*, 241 U.S. 565, 569 (1916)). Indeed,  
 27 “redistricting ‘involves lawmaking in its essential features and most important aspect’” and such

1 lawmaking “must be in accordance with the method which the State has prescribed for legislative  
2 enactments. *Id.* at 807 (quoting *Smiley v. Holm*, 285 U.S. 355, 366-67 (1932)). In Washington, the  
3 Legislature has delegated its redistricting powers to the Commission through a voter-approved  
4 state constitutional amendment. *See* WASH. CONST. art. II, § 43, as amended by WASH. CONST.  
5 amend. 74, S.J. Res. 103, 48th Leg., Reg. Sess. (Wash. 1983) (enacted, approved by voters Nov.  
6 8, 1983). Under state law, “[l]egislative and congressional districts may not be changed or  
7 established except pursuant to” article II, section 43 of the state constitution. WASH. CONST. art.  
8 II, § 43(11) (emphasis added). And while the Commission ceased to exist on July 1, 2022, *see*  
9 RCW 44.05.110(2), “the legislature may . . . adopt legislation reconvening the commission for the  
10 purpose of modifying the redistricting plan,” RCW 44.05.120(1); *see also* WASH. CONST. art. II,  
11 § 43(8).<sup>18</sup> If the Commission is reconvened, it “shall complete the modification to the redistricting  
12 plan as soon as possible, but no later than sixty days after the effective date of the legislation  
13 reconvening the commission.” RCW 44.05.120(4). The process for modifying a redistricting plan  
14 generally follows the same pattern as ordinary decennial redistricting. “At least three of the voting  
15 members shall approve the modification to the redistricting plan.” *Id.* “Following approval of a  
16 modification to the redistricting plan by the commission, the legislature has the next thirty days  
17 during any regular or special session to amend the commission’s modification. Any amendment  
18 by the legislature must be approved by an affirmative vote in each house of two-thirds of the  
19 members elected or appointed thereto.” RCW 44.05.120(5). “The commission’s modification to  
20 the redistricting plan, with any amendments approved by the legislature” shall constitute the new  
21 redistricting plan. RCW 44.05.120(6).

22 Washington law provides a clear, unambiguous method for amending legislative district  
23 maps outside of the standard decennial reapportionment cycle. And caselaw is likewise  
24 unambiguous in holding that states should have the first opportunity to enact a remedial legislative

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26 <sup>18</sup> Although the Legislature’s next regular session is not scheduled to begin until January 8, 2024, “[s]pecial legislative  
27 sessions may be convened” by either “proclamation of the governor” or “resolution of the legislature.” WASH. CONST.  
art. II, § 12(2); *see also* Joint Rules of the Senate and the House of Representatives, H. Con. Res. 4401, 68th Leg.,  
Reg. Sess., Rule 29 (Wash. 2023).



1 apportionment scheme if the original plan is found to violate the Constitution or the VRA, and that  
2 states need not rely on a plaintiff’s remedial or demonstrative maps when doing so. Therefore, in  
3 order to avoid “intrud[ing] upon state policy any more than necessary,” *White v. Weiser*, 412 U.S.  
4 783, 795 (1973) (quoting *Whitcomb v. Chavis*, 403 U.S. at 160), if the Plaintiffs prevail on either  
5 of their claims under the VRA, or if Mr. Garcia prevails on his claim under the Fourteenth  
6 Amendment, this Court should order any remedial maps be enacted by the State of Washington  
7 through the Commission, as reconstituted pursuant to Washington law.

8         If Mr. Garcia’s Fourteenth Amendment challenge is upheld, the Court should order that  
9 the remedial map be drawn by the reconstituted Commission in a race-neutral manner. By drawing  
10 a new legislative district map in a constitutionally-compliant and race-neutral manner, the  
11 Commission might conduct a proper VRA analysis, the results of which would result in more  
12 defensible boundaries for Yakima area legislative districts under the VRA. In either event, it is for  
13 the State (through the Commission) to address the constitutional violation in the first instance, not  
14 for the Plaintiffs to show that an already unconstitutional map may have possibly complied with  
15 the VRA when it was enacted.

16         For any remedial map that is ordered—whether in *Garcia*, *Soto Palmer* or both—the Court  
17 should require the new map be approved by the Commission by November 15, 2023. This deadline  
18 provides a sufficient window of time for a special session of the Legislature to be convened, so  
19 that the Legislature can in turn “reconven[e] the [redistricting] commission for the purpose of  
20 modifying the redistricting plan,” which modification must be completed “no later than sixty days  
21 after the effective date of the legislation reconvening the commission.” RCW 44.05.120. A  
22 November 15 deadline for the reconvened Commission’s modified plan is consistent with deadline  
23 under state law for ordinary decennial redistricting. *Cf.* WASH. CONST. art. II, sec. 43(6); RCW  
24 44.05.100(1). Such a deadline provides the Legislature with the opportunity to make any necessary  
25 adjustments to the map produced by the Commission during the first 30 days of the 2024 regular  
26 legislative session (or any earlier special session that may be called), as is also consistent with state  
27 law. *Compare* RCW 44.05.120(5)-(6) *with* RCW 44.05.100(2)-(3). And this timeline easily allows

1 for the new legislative district map to be in place before the 2024 legislative elections, with ample  
 2 cushion for the Secretary of State and county election administrators to make any required  
 3 adjustments to precinct boundaries and other back-end systems.<sup>19</sup>

4 Finally, because legislative “reapportionment is primarily the duty and responsibility of the  
 5 State,” *Chapman*, 420 U.S. at 27 (citing *Reynolds v. Sims*, 377 U.S. at 586; *Md. Comm. for Fair*  
 6 *Representation v. Tawes*, 377 U.S. 656, 676 (1964)), and because state law forbids redistricting  
 7 from “purposely . . . favor[ing] or discriminat[ing] against any political party,” WASH. CONST. art.  
 8 II, § 43(5); RCW 44.05.090(5), then any order by this Court for a new legislative map should  
 9 require that such remedial map keep intact the overall partisan balance of the Enacted Plan. At  
 10 trial, Commissioners from both parties testified that partisan outcomes were a key goal of their  
 11 negotiations, and that partisan metrics were an integral component of the negotiation process. *See*,  
 12 *e.g.*, Trial Tr. 226:25–227:9 (Sims) 411:3–9 (Grose); 443:22–24, 456:3–10 (Fain: “I was very  
 13 interested in making as many districts in the state more politically competitive, across party  
 14 lines.”); 721:20–722:15 (Graves: “[M]y top priority was trying to draw more competitive  
 15 districts.”). These Commissioners testified they would not agree to unfavorable partisan changes  
 16 in one district without obtaining a favorable partisan change in a different district. *See, e.g.*, Trial  
 17 Tr. 252:13–23 (Sims); 387:7–388:1 (Grose: “Everything is always a negotiation, all the time.”);  
 18 447:3–10 (Fain); 703:7–22, 707:15–23 (Graves). Indeed, the final map produced by the  
 19 Commission only came about because, at the eleventh hour, Commissioners were able to consent  
 20 to a “framework” that primarily consisted of agreed-to partisan performance targets for various  
 21 legislative districts. *See, e.g.*, Trial Tr. 228:20–229:5, 230:7–14 (Sims); 449:23–450:7, 495:7–22  
 22 (Fain); 743:13–744:9 (Graves); 799:12–20 (O’Neil: “It was an agreement upon . . . the partisanship  
 23 numbers in . . . four, five districts.”). And a partisan performance target proved necessary to  
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25 <sup>19</sup> With respect to the 2022 election cycle, the Secretary of State indicated—which the Plaintiffs did not challenge—  
 26 that legislative district boundaries would need to be finalized by March 28. (*See* Dkt. # 66 at 7; Dkt. # 50 at 14.)  
 27 According to the Secretary of State, “[i]n order to implement any new state legislative maps from the 2024 election  
 cycle without disrupting Washington’s elections, new maps must be finalized no later than March 25.” (*See* Dkt. # 178  
 at 2.)

1 achieve compromise with respect to LD-15 itself—with Republican Commissioners assenting to  
2 drawing LD-15 as a majority HCVAP district in exchange for Democratic Commissioners  
3 agreeing to drawing it as a Republican-leaning district. *See, e.g.*, Trial Tr. 252:24–253:9, 282:13–  
4 18 (Sims); 326:22–24 (Walkinshaw); 474:10–13 (Fain); 745:7–12 (Graves).

5 Thus, if the Court finds that LD-15 must be modified, it should require that any changes to  
6 the partisan composition of that district be offset by partisan changes to other legislative districts  
7 in the modified statewide legislative plan. As the Washington State Supreme Court recognized  
8 following the 2021 process, “[r]edistricting raises largely political questions best addressed in the  
9 first instance by commissioners appointed by the legislative caucuses where negotiation and  
10 compromise is necessary for agreement.” *In re Order Regarding the Wash. State Redistricting*  
11 *Comm’n’s Letter to the Supreme Court on Nov. 16, 2021*, 504 P.3d 795, 796 (Wash. 2021) (mem.).  
12 To *ex post* alter the partisan makeup of only a single legislative district would vitiate the  
13 “negotiation and compromise” that the Commissioners found “necessary for agreement,” *id.*, and  
14 would violate the state law proscription against redistricting changes that “favor or discriminate  
15 against any political party,” WASH. CONST. art. I, § 43(5); RCW 44.05.090(5). It would invite a  
16 moral hazard for future redistricting commissioners to attempt to achieve their desired partisan  
17 aims by cynically trading away at the commission that which they expected to regain in the  
18 courts.<sup>20</sup> And most concerningly, it would undermine the entire bipartisan and collaborative spirit  
19 of the Commission, a feature that sets Washington’s redistricting process apart from the vast  
20 majority of other states where partisan gerrymandering runs rampant. *See, e.g.*, Nicholas  
21 Stephanopoulos, *Reforming Redistricting: Why Popular Initiatives to Establish Redistricting*  
22 *Commissions Succeed or Fail*, 23 J.L. & POL. 331, 333 (2007) (“[O]n the basis of political theory  
23 and empirical evidence, . . . the bipartisan commission is, on the whole, well-designed to prevent  
24 gerrymandering and improve redistricting.”)

25 \_\_\_\_\_  
26 <sup>20</sup> Indeed, it appears at least one Commissioner was prepared to engage in such cynical gamesmanship, by voting for  
27 a map he believed to be illegal and expecting the courts to award his caucus an additional seat in subsequent litigation.  
*See* Trial Tr. 791:7–16; *cf. Cooper*, 581 U.S. at 335 (Alito, J., concurring in part and dissenting in part) (warning of  
“losers in the redistricting process [who] seek to obtain in court what they could not achieve in the political arena”).

1 For these reasons, if the Court finds in favor of the Plaintiffs in either case, it should order  
2 the State to adopt, through the Redistricting Commission and pursuant to existing state law, a new  
3 legally-compliant legislative district map by November 15, 2023, that maintains the same overall  
4 statewide partisan balance as the Commission’s original Enacted Plan.

5 DATED this 12<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2023.

6 Respectfully submitted,

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**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that on this day I electronically filed the foregoing document with the Clerk of the Court of the United States District Court for the Western District of Washington through the Court's CM/ECF System, which will serve a copy of this document upon all counsel of record.

DATED this 12<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

s/ Andrew R. Stokesbary  
Andrew R. Stokesbary, WSBA No. 46097

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