Adapted loosely from ALC Template:

**Hello, my name is Muhammed Razeen and I have lived in Santa Clara County for 21 years. I was born in India and immigrated here many years ago, sharing a similar story with countless Americans.**

My community is:

The Santa Clara/Sunnyvale/San Jose/Cupertino Muslims of California. Although we once began as just a small mosque several decades ago in Santa Clara, we have expanded to include multiple campuses and mosques, and contribute countless efforts to not just combatting the resurgence of Islamophobia, but also helping the disadvantaged during the COVID-19 pandemic. I am privileged and proud to see how far our community has come with such a tiny initial base, and little financial resources.

Our community works tirelessly and under great financial strain to better our brothers and sisters in humanity. We are one of the most diverse religious demographics in the U.S (by ethnicity, income, marital status, etc etc.) and we are composed of many tech and medical professionals, law affair workers, humanitarian workers, and of course everyday citizens. Although California has given us much, we still need better protections for a resurgent rise in hate crimes, specifically passing ordinances at the county and state-level to assist Muslims suffering from mental health and hardship in terms of food resources. The COVID-19 pandemic put a potentially even greater strain on our communities than most, as California Muslims must deal with the minimal resource allocations typical for religious minorities while feeling drowned out by other, more populous interest groups, all the while combating resurgent hate crimes and unique mental, and physical health issues.

We are indeed a small fraction of America. But, we share many of the same issues that fellow Americans share. We are significant.

Location:

My community is located in Santa Clara County, or more largely the SF-Bay Area. Notably, we would absolutely prefer to be better grouped alongside the Sunnyvale, Santa Clara, San Jose, Cupertino, and contiguous areas. We live alongside many churches and other faith organizations in SC County, and observe that they possess significantly better connections to churches/synagogues/temples/etc, outside of their region. Additionally, we would like to ask for the non-incorporation of Gilroy into the South Bay County/Region. Not only is it geographically far from the other four cities (SJ, SC, Cupertino, Sunnyvale), but there are substantially fewer Muslims in Gilroy, substantially more hate crimes, and what seems to be a significant, vocal opposition to building faith centers there. Gilroy is an amazing and beautiful place, but by forcing minorities like Muslims to compete against far more numerous majorities, our voice risks being drowned out if forced to compete against cities we are not established in, and face the threat of violence/persecution.

Current district boundaries needlessly separate San Jose and Santa Clara, and even separate Sunnyvale from Cupertino and Santa Clara. These divisions bog our community down in paperwork and force mosques to work alongside with different rules and significantly different political systems. Redistricting for us would be most beneficial is these key areas: San Jose, Santa Clara, Sunnyvale, Cupertino, need to be better incorporated instead of needlessly falling under different jurisdictions.

Why my community is important:

Muslims in America face significant, unique challenges. Although we have grown so much, Californian Muslims still feel isolated from muslims from even neighboring countries and jurisdictions, forcing mosques and faith-based organizations as well as Islamic schools to find creative loopholes to take care of our community of students, professionals, and disadvantaged. Uniting Muslims and grouping districts, specifically making more efforts to unify Santa Clara with Sunnyvale, Cupertino, and San Jose and other contiguous areas would help our community come together and stand against hate, and give Californian Muslims hope that they are united.

**In summary, we ask for San Jose/Santa Clara/Cupertino/Sunnyvale and other CLOSELY CONTIGUOUS areas to be better connected to each other, and ask that GILROY and regions SIGNIFICANTLY SOUTH of the SF-Bay Area be distanced/redistricted in separate/from our communities.**

I thank the redistricting body for allowing this meeting, and for listening to public input.