

**Testimony of Nicole Plett,**  
**Member, Integrated Justice Alliance**  
**Before the**  
**Apportionment Commission of New Jersey**  
**February 13, 2011**

Thank you, Commissioners. My name is Nicole Plett and I am the Vice President of the New Jersey Regional Coalition, which is a core member of the Integrated Justice Alliance. The New Jersey Regional Coalition is a statewide, faith-based, grassroots coalition devoted to the idea that everyone who lives here has a stake in the economic and social well-being of our region. We work to advance a meaningful regional reform agenda that addresses fiscal and social disparities, racial and economic segregation, concentrated poverty, neighborhood decline, and urban sprawl.

We know there is no longer sufficient time to work with the Department of Corrections to ascertain the accurate home addresses of the approximately 22,000 thousand adults now incarcerated in New Jersey. But we do not need to have these exact home addresses in hand to prevent the misuse of prisoners in the current redistricting process. As others in the Alliance have previously explained, there are interim solutions for the Commission to consider before we accomplish the long-term goal of changing the way our Census Bureau counts incarcerated people.

**First**, the Commission could declare that all people who have been counted as residents of prisons have been counted there incorrectly.

**Second**, since we do not have correct home addresses at this stage in the process, the Commission could instead declare prisoners' addresses unknown and treat them as at-large members of the state and not as residents of any particular district.

Although, ideally, New Jersey will work to pass legislation that mandates that all people in custody be counted at their home addresses, **the State does have the power – and the available prison population data** – to avoid skewing the population distribution in New Jersey based on the location of its prisons. As you know, our neighbors in New York, Delaware, and Maryland have already recognized this problem and have taken steps to address it. We are here today to ask that New Jersey take steps in the same direction.

Once again, at the Integrated Justice Alliance, we remain prepared and willing to work closely with you to interpret the census data that we have submitted to ensure a fair statewide count.