

Alexander Barrett

Alexander Barrett

Prepared testimony for NYIRC hearing on July 26, 2021

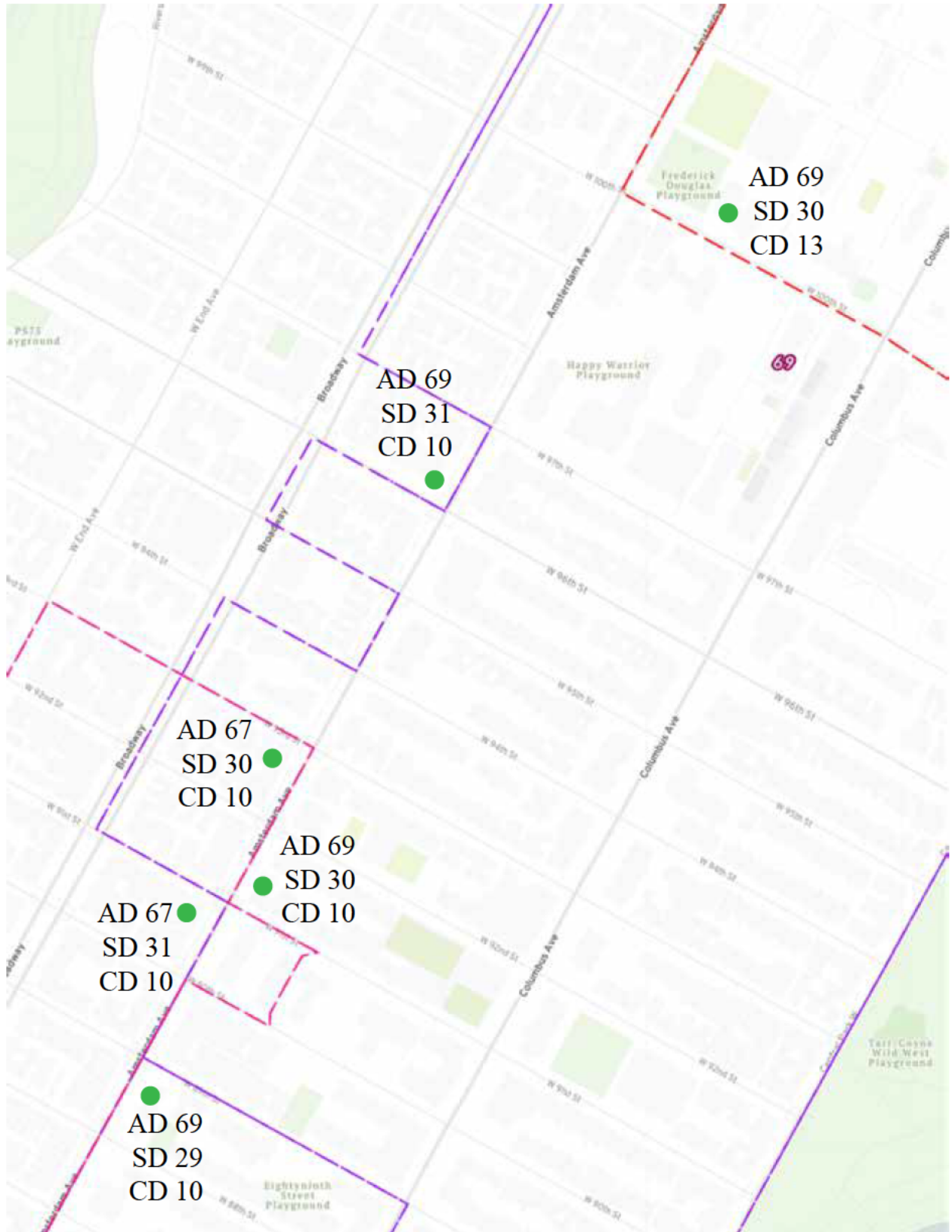
I am a Democratic District Leader from the 69th Assembly District Part B, on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, where I have lived for most of my life. I currently live eighteen blocks from where I grew up. I am also a software developer in my professional life, specializing in the visualization and communication of data, and I have experience working with census data and creating maps of political districts.

My testimony will focus on the importance of maintaining the integrity of whole neighborhoods, like Manhattan's West Side, within district lines. Districts should conform to geographic borders and existing political boundaries, such as Census tabulation areas or community boards, as much as possible. Congressional and state legislative districts should share borders as much as possible. There are three related reasons that this is essential, which I will elaborate on during my spoken testimony:

- Representation and attention from elected officials
- Understanding district needs and providing services
- Organizing and the political process

Alexander Barrett

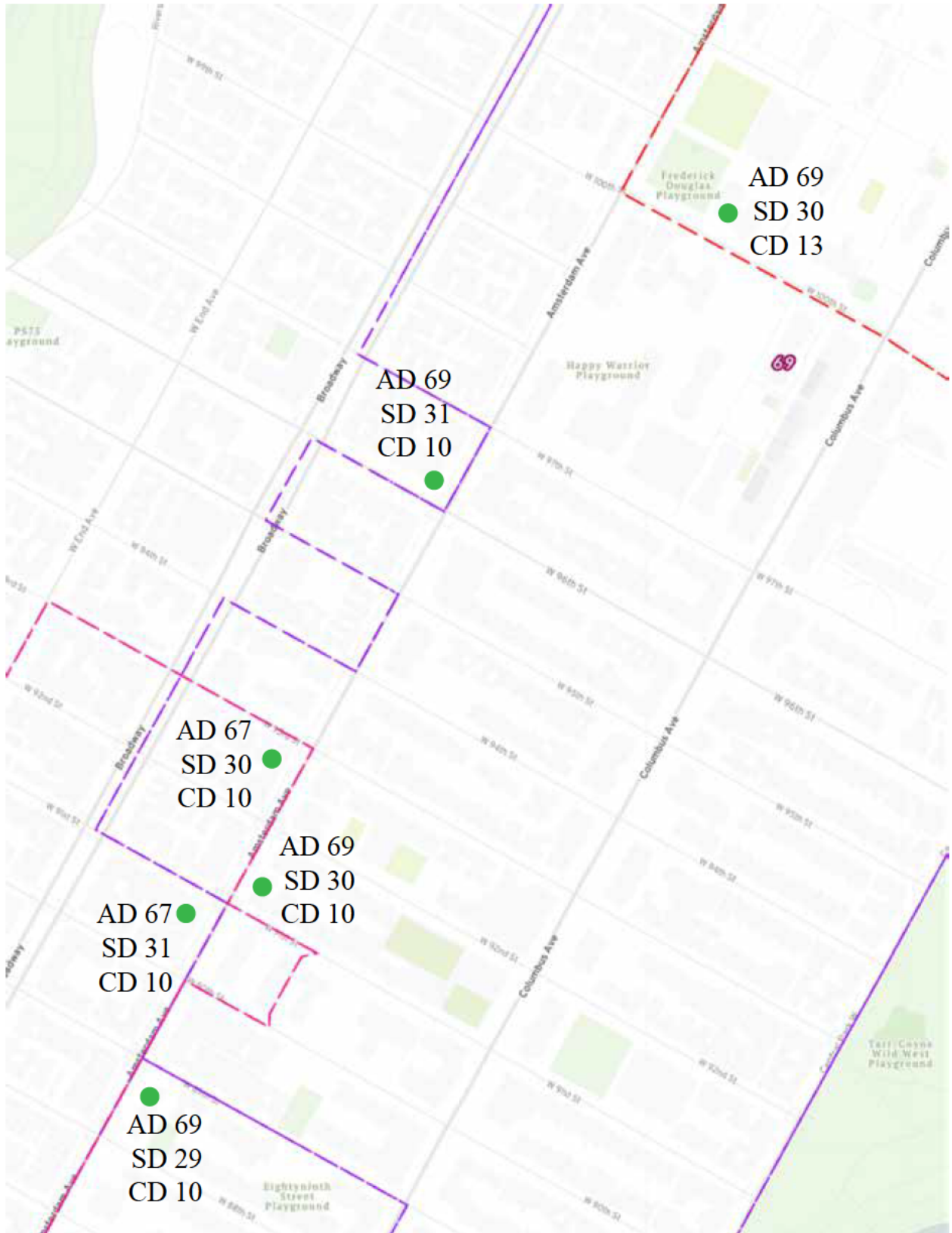
In an eleven-block stretch of Manhattan's Upper West Side, a resident could be represented by one of six combinations of Assemblymember, Senator, and Congressperson under current district lines. This confuses voters and creates unnecessary obstacles for political campaigns and constituent services.



Annotations by Alexander Barrett, July 2021.

Base map from NYC Boundaries Map <https://boundaries.beta.nyc/>

In an eleven-block stretch of Manhattan's Upper West Side, a resident could be represented by one of six combinations of Assemblymember, Senator, and Congressperson under current district lines. This confuses voters and creates unnecessary obstacles for political campaigns and constituent services.



Annotations by Alexander Barrett, July 2021.

Base map from NYC Boundaries Map <https://boundaries.beta.nyc/>

Anita Altman

Testimony NY State Independent Redistricting Commission Hearing, July 26, 2021

Good Afternoon,

My name is Anita Altman. I am a native born New Yorker and a registered voter, who has lived her entire adult life on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. I am here today to express my views on the potential redistricting of Congressional District 10, represented by the Honorable Jerrold Nadler, who for almost 30 years has been a member of congress representing Manhattan's West Side. This west side district has pretty much remained the same over the past 40 years. I know that I speak for many of his constituents, who are proud to call him our congressman, and are anxious to have him continue to do so. We have confidence in knowing he represents us, and through his many years as our congressman understands the issues and challenges confronting this district.

Unfortunately New York State will lose one congressional seat as a result of the 2020 census. I would like to point out that unlike some New York counties in the southern and northern tiers of our state that have experienced population loss, New York City has experienced small growth and should not be penalized with the loss of that seat. Manhattan's population has basically remained the same. So I am puzzled to understand why there has even been a discussion of what would be a radical redrawing of our district to encompass Manhattan's east and west sides. Cross-town buses are the one obvious connection linking both sides of the borough. Otherwise, the West Side primarily functions on a north-south axis, as evidenced by our two subway lines, formerly known as the IRT and the IND, as well as municipal service districts, e.g., local school boards and elementary and middle school zones; and police and fire precincts. Community Boards 1, 2, 4 and 7 are almost all within CD 10. I was a 10 year member of CBD 7 and can attest to the importance of having a primary elected representative on the federal, state and city levels with whom to work to fulfill the aspirations and address the concerns of local residents.

I would also like to add that there has been a significant demographic change in the New York City delegation. Congressman Nadler is the only remaining Jewish member, and this the only district with a Jewish majority. At this time of rising anti-Semitism, it is more important than ever that we continue to have a Jewish presence in the NYS delegation. Continuing the unification of the Jewish communities of Manhattan's West Side, and Jewish population centers in Brooklyn I believe help to protect the interests of our community, and instill confidence that our government will stand by and confront this growing and frightening rise of hatred against Jews.

Respectfully submitted,

Anita Altman

[REDACTED]
New York, New York 10025
[REDACTED]

Anthony S Hoffmann

NYS Independent Redistricting Commission

Testimony

July 26, 2021

Distinguished members of the NYS Independent Redistricting Commission:

Good morning. My name is Anthony S Hoffmann. I have lived in Greenwich Village for the past fifty-three years and have been active in my community since I moved here in 1968. I have been an active member of the 13th Street Block Association, the Village Independent Democrats, the PS 41 PTA, Community Board #2, The Village Temple and J Street, a pro-Israel pro-peace organization. From 1981-1991 I was the elected Democratic Party District Leader for the 66th Assembly District, Part A..

I strongly urge the NYS Redistricting Commission to keep Greenwich Village, as defined by the area South of 14th Street, North of Houston Street., and West of Fifth Avenue to the Hudson River, in one congressional district as it has been for the past thirty years. When I moved to Greenwich Village in 1968 a significant part of The Village was joined with Staten Island in one district. That long-ago ill-thought-out joining of two different communities was dysfunctional and did not work for either.

Greenwich Village has a progressive culture that should not be diluted, drawn from historic roots that spring from political liberalism to accidents of geography and even public transportation. Together they establish a unity that should remain in one cohesive district. In other words, there is no reason to divide or change the district we have today.

A significant portion of Greenwich Village is located within three landmark districts: The Greenwich Village Historic District, The South Village Historic District and the Meatpacking District. One of the things that make Greenwich Village distinctive, and an amazing tourist draw, is the preservation of its, and New York's, early history through its landmark status. The real estate development pressures on these districts are ongoing and severe. It is critical to keep these historic districts in one congressional district so their continuation can be championed by a strong voice.

I was the Democratic Party District Leader for Greenwich Village from 1981-1991. I was also the four time president of the Village Independent Democrats. Both of these positions serve the entire 66th Assembly District, Part A (approximate geographic boundaries are 14th Street to Houston Street, 1st Ave. to the Hudson River). Even though there are many issues that are similar throughout the 66th Assembly District, Part A there are definitely distinct issues East and West of Fifth Avenue. I have found that people in Greenwich Village are more aligned with the West Side of Manhattan, (Chelsea, Hells Kitchen, Upper West Side) whereas those people living East of Fifth Avenue are more aligned with the East Side of Manhattan (Murray Hill, Lenox Hill, Upper East Side). There could be many historical reasons for this but one contemporary issue is

transportation. The West Side of Manhattan is serviced by the A, C, E, F, 1, 2, and 3 trains while the East Side is serviced primarily by the 4, 5 and 6 trains. This North/South direction of subways impacts communications and interactions as well as the focus of complaints and expression of needs I received from constituents.

Another geographically based distinction between the East and West Sides of Lower Manhattan is the very physical connection to the Hudson River and the Hudson River Park. People living East of Fifth Avenue are focused on the East River. This can be seen vividly today through the disruptions to park usage caused by the reconstruction of the East River Park in order to protect the community against flooding that would occur due to another Sandy type event. It is the people living East of Fifth Avenue who are making their presence felt at the various meetings dealing with this issue. On the West Side residents are mainly focused on the Hudson River Park, Pier 40 and the funding needed to finish the Hudson River Park.

Another East/West distinction is schools. In the Village the dividing line between School Board 1 and School Board 2 is University Pl. which is just one block East of Fifth Avenue. Therefore, most parents in Greenwich Village send their children to schools in School Board #2. Similarly, Community Board #2 is overwhelmingly in Greenwich Village. Its boundary on the East Side is Third Avenue Ave/The Bowery. When I was on Community Board #2 in the 1990's the majority of Greenwich Village issues we dealt with were West of Fifth Ave. To this day that has not changed. As a good government issue it makes most sense to keep these community organizations in one congressional district.

The 10th Congressional District is one of most progressive in the country. It has the largest concentration of Jewish Residents (over 150,000 adults) of any congressional district in the country. It is also a voice of progressive Judaism. I am an active member of J Street, an organization whose focus is working for a two state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian issue. We believe that the road to peace in the Middle East is through two separate states, one for Jewish people and one for Palestinians. Although J Street is a national organization, with members throughout the United States, the largest number come from the 10th Congressional District with many of them living in Greenwich Village. It is important that progressive Jews have a voice in congress. The 10th Congressional District is one of those voices and shouldn't be diluted.

Greenwich Village is known throughout the world as an iconic place for its history, the arts, and its progressive politics. It is aligned with other communities up and down the West Side of Manhattan. These commonalities have long historical roots which remain very present today. For instance the LGBTQ Community has strong, historic base on the West Side of Manhattan, including Greenwich Village, Chelsea and Hell's Kitchen.

The 10th Congressional District, which was drawn by a special master, should be kept intact.

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony S. Hoffmann



Testimony for the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission
July 26, 2021

Thank you to the Independent Redistricting Commission (IRC) for organizing this series of public hearings on the upcoming redistricting cycle.

I am Anu Joshi, the Vice President of Policy at the New York Immigration Coalition, an umbrella policy and advocacy organization that works statewide with over 200 immigrant-serving member organizations. The NYIC is a member of the Mapping Our Future coalition. Mapping Our Future is a statewide coalition of advocates dedicated to mobilizing the grassroots to get involved in redistricting and advocate for a fair process and fair maps.

Fair districts are the foundation for fair representation.

The opportunity to draw fair districts only comes every 10 years. And there are no do-overs. If we don't get this right, our communities have to live with the consequences for the next decade.

District maps that make it impossible for communities to elect their own members often mean a decade of having the needs of that community deprioritized. If candidates and elected officials know they can get reelected while ignoring certain communities, they may do just that. Our work on fair and humane immigration policies, affordable housing, police reform, and so much more is made harder because some incumbents feel untouchable.

But a good redistricting process can remedy that. Well-drawn districts that keep communities of interest together can protect New York's immigrants and communities of color, allow challengers to have a fair shot at winning elections, and energize civic engagement.

These public hearings are a promising start, but I urge the IRC to consider the entire redistricting process to be a public one. At a minimum this must include:

- Maintaining an up-to-date website of upcoming meetings and events
- An archive of past meetings and events
- Meetings that are open to the public and announced with adequate advanced notice
- A commitment to partner with advocacy organizations on community events; and

New York Immigration Coalition

131 W 33rd St. Fl 6
New York, NY 10001
212 627 2227
nyic.org



Anu Joshi

- A commitment to engage with ethnic media across multiple platforms so the public is aware of IRC events and announcements

The unfortunate reality is that New York's district maps have been egregiously gerrymandering for decades. To remedy this, the IRC must not use the current maps as a starting point.

We have a lot of work ahead of us, but this is a good start to remedying some of the mistakes of the past and mapping a future that works for all New Yorkers. Thank you again to the IRC for holding this hearing and thanks also to the many partners who are in this fight for fair maps and fair representation.

Please reach out if you have any questions at [REDACTED]

Bernadette Ferrara- Van Nest Neighborhood Alliance New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

BRONX AND NEW YORK COUNTY
VIRTUAL PUBLIC HEARING TO SOLICIT INPUT FROM YOUR COMMUNITY
MONDAY – JULY 26, 2021 – 2:00 p.m.

Testimony to a “Listening Session” prepared by
Bob Nolan, Sr. advisor of Van Nest Neighborhood Alliance
Bernadette Ferrara, president of Van Nest Neighborhood Alliance

Monday, July 26, 2021

Van Nest has always been identified as an East Bronx neighborhood. It is a blue collar neighborhood of nurses, laborers, mechanics, bus drivers and small business owners who raise their families to respect their neighbors, friends and law enforcement.

Our diverse population includes primarily Hispanics, African-Americans, Muslims and Caucasians who live together in harmony and respect cultural and racial differences.

Van Nest is part of the 49th Police Precinct, the 49th Clergy Council and Community Board #11 in the East Bronx. Our members attend both meetings each month and local residents make up 4 of the 51 board members of Community Board #11. Other neighborhoods within the Board are our organization partners and include the Morris Park Community Association, the Pelham Parkway Neighborhood Association, and the Allerton Avenue Homeowners and Merchant Association, Allerton International Merchant Association, Eastchester Gardens and Bronx Park East Community Association, just to name a few.

Unfortunately, previous commissions and legislators ignored our requests to keep our neighborhood together.

Today in Van Nest, the lines separating two assembly districts divides Van Nest in half between the 80th and 87th A.D. The State Senate district separates our neighborhood from Morris Park to our east where we share many of the same problems and concerns. Though not under the jurisdiction of the 2021 State Commission, the City Council lines also divide Van Nest between two districts causing our organization to call multiple elected officials with community problems.

Van Nest is abundantly aware that the political division of our community damages the ability to receive financial support from our electeds. Since our neighborhood is always “on the fringe” so is the funding received from electeds while those neighborhoods in the heart of the district benefit. This is no surprise to any of the Commission members.

Van Nest has no funded youth programs, nor a program for Seniors funded through the Department For The Aging (DFTA). There are no cultural programs and the few activities funded through Parks in our Van Nest Playground, we must fight for each year. If we were united in one district, we are confident that funding would flow to our Van Nest community.

In conclusion, we request the following:

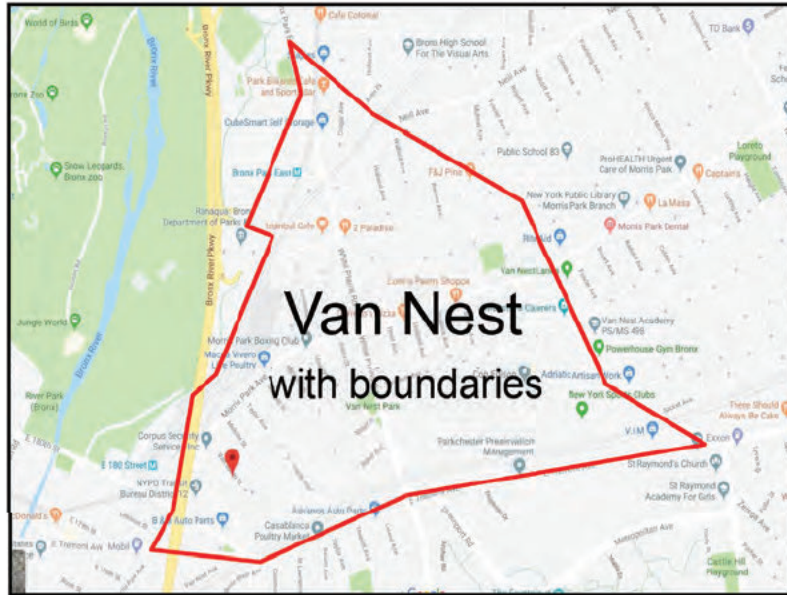
- An end to the division of the Van Nest community through re-apportionment;
- Inclusion of Van Nest with neighboring communities within Community Board #11/49th Precinct whose boundaries are coterminous;
- Van Nest has always been identified as an East Bronx neighborhood and we want to continue to fight with community groups to the East and North to improve the quality of life for each and every resident of our community.

Thank you to the Commission for holding the “listening session.”

Bernadette Ferrara- Van Nest Neighborhood Alliance

MAPS OF VAN NEST NEIGHBORHOOD:

1. Local boundaries of Van Nest neighborhood in the Bronx:



2. Boundaries of Van Nest neighborhood in relation to the Northeast Bronx:



**Bryan Wigfall
County Committeeman
New York State Assembly District 79
Bronx Democratic Party**

**Testimony
New York State Independent Redistricting Commission
August 15, 2021**

Good Afternoon Distinguished Commissioners. My name is Bryan Wigfall. I have the honor of serving my community as a County Committeeman for New York State Assembly District 79 within the Bronx Democratic Party. I am providing you with testimony about congress district 15. This congressional district consists of the South Bronx.

All of the communities within the South Bronx have similar needs. By the South Bronx having its own congressional district this gives our communities the ability to work as part of a coalition with the house member who represents our district to meet our needs. This is crucial. Please do not break up our congressional district. I ask that you keep congress district 15 the way it is.

Carol Salmanson

My name is Carol Salmanson, and I've been working on the
#DrawDemocracy Campaign.

The **#DrawDemocracy Campaign** is a partnership between True Democracy NY and RepresentUS NYC.

True Democracy NY, a 501(c)4 nonprofit organization, is a non-partisan group of New Yorkers dedicated to changing the systemic dysfunction and corruption of New York politics. We believe in empowering everyday people to take action locally to fix our broken elections and hold politicians accountable.

[RepresentUS NYC](#) is a chapter of [RepresentUS](#).

Carol Salmanson

We have created what we believe to be the first ever jigsaw puzzle based on electoral districts, of the New York State Senate. You can see the puzzle, which illustrates the reason for the crazy district lines: to protect incumbents and the party who drew them.

www.drawdemocracy.org



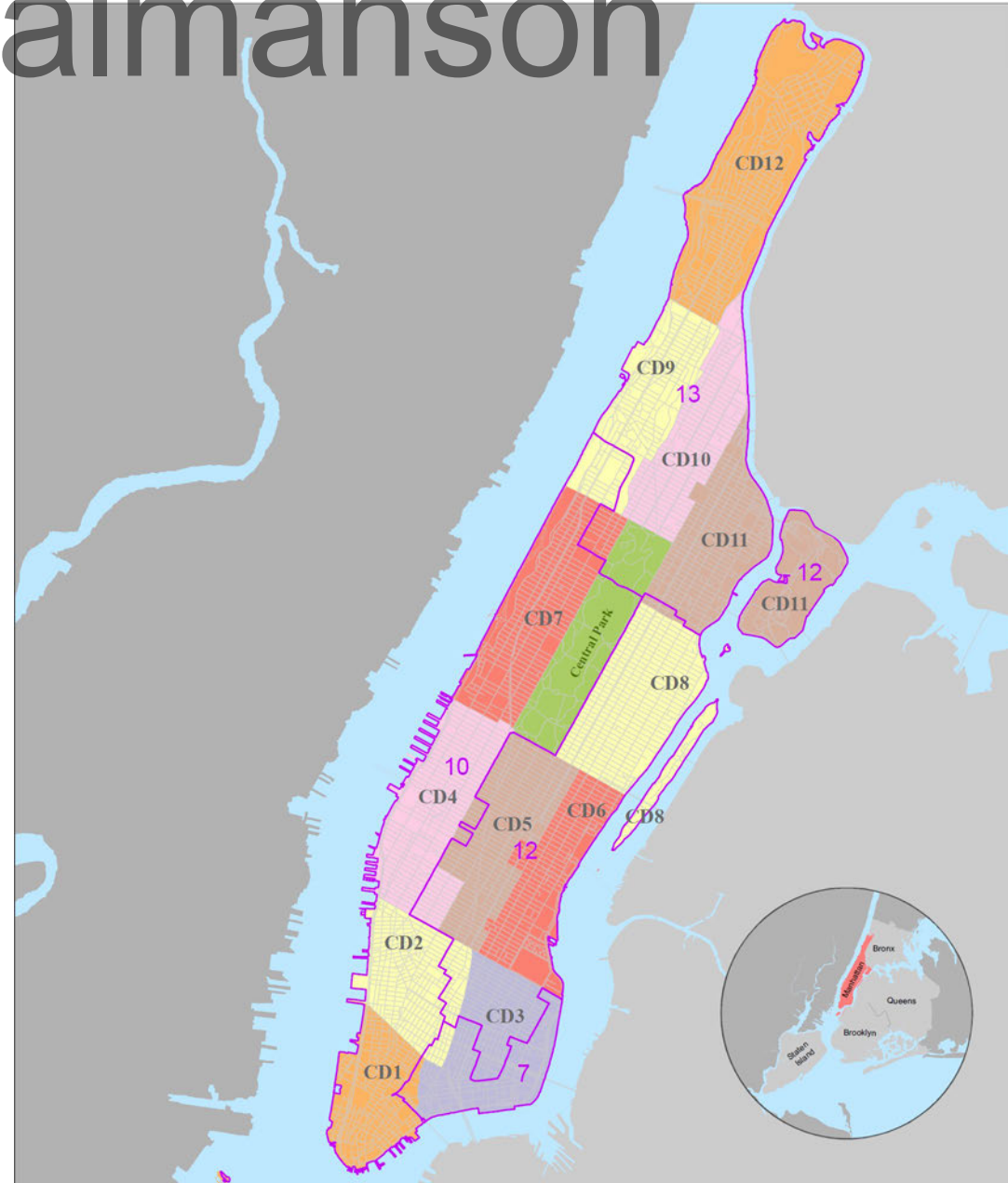
Carol Salmanson

True democracy would have district lines that represent their residents.

And, actually, New York City's Community Boards do just that, as is shown by the map here.

I myself live in Manhattan, in

- Community District 6
- Dan Quart's Assembly District 73
- State Senator Liz Krueger's District 28
- Carolyn Maloney's Congressional District 12.



Carol Salmanson

I've done a bit of research on their district lines, and found maps provided online by NYC Department of Planning. There is a .pdf for every borough, each containing maps of:

- **Community Boards, in color**
- **State Assembly District lines overlaying the Community Boards**
- **State Senate Districts overlaying the Community Boards**
- **Congressional Districts overlaying the Community Boards**

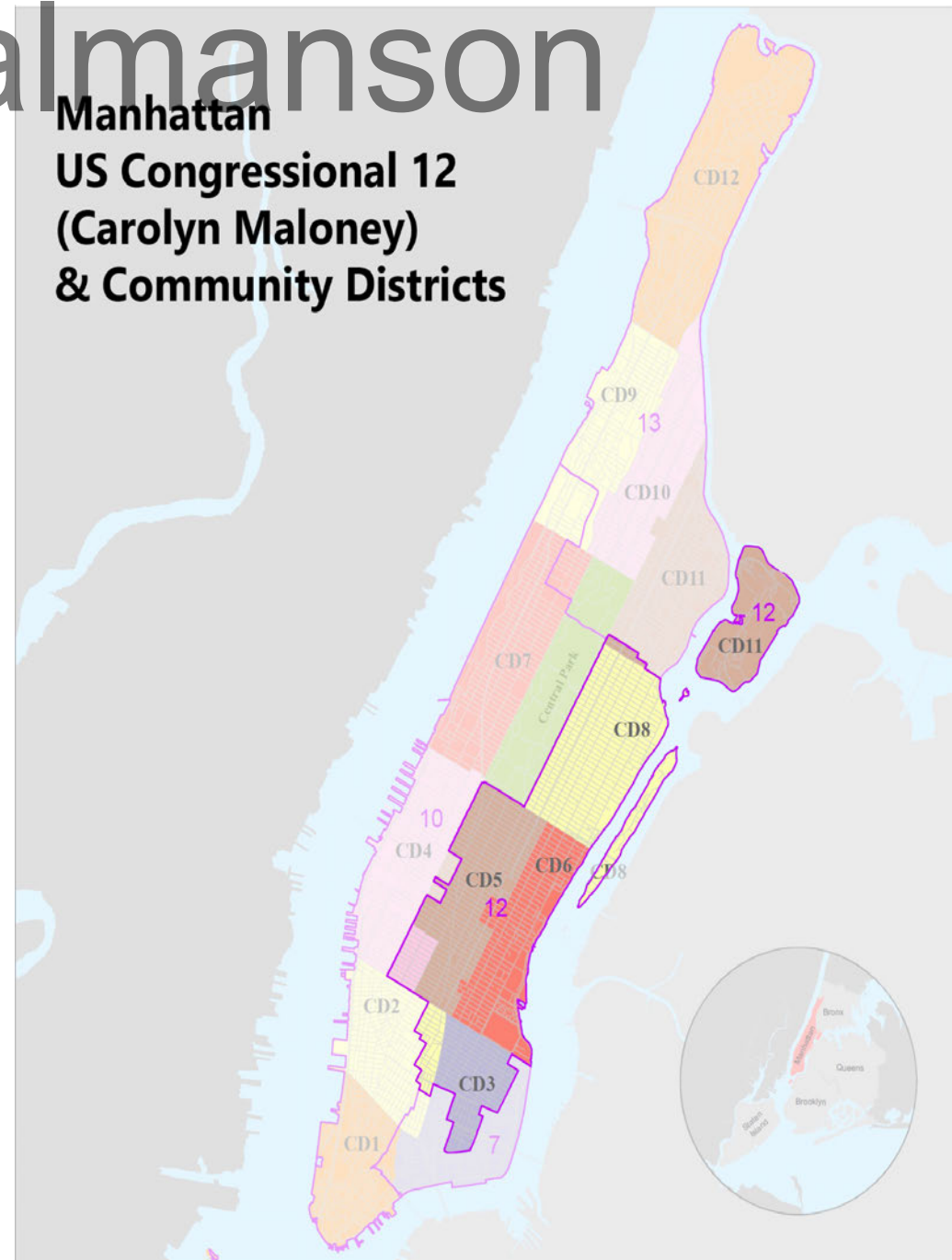
Carol Salmanson

So I spent some time in Photoshop graying out everything but my own district, whose gerrymandering isn't too bad, comparatively speaking. But the way they were drawn still chops up Manhattan's community.

Carol Salmanson

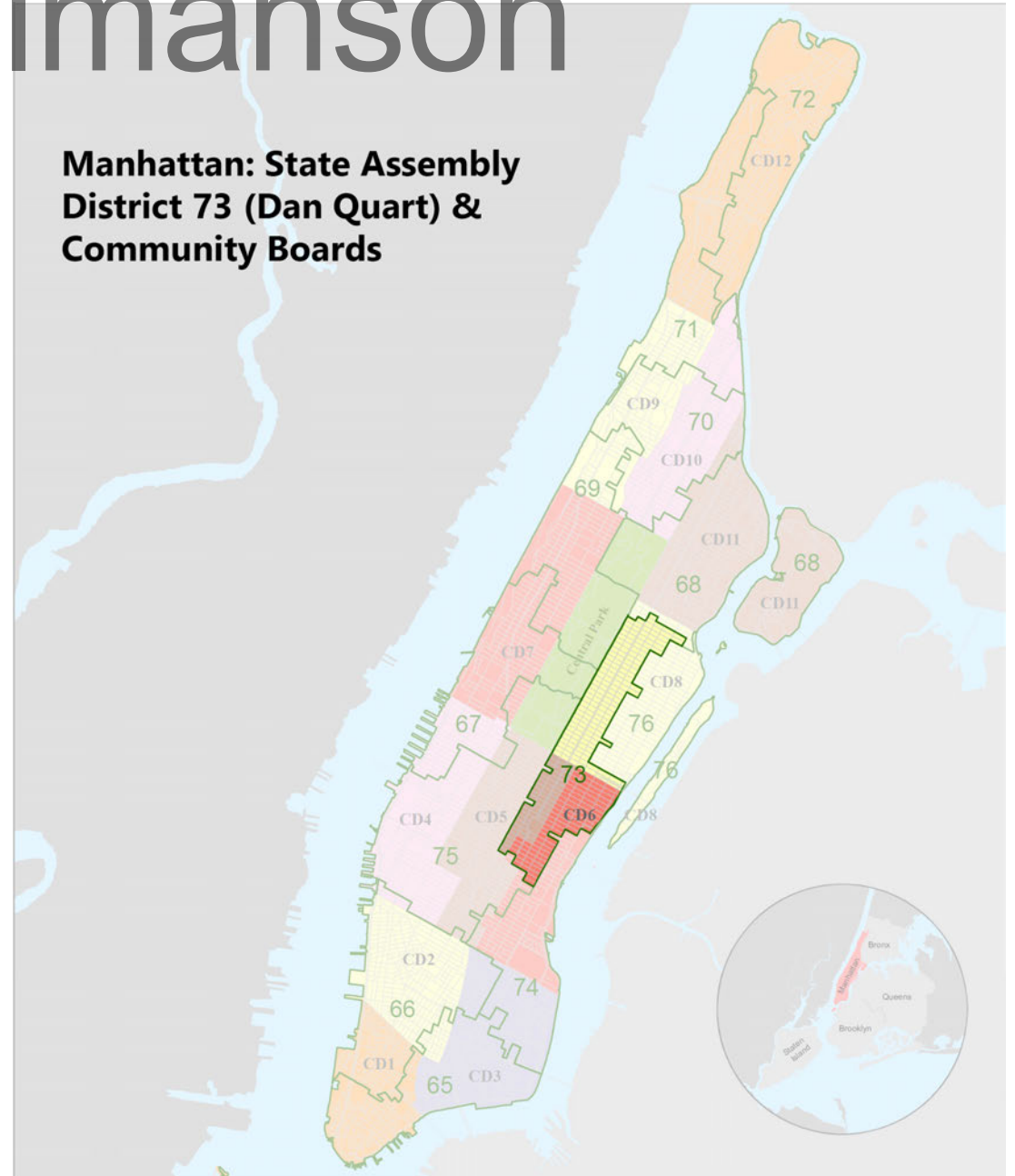
Manhattan
US Congressional 12
(Carolyn Maloney)
& Community Districts

This map shows
Congresswoman
Carolyn Maloney's
district, which is fairly
sane, but cuts up
Community District 3.



Carol Salmanson

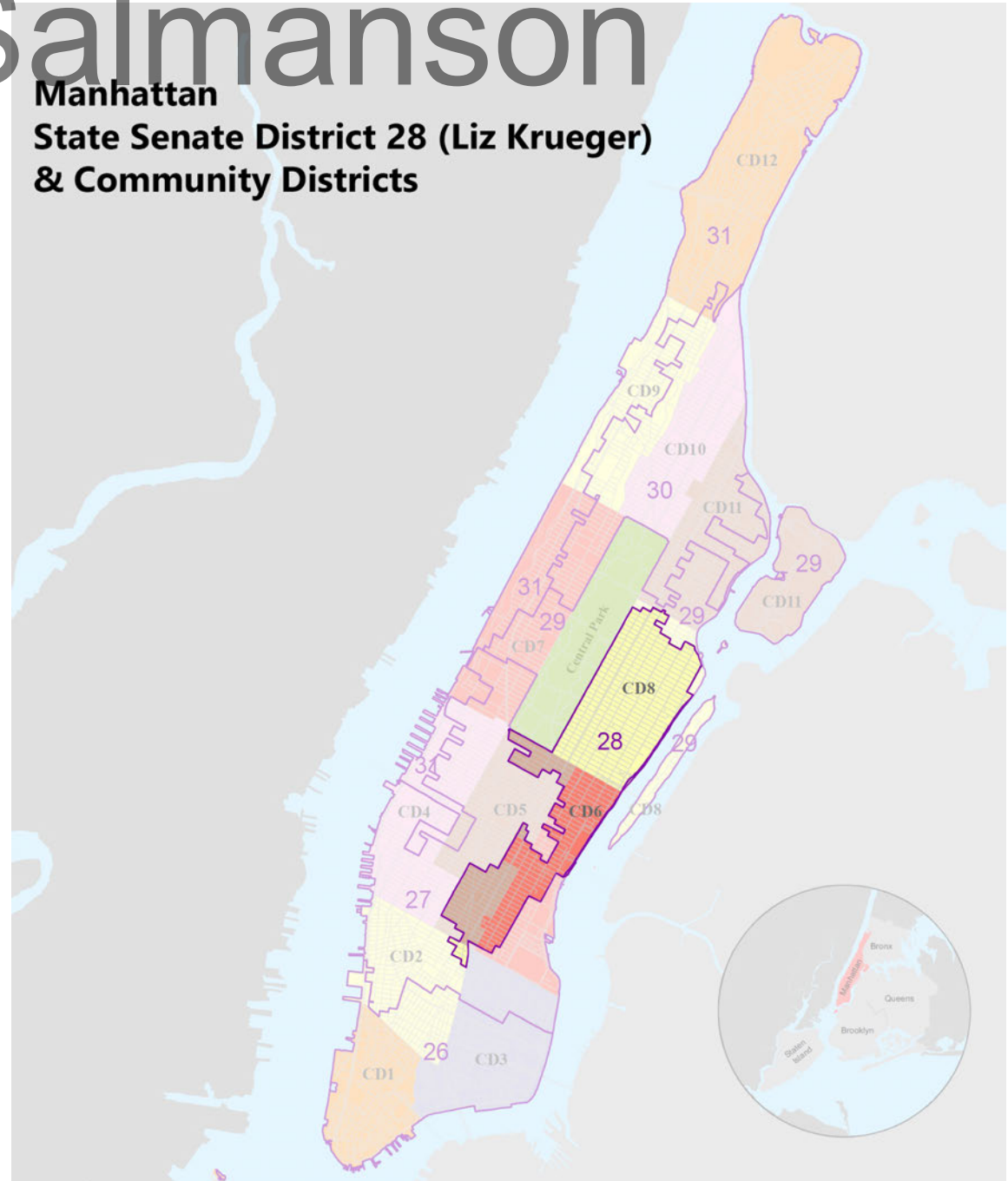
This second map shows Assembly Member Dan Quart's district. It contains Community Districts 5, 6, and 8, but doesn't have even one community board in its entirety.



Carol Salmanson

Manhattan
State Senate District 28 (Liz Krueger)
& Community Districts

And finally, let's look at State Senator Liz Krueger's map. It's bizarre, although nowhere near as bizarre as other state senate districts (District 29, for example). Its southeast segment cuts out single blocks in places, and the district has portions of Community Boards 2, 4, 5, and 8.



Carol Salmanson

Clearly, the intent in drawing these electoral districts was not representative government.

I implore this commission to draw the maps in the same spirit as the community boards' lines were drawn. They are truly drawn to represent its residents, rather than politicians and their parties.

**Testimony of
Catherine McVay Hughes
Before the
New York State Independent Redistricting Commission for
Bronx and New York counties
Virtual Public Hearing: Monday, July 26, 2021, at 2:00 PM**

Thank you for allowing me to testify on Redistricting in Manhattan. I am a 30+ year Financial District Resident of the 10th District of New York and have been very involved in rebuilding Lower Manhattan after 9/11, and again after Superstorm Sandy in 2012, and now COVID. My full affiliations are below.

We raised our family one block east of the World Trade Center site. We chose to stay in Lower Manhattan to be part of rebuilding and recovery, now for the third time. We stayed because we trusted the continuity provided by our 10th District legislative representation and the leadership of Congressman Nadler and his team.

To understand the importance of this district, here are three critical facts:

First, government action and leadership were central to the recovery after 9/11 and Sandy. Lower Manhattan would be a dead zone today had it not been for concerted, sustained, and effective government response. This was not about "government getting out of the way." The private sector abandoned Lower Manhattan after 9/11 and Sandy, only returning after government restored essential services and rebuilt business confidence.

Second, Lower Manhattan is an extraordinarily complex mosaic of jurisdictions. All three branches of State government operate here, as well as the City Council, the Borough President, the Mayor and the Community Board. Lower Manhattan is the linchpin of the MTA regional transit network and home to the second-largest state authority, BPCA; and the bi-state Port Authority operates the Trade Center and the PATH. Nowhere in the country is the organization of government more intertwined.

Third, the current Congressional district has maintained its boundaries for over 40 years. People know it and know that their representative understands the community and its concerns, and most importantly it works.

- Community Boards should not be split between Congressional districts.
- Security continues to be a top priority – NYPD police precincts in Manhattan largely run north/south and not east/west.
- Financial District/South Street Seaport, Battery Park City & Tribeca share connections and community resources with the Village, including parks, waterfront, and schools.
- New York's Harbor and the Hudson River unite downtown with the East River – we saw the devastating and costly impacts of Hurricane Sandy and now see the critical need for improved waterfront resiliency, including the dense FiDi-Seaport area where high tide already splashes over the esplanade.

Catherine McVay Hughes

Congressman Nadler has made sure that our community got the services and support that we needed to bring back America's fourth largest business district and its diverse community. We need to have a Member of Congress who understands the complex character of our area, and today's District 10 assures this. Thank you very much.

Affiliations for purposes of disclosure:

Catherine McVay Hughes is currently a member of the Board of Directors for Battery Park City Authority, Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, South Street Seaport Museum, WTC Scientific Technical Advisory Committee, WTC Survivors Steering Committee, NYC's Climate Coalition for the Seaport-Financial District, Financial District Neighborhood Association, CERES Presidents Council, Princeton Climate Institute, Storm Surge Working Group and the External Committee for Princeton University School of Engineering and Applied Science Andlinger Center for Energy and the Environment.

She served as Chair of Manhattan Community Board 1 and its World Trade Center Redevelopment Committee and Governors Island Trustee, Earth Institute at Columbia University Advisory Board, NY Rising Community Reconstruction Program for Southern Manhattan Co-Chair, Downtown Alliance Board, NYC Police Museum Board, The Battery Board, Community Advisory Boards for the WTC Health Registry, Gouverneur Healthcare Services and Community Liaison to the US Environmental Protection Agency WTC Expert Technical Panel in 2003-2004. She holds an MBA from the Wharton School of Business and a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from Princeton University.

Cira E. Angeles

**Key Issues of Concern for Dominican-American
Community in City of New York based on Proposed
Redistricting Plan**

**Testimony at New York Counties Public Meeting before
the New York State Independent Redistricting
Commission**

State of New York

July 29, 2021

Cira E. Angeles

Member of the Board of Advisors of the Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons (VP&S) and Columbia University Irving Medical Center (CUIMC), Member of the Board of Advisors of Eugenio María de Hostos Community College of The City University of New York, Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer of L.A. Riverside Brokerage, Inc., and Former Spokesperson of the Livery Base Owners Association

My name is Cira Angeles. Over the last 25 years, I have and continue to serve in various leadership roles for organizations that have had a direct relationship with the Dominican-American communities in the neighborhoods of Washington Heights, Inwood, and the South and West Bronx. Through these various roles I have come into direct contact with the patients, students, entrepreneurs, and taxi drivers that make up one of the largest Spanish-speaking communities in the State of New York.

Specifically, as the former spokesperson of the Livery Base Owners Association, I spoke on behalf of over 20,000 livery drivers, the majority of whom were of Dominican descent. As a leader in this vibrant community that has contributed so much to the rich culture and diverse fabric of the State of New York, it is unconscionable to me that any proposed lines of re-districting could potentially deny the members of our Dominican community the opportunity to vote for representatives who share their same ethnicity, culture, and socio-economic values.

The bonds that tie our neighborhoods together and give us our common identity are Juan Pablo Duarte Boulevard or, as it is also known, St. Nicholas Avenue, the street vendors in Inwood who sell our favorite “patelitos”, the professors at Hostos Community College who share the same immigration stories as their Dominican students, and Priests at Church of Our Lady of Esperanza who understand the deep cultural bonds to our faith. These people need representation that looks like them to preserve the social fabric of our neighborhood.

Over the last 25 years, I’ve personally watched Dominicans flee New York State due to rising rents and less economic opportunities. Without adequate representation fighting for us in the New York State Senate and Assembly, we will continue to see this trend. On behalf of Dominicans in these neighborhoods, I urge the Commission to reject any lines that do not result in a district that is a majority Dominican, bound by the common neighborhoods of Washington Heights, Inwood, and the South and West Bronx.

Respectfully,

Cira E. Angeles

INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING TESTIMONY

Daniel Marks Cohen

Good afternoon. My name is Daniel Marks Cohen, and I am the Democratic State Committeeman for the 69th Assembly District. I was elected in 2010 and have lived in the Manhattan Valley/Morningside Heights neighborhoods my entire life, 50 years.

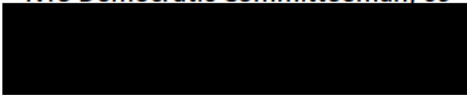
I have testified in on redistricting previously following the last Census cycle, and was also the principal litigant in Cohen v. LATFOR and Cohen v. Cuomo. The redistricting commission maintained the integrity of some of the districts, and struggled with others. I hope that it will finish the work it started a decade ago.

At present I live in the 10th Congressional District ably represented by Congressman Jerry Nadler, and the district includes the entirety of the West Side and should continue to do so. Others today will speak on the subject of the Congressional lines but I urge you to maintain them largely as they are, and to also maintain the 10th separate from the East Side district, ably represented by Carolyn Maloney.

I would like to speak to the 69th Assembly District, which as I mentioned previously, I have lived in for my entire life. The district runs roughly from 86th Street to 125th Street, including the northern parts of the Upper West Side and including the entirety of the neighborhood of Manhattan Valley and Morningside Heights. As with the Congressional District, the Assembly District represents its constituents well and does not need to be largely altered. It is compact and keeps several neighborhoods together and whole, rather than splitting up neighbors along arbitrary lines. I urge you to maintain the district as it is, and not make any changes that would upset the careful and thoughtful balance the district has achieved.

Thank you.

Daniel Marks Cohen
NYS Democratic Committeeman, 69th AD



Daniele Gerard

July 26, 2021

To members of the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission:

My name is Daniele Gerard. I was born and raised in New York City, and have lived uptown and downtown, on the East Side and on the West Side. I first bought an apartment on the Upper West Side in 1996. I have been a member of Three Parks Independent Democrats since 2004, and on the Board of Directors since 2006. I am a civil rights lawyer for children.

I am testifying before you today because I believe it is of the utmost importance to keep the 10th congressional district a single district on the West Side. This is for several reasons that cannot all be adequately covered in three minutes, so I will focus on just a few of them that make sense based on the way our communities were formed and historically on how the districts have always been drawn.

First, the current congressional lines were drawn not by political gerrymandering, but by the Second Circuit Court of Appeals, specifically by a redistricting expert Special Master. The lines as drawn in Manhattan make eminent sense and have for the last 40 years.

Second, the West Side has shared community facilities such as:

- Subways, with their shared impact on transit and community, that run north/south, not east/west;
- Elementary and Middle School zones that do not cross Central Park or run river-to-river;
- Contiguous waterfront parks from the Battery to Riverside Park, including Hudson River Park, which runs from Chambers to 59th Street.
 - New York's Harbor and the Hudson River unite downtown with the West Side, as we saw with the impacts of Hurricane Sandy and now see with the need for improved resiliency along our coast to address the impact of further climate change disasters.
- Community Boards should be contiguous – each has issues and focuses that require expertise in their local area. The Community Boards on the West Side shouldn't be broken up between congressional districts. Community Boards 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7 are almost wholly within a single congressional district and should remain that way.
- NYPD police precincts largely run north/south and not east/west. The divisions between the East and West Sides contribute to why the precincts are structured that way.

Third, in culture and character, Morningside Heights, particularly around Columbia, has more in common with the Upper West Side than other parts of Manhattan. Columbia University is a premier educational institution and community of interest that should be in one congressional district.

Please maintain the lines of the 10th Congressional District and keep our communities intact.

Thank you for your consideration,

Daniele Gerard



July 26, 2021

My name is Debra Cooper

I have happily been a resident of the Upper West Side for more than 40 years. It is a unique and special place in our City.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit this testimony to you about what I think should result in the fairest and best redistricting for the 10th Congressional District which has its predominant part on the West Side of Manhattan.

I have been the Democratic State Committeewoman for the UWS/67th AD for 14 years.

At national meetings and conferences when I have identified myself as the Committeewoman from the Upper West Side I have actually received appreciative applause, not for myself, but for the place I represent. There is an instantaneous recognition of the cultural, political and social significance of this place in NYC. There are cultural similarities amongst those who inhabit this district from Brooklyn Heights to the UWS.

The Westside has all its crucial infrastructure on the west side of Manhattan going from south to north.

- *Subways, the 1,2,3 lines go from north to south

- *Its other transportation hubs like the PATH, Penn Station, Port Authority, the World Trade Station connect to those subway lines on the north south axis.

- *Its parks run up the Hudson River from the Battery to northern Riverside Park

- *Its school districts go north to south as do the community boards. Neither is community boards nor should its school district be divided and certainly not east to west.

- * The NYPD police precincts also flow north to south, NOT east to west.

- * All this physical infrastructure is connected to people who quite vigorously assert the needs and concerns of their communities. For 40 years, whoever has been its sole Representative has met those needs diligently and with deep understanding.

- * The 10th CD is home to one of the largest Jewish population in the US

- *The 10th CD may have changed its number with each redistricting cycle but it has not changed its essential character. One which has been recognized by prior redistrictings as well as in the last cycle by the Special Master of the 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals.

- * Please keep the 10th CD as a contiguous physical, political and social entity.

Testimony of Eddie Cuesta, Executive Director DominicanosUSA
Independent Redistricting Commission Hearing: July 26, 2021

- Members of the commission thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.
- My name is Eddie Cuesta, Executive Director of DominicanosUSA - a Nonprofit and non-partisan community based organization committed to the civic, social, and economic integration of Dominican-Americans into all facets of the American life.
- DUSA advocates and strives to ensure that every U.S. citizen is able to freely and easily exercise their civic rights, realize their full potential, and capitalize on all the opportunities the U.S. has to offer. Our contribution to making this vision a reality begins with our direct and grassroots work in the Dominican-American community.
- Since 2013, we have registered more than 125,000 voters in New York and helped thousands navigate a path to citizenship. During the census count, we organized across various neighborhoods in New York city.
- Dominicanos USA is here today because the New York State Redistricting process is intimately tied to our representative democracy, which is essential to the progress of our growing yet potent population. Dominican-Americans make up a significant portion of New York's large and diverse Latino population.
- According to 2017 estimates from the Census Bureau Community Survey, in New York State the Dominican population estimates are 872,504 with the foreign-born populations at 515,000, in New York City, the Dominican population is 720,000 with the foreign born Dominican population at 441,000. Dominicans now stand as the largest Latino national subgroup in New York.¹
- The 720,000 Dominicans in New York City account for more than one of every nine City residents (12%) and they also account for 29% of Latinos in the City. The Dominican population in the Bronx stands at 355,000 and accounts for nearly one of every four and almost half of the borough's Latino residents, making the Bronx the US county with by far the largest Dominican population. A majority of the Dominican population lives between the Northern Manhattan (Washington Heights and Inwood) and West Bronx area.
- Considering the magnitude of the Dominican population in New York and the contributions of Latinos as a whole to our great state, we want to make sure that maps drawn for Northern Manhattan and the West Bronx reflect this community of interest and that the new district maps are not

¹ https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1096&context=clacls_pubs

Eddie Cuesta

packed, cracked or drawn in a manner that unjustly dilutes the electoral power of these communities.

- By geographically defining our community, I can start with our celebration of the Dominican day parade along the Grand Concourse in the Bronx. Going over any of the three bridges (207 Street, 181 Street and 145 Street) which cross the East River to connect the West Bronx to Northern Manhattan. One can find a hub of Dominican activity from Hamilton Heights to Marble Hill and the west Bronx. La Plaza on 175th Street and Broadway, where on any given day you can find community members searching through vendors' offerings and vast amounts of fruits and vegetables at the farmers market.
- In Northern Manhattan and the West Bronx, there are many churches, businesses, supermarkets, medical centers, livery taxi companies, family owned small businesses, pharmacies, bodegas, as well as street vendors offering Dominican products. Going north towards Dyckman, one will find Quisqueya Heights, a recently named area of Inwood, lined with restaurants reflecting the diversity of our city and the Dominican population of the neighborhood.
- The entrance to Highbridge Park at 174 Street and Amsterdam Avenue, in Washington Heights has a recently renovated pedestrian bridge that connects to the Highbridge section of the Bronx. The Dominican student population is reflected in the CUNY Colleges in the West Bronx and Hamilton Heights such as, Hostos community College, Bronx Community college, Lehman College and City College which are located within these geographic areas and all comprise of having the largest population of college age Dominican students in the City of New York.
- Even with the high concentration of Dominicans and other Latinos population we don't have a State senator. There are several districts that are gerrymandered, when we look at Manhattan Senate district 31 begins in Chelsea and ends in Inwood. Assembly District 71 extends from Washington Heights down to what is known as "the Polo grounds" and then east to the Harlem River.
- In the Bronx perhaps an additional Senatorial district in the West Bronx as well as an assembly district can be added.
- In Congressional District 13 the future map should reflect an area that can represent a larger portion of the district that can encompass 135 street, Hamilton Heights, Washington Heights Inwood, Marble Hill and part of the West Bronx.
- There are also enclaves of communities of interest in Corona Queens, in Bushwick and East New York in Brooklyn.

Eddie Cuesta

- Committee members – thank you again for this opportunity to testify. Understanding the complexities that exist in redistricting, we want to reiterate the importance of guaranteeing that communities which have traditionally been disenfranchised are not once again faced with diminished electoral power. We know you share our goal of a fair redistricting process that allows all New Yorkers a meaningful opportunity to participate, and results in maps that provide underrepresented New Yorkers an opportunity to elect the candidates of their choice.
- We look forward to working with you to achieve this important goal.

Public Hearing of the Independent Redistricting Commission

Written Testimony Submitted by
Emely Paez, Director of Government Affairs and Civic Engagement
Hispanic Federation

Monday, July 26, 2021

Good afternoon, my name is Emely Paez, and I am the Director of Government Affairs and Civic Engagement at Hispanic Federation. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today at the Independent Redistricting Commission public hearing.

Since its inception in 1990, Hispanic Federation's (HF) mission has been to empower and advance the Hispanic community, and several decades later HF has and continues to be a leading force in the battle to have a fair and accountable government. As one of the nation's top Latino nonprofit organizations, HF works with its network of Hispanic nonprofits, grassroots leaders, and media partners to empower and advance Latinos across the U.S. in the areas of Health, Education, Economic Empowerment, Immigration and Civic Engagement.

Following each census, HF has been on the frontlines advocating for Latino voices to be heard and included in the reapportionment and redistricting process. In 2020 alone, we reached out to millions of New Yorkers to get them counted and to debunk myths created around the Census with facts. In Manhattan and the Bronx this meant working closely with Latino families, explaining that the data would not be used to harm them, and that that getting counted would only help the community thrive. Even when we were sounding the alarm bells, we never expected New York state to lose a seat because 89 people were not counted. That loss of a congressional seat will be felt for the next ten years – especially in black and brown communities that continue to be gerrymandered out of existence.

Over the last few decades, New York State has seen a dramatic growth in the Latino population over the last few decades, and The Bronx – with over 400,000 Latinos – is the county with the most Latino residents in the whole state. The Bronx also has the most registered Latino voters (243,000) in the state – which is not a surprise when you factor in that 55% of Bronx residents identify as Hispanic.

The COVID pandemic hit Latinos the hardest in the city, and the Bronx was hit especially hard with unemployment and poverty levels going up. Now more than ever, it is crucial that residents of the Bronx have proper political representation at all levels, that their needs and concerns are addressed, and none of this can happen without a fair redistricting process. We need to draw districts that allow for accurate and true representation of community. All people within a district must be served, including low-income, people of color.

The same can be said for Upper Manhattan, especially in Washington Heights, Inwood and Marble Hills where 68% of residents identify as Latino. In these neighborhoods – which have a poverty rate that's higher than the state's average – 44% of the population is foreign born, with a sizable majority of residents identifying as Latin American mainly from the Dominican Republic.

Other neighborhoods that need to be mentioned are Bedford Park, Fordham North, Norwood, Fordham South, and Mount Hope. These neighborhoods are over 70% Latino and more almost three quarters of its residents speak a language other than English. We can also talk about the neighborhoods of Concourse, Mount Eden, Crotona, Belmont, Hunts Point, and Melrose all of which are predominantly Latino neighborhoods and share similar characteristics with the other communities mentioned above.

These neighborhoods consist of mainly working-class families who are first- or second-generation immigrants and live in mixed-status households; some neighborhoods even have

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poverty rates of almost 50%. The Bronx and upper Manhattan Latino communities have long been underserved, and we require long-term solutions to lift residents out of poverty. Thoughtful redistricting can provide a base for community empowerment through the equitable allocation of resources. Community representation matters; the result of truly considerate redistricting should enable residents to have their voices heard.

Together, we must ensure that the systems and processes by which we choose to draw lines are transparent, fair, and representative and that there is reciprocity in shared information in a culturally competent manner. Redistricting must not result in the dilution of power resulting in less representation for Latinos and communities of color. New York State can lead by advancing a process for drawing district boundaries that centers diverse communities and provides the requisite resources, capacity and time necessary for ensuring all communities are included.

We look forward to collectively working together towards achieving a fair and equitable redistricting process that is reflective of the dramatic growth of communities of color in New York – allowing all communities the opportunity to have fair representation and to have candidates that reflect their ideas, and that help meet the needs of their community.

Thank you.

Comment has been submitted

Evan Katzman

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission <submissions@nyirc.gov>

Fri 8/13/2021 4:38 PM

To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

A private comment has been submitted

I wanted to register a few concerns that I hope your team will keep in mind.

As a member of the LGBT community, I wanted to be sure that the three adjacent Manhattan neighborhoods of Hell's Kitchen, Chelsea, and Greenwich Village remain in the same district.

It is vitally important that all districts have the same population. The nightmarish gerrymanders of the Assembly and Senate from the last cycle should not be repeated. Voters should choose their representatives, not the other way around, and the crazy jagged lines of the last maps... should be replaced with clearer simpler designs that reflect our counties/boroughs, cities, neighborhoods and communities of interest. The Senate district I live in now is centered on Washington Heights but inexplicably includes the Lincoln Tunnel, miles away and connected mostly by the Hudson River and a narrow strip of park. This makes no sense and contributes to the lack of responsiveness people notice from their representatives in Albany and Washington.

The cleanest map of the 2010 cycle is for the US House, but even that one contains some bizarre decisions like including a snaking section of Brooklyn almost all the way to Coney Island in Jerrold Nadler's West side of Manhattan based district.

It will be tempting to tilt the scales in favor of upstate areas that once had their own representative but which have lost population relative to the state as a whole, or have not grown enough to warrant distinct districts. Please do not do this. You are not working for politicians. You are working for the people of the state

Evan Katzman

of New York, and we live where the census says we live. We all deserve equal representation, not some construct to favor where people once lived back in the past.

Thank you for your service, and if I can help in any way, please let me know.

User: Evan Katzman ([REDACTED]

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Gale A. Brewer, Borough President

July 26, 2021

**Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Testimony before the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission
Hearing on Bronx and New York Counties**

I'm Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President.

I supported the creation of this commission in 2014, so I'm delighted to testify today.

I testified 10 years before a similar body about how important contiguousness is. At that time, I represented the sixth council district on the West Side of Manhattan between 54th – 96th Street-- perhaps the most contiguous council district in the city.

Since the last redistricting cycle, I became Borough President and learned every nook and cranny beyond the West Side too.

These past seven and a half years as Borough President have only reinforced for me how distinct the West Side is from the East Side and from Northern Manhattan.

They're all great communities, but they're each distinctive-- any New Yorker knows that. Communities on the West Side, the East Side, and Uptown have unique needs. Historically, each has been served by their own congressional district.

Some traditions are worth upending, but this one is worth keeping-- I urge you to preserve these historic boundaries.

Our city is already organized recognizing these boundaries in major ways. NYPD precincts largely run north-south and not east-west. The same goes for our community boards, and most of Community Boards 1, 2, 4, and 7 are all in Representative Jerrold Nadler's district.

Representative Nadler's district includes two preeminent universities, a deeply rooted LGBTQ community stretching from the Village to Morningside Heights, as well as the majority of Port Authority's facilities-- the bus terminal, the Holland and Lincoln Tunnels, Penn Station, the PATH.

Gale Brewer Manhattan BP

Representative Carolyn Maloney’s district has similarly represented cohesive East Side neighborhoods, such as Stuyvesant Town & Peter Cooper Village, the Gold Coast of Fifth Avenue, and Bedpan Alley-- and the nascent life sciences sector taking root now.

Representative Adriano Espaillat, who succeeded the great Charlie Rangel representing uptown north of Central Park, deeply understands that territory in the same way that Representatives Maloney and Nadler do theirs. West, Central, and East Harlem share a history and culture, as do Washington Heights and Inwood. And the majority of Manhattan’s Spanish-speaking population lives north of 125th Street.

The southeast corner of Manhattan, taken up as part of Representative Nydia Velasquez’s district, also honors another kind of contiguousness—ethnicity—meeting the needs of the Voting Rights Act. Despite the Supreme Court’s invalidation of the Voting Rights Act, there’s no reason why New York State can’t continue to meet those criteria.

So to remove or eliminate a district means that there is an irreplaceable loss of local knowledge and effective representation, which is what we are all about. So I strongly urge that Manhattan’s congressional districts not be consolidated.

This isn’t a new concern for me. Years ago, knowing that our state was at risk of losing seats in Congress, ensuring that every Manhattanite was counted this census cycle became one of my biggest priorities. Once the pandemic hit and counting grew even more challenging, I doubled down on outreach.

My “Make Manhattan Count” and “Complete Count” initiatives invested nearly \$300,000 in funding for community outreach. I sent out almost a quarter of a million census reminder postcards. And we even ran an ad in the East Hampton Star newspaper to remind those who had fled to beach houses of their true Manhattan home and to fill out census forms with their Manhattan addresses.

I tried everything to make sure there’d be no reason for the borough’s sensical congressional districts to be jumbled.

During the last redistricting cycle, I testified that contiguousness and respect for Manhattan’s de facto divisions were important. The commission listened to me then, and I hope you’ll do so too in this cycle.

Thank you.

Gregory Jost

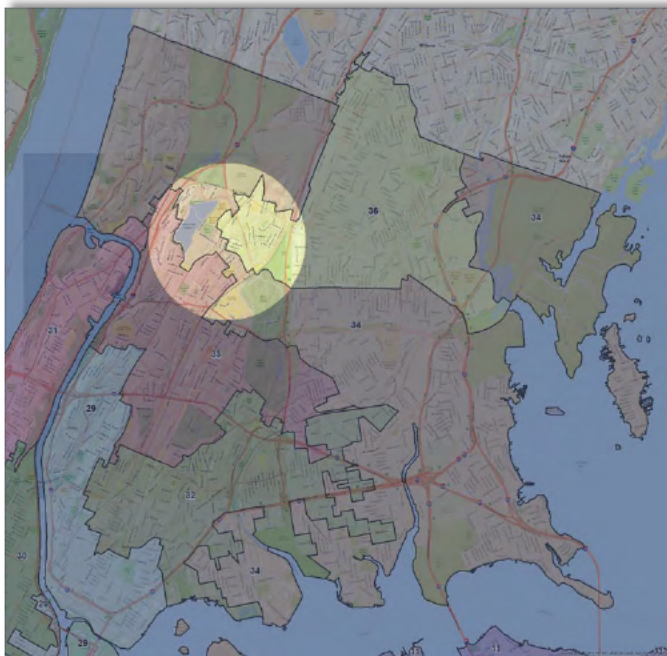
July 29, 2021

Re: Redistricting in the Bronx and Valuing Multiracial Communities

Esteemed Members of the Independent Redistricting Commission of New York State:

My name is Gregory Jost and I am a Bronx resident and a community-based scholar and organizer affiliated with both Fordham University and Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association. My research and writings focus on the grassroots community responses to structural racism and disinvestment such as redlining, urban renewal, “benign neglect” and “planned shrinkage”, and their more contemporary manifestations which include the gerrymandering of political districts. I was interviewed a few years ago on WNYC for a story on gerrymandering in New York State called “[A Vote is a Terrible Thing to Waste.](#)”

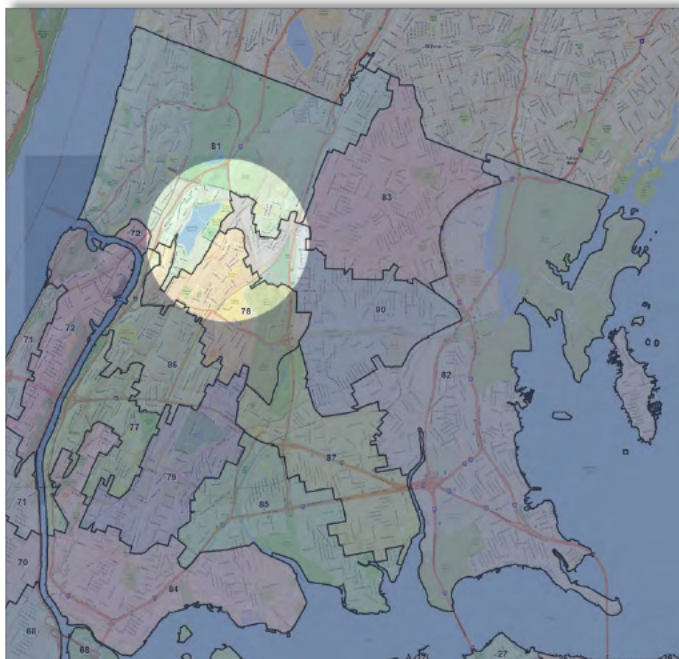
The focus of my research has been the community organizing efforts of the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition going back to the 1970s, and I have made my home and workplace here in the neighborhoods of the Northwest Bronx for most of the past three decades. Like many other historically redlined communities, our neighborhoods have often been cut up by legislators to suit their own needs. The last redistricting process in the New York State Legislature greatly diminished our power while bolstering that of nearby wealthier areas.



The district lines of the New York Senate currently cut through the Northwest Bronx neighborhoods of Norwood, Bedford Park, Fordham Bedford, Kingsbridge Heights, and Van Cortlandt Village. Our neighborhoods fought together valiantly to end practices like bank and insurance redlining, yet we have been divvied up into three senate districts. The former IDC Senator, Jeffrey Klein ensured his district (34) lines joined together the higher income, majority-white Bronx neighborhoods of Riverdale, Woodlawn, Morris Park and Throggs Neck. To do this, he ran his lines down Bedford Park Boulevard, using our neighborhoods merely as a

connector of areas that were more likely to vote for him while dividing the power of our multiracial, diverse community. Today, I can walk just a few blocks and go from Senator Bailey’s District (36), to now Senator Biaggi’s District (34) and Senator Rivera’s district (33). What power do our neighborhoods have in the Senate when we are so divided?

Gregory Jost



Our neighborhoods fared no better in the State Assembly. District 80, which is based primarily in the East Bronx neighborhoods of Morris Park and Pelham Parkway, was drawn to extend to Tracey Towers (home to more than 800 households) in Bedford Park. By using Mosholu Parkway as the connector, one can again walk through multiple districts (78, 80 and 81) in less than five minutes. One could reasonably assert that the last redistricting process was designed to disempower our neighborhoods in the State Legislature in the interest of wealthier, whiter neighborhoods like Riverdale and Morris Park. Meanwhile, the predominately Black neighborhoods

in the Northeast Bronx were also relegated to single districts (Assembly District 12 and Senate District 36). Our area is, to only a somewhat lesser extent, divided in the City Council (see districts 11, 14 and 15) and Congress (see districts 13, 14, 15 and 16). Instead of valuing diverse neighborhoods like ours, the redistricting process has perpetuated structural racism by creating bases of power in more homogeneous areas.

I implore the IRC to consider the value of multiracial and diverse communities – including those which have historically struggled together to battle injustices – in your independent redistricting process. It was, in fact, the diversity and unity of Black, White, Latinx and Asian-American neighbors that beat back redlining in the Bronx and saved our neighborhoods from the destruction that was unleashed on the South Bronx. Continuing to divide our incredible, diverse neighborhoods while leaving wealthier, whiter neighborhoods as strong and unified voting blocs perpetuates structural racism in ways similar to the historic policy of [Redlining](#) detailed in the 1930s Home Owners Loan Corporation maps and area descriptions. Instead, I ask you to assign value to diverse and historic neighborhoods including the Northwest Bronx neighborhoods of Norwood, Bedford Park, Fordham Bedford, Kingsbridge Heights and Van Cortlandt Village in your independent redistricting process.

Sincerely,

Gregory Jost

████████████████████
Bronx, NY 10463
████████████████████

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE IRDC HEARING FOR JULY 26, 2022

My name is Janice Oppenheimer and I am a District Leader representing the 67th Assembly District, Part C of Manhattan's Upper West Side in the New York State Democratic Committee. The Assembly Member is the honorable Linda B. Rosenthal.

My husband and I live in Lincoln Towers on West End Avenue. We are an integral part of a very vibrant community. The Upper West Side is known for its diversity and progressive politics. It is unique to New York. It should not be separated and combined with the East Side congressional district as the East Side has its own community needs.

The West Side has shared community facilities such as:

- Subways, with their shared impact on transit and community that run north/south not east/west;
- Elementary and Middle School Zones that do not cross Central Park or run river-to-river;
- Contiguous waterfront parks from the Battery to Riverside Park, including Hudson River Park which runs from Chambers to 59th Street,

My husband and I are Jewish and feel strongly that the West Side, which has one of the largest concentrations of Jews in the United States should be kept in a single Congressional District.

Congressman Jerry Nadler has been a strong advocate for this constituency.

I urge you to keep the East Side and the West Side of Manhattan as two distinct Congressional Districts.

Thank you.

Janice Oppenheimer



Public Testimony: New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

Sunday, August 15, 2021 – Statewide Public Meeting Virtual Hearing

Good Afternoon Members of the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission,

My name is Jasper Diaz and I am a lifelong resident of New York City. I am testifying today in my role as Political Coordinator for the League of Asian Americans of New York (LAANY), an association of Asian American community leaders advocating for justice and representation in our communities and government.

From our founding earlier this year, LAANY has been active in hosting candidate forums focusing on issues of importance which are impacting Asian American communities, with candidates running for local, boroughwide, and citywide office. We have also been promoting voter registration specifically in the Chinese community and have been partnering with community organizations such as the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA-NY) to provide self-defense classes in light of the significant increase in Anti-Asian xenophobia and violence beginning over a year ago.

Recent data released from the United States Census Bureau shows a 7.7% overall population increase for New York City, with half the city's growth coming from an increase in the population of Asian New Yorkers, according to the city's chief demographer. This cannot be more pronounced in the Borough of Brooklyn which saw a 43% population increase in the number of Asian residents to 420,000, and in Queens which saw a 29% increase to close to 706,000 Asian residents. In both cases, the dramatic increase in the number of Asian residents outpaced the overall population growth of their respective boroughs or counties.

While we feel there are many districts that can see improvements for Asian Americans throughout the city, we feel South Brooklyn has the most room for improvement where existing Chinese and Asian communities spanning multiple neighborhoods are currently gerrymandered and split between multiple overlapping districts especially at the state senate level spanning Districts 17, 20, 22, and 23. The New York State Independent Redistricting Commission has the power to help make history in creating the first district unifying South Brooklyn's Chinese communities encompassing Sunset Park, Bensonhurst and the areas of Homecrest and Ave U in Sheepshead Bay, into one state senate district that can better serve the people who live there and enhance both social service delivery and representation. At a time where Anti-Asian bias, xenophobia and violence is on the rise, unifying existing Asian American communities in South Brooklyn will send a strong message in helping to enhance the



ability for better representation and resources, while ensuring that Chinese communities can have a unified and equitable voice in the electoral process. We hope to continue working with you, as well as our community partners and friends during this redistricting process.

Thank you for your time today, and for the opportunity to testify before the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission.

Jasper Diaz

Ladies and Gentlemen,

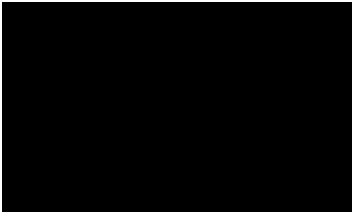
Sadly, I found out about today's meeting too late to submit testimony.

It is very important that the commission learn about the issue I would have raised – West 61st street has been assigned to the Hells Kitchen Council District rather than the Upper West Side (Helen Rosenthal's district). Staff of both council members agree that this is an egregious error; West 61st street belongs to the Upper West Side by demography and geography.

Please let me know how I may access your Commission. I am the Vice President of the Beaumont Condominium on West 61st Street – we need to be redistricted into Helen Rosenthal's district!

Thank you for your attention.

Joan Lurie





PUBLIC ADVOCATE FOR THE CITY OF NEW YORK
Jumaane D. Williams

**TESTIMONY OF PUBLIC ADVOCATE JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS
TO THE NEW YORK STATE INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING COMMISSION**

Aug 11, 2021

My name is Jumaane D. Williams and I am the Public Advocate for the City of New York. I appreciate the opportunity to deliver testimony at this important hearing.

Since the Reconstruction era, gerrymandering has minimized the impact of the votes of people of more color. Through “cracking”, which intentionally spreads voters of more color out amongst multiple districts in order to dilute their political voice, and “packing”, which intentionally concentrates voters of more color into one district in order to restrict their influence, the drawing of districts has been a harmful political tool. In addition, district lines that ignore local neighborhood boundaries can result in elected representation that is not reflective of community priorities or demographics. In order to avoid these damaging outcomes, it is important that New York State uses this once-in-a-decade opportunity to draw lines that ensure fair and accurate representation for all of its residents, especially those who have been most marginalized by this process in the past.

Given the time-sensitive nature of the redistricting process, it is unacceptable that State funding was not disbursed to the Independent Redistricting Commission (IRC) until very recently. To be clear, in Fiscal Years 2020 and 2021, the Governor should have taken steps to ensure that the IRC was able to have the necessary time and funds to hire staff, conduct public outreach, and perform its core functions. Because the Governor failed to do so, the IRC is now working on a compressed timeline that has presented understandable complications. Nonetheless, the Commission must now take swift action to ensure all necessary work can occur before its first map proposals are due on September 15th. In order to do so, it must make significant improvements to its operations.

Public participation in events such as this hearing such as this is the only way that the IRC will be able to identify “communities of interest”—groups with shared policy concerns that would



PUBLIC ADVOCATE FOR THE CITY OF NEW YORK
Jumaane D. Williams

benefit from being maintained together in a single district. As such, the IRC must make its public events more accessible. The fact that the hearing schedule was only announced on July 12th severely limited the amount of outreach that could be conducted around it and depressed turnout. The late launch of the IRC website on July 12th has also limited public engagement. Further, requiring members of the public to request translation or American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation for the hearing via this low-traffic website, rather than providing these services proactively, has presented serious accessibility challenges for New Yorkers. Moving forward, the IRC should follow provisions in the State's Public Hearings and Meetings law to ensure that future events meet basic democratic standards, while maintaining the ability for the public to testify remotely. In addition, the IRC should release its draft maps as soon as possible so that future hearings can be as informed and effective as possible.

The IRC should also significantly increase the direct outreach into communities regarding its work. All communities must be made aware of all hearings, map-drawing workshops, and listening sessions. A targeted and robust marketing campaign must be a centerpiece of this outreach strategy. Specifically, at least 50% of marketing funds should be dedicated to ethnic and local community media outlets, in order to reach all corners of New York's diverse population. Further, in the aim of transparency and accountability, the IRC should provide detailed reporting on how funds are spent.

Lastly, all New Yorkers should play their part in informing their neighbors about this redistricting, especially elected officials and community based organizations that have strong and lasting relationships with residents. I encourage them to join our Office in amplifying the redistricting process and connecting residents to all associated events. The stakes are too high here for New Yorkers—especially those who have been traditionally excluded from the political process—to be left unengaged. Please reach out to us to see how we can partner together in this campaign.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



PUBLIC ADVOCATE FOR THE CITY OF NEW YORK
Jumaane D. Williams

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J.D. Williams".

Jumaane D. Williams
Public Advocate for the City of New York

Justin Lee

████████████████████
New York, NY 10013

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission Testimony

July 26, 2021

Good afternoon. My name is Justin Lee, and I am a law student at New York University and a resident of 22 Pell Street in Manhattan’s Chinatown. I also regularly volunteer in the Chinatown community with Asian Americans for Equality (AAFE), and through them, I help provide the necessities of life like food and clothing, to the most vulnerable members of my community. I am also the third generation of my family that has called Chinatown home.

And it is through AAFE and the APA VOICE Redistricting Task Force, that I learned how harmful separate representation of all of New York’s Asian American communities could be.

Esteemed Commissioners, I come before you today to ask you to preserve Chinatown as a whole within the 65th Assembly District and the 7th U.S. Congressional District.

Doing so would strengthen our community at a time that we are increasingly vulnerable.

Even as the city opens up more and New Yorkers and tourists alike stream back into Chinatown, taking in everything that we have to offer: the cuisine, the atmosphere, and an Instagram backdrop to die for, *the need in our community has not abated.*

This is because the last year and a half have only highlighted the pain that has been here all along.

The affordable housing that has so long made this place a refuge for immigrant families is under siege. The steady tide of gentrification continues to drive deeper into our community and erode what makes this place such a special part of the tapestry that is New York City.

Now, as ever, our population, especially our elders, need access to government social services and emergency aid just to make ends meet so that they need not live without just reward for all that they have given our city.

And, lastly, the rise in anti-Asian violence should outrage people of conscience across our state, and Chinatown needs the opportunity to raise up champions to fight these outrages all the way to the highest levels of government.

It is in times like these in which we need our voices to be heard in the political process.

Maintaining Chinatown as a whole within the 65th Assembly District and the 7th U.S. Congressional District would help to do this. It would help unlock the power of the AAPI community at the ballot box. It would also help provide us with fair representation in government—something which has been tragically lacking.

Justin Lee

From my earliest memories in my grandfather's restaurant on Bayard Street, I have always loved Chinatown, with all of its characters, its quirks, and all of what it has represented to my family and untold legions like mine. I hope that preserving Chinatown through this process and making sure it has the voice it deserves in the halls of government will ensure that it continues to grow and prosper for many years to come.

And so, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Testimony prepared by Kim Moscaritolo, Democratic District Leader, 76th Assembly District, Part B

For the New York Independent Redistricting Commission

Date: July 26th, 2021

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify. My name is Kim Moscaritolo, I'm the female District Leader for the 76th Assembly District Part B, which includes parts of the Upper East Side and Yorkville in Manhattan.

I first want to thank the commission for committing to this open and transparent process. I was President of the Manhattan Young Democrats during the last round of redistricting, and I remember being incredibly disappointed by the process back then. Despite promises of independence, legislators drew their own lines in back room meetings, and both Democratic and Republican leaders conspired to protect their majorities and their own incumbents.

Despite gerrymandering, Democrats were able to secure a super majority in the State Senate in 2020, thanks to the incredible work done by so many grassroots organizations. We cannot waste the opportunity we now have to create fair district lines.

I believe it is imperative that this commission follow basic redistricting best practices, as set forth by the Brennan Center for Justice:

Districts should be geographically contiguous, should provide racial and ethnic minorities with an equal opportunity to participate in the political process, and should minimize the division of communities of interest.

Here in Manhattan, there are some districts that are particularly egregious. Take for example the 29th Senate district which encompasses a large swath of the Bronx, but also includes a portion of East Harlem and the Upper East Side from 92nd Street to 111th Street, as well as a small chunk of the Upper West Side, and Roosevelt Island. Not only is this district not geographically compact or

Kim Moscaritolo

contiguous, but the dividing line between the 28th and the 29th districts literally cuts through a public housing complex, such that residents of the Holmes Towers have one State Senator, and residents of Stanley Isaacs have another. These are 5 buildings that sit on the same property, and should absolutely be considered a community of interest.

This is just one example of the kind of gerrymandering we saw in 2012. This commission has an opportunity to right these wrongs and create truly fair districts.

My final suggestion would be to create overlap between Senate, Assembly and Council districts when possible. For example, I live on 91st Street and 1st Avenue. My State Senator is Liz Krueger, my Assembly Member is Rebecca Seawright and my Council Member is Ben Kallos. My neighbors across the street are represented by State Senator Jose M. Serrano, but still by Seawright and Kallos. Residents at 419 East 93rd Street, just 2 blocks away, are still represented by Kallos in the Council, but by Senator Serrano and Assembly Member Robert Rodriguez.

I believe residents are best served when there is consistency in their representation, and to the degree that this commission can create overlap between the same representatives, I believe it should do so.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my testimony today. I look forward to seeing this process move forward, and to finally having the fair district lines that New Yorkers deserve.

Map Submitted

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission <submissions@nyirc.gov>

Thu 8/12/2021 12:10 PM

To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

Submitted Map

- **First Name:** Kristen
- **Last Name:** Browde
- **Email:** [REDACTED]
- **Description:** I am not submitting a draft map as I do not have access to 2020 census data, however I urge the Commission to keep in mind the need to allow communities of interest, such as the LGBTQ community, to be represented proportionately in our state legislature.

Often these communities lose all but token representation. This occurs because the communities, while sharing common goals, do not often live in a geographic area in which they have sufficient population density.

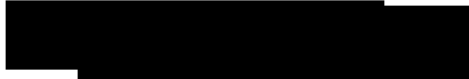
This is easily seen In the case of the LGBTQ community, which, while representing 10-15% of the state population at large, has never had more than one State Senator and rarely more than two or three members of the Assembly.

The sole area with sufficient community density to generate regular representation for the LGBTQ community is the area including the western Greenwich Village neighborhood in New York City. In order to at least maintain the current density urge the Commission in its redistricting not to split that neighborhood into multiple districts, and to examine whether there are other areas of the state in which similar districts can be created, including, possibly, areas with high numbers of college students who vote.

Thank you for your consideration.



Morningside Heights Historic District Committee
PO Box 250405
Columbia University Station
New York City, NY 10025



July 26, 2021

Good afternoon. My name is Laura Friedman and I am the President of the Morningside Heights Historic District Committee (MHHDC).

The Morningside Heights Historic District Committee was formed in the 1990s to preserve our neighborhood by pursuing a NYC Historic District designation. Though we prefer to be known as Morningside Heights, our community is often referred to as the Upper Upper Westside!

We are testifying today because we believe that the Westside of Manhattan should remain in its own Congressional District. When we achieved the first phase of historic districting, one of our crowning achievements was connecting all of Riverside Drive from its beginning block on West 72 Street all the way up to W. 119th Street.

Manhattan is largely a linear borough and the distinction is quite clear when you look at the way we are organized, both socially and structurally. Our subways run north and south on the westside, meeting up through our large transportation hubs such as the Port Authority, Penn Station, PATH trains and the Fulton Center. Riverside Park, running along the Hudson River, not only connects us socially, but allows us to develop the necessary protections that are needed for this unique westside stretch of parkland.

It is no surprise that the West Side of Manhattan has among the largest number of periodical readers in the country. Morningside Heights, which is represented by the 10th Congressional District, has a higher concentration of diverse academic institutions than any other area in NYC. This helps to create the intellectual synergy that is particularly felt on the West Side and attracts those in the academic fields to our community. Additionally, we still retain the wonderful advantages of being a diverse community, both ethnically and economically, that bring a richness to our unique westside experience.

Due to our proximity to the great artistic institutions of NYC such as Lincoln Center, Broadway, Carnegie Hall and the Avant Garde areas of Chelsea, Greenwich Village and Soho we are fortunate enough to

Laura Friedman

attract many performing artists as well. In addition to these honored bastions of the arts, we have some of the premier performing arts institutions, Julliard and the Manhattan School of Music, that create new dancers, musicians, actors and skilled technicians. They are the future of our great American creative vibrancy and many of these artists live on the West Side of Manhattan.

So, does the West Side have a distinct character from the East Side? Indeed, it does. From our infrastructure which moves us up and down the West Side to our schools, community boards and essential services, to the unique neighbors that inhabit our blocks. This all creates a distinct, and remarkable, part of NYC that deserves to have its own Representative. We have a myriad of particular interests that would best be enhanced and protected by having a single Member of Congress.

Respectfully submitted by:

Laura Friedman, President

Morningside Heights Historic District Committee

Comment has been submitted

Independent Redistricting Commission <submissions@nyirc.gov>

Mon 7/12/2021 5:21 PM

To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

Independent Redistricting Commission

Lennin Reyes

A private comment has been submitted

Please place the strong Dominican neighborhoods of High Bridge, Morris Heights and University Heights (currently split between CD's 13 and 15 and between SD's 29 and 33) in the same districts as Washington Heights and Inwood just across the Harlem River.

User: Lennin Reyes

Delete Comment

Ban User from Future Comments

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Comment has been submitted

Independent Redistricting Commission <submissions@nyirc.gov>

Mon 7/12/2021 5:20 PM

To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

Independent Redistricting Commission

A private comment has been submitted

Unite Morrisania into one State Senate District. East 169th Street is in the middle of the neighborhood, and should not divide three State Senate districts (SD's 29, 32 and 33).

User: Lennin Reyes [REDACTED]

Delete Comment

Ban User from Future Comments

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Map Submitted

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission <submissions@nyirc.gov>

Thu 7/29/2021 10:53 PM

To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

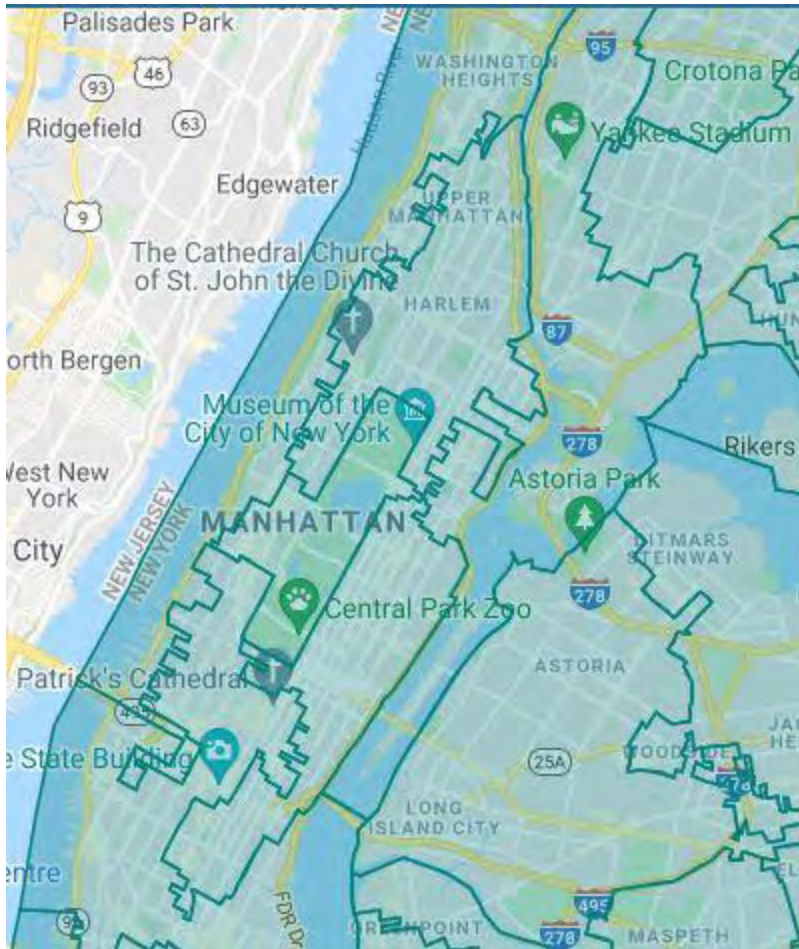
New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

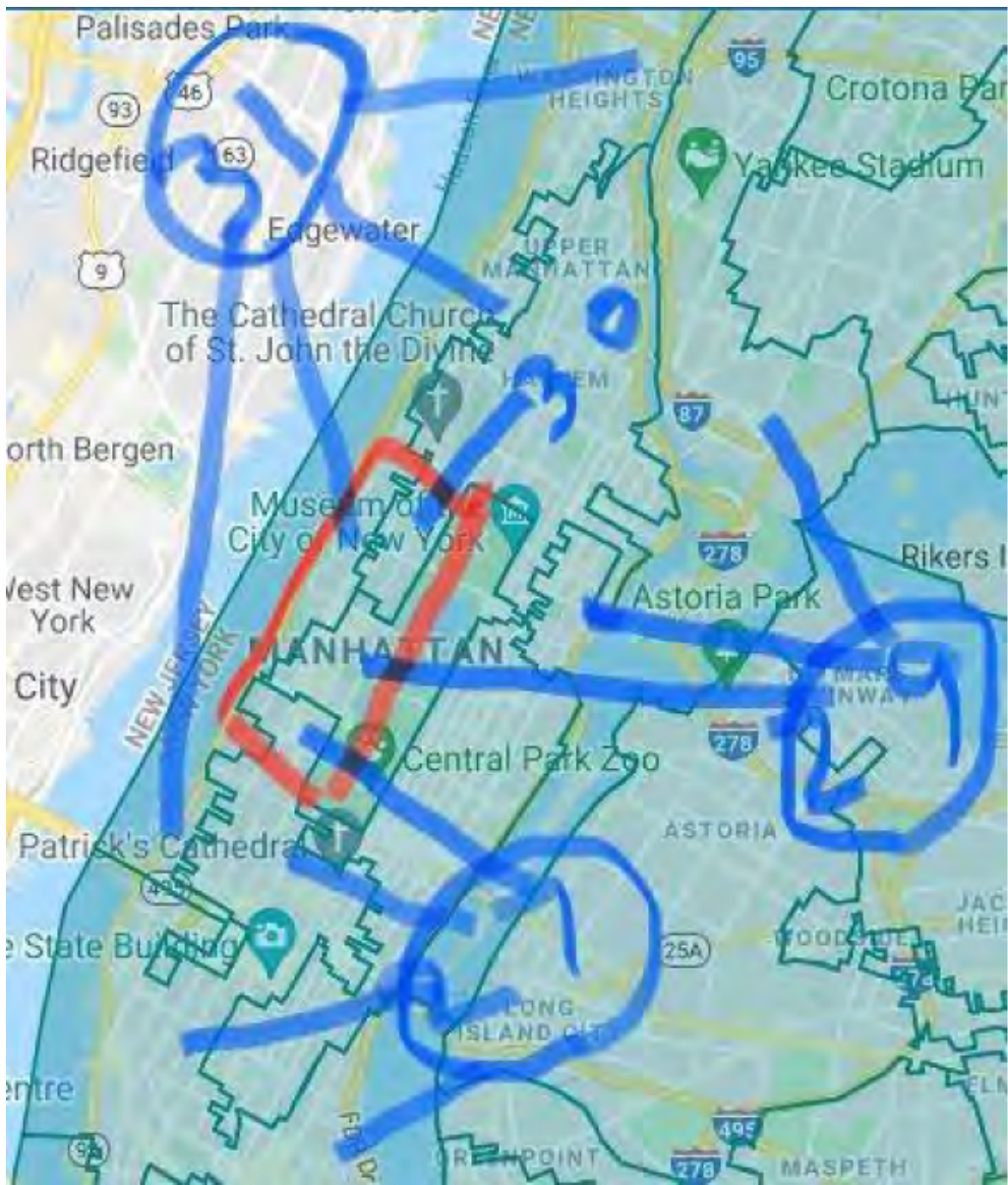
Submitted Map

- **First Name:** Lucas
- **Last Name:** Liu
- **Email:** [REDACTED]
- **Description:** Senate Districts 27, 29, 30 and 31 cover the Upper Westside of Manhattan. These districts are so gerrymandered that the residents of the Upper Westside have NO representation. The Upper Westside is divided up across 4 districts that those 4 sections of that are part of the 4 senate districts are so small that the residents have no critical mass that the senators that cover those 4 districts ignore the Upper Westside. When I lived in Robert Jackson's District 31 for about 10 years, I never saw him except at election time. Although I have only lived in Brian Benjamin's district for a little less than a year, he is not around. If you look where they have events, its rarely in the Upper Westside sections of their Districts.
- **Map File:** [Link to Map File](#)

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Lucas Liu





Testimony to New York State Independent Redistricting Commission
July 26, 2021 – Maarten de Kadt

I live in a unique district that requires the attention and historical knowledge of its own political elected personnel.

I'm Maarten de Kadt. I sit on Manhattan Community Board 4 as well as the Penn South Board. I have been a Chelsea resident and community activist since 1991.

Our distinct community has:

Unique housing mix from low income, NYCHA housing, affordable limited equity housing (Penn South) to market rate housing. In recent years luxury housing has flooded the district along with upscale shopping making it economically difficult for long term residents.

A unique limited equity housing complex that has become a Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (a HORC) and is a strong voting block – Penn South.

Unique cultural and racial mix.

Unique air conditions. We have the city's third worst air conditions emanating from our buildings and our unique transportation network including tunnels, bus terminal and center city traffic clogged roadways. In addition we have cruise ship terminals without shore power thus leading to additional air pollution every time ships are in port idling their engines.

Insufficient parks, but also some great ones. We have portion of Hudson River Park and the High Line. Penn South has its own playgrounds to which it offers public access.

A central transportation hub including Penn Station, Port Authority Bus Terminal. The PABT is undergoing renovation and responding to significant public input while the proposed Penn Station – Empire Station Complex project is being inappropriately imposed on our community.

Unique requirement for street litter pickup because of the large volume of pedestrian traffic.

For all these reasons and more our district needs to continue to be uniquely identified with its own elected officials paying it their unique attention.



**Chinese
Progressive
Association**

Statement to New York State Independent Redistricting Commission
Meeting Public Input Regarding District Lines – Bronx & New York Counties
July 26, 2021
from Mae Lee, Executive Director of Chinese Progressive Association

My name is Mae Lee, Executive Director of the Chinese Progressive Association. T

The Chinese Progressive Association serves those who live, work, or go to school in Chinatown and the Lower East Side in Manhattan. We provide services to new immigrants. We conduct voter registration, outreach, education so that our community can be more involved in the decision making processes that affect their lives. The Chinese Progressive Association is also a member of APAVoice.

We are here today to talk about the “communities of common interest” in our area.

- **Chinatown and the Lower East Side are communities of common interest.**
Chinese residents in our community live both in the traditional Chinatown core as well as in the Lower East Side. Before 1990, these communities of common interest were in different political districts. After 1990, lines were redrawn and they have been in the same political districts. Today, they are still communities of common interest

- **Chinatown/the Lower East Side (in Manhattan) and Sunset Park (in Brooklyn) are also communities of common interest.** (Currently Congressional District 7 is a district that includes these 3 neighborhoods.)
 - **Interaction between the neighborhoods.** Some new immigrants who start their lives in Chinatown/Lower East side, Manhattan may move to Sunset Park for larger and more affordable housing when they start new families but retain their connections to Manhattan by working there, shopping there, sending their children to high school in the neighborhood, and visiting friends and family
 - **Some evidence:**
 - Of Chinese Progressive Association's members and clients, the second largest group are Sunset Park residents (after Chinatown residents) While they live in Sunset Park residents, they work in Chinatown and find it more convenient to participate in

programs, in the place where they spend significant amount of time. Other neighborhood based community organizations will also tell the same story.

- In the months before before the NYC primary elections, our organization conducted outdoor on-the-street voter registration, education, and outreach. About 1/3 of those we reached on the streets in Chinatown/Lowere East Side were Sunset Park residents
- **Public transportation plays a role:** Chinatown/Lower East Side and Sunset Park may be separated by a river but public transportation provides the connection. Our community uses public transportation extensively – the 2 neighborhoods are connected by subway lines (N/R train)
- **Manhattan Chinatown/LES and Sunset Park are an ecosystem:** Manhattan Chinatown small businesses were hit hard by the covid-19 pandemic and shutdown hit Many of these small businesses are owned by and/or have employees who are Sunset Park residents. As the community was advocating for more aid to these businesses, we found that by association and decisions such aid would by association, and connection, have an impact on the livelihood of residents in Sunset Park.

**NORTHERN MANHATTAN IMPROVEMENT
CORPORATION
(NMIC)**

WRITTEN TESTIMONY to the
NYS Independent Redistricting Commission

SUBMITTED BY:
Maria Lizardo, LMSW
Executive Director
NORTHERN MANHATTAN IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION (NMIC)
July 27, 2021

Maria Lizardo- Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation

Greetings. My name is Maria Lizardo, and I am the Executive Director at Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation (hereafter, "NMIC"). On behalf of NMIC, we thank you for allowing us this opportunity to submit testimony.

NMIC is a community-based settlement house founded in 1979. We have grown into a leading multi-service agency with a staff of over 150 employees, primarily serving community members residing in Upper Manhattan and the West Bronx. Our mission is to serve as a catalyst for positive change in the lives of the people in our community on their paths to secure and prosperous futures. Our legal, organizing, and advocacy services include immigration legal services, housing court representation/eviction prevention, counseling for immigrant communities and mental health support services. Our education and career services provide the community with the additional tools necessary to build secure and prosperous futures. We also offer weatherization services to improve the housing stock throughout Upper Manhattan. Community members receiving our services are also able to connect with our Connections to Care mental health services if the need arises. NMIC does not charge any fees for services and serves low income and immigrant persons and families.

Since 1979, NMIC has been providing key social services to a primarily Latino community. 78% of our clients are Hispanic and 64% are Spanish speakers with 92% of them residing in Manhattan and the Bronx. Specifically, the Dominican-American population has grown tremendously. Between 1990-2014, NYS saw an increase of 362.3% with 394,897 eligible voters in 2014. In NYC, the NY-15 congressional district accounts for 239,911 Dominicans and NY-13 congressional district accounts for 233,130. The increase in Dominican eligible voters led to the election of the first Congressional representative of Dominican descent. Since the redistricting that took place in 2012, we saw the expansion of Dominican businesses, restaurants, and chains catering to Dominican and other Latino groups.

Upper Manhattan and the West Bronx have become havens for the Dominican and Latino communities and NMIC has been front and center in providing services. During the 2020 Census count, we partnered with local community based organizations, elected officials and activists to ensure that every person was counted. During the Covid-19 pandemic, we pivoted our services from in-person to virtual so we could continue to provide services. Through our hotlines, we managed to provide benefits access, unemployment benefits assistance, legal and housing services, educational classes, and training to thousands of community members of

Maria Lizardo- Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation

Latino descent. In order to meet the increased food needs, we expanded our food pantry and since May 2020, have provided over 144,000 pounds of food. When access to the vaccine was a major issue for Black and Brown communities, NMIC launched a Covid-19 vaccination hotline that to date has made over 18,500 vaccine appointments.

The Upper Manhattan and West Bronx communities are linked not only by the people that reside there but also by their common interests that link them such as culture, businesses, and language. As we look at our communities, it's imperative that the districts are reflective of the community members that reside there. We acknowledge the importance of building political power for groups that have traditionally been marginalized and not represented in the political process. Redistricting that results in cracking, leads to a reduction of voting power for a certain community or party, and in this case, the Dominican and Latino community. Reducing the influence of the Dominican community in portions of Upper Manhattan and the West Bronx, decreases their opportunity for appropriate representation in all levels of government. Redistricting needs to take into consideration the contributions made thus far and looks to expand these contributions in the future.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony.

Marisa Redanty
District Leader
75 Part B Hell's Kitchen

NYC 10036

Testimony for Redistricting
Monday, July 26 2021

My testimony today is to state in the strongest terms to keep in place the present borders of the 10th Congressional District.

We on the West Side, have completely different priorities, needs and concerns compared to our East Side brothers and sisters. We need to work together with our community boards to address issues that affect our residents. The Boards need to be aligned in location in order for the cooperation to continue.

Our police share information about the entire West Side. As the District Leader in Hell's Kitchen I witnessed the rapid decline in safety on our streets since the shutdown. Along with another advocate we contacted each police precinct in our district and developed strong relationships with them to fight these issues. We were able to work closely with Midtown North, Midtown South and the 10th precinct because all three precincts were addressing the same issues. Through constant communication we collaborated and were able to identify hot spots. The result was a vast improvement but more work needs to be done. We need to retain this cooperation and teamwork to finish the job. Disturbing the well devised plans within this area will set our community back and put us at risk for more and bolder crimes.

West Side residents share our transportation (which runs north and south); our parks and waterfront parks and our schools.

The 40 some year-old boundaries were not a result of political interests. But of sound city planning.

We need to keep the integrity of that effort and not be swayed by salivating gerrymanderers.

Respectfully Submitted

Marisa Redanty

Testimony of Mark Diller
Before the
New York State Independent Redistricting Commission
Monday, July 26, 2021

Honorable Members of the Commission:

My name is Mark Diller. I have called the West Side of Manhattan my home for all but two years from 1976 to the present.

While I currently serve as a member of Community Board 7/Manhattan (including two separate terms as its chair and multiple tenures as Chairs of standing Committees), and am a Commissioner on the New York City Civic Engagement Commission, the testimony I offer today is not in any way on behalf of either of those organizations, and reflects only my personal views.

I respectfully urge the Commission to keep the West Side of Manhattan in a single Congressional District, not to divide vertically the West Side (especially the Upper West Side from West 59th to West 125th Streets West of Central Park) into multiple Congressional Districts, and not to merge Congressional Districts so that a single District would serve both the East and West Sides of Manhattan.

The West Side of Manhattan, including the areas comprising the Upper West Side, Hell's Kitchen, Clinton, Chelsea, the West Village and Tribeca, have distinct and separate characters and identities from the areas such as the Upper East Side, East Midtown, Murray Hill, Turtle Bay and the Lower East side. Although as the crow flies they might be considered proximate, the history, character, needs and experiences of the West and East Sides are demonstrably different, and deserving of representation that understands and embraces those differences while working to ensure a more just and equitable society for all. Even the built fabric and historic and architectural styles of those areas call attention to the differences that have defined those separate areas for generations.

Parents, Administrators and Teachers on the West Side of Manhattan, for example, have been leaders in fighting for greater equity and inclusion in our City's public schools, often taking bold action that seeks to counter the Citywide trends that perpetuate isolation and disparity of access to resources. While other communities have taken similar actions, the historical context and current conditions on the West Side present distinct and troubling challenges from those experienced elsewhere. Those advocates deserve the singular focus and attention of their electeds.

It is a bedrock principal of the Upper West Side Community, and indeed of all of our City, that the benefits, resources, services and advantages of our City be universally and adequately available and equitably allocated. From affordable housing to addressing food insecurity to equitably resourced public schools to meeting the needs of our most vulnerable neighbors to the myriad lessons about the disparities in health care and social services taught by the Pandemic,

Mark Diller

the goals of diversity, equity, inclusion and the celebration of our multiple identities and singular community must be reflected in the way we draw District lines. These worthy goals can easily be achieved without splintering our geographic community into shards.

The relatively narrow commercial corridors of the Upper West Side, Hell's Kitchen and Clinton have been hit particularly hard by the pre-Pandemic erosion of shopping at brick-and-mortar stores, which the Pandemic exacerbated. The nature of those lost retail opportunities is different than in corresponding areas elsewhere in Manhattan, and the focus of our electeds representation should not be divided across sections of town.

Tourism is one of the pillars of the City's economy, and the performing arts and the hospitality industry are in turn indispensable key elements to the recovery of tourism. While every section of Manhattan and our City must play its part in restoring tourism, including in-person performing arts and cultural events, and the dining, entertainment and lodging facilities without which no one would patronize the arts, the West Side of Manhattan is the home of the lion's share of the theaters, concert halls, and intimate performance venues that have no parallel elsewhere in the Country. Meeting the unique and changing needs of the performing arts community and the hospitality industry require a singular focus that would not be well-served by elected officials who must advocate for them among a chorus of other needs and voices.

The need for keeping the Upper West Side in a single Congressional District is not abstract or rhetorical – the current New York State Senate district lines are instructive on this score. For reasons best left to others to explain, the Upper West Side to the west of Central Park is served by portions of the 27th, 29th, 30th and 31st New York State Senate Districts. For example, my State Senator makes a Herculean effort to be present for and pay attention to the needs of my Upper West Side neighbors, while at the same time making efforts on behalf of a larger number of his constituents in portions of the South Bronx and the East Side. The reality of course is that it is only my Senator's and his devoted Staff's resolve to work well past the end of any reasonable vision of a workday that makes them succeed in being relevant to such a geographically separated electorate. Even with their dedication, their ability to understand and serve the needs of such a spread out community inevitably has its limits – limits that do not serve the public and would be thoroughly avoidable with more rational district lines.

I therefore respectfully urge the Commission to keep the West Side of Manhattan in its own single and contiguous Congressional District.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Diller

Matt Nosanchuck

Thank you

My name is Matt Nosanchuk, and I'm here today to testify for the preservation of District 10. I served as the liaison to the American Jewish Community in the Obama White House, as well as working at the Department of State in the Secretary's Office of Religion and Global Affairs, the Department of Homeland Security in the Office of the General Counsel, and the Department of Justice in the Civil Rights Division. In 2020, I co-founded the New York Jewish Agenda, an organization committed to educating and representing the Jewish liberal mainstream, both on a city and state level.

As a member of our Leaders Network, Representative Nadler has been instrumental in accomplishing our mission of building a coalition of diverse Jewish New Yorkers. During his tenure in congress, Nadler has fought for all of NY-10's Jewish constituents, no matter their race, ethnicity, denomination, gender, or generation. At NYJA, we recognize the safety of New York's Jewish population is dependent on this kind of advocacy.

I speak today to urge the Redistricting Committee to keep the 10th Congressional District centered on the West Side. NY-10 is a district with great historical, social, and political significance, especially to its Jewish community. We cannot let this cultural significance get erased by upcoming redistricting efforts.

Within the past few years, New York's Jewish community has lost significant representation, especially on the congressional level. In a time when increased antisemitism has threatened the safety and well-being of our communities, it is critical that we protect the Jewish representation in our local and state politics.

As the president of NYJA, I know that our community is most empowered when we are unified. NY-10 ensures protection and representation for all Jewish New Yorkers.

Thank you for your time.

Nancy Idaka Sheran

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

<https://www.elections.ny.gov/district-map.html>
State Assembly district 73
State Senate district 28
Congressional district 12

Looking at the district maps for my districts, some of the maps appear to be gerrymandered. I am in favor of having simple lines around the districts.

I prefer a non-partisan approach, grouping neighborhoods that share values about what they want their neighborhood to be. I realize that this has to be done while at the same time considering equity and fairness, so that neighborhoods are open to all kinds of diversity.

I live in central Manhattan, and would like to see my Midtown neighborhood remain diverse in income levels and other kinds of diversity (gender, racial, religious, etc.). I'd also like to see the neighborhood remain diverse with its mix of spaces: commercial, retail, office, independent businesses, restaurants, residential, cultural, religious, attractions, medical, services, light manufacturing (all kinds of) spaces.

We currently are a relatively safe neighborhood, and safety is an important concern for people who live, work and have businesses in the neighborhood. Our neighborhood has a relatively high level of education and has comfortable income levels on the whole (but we are not super wealthy). The neighborhood has many full-time residents who also have businesses or work nearby. Families with young children have been a growing part of the community. The neighborhood is also has pied-a-terre apartments with residents who are only here part time. There are many young professionals in the neighborhood. Some may be living with roommates. There are also people who are aging in place, who like the area for its proximity to good medical facilities and convenience. Residents who live in the center of Manhattan like city life and like the convenience of being able to walk to the places we need and like (grocery stores, retail shops, banks, hardware stores, doctors, places of work, places of culture and entertainment, etc.). My immediate neighborhood lacks convenient green spaces, and as a result we value our street trees and small parks and green spaces, small gardens in front of residential buildings, and street benches. Many of us value historic preservation, and we like having a mix of old and new buildings in our neighborhood. Only the real estate brokers want the neighborhood to be gentrified. Residents want to be able to afford to live here. We don't want only luxury housing and stores and shiny new glass buildings. We want to keep and even to have more affordable housing and affordable commercial space in the neighborhood. We like our small independent businesses. We want our neighborhood to remain a safe, clean and desirable neighborhood that maintains its value for homeowners and property owners. We are not anti-police, and we want police (and other city agencies) to play a helping role to keep our neighborhood safe and clean. Our neighborhood has had an influx of homeless people living on the street, and this is a problem, as it has a negative impact on the community. We have several homeless shelters in the neighborhood, and during covid, many hotels housed homeless people. Panhandlers come to our neighborhood because it is central. I personally think that most of the homeless problem would be solved

Nancy Idaka Sheran

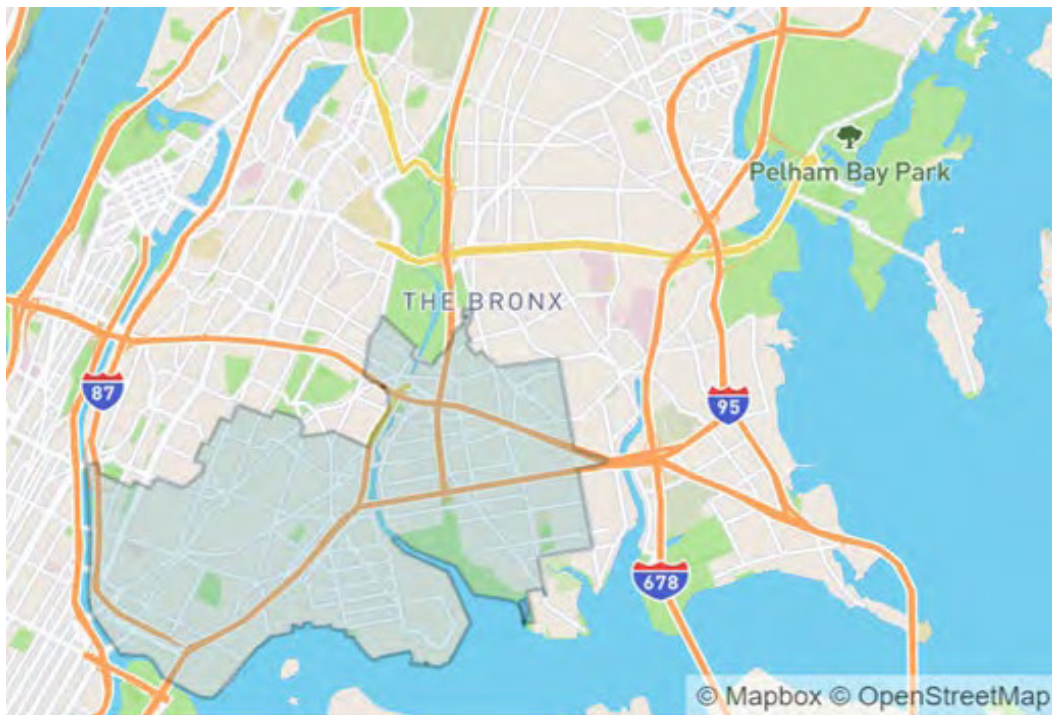
with more affordable housing and supportive housing for people with mental or physical illness. The city also needs affordable temporary housing (might serve a need better than shelters do). My neighborhood is between the Lincoln Tunnel and the Midtown Tunnel, and can sometimes be like a thoroughfare between the two tunnels. It is convenient to the most popular attractions and transportation hubs, and therefore also has a lot of hotels, tourism and office spaces.

We need to balance all of these interests and the many stakeholders who have interest in my neighborhood. I would not want to see the center of NYC to become a hollowed-out shell of a place only for hotels and tourists or only for commuting workers. NYC neighborhoods are strong when they have a high percentage of fulltime residents who have "eyes on the street" (to quote Jane Jacobs). Ideally the district boundaries also considers the interests of the district.

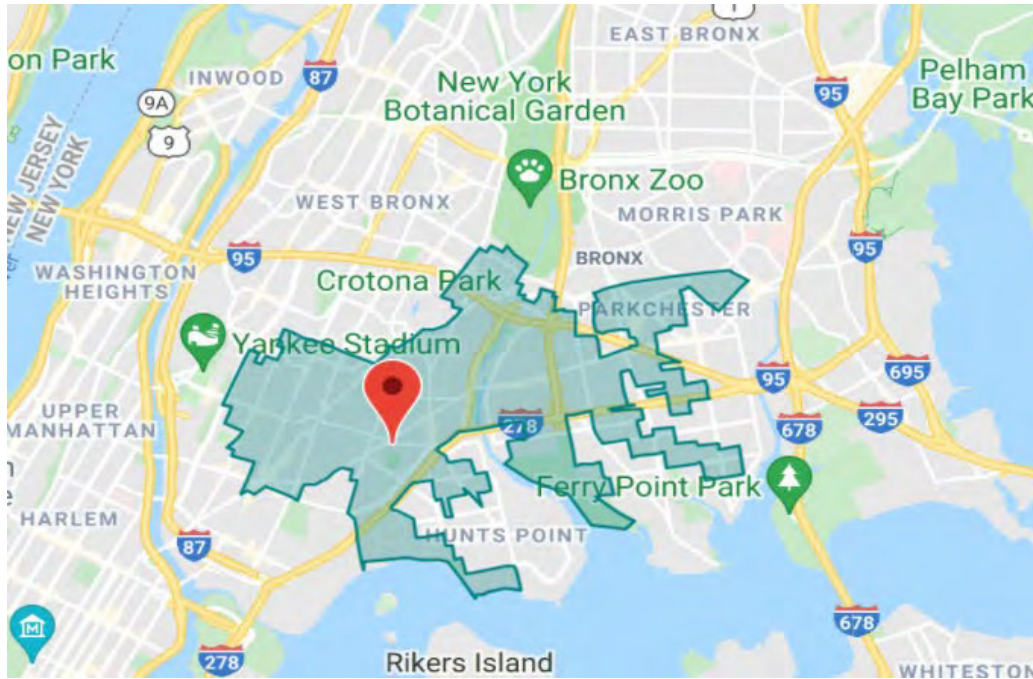
The 32nd State Senate District consists of mostly, Multifamily residential Units, also known as MDU. For those who are less familiar with MDUs, they are a classification of housing where multiple separate housing units for residential inhabitants are contained within one building or several buildings within one complex. In my district we have quite a few of them in many shapes and sizes. These units can be next to each other (side-by-side units), or stacked on top of each other (top and bottom units). In the 32nd State Senate District our multifamily residential buildings are very diverse with cooperatives, condominiums, apartment buildings with private owners housing mostly families and/ or seniors. Issues of great concern of my community are education, public safety and (community members) small local business preservation/ development.

The purpose of redistricting is to ensure that key factors are met, compactness, contiguous, preserve political subdivisions, preserve communities of interest, preserve the core of prior districts, promote competitiveness and does not favor any candidate or party. With my map for a New 32nd State Senate it does just that.

A New 32nd State Senate



The Current 32nd State Senate District is not compact, nor is it contiguous it separates communities that should be combined together within the same district.



New York State Independent Redistricting Commission
Monday, July 26, 2021
New York and Bronx Counties Hearing

Public Testimony:

Paul Devlin


New York, NY 10036

Hello. Thank you for hosting this hearing on a critical issue of our day. These hearings are an important way for the voices of the neighborhoods to be heard, and I appreciate all the time you're putting into this process.

My name is Paul Devlin. I live on West 45th Street in Hell's Kitchen. I'm the Hell's Kitchen Democratic Club District Leader; I'm a member of Manhattan Community Board 4; I am active with Gays Against Guns; I'm on the Advisory Council for Holy Apostles Soup Kitchen in Chelsea; and, as a paid job, I'm a real estate agent with an office in the Upper West Side. But I'm not here representing any of those organizations, I'm here to speak on my collective experiences in our neighborhoods.

On a daily basis I witness the unique aspects of each of the neighborhoods on the West Side. Our borough is oriented in a North/South direction. The separation between the West Side and East Side extends far beyond the short geographic distance, and the expansive park that is in the center of our island.

As a gay activist and real estate agent, I've seen the shift of the residences of the queer population migrate from the West Village to Chelsea to Hell's Kitchen. There is a sense of community that keeps these neighborhoods whole.

As a resident of Hell's Kitchen, I interact with neighbors with roots of multi-generations in Hell's Kitchen – there's a community group that I can't join because the requirement is that you must have lived in Hell's Kitchen for 3 generations! And it's a vibrant group.

As a member of the Community Board, I serve on both the Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee and the Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee. We have 2 distinct land use committees to address the

Paul Devlin

unique concerns and issues of the two neighborhoods. Within Chelsea we have NYCHA complexes, the High Line (which runs north/south), and Historic Districts; then in Hell's Kitchen have Hudson Yards, Penn Station, and Port Authority. Just listing these specific places, which you can all identify, proves the point of the distinct concerns of these neighborhoods. To break up these neighborhoods into separate congressional districts would not make sense.

I urge you that when you are considering drawing lines for districts you consider the wholeness of our neighborhoods and north/south axis of our communities. I would ask that you look at Community District boundaries as a guide for drawing any lines in order to keep neighborhoods and their representation whole. And, I'd ask that you consider keeping West and East sides cohesive.

Thank you.

PETER MORLEY

New York, New York 10011

July 23, 2021

My name is and Peter Morley and I am a resident of the 12th Congressional District and a health care advocate. In 2007, I was permanently disabled from an accident. In 2011, I survived kidney cancer and fought my way into remission after losing part of my right kidney. In 2013, I was diagnosed with Lupus, which causes me severe fatigue and most days it's a struggle to get out of bed. I manage over 10 pre-existing conditions, take 38 medications, and self-inject myself with weekly biologic infusions to slow the progression of my disease. All of my treatments were in the 12th Congressional district: my spinal surgeries were at Beth Israel (which no longer exists); my kidney cancer surgery was at Memorial Sloan Kettering, I had two pituitary tumors removed at New York Presbyterian, my primary physician is affiliated with NYU and my rheumatologist and coordinated doctors are in residence at the Hospital For Special Surgery and New York Presbyterian/Weill-Cornell.

I am so grateful and appreciative that Manhattan's East Side is at the epicenter of the New York medical establishment whose world class excellence attracts doctors and patients from New York City, the nation, and the world. The 12th Congressional district incorporates many of New York City's hospitals including several teaching hospitals, specialty hospitals, and public hospitals.

It is not an accident that so many excellent hospitals are located in such a small area. They are able to share talent, ideas and perspectives. It is natural that so many medical institutions located near one another should have one member of Congress who can become intimately familiar with their concerns.

Because of the concentration of hospitals, the East Side of Manhattan also has a dense concentration of doctors who work and reside on the East Side. Doctors often are affiliated with several hospitals. New Yorkers who work in the hospital industry have shared interests and shared concerns, particularly when it comes to the federal programs that fund or regulate the medical industry. It helps to have one representative who truly understands those interests.

Our hospitals remain the best because of the extraordinary research they do. They attract truly talented doctors and scientists, who are able to make great strides in medical research. It helps to have a member of Congress who understands the importance of increasing the amount of federal research dollars available. For individuals living with rare diseases or chronic illnesses, the ability for this research to garner federal funding can be a life and death situation.

Many members of Congress have an industry that dominates their community -- for some it is agriculture, for others defense, for others the auto industry. Those members of Congress are necessarily well-informed about the issues that affect that industry. An informed member is a better partner. The 12th Congressional District has many important industries, but the concentration of hospitals, doctors and medical researchers in our area ensures that medicine is a primary concern to the representative of this district.

I urge and implore you as a health care advocate and as a patient with complex chronic illnesses to keep all of the hospitals on Manhattan's East Side in the same Congressional District.

Sincerely,
Peter Morley

Testimony for NYS Independent Redistricting Committee Hearing - 7/26/21
From Robin Forst

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today at the NYS Independent Redistricting Committee hearing.

My name is Robin Forst and I am a long-time resident of Battery Park City, a community of approximately 15,000 residents, located across the street from the World Trade Center site. The 92 acres that comprise Battery Park City were built on landfill from the original construction of the World Trade Center. Since its creation, the community has grown and flourished, and has become increasingly important as an “anchor” of Manhattan’s lower West Side residential community.

Since moving to Battery Park City 30 years ago, I have been a community activist and leader. I have served, and am serving once again, on the local Community Board. I also currently serve as 1st Vice President of the Gateway Plaza Tenants Association, representing a complex of more than 1700 residential units in Lower Manhattan. Several years ago, I was part of the community group that was successful in pushing for the creation of a new public school and the first public library to serve this rapidly growing community. I am a founding Board member of Battery Park City Cares and a former PTA president.

Though Battery Park City is newer than much of Manhattan’s West Side, we have grown to be an integral part of the fabric of the West Side community. We are very closely linked to Tribeca, a community just to the north, and Greenwich Village, just north of that. We share many resources including the Hudson River waterfront and Hudson River Park, elementary, middle and high schools, children’s softball, football and soccer leagues, and multiple transportation entities under the purview of the Port Authority of NY & NJ.

In the aftermath of 9/11, we joined with neighboring communities, to advocate for the redevelopment of the area, for the assessment and monitoring of environmental impacts including air quality, and of course, the development of health coverage for sick 9/11 survivors.

So much of our progress has come with the help and support of our elected officials: city, state, and federal. It has been extremely important to have a “unified” West Side for Congressional representation. Our issues are interconnected and frankly, are best served under the leadership and oversight of one office. I urge you to support the continuation of the 10th Congressional District, as it is currently mapped, for the common goals we share with the communities contiguous to ours.



DOMINICAN WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT CENTER
519 West 189th Street, Ground Floor · New York, New York 10040

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**WRITTEN TESTIMONY to the
NYS Independent Redistricting Commission**

SUBMITTED BY:

Rosita M. Romero

Executive Director

DOMINICAN WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT CENTER

August 12, 2021



Rosita Romero

DOMINICAN WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT CENTER

519 West 189th Street, Ground Floor · New York, New York 10040

Greetings; my name is Rosita Romero, and I am the Executive Director at the Dominican Women's Development Center (hereafter, "DWDC"). On behalf of DWDC, we thank you for allowing us this opportunity to submit testimony.

DWDC is the largest Dominican founded organization in the United States, delivering services to approximately 10,000 individuals per year. Our mission is to empower all women and communities to advance gender equality and social justice. Our programs and services provide a holistic approach to the needs of women by providing them with access to basic education, domestic violence, child care, health promotion activities, and opportunities for personal growth and community advocacy and organizing. All our services are provided by a staff that is innovative, culturally competent, and adept at conveying a sense of inclusion that is conducive to participants' active engagement in shaping the solutions to their own challenges. We serve all eligible participants without regard to race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, orientation, culture, age, religion, or spiritual practice.

We provide services to residents of Washington Heights/Inwood [WH/I (NDA 12)] and who are interested in developing small businesses. This geographic area is bounded in the south by 155th Street, extends north to West 220th Street; is bounded in the east by the Harlem River Drive/ Harlem River; and by the Henry Hudson Parkway/Hudson River in the west. The Statement of Community District Needs (2021)", notes that WH/I is an immigrant community with a population of 190,020 residents of which nearly 50% are foreign-born and 71.4% are of Hispanic/Latino heritage - Dominicans being the largest group represented. Seventeen percent (17%) of residents are White, Non-Hispanic; 7% are Black/African-American, Non-Hispanic; and 3% are Asian. Due to gentrification and displacement many Dominicans residents from Washington Heights have moved to the West Bronx.

In general, the Dominican-American population has grown tremendously in the past 30 years. Between 1990-2014, NYS saw an increase of 362.3% with 394,897 eligible voters in 2014. In NYC, the NY-15 congressional district accounts for 239,911 Dominicans and NY-13 congressional district accounts for 233,130. The increase in Dominican eligible voters led to the election of the first Congressional representative of

Rosita Romero



DOMINICAN WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT CENTER

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Dominican descent. Since the redistricting that took place in 2012, we saw the expansion of Dominican businesses, restaurants, and chains catering to Dominican and other Latino groups.

Upper Manhattan and the West Bronx have become havens for the Dominican and Latino communities and DWDC has been front and center in providing services. During the 2020 Census count, we partnered with CUNY, local community based organizations, elected officials and activists to ensure that every person was counted. During the COVID-19 crisis DWDC continued to provide remote services to our clients most of whom have been the hardest hit by either because they live below the poverty line, became unemployed, are undocumented, domestic violence survivors, face mental health or substance abuse issues, are homeless or inadequately housed, or are members of the LGTBQ community. We have been able to provide assistance to 500 families with food, toiletries, cleaning products, rent subsidies, filling out unemployment, SNAP, and health insurance applications; providing virtual yoga, remote learning activities to 182 children in our Child Care Center and Home Based Early Head Start, provided increased domestic violence virtual counseling, and provided ongoing counseling and mental health support to our staff and program participants to cope with the COVID-19 crisis.

The Upper Manhattan and West Bronx communities are linked not only by the people that reside there but also by their common interests that link them such as culture, businesses, and language. As we look at our communities, it's imperative that the districts are reflective of the community members that reside there. We acknowledge the importance of building political power for groups that have traditionally been marginalized and not represented in the political process. Redistricting that results in cracking, leads to a reduction of voting power for a certain community or party, and in this case, the Dominican and Latino community. Reducing the influence of the Dominican community in portions of Upper Manhattan and the West Bronx, decreases their opportunity for appropriate representation in all levels of government. Redistricting needs to take into consideration the contributions made thus far and looks to expand these contributions in the future.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony.

Comment has been submitted

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission <submissions@nyirc.gov>

Fri 7/23/2021 10:20 AM

To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

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A private comment has been submitted

NY SD-29 should not contain the few blocks in the Upper West Side. It's unrepresented by our senator. His political interests lie elsewhere. It only "looks" continuous because of Central Park — with no residents!

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Steve Max

NYC, NY 10025

The Upper West Side has a long tradition of sending to Congress the most progressive and component representatives starting with Bill Ryan IN 1961, then Bella Abzug, Ted Weiss and Jerry Nadler. The steady political nature of the Upper West Side community enabled Nadler to gain the seniority to become Chair of the Judiciary Committee where the impeachment of Donald Trump originated.

The Republicans would like nothing better than to see this district broken up and made over into one composed of people with no common political history. This would lead to primary fights and would prevent future Representatives from gaining seniority. Such a redistricting can hardly be considered non-partisan.



**New York State Independent Redistricting Commission
August 2021**

Testimony from Vanessa Leung, Co-Executive Director

My name is Vanessa Leung, and I am the Co-Executive Director of the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF). CACF greatly appreciates the esteemed members of the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission for providing us the opportunity to submit testimony.

Since 1986, CACF has been the nation's only pan-Asian children and families' advocacy organization, leading the fight for improved and equitable policies, systems, funding, and services to support the diverse Asian American diasporic community here in New York.

The APA population comprises over 15% of New York City. Yet, the needs of the APA community are often overlooked, misunderstood, and uncared for. We are constantly fighting the harmful impacts of the model minority myth and the perpetual foreigner - stereotypes that prevent our needs from being acknowledged, understood, and addressed. This means our communities, as well as the organizations that serve the community, often lack resources to provide critical services for those in need. We work with almost 80 member and partner organizations to identify and speak out on common challenges and needs across the APA community and other marginalized communities.

CACF work with our 50 Asian-led and Asian-serving community and social service organizations that comprise our membership who serve the APA community across all five boroughs. Together, we come together as a united community to ensure that the needs of our community are understood and met.

Recent data also reveals that APA communities have been hit disproportionately harder by the pandemic as a result of systemic inequalities in our healthcare and economics system that long predate COVID-19. These issues vary across communities and have relied heavily upon Asian-led and serving organizations to fill in the gaps of services through culturally inclusive and language accessible services that have the most impact on addressing the needs of our communities. Over the past year, the COVID-19 pandemic has been a time of immense fear and uncertainty for Asian Pacific American (APA) New Yorkers.

- Asian Americans have been 2x more likely to test positive for COVID-19 than their white counterparts, yet less likely to be tested at all.
- Asian Americans have experienced the largest increase in joblessness of all major racial groups in NYC, with unemployment claims rising 6,900% in the first few months of the pandemic last year, and a slower recovery since then.
- Nearly 50% of all APAs in NYC live in the hardest hit areas during the pandemic
- There have been over 3,800 incidents of anti-Asian violence and an 1,900% increase in Anti-Asian related hate crimes across NYC

It is important that a community of interest is kept together - that includes working class interests, immigrant community experience, and the need for language accessible and culturally responsive services and resources. Keeping such communities whole, can ensure better

Vanessa Leung- Coalition for Asian American Children and Families

accountability of our elected officials to properly support and invest in those communities. For example, In the New York State Assembly, the Asian Pacific American Task Force consists of Assembly Members whose APA population is at least 10% in the district. The APA Task Force played a pivotal role in securing for the first time \$10 million in the State budget to address the rise in anti-Asian hate incidents by supporting Asian-led and Asian-serving community based organizations that are best equipped to provide the life affirming services necessary to ensure the safety and wellness of our community members.

Therefore, we support the following recommendations:

1. Elmhurst, Queens, with its large immigrant community should be kept whole rather than the current configuration where the neighborhood is split across three Assembly districts.
2. Richmond Hill, Queens, with a large South Asian community should be kept whole rather than be split across 7 Assembly districts.
3. Sunset Park, Brooklyn, with its large predominantly Chinese immigrant population is currently split across two State Senate districts. Sunset Park is a working class, largely immigrant population that has much more in common with Bensonhurst, Brooklyn communities as they both struggle with accessing language appropriate and culturally responsive services.
4. Manhattan's Chinatown's congressional district should remain connected to Sunset Park to ensure the working class and immigrant population's needs are met.

We believe that ensuring district lines keep communities of interest together will ensure marginalized groups can hold our government accountable to meeting the needs of our communities.

Thank you again for this opportunity to submit testimony.

Comment has been submitted

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission <submissions@nyirc.gov>

Tue 7/27/2021 5:58 PM

To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

A private comment has been submitted

There is no good reason for dividing Manhattan below Harlem into westside and eastside Congressional Districts. You have enough population there for an entire district. Census will prove the socioeconomic and demographic profile of residents is identical.

User: Wai Chan



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July 30, 2021

New York, NY

TO: WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

FROM: YELIZAVETA KAYMIN, RTVI News Anchorwoman

RE: Representation of Russian communities in New York City

I have been working as Anchorwoman at RTVI for over fifteen years, the most popular Russian-language TV station in New York and the United States. RTVI is a New York-based, Russian language news network which operates fully independently and is privately owned for the Russian communities. It was founded in 1993. Its broadcast platform reaches fifteen million viewers around the world-- mainly in New York, Germany, Israel, Eastern and Western Europe.

New York has the largest Russian-speaking population in the country. Despite that, there are currently no immigrants from the former Soviet Union in any office in New York because gerrymandering made that impossible.

The existing maps for the State Senate, State Assembly and Congress divide the Russian community into too many districts. This muffles our voice and leaves our concerns unaddressed.

The largest Russian-speaking neighborhoods known as Brighton Beach, Manhattan Beach and Sheepshead Bay have been previously redistricted into Congressional districts where the majority has very different needs, desires, and ideologies from those of the people living in these neighborhoods. Instead, our needs would be much better met by combining the people of these neighborhoods into New York's 11th Congressional District, which already represents well over 50,000 Russian-speakers in Staten Island, Bay Ridge, Gravesend and Midwood. It would also unite Soviet immigrants with Orthodox Jews in Midwood and Syrian Jews in Gravesend, communities with similar needs and ideologies as Soviet immigrants. This redistricting is a once-in-a-decade opportunity to fix the harm done to the Russian-speaking population of New York City.

I respectfully request that the Commission listen to the request of the people in New York's Soviet emigre community and to provide them with a voice that they desire and deserve.

Sincerely,

Yelizaveta(Liza) Kaymin

RTVI Anchorwoman



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Yelizaveta Kaymin', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Advocating for Caribbean LGBTQ Voices in NYC
Post Office Box 200248 . Queens . NY 11420
www.CaribbeanEqualityProject.org . info@CaribbeanEqualityProject.org



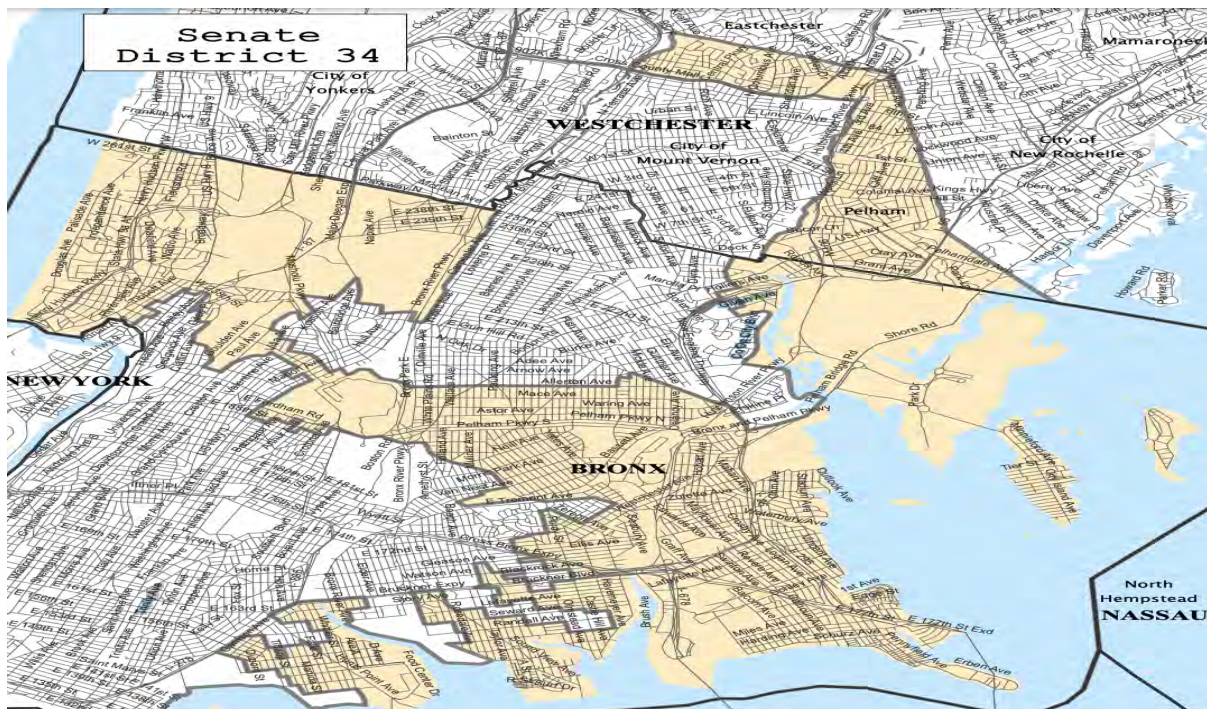
My name is Ramdat Singh , I'm a proud Queer, public school teacher and the Director of Civic Engagement at the Caribbean Equality Project (CEP) and a proud lifelong Bronxite. I would like to thank the Independent Redistricting Commission for this opportunity to submit written testimony and to voice our redistricting concerns for the Bronx. Founded in 2015 in response to anti-LGBTQ+ hate violence in Richmond Hill, the Caribbean Equality Project (CEP) is a community-based organization that empowers, advocates for, and represents LGBTQ+ Caribbean immigrants in New York City. The Caribbean Equality Project is a proud coalition member of the APA Voice Redistricting Task Force.

As the Director of Civic Engagement, I oversee Caribbean Equality Project's civic engagement work, which is focused on building political power through voter education campaigns. This year, our civic engagement organizing includes redistricting because we understand what it means to be excluded in our political system because of the division of Parkchester, Westchester Square and Castle Hill in the Bronx

In the South Bronx, the areas of Parkchester, Westchester Square and Castle Hill, have a growing Asian population and should be kept together in all legislative districts. Currently, this community of interest is divided between two Assembly and two Senatorial districts. Parkchester and Castle Hill are in Assembly district 87 and Westchester Square is in Assembly District 82. Parkchester is divided between the 34th and the 32nd Senatorial districts. Moreover, Castle Hill is divided between the 34th and 32nd Senatorial districts, while Westchester Square is in the 34th Senatorial District. Parkchester and Westchester Square is home to a growing Bengali population. Castle Hill is a neighborhood with the second largest Guyanese/ Indo-

Caribbean population in NYC. Similarly, to my testimony for Richmond Hill/ South Ozone Park, Indo-Caribbeans have a complex history of South Asian ancestry, but because of British Colonialism, they were forced into indentureship in the Caribbean. Nevertheless, Benaglis and Indo-Caribbeans share similar cultures, customs, religions and should be kept together.

Senate District 34 is by definition a gerrymandered district. The 34th Senatorial District spans over the Northwest Bronx, which comprises the neighborhoods of Riverdale, Spuyten Duvil, Kingsbridge and Woodlawn; to the Northeast Bronx are the neighborhoods of Pelham Gardens, Morris Park, Allerton and City Island; to the South East Bronx, are the neighborhoods of Edgewater, Throgs Neck, Parkchester, Westchester Square, Castle Hill, Soundview, Clason Point and Harding Park. Lastly, this Senatorial district crosses county lines representing the areas of Pelham, Pelham Manor and Mount Vernon, in Westchester County. As mentioned above, the areas of Parkchester, Westchester Square and Castle Hill are home to a growing Asian(Bengali and Indo-Caribbean) population. We are asking that the 34th Senatorial District lines be redrawn, so that there are not so many dissenting economic and geographical interests in this one district.



Due to the fact that Parkchester, Westchester Square and Castle Hill are divided between Assembly and Senatorial districts, it dilutes our political power and our ability to organize our communities. We are asking the Independent Redistricting Commission to keep the areas of Parkchester, Westchester Square and Castle Hill together. We need these communities together, so that we can organize to ensure this community of interest gets the necessary resources it needs to thrive.