

Map Submitted

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

Fri 9/10/2021 5:08 PM

To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

Submitted Map

- **First Name:** Alex
- **Last Name:** Pellitteri
- **Email:** [REDACTED]
- **Description:** My name is Alex Pellitteri and I currently live in Bay Ridge at [REDACTED] I grew up in Bensonhurst and have lived in this area my entire life. Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights have been split between 4 separate Assembly districts for the last decade. I believe the constituents of South Brooklyn are best represented by one single Assembly district. Having this fair representation will give the residents of South Brooklyn a stronger voice in Albany and give us the ability to more democratically elect a representative.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with further questions:

[REDACTED]

- **Map File:** [Link to Map File](#)

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Amariah

Teaching & Guiding in God's Promises

Wednesday, July 28, 2021

To whom it may concern,

I am participating in the New York Independent Redistricting Commission's public comment process to encourage the commission to recognize the large and growing Orthodox Jewish and Russian Jewish communities that are centered in Kings County and stretch through Queens County and into southwestern Nassau County.

State law, and the state constitution, require the commission to take into consideration "language minority voting rights" and communities of interest in the drafting of state legislative and congressional district lines.

While we await the data resulting from the 2020 United State Census, there is little question that the region's Orthodox Jewish and Russian Jewish population have experienced extraordinary growth. This is readily apparent from the vast number of schools, synagogues, small businesses, media outlets and social service organizations that serve these communities.

As these communities have grown, they also have become more integrated—economically, socially and politically. Today, a tremendous interrelationship exists between businesses, religious institutions, and social service providers in Nassau, Queens, and Kings counties. This is particularly apparent in areas like the Five Towns, Nassau County and Far Rockaway, Queens.

Beyond the economic, cultural, and societal relationships connecting the Orthodox Jewish communities in each of these three counties, the values and interests they share have also manifest in their voting preferences. This shouldn't be of any surprise based on their shared religious beliefs and biblical values. This also extends to the Russian community, many of whom are also observant Jews.

After the 2010 Census, a majority Orthodox Jewish state senate district was created in Brooklyn - enabling a portion of the county's Jewish community to elect a candidate of their choice. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for the many Orthodox Jewish and Russian Jewish voters who reside outside the boundaries of that senate district, nor can it be said about their congressional representation.

The state constitution states that "Districts shall be drawn so that... minority language groups do not have less opportunity to participate in the political process than other members of the electorate and to elect representatives of their choice."



Amariah

Teaching & Guiding in God's Promises

I strongly encourage the commission to fulfill this responsibility, and to provide the Orthodox Jewish and Russian Jewish communities that have strong biblical values in Kings, Queens and Nassau counties, who also clearly represent a cohesive community of interest, with the opportunity to elect a candidate to the United States House of Representatives, as well as further empowering the community by consolidating it on the state legislative level.

Sincerely,

Nachman Mostofsky
Executive Director & VP



As a longtime Bay Ridge resident, I am concerned about the potential redrawing of the current maps. Therefore, I propose that the Commission keep the neighborhoods of Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights intact.

However, while it is my belief that there is no need to redraw the current Congressional and State Senate maps, there may be an opportunity to consider modifying the current four (4) Assembly districts to two (2).

The Congressional and Senate seats of Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights are almost entirely encompassed within single Congressional and Senate seats. As such, no change is warranted. Currently, Senate district (23), runs from Bay Ridge through Dyker Heights, Bensonhurst, Bath Beach up to Marine Park and Gerritsen Beach, providing for a truly contiguous map. The current Congressional district (11), encompassing Staten Island and Southwest Brooklyn, are neighboring communities connected via the Bridge, as well as being connected through the many educational institutions, families, friends, and businesses.

As for the current 4 Assembly districts, (ADs 46, 49, 51 and 64), I propose the Commission give serious consideration to realigning them from 4 to 2. Such a consideration would provide for consistency with the current Congressional and Senate districts, not to mention the commonality of interests between the 64h AD that currently make up Bay Ridge and parts of SI. I hope the above statement provides the support needed of not changing the current Congressional and Senate maps, while considering combining the current 4 Ads to 2.

Bedford Stuyvesant / Crown Heights Committee for Fair Redistricting (BCCFR) |

Contact us at [REDACTED]

Written Testimony

Virtual Public Hearing for Kings and Richmond Counties

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission (IRC)

July 29, 2021

This testimony is on behalf of the Bedford Stuyvesant / Crown Heights Committee for Fair Redistricting (BCCFR), an organized group of local community leaders, concerned citizens and professionals. BCCFR set out to provide engaged citizens with the knowledge and tools they need to get involved with the 2021 redistricting process. We want to ensure the district borders reflect the needs and wants of our community.

We appreciate the time and consideration of the NY IRC to hear our testimony today.

The Bedford Stuyvesant / Crown Heights community is composed of majority Black residents who have historically maintained a vibrant, tree-lined neighborhood of cultural corridors. Many of the long-term residents are public service employees (transit, city agencies, teachers) who built the fabric of the entire city. Our community has been one of the most gentrified areas in the entire state, at a rapid pace of change, moving away from being a historical, social, cultural center for African-American residents of New York City.

Our community has experienced significant population and economic growth, but also major cultural shifts since the last census in 2010. Our rate of change is above and beyond the statewide rates and is expected to continue. Maintaining singular, equal political representation of our neighborhood is crucial in supporting all of the residents. The household income group with the largest share of households is now in the range of \$100,001 to \$250,000. However, in 2000, the household income group that had the largest share of households were \leq \$20,000. Median household income is approximately \$62,000, about 12% less than citywide median household income (approximately \$71,000). The poverty rate is much higher than citywide rates. Real median gross rent has increased more than 55% from 2006 to 2019, yet the homeownership rate of approximately 18% is lower than the citywide share of 32%. Plus, the homeownership rate in the neighborhood has decreased by 2.0 percentage points since 2010.

Based on presentations by Brooklyn Community Boards 3 and 8, there are 34 proposed redevelopment projects in process of coming to the district in the near future. We estimate these buildings will provide approximately more than 5,000 apartment units and 13,000 to 15,000 new residents within the next 3 to 5 years. This large demographic change requires consideration now as it relates to the drawing of our new Assembly District lines. We cannot afford to wait until the 2030 Census to account for these developments within our district borders.

As such, we ask the NY IRC to consider the following factors when deciding on the boundaries of the district:

- Based on a survey we conducted prior to this public hearing, less than 15% of the respondents indicated they wanted to change the current district lines.
- The majority of respondents wish to keep residential blocks together and not break up community clusters. For example, residential block associations are represented by more than one elected official, which impacts their ability to have cohesive political representation.
- Respondents also wanted to maintain a complete overlay of city, state and federal political representation to ensure the neighborhood receives the crucial financial support to enable the community to flourish.
- The community was adamant about keeping Interfaith Medical Center and Woodhull Hospital, the two remaining healthcare facilities in the district. Our community continues to significantly battle the effects of the pandemic that exposed health disparities for Black residents in our community.

Lastly, the BCCFR is committed to including community voices in determining the lines of our district. We will continue to gather information from residents and local community groups to help inform the work of NY IRC.

Thank you for your time and for the committee's consideration of our testimony today.

My name is Dr. Bernard Fryshman and I am the Executive Director of the Association of Advanced Rabbinical and Talmudic Schools, Professor of Physics at the New York Institute of Technology, and on the steering committee of the Conference of Academicians for the Protection of Jewish Cemeteries.

I want to express my appreciation for this opportunity to submit this comment into the Independent Redistricting Commission's official record. Please note that I am submitting testimony strictly on my own behalf.

Brooklyn is home to the nation's largest and fastest growing Orthodox Jewish community. This is a large and cohesive community that shares a common lifestyle, beliefs, interests, and localized economy.

There is perhaps no clearer example of a community of interest anywhere in New York than this community.

Unfortunately, South Brooklyn's Orthodox neighborhoods have been divided between several state senate, state assembly and congressional districts, which has caused us to be underrepresented in government. A positive step was taken to address this ten years ago when this Commission's predecessor created the state's 17th senate district. This gave us true representation in the state senate and has been of great benefit to the community.

With continued growth, it is time to consolidate all of the area's Jewish communities and connect them with other neighborhoods that share similar principles and interests, such as the Sephardic and Russian Jewish communities which have been included in the 11th congressional District. With the requisite increase in the size of New York's congressional districts, it would also make sense to add South Brooklyn's Orthodox Jewish neighborhoods to this district to ensure that there be effective representation in Washington.

I hope you will help ensure that the entire community is properly represented.

Good afternoon and thank you very much for the opportunity to give testimony today in regards to the potential redistricting of Richmond County and Southern Kings County.

My name is Brian Doherty and I have been a lifelong resident of Brooklyn and a thirty five year resident of Bay Ridge. I am a retired NYPD Sergeant and currently a teacher at Bay Ridge Catholic Academy. My wife is a NYC Schoolteacher here in Bay Ridge and we have three children all of whom attended public schools here in Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights.

I know quite well that redistricting our Congressional, Senatorial and Assembly districts is a sensitive and occasionally inflammatory process and I know also that no matter how much care is taken that it is unlikely that the result will be all things to all people. I believe that as far as our community is concerned, the boundaries as currently drawn reflect a fair and considerate representation of the communities of Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights and their neighbors. But there certainly exists room for improvement.

I believe that the 11th Congressional District as drawn, despite being an inter county district reflects a great deal of consideration for the relationships, traditions and concerns of its residents. Although it straddles both sides of the Verrazano Bridge, residents of CD11 share similar concerns affecting their day to day lives. The interborough migration that began in earnest with the construction of the Verrazano Bridge has forged a bond among the communities of CD11 that includes commerce, educational institutions and even familial. As a teacher and a parent, I am acutely aware of how many families have children commuting across the bridge to attend wonderful schools on both sides. Additionally, I think you would be hard pressed to find many people in Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights who do not have a relative living in Staten Island. Because of these reasons and many more, I believe CD11 serves our communities as it is currently drawn.

The 23rd Senatorial District is also an excellent example of how it is possible to afford a political voice representative of the sensibilities of citizens across a large and varied area as diverse in character and landscape as it is in the people who live across it. Although SD23 stretches a great distance through many neighborhoods, it is geographically contiguous and the neighborhoods it encompasses have more in common than you may think. All have coastal portions that come with their own specific challenges, all have large business districts and residents lean and tend to vote conservatively despite enrollment numbers that make this seem counterintuitive. At a time when single party rule threatens to overwhelm our city and state, I believe it is more important than ever to preserve this district and consequently the collective voice of all who live in it.

I believe that the greatest improvement that can be made in this decade's redistricting would be in the Assembly Districts that currently represent Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights. While many communities are represented by Assembly Districts that adhere to the historic boundaries of those communities, Bay Ridge has been carved up into an astonishing four different Assembly Districts; the 46th, 49th, 51st and 64th. This is a decades old disservice to the people of Bay Ridge and of Dyker Heights. Being parceled off to the surrounding Assembly Districts has

served no purpose for its residents. It has offered solutions to no coterminal issues, offers no historic relationships around which to cohere and has yielded virtually no voice and no representation for the people of Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights in the Assembly chamber. Each of these four Assembly Districts has left us with no possible ability to influence elections in our districts and if we are being honest, has lended the appearance that this was done to limit the political voice and will of our community. You have the opportunity to right this wrong and I pray you seize it.

Thank you again for the opportunity to address the committee and I wish you good luck in your work.

Brian T. Doherty

Topic: Redistricting
Host: New York State Independent Redistricting Commission
Date: Thursday, July 29, 2021
Time: 2pm
Location: Virtual

My name is Crystal Hudson, and I am the Democratic nominee for New York City Council's 35th District, which encompasses the neighborhoods of Crown Heights, Prospect Heights, Fort Greene, Clinton Hill, and Bedford-Stuyvesant. I would like to thank the Independent Redistricting Commission and Chair David Imamura for holding this public hearing and for giving me the opportunity to testify today.

I am a third-generation Brooklynite and the daughter and granddaughter of Jamaican and Honduran immigrants. My mother served as a nurse for more than 30 years at Harlem Hospital and raised me in the same Prospect Heights community her father laid roots in when he brought her from Honduras, by way of Jamaica. I now live in the home my mother worked hard to buy many years ago, and I have now planted roots of my own right here in Central Brooklyn.

My story is not unique. The 35th District is home to many folks like me from various backgrounds – from multi-generational Caribbean immigrant families and the Lubavitch community in Crown Heights to long-time Black American families in Fort Greene and Clinton Hill – who have deep ties to these communities. Many of these residents live at the five NYCHA developments in the district: Atlantic Terminal, Lafayette Gardens, Ingersoll Houses, Farragut Houses, and Walt Whitman Houses — the last three of which used to be one development called Fort Greene Houses. These developments serve as much of the cultural fabric of the 35th District. In the advent of mutual aid during the global COVID-19 pandemic, they are now spaces where folks from diverse backgrounds join together in community, serving the community, and connecting so many people from across the 35th district.

These folks are the reason the 35th District is so special. They're also the Black retail owners and restaurateurs who set up shop along Fulton Street, Washington Avenue, Nostrand Avenue and more; the families that come out every year to the West Indian Day Parade along Eastern Parkway; and the ones who come out in droves each year to the Brooklyn Academy of Music to enjoy Dance Africa. Our district is also home to newer, white Brooklynites who want to plant roots in a diverse community and contribute to its growth and prosperity. Diversity and history – in particular Black history and culture – is what makes the 35th District so unique.

While the bulk of the Councilmanic district lies in the 43rd and 57th Assembly districts and the 20th and 25th Senatorial districts, it also spans across parts of five community districts (CDs 2, 3, 6, 8, 9), five Assembly districts (ADs 43, 50, 52, 56, 57), three state senate districts (SD 20, 21, 25), and two congressional districts (NY-8, NY-9). At its core, however, are the historically Black neighborhoods of Crown Heights, Prospect Heights, Fort Greene, Clinton Hill and Bedford-Stuyvesant. In fact, the entirety of District 35 was once predominantly Black. But over the past two decades, gentrification has overwhelmed our district. With an influx of new

Crystal Hudson

homeowners who purchase brownstones from Black and brown families who can no longer afford the costs associated with increased property taxes, overall maintenance and upkeep of owning historic homes, and simply living in the neighborhood, we have seen longtime residents pushed out. New residential developments have also gone up throughout the district, with taller buildings replacing older brownstones or commercial property and providing housing options for wealthier residents – as our district’s affordable housing options remain woefully inadequate. As a result, we have more people moving into our district who are typically whiter and wealthier while we have seen longtime residents of color forced out of their homes. And with one of the [highest eviction](#) rates in Brooklyn – at 92.4 per 10,000 residents in Crown Heights South compared to 5 per 10,000 in Park Slope/Gowanus – we have quite literally seen folks forced out of the very neighborhoods they were raised in, set roots in, raised their own families in, and started businesses in.

As the commission considers new boundaries for legislative districts, I urge you to prioritize diversity and ensure Central Brooklyn retains its unique characteristic as home to a myriad of Brooklynites from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds as it has for generations. The Councilmanic district has been home to the Chabad headquarters since 1940 and the West Indian American Day Parade since the 1930s. Our community is centered around numerous iconic community and cultural destinations – from Fort Greene Park in Fort Greene to the Brooklyn Museum in Prospect Heights to Medgar Evers College in Crown Heights. These hubs serve the numerous communities I will represent, and provide unique community services from recreation to culture to education. I urge you to ensure the 35th Council District and its related Assembly and Senate districts retain the diversity and community hubs that our residents pride themselves on.



**Interwest United Insurance
Brokerage, Inc**

703 Avenue U, Brooklyn, NY 11223
Phone: [REDACTED]
Fax: (718) [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]

Dear NYS Independent Redistricting Commission,

Around 10 years ago, Brighton Beach area was divided into 2 sections politically. Brighton Beach is known for being a primarily Russian speaking community. Due to this redistricting, it becomes difficult and cumbersome to have Russian speaking candidates hold government positions. This division only fosters confusion and disconnect between the Russian community and government officials. In the 40 years of Brighton Beach's creation, we have no representation in the political field, causing our voices to be limited and suppressed and our needs to be unknown. We need to **cease this division** to gather more opportunities and bring rise to the strong voices that evolve in our community. The Brighton Beach Russian community wants to play a vital part and be heard in political discussions. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Daniella Kirfeld
President

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

Wed 9/1/2021 5:41 PM

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New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

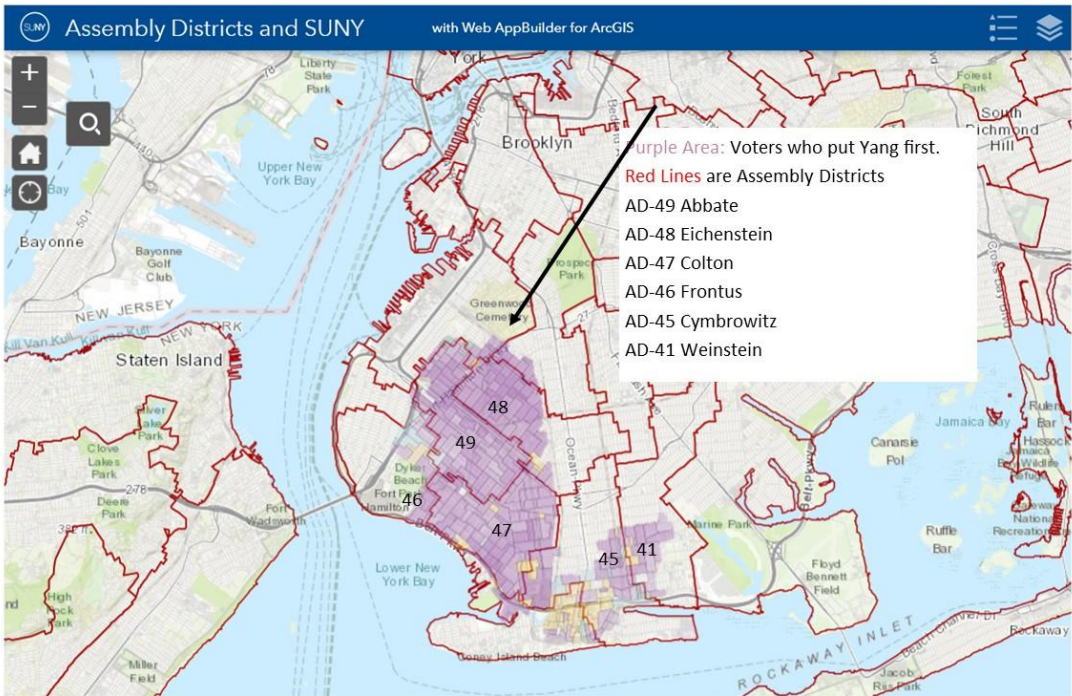
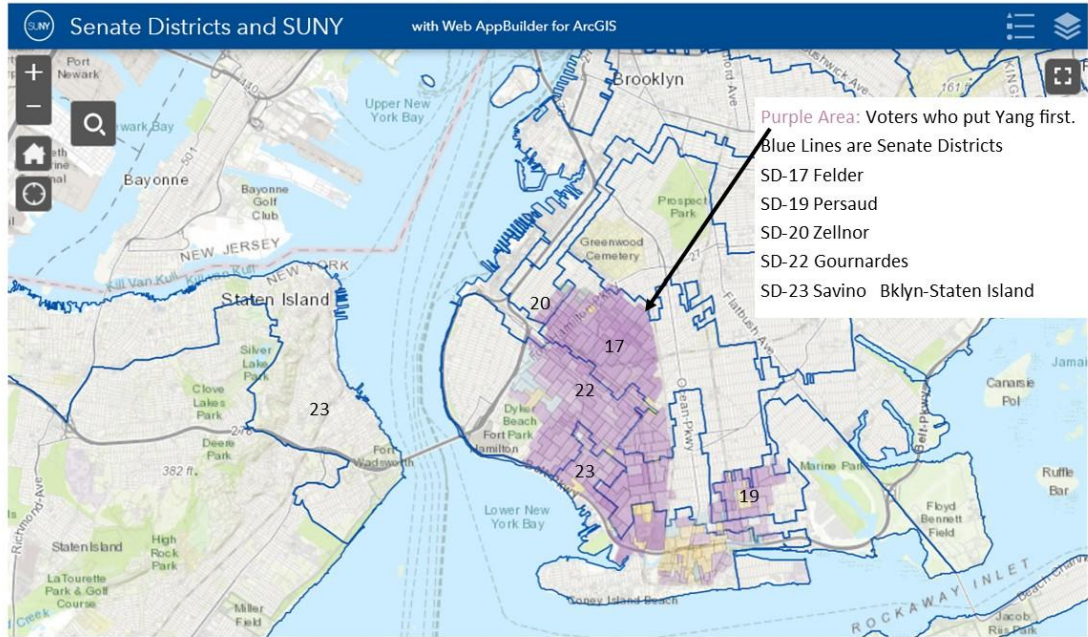
Submitted Map

- **First Name:** David
- **Last Name:** Lee
- **Email:** [REDACTED]
- **Description:** The map overlays Andrew Yang mayoral candidate voters over State Assembly and Senate districts in Brooklyn. It indicates that the constituency that would vote for a candidate like Andrew Yang is split and prevents a majority in any one district.
- **Map File:** [Link to Map File](#)

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Districts that placed Mayoral Candidate Andrew Yang first are divided by State districts.

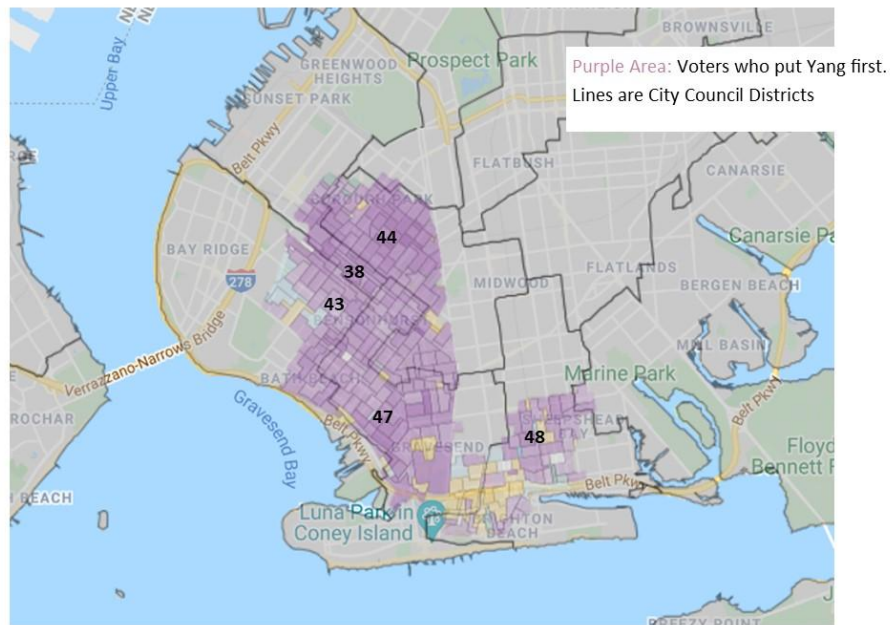
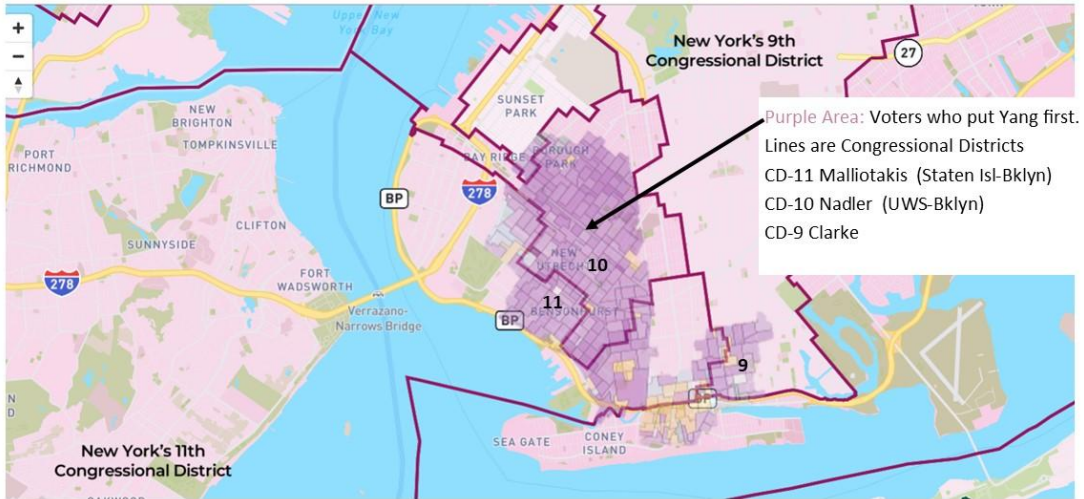
2021



LAANY - League of Asian Americans of New York

Districts that placed Mayoral Candidate Andrew Yang first are divided by Congressional and City districts.

2021



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Wed 9/1/2021 5:46 PM

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New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

Submitted Map

- **First Name:** David
- **Last Name:** Lee
- **Email:** [REDACTED]
- **Description:** These 2 maps overlays Andrew Yang mayoral candidate voters over Congressional and City Council districts. It indicates how that particular constituency is split preventing it from forming a majority in any one particular district. In particular, the demographics are particularly disparate in Congressional district 10 which combines low income immigrant Asians with affluent Manhattan Upper Westsiders.
- **Map File:** [Link to Map File](#)

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Testimony to the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

On behalf of the
Jewish Community
Relations Council of
New York

David M. Pollock
Associate Executive Director
Thursday, July 29, 2021

Thank you for your time and openness. My name is David Pollock, I have been at the JCRC since 1980 and I am honored to serve as the Associate Executive Director and Director of Public Policy. Due to my longevity this is the fifth redistricting “cycle”. Throughout my career I have worked to gain an understanding of the Jewish communities in the metropolitan area, their demographics and their needs.

It is important to note that New York State's Jewish communities are not homogeneous. The Jewish community is incredibly diverse: geographically we reside throughout the state; religiously we span secularism to Haredi (Yeshivish and Hasidic); economically we are rich, poor and everything between; politically we span the spectrum from liberal to conservative and our immigrants in New York include concentrations of émigrés from the former Soviet Union, Israel, Syria, Iran, Ethiopia and many, many more. My service to the Jewish community has taught me that no one speaks for the entire Jewish community. At the JCRC-NY we try to identify and to develop consensus among the various Jewish communities and to act when there is consensus.

Over the years, JCRC-NY has developed various proprietary data sources, including maps showing the "contours" of the various communities with heavy concentrations and of the Russian-speaking communities. These maps were developed from voter registration and census data. The maps might not be exact, but they tell the story accurately.

Decades ago, the JCRC developed a general framework with which to approach the redistricting process which has needed only slight revisions. The framework, reflecting our experiences with Congressional, State Legislature and New York City Council redistricting processes, includes four basic precepts:

1. **Elected officials.** We believe that the interests of the Jewish community can be protected and advanced by sensitive and effective individuals, whether they are Jewish, or not.
2. **District lines.** We believe that the district lines affecting Jewish communities should facilitate the election of effective, sensitive, and receptive public officials.
3. **Maintaining communities of interest.** Many redistricting scholars cite the importance of creating districts in which the voters share interests as the result of a common history, common culture, common ethnic or religious background, common language, or other common ties and identifiable interests. Many Jewish communities in New York State are clearly communities of interest. Such communities should neither be packed nor cracked in ways that undermine the previous two principles.
4. **Maintaining a critical mass.** Towards that end, we support districts that include – wherever possible – a critical mass of Jews; and that district lines keep smaller Jewish communities together so that their electoral clout is not negated. There may be areas where the Jewish population is sufficient to support critical masses of voters in two districts. However, caution must be observed to ensure that each such district have a critical mass of voters, sharing common interests, so that their electoral voice can be effectively heard.

We of the JCRC-NY know well that New York's diversity is dynamic. The history of New York City reflects and celebrates continuously evolving, demographic snapshots and your difficult task is to create a plan that addresses and empowers those represented in the ever-changing demographic reality.

At this point, before the release of the *Public Law 94-171 Redistricting Data Summary Files*, we cannot propose any specific lines. We do urge that this Commission balance the multiple priorities before it and moves to draw districts that respect communities across the state and do not inadvertently contribute to the Balkanization of our government. In our opinion, districts need not be homogeneous.

In our experience, representatives with narrow constituencies are more likely to cling to symbolic actions and advocate for services catering solely to narrow clienteles. Their effectiveness is often compromised by their inability to compromise, and their constituents are the ones to suffer. In the words of the Co-Chair of the JCRC Commission on Government Relations, Prof. Ester Fuchs, "The key to effective representation for the Jewish community is having large enough numbers in a district to be an important member of a broader coalition." I believe that the same holds true for other communities. I believe that elected officials that are constantly called on to effectively balance parochial and universal concerns are destined to serve New York well.

In conclusion, we express our gratitude to the members of the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission and its staff. Your assignment is difficult, and we thank you for your service.

David Pollock
Jewish Community Relations Council of New York
225 West 34th Street, Suite 1607
New York, NY 10122

From:

Dionne Brown-Jordan, District Leader for the 46th Assembly District

My statement/concerns on the importance of redistricting the 46th Assembly District.

What happened to the 46th Assembly District between 1971 to 2021?

I'll tell you what happened. Politics happened! This was basically all about political games, making sure that incumbents had a leg up instead of what was better for the community. Since the turn of the 21st Century, the 46th Assembly District has been continuously gerrymandered. This District has basically lost immigrants by diluting the Russian community by splitting the Brighton Beach area in half and removing African American voters in the Marlboro Houses, according to the voting rights act. Before the year 2000, the 46th Assembly District consisted of Coney Island, Brighton Beach, parts of Bath Beach and Gravesend. Currently, the district represents Coney Island, parts of Bath Beach, Bay Ridge, Brighton Beach, Dyker Heights, and Beach Haven/ Gravesend.

The gerrymandering that has taken place has disenfranchised and split the communities. Coney Island and Bayridge/Dyker Heights have very different needs. The current map does not meet the needs of the district and communities.

Each zig-zag line is dividing communities with political motives in mind.

- Splitting areas makes it difficult for communities to stay together- KEEP neighborhoods together that share financial, religion, language, culture, history, and occupations together.
- District lines should not be drawn to aid elected officials and their re-elections- They should be drawn to keep communities together, to help neighbors with similar issues and backgrounds.
- Our Assembly District is shared by Coney Island and Bayridge- two very different communities with very different histories, culture, economics, ethnicities, needs, and languages. Issues affecting each area are very different, in fact the only thing we have in common is that we both have exits on the Belt Parkway!

Dionne Brown-Jordan

- Coney Island has the largest Norc (Naturally Occurring Retirement Community) in the City with fixed incomes. Yet we share the Assembly district with Bay Ridge that has a significantly younger population with a much higher median income.
- In closing, I believe that there should be fair representation for all our districts. It should represent our communities, the voters should pick their representatives, and representatives should not pick their voters.

July 28, 2021

My name is Dr. Ramona Hernández, and I am the Director of the CUNY Dominican Studies Institute and a Professor of Sociology at The City College of New York. As you contemplate reconfiguring the boundaries of congressional districts in New York City, we encourage you to consider dispersed districts that might benefit from being brought together based on their shared commonalities. Therefore, creating new political seats or expanding current districts to bring them together.

The Dominican Studies Institute is the nation's first university-based research institute devoted to the study of people of Dominican descent in the United States and other parts of the world. Housed in The City College of New York since our founding in 1994, we have both witnessed and documented the settlement and maturation of the Dominican people, and by relation, the transformation of New York City.

Dominicans, who upon first arriving in mass numbers in the 1960s, originally moved into the Northern Manhattan neighborhood of Washington Heights, steadily expanded their presence predominately northward to Inwood and the Bronx. In 1990, there were 517,000 Dominicans in the United States. Today, there are over 2 million, the majority of which, call New York City home. The local Dominican presence is concentrated in Washington Heights, Inwood, and the Bronx—the cultural heartlands of the Dominican community in New York City and more broadly, the United States. Since the 1960s, the area has been a hub for Dominican activity, bustling with the combined sounds of mostly Spanish-only business transactions, merengue music that spills from passing cars, and the screeches of halting subway trains. From a stroll through Upper Manhattan and the Bronx, the effort Dominicans have made to carve out a space for themselves and mark their presence is evident. Storefronts boast their Dominican origins with

names like “Quisqueya” and “Santo Domingo”; Dominican flags adorn many of the streets, representing a non-timid appropriation of space; and on cool nights, Dominicans of all ages claim the streets as their own by sitting outside and chatting, playing dominoes, and listening to bachata.

The Bronx holds the following in common with Harlem, Washington Heights, and Inwood:

1. That Dominicans moved in when others fled and felt that they could not raise their children there;
2. That Dominicans decided to rebuild the reputation of the area with their work-ethic, their vision, and their values;
3. That Dominicans created a booming economy, with the establishment and expansion of small-businesses that decisively increased the City’s coffers with its tax- contribution while also creating jobs and raising the aggregate value of the space;
4. That the area’s social fabric was impregnated with a distinct, vibrant Dominican culture and historical legacy supported by an impressive number of home-grown community organizations.

This could not have been more evident than just last Friday, July 23, when New York City’s Dominican community—coming mostly from the Bronx and Upper Manhattan—came together to celebrate the annual Dominican Day Parade. Residents walked along Grand Concourse from East Tremont Avenue to East 166th Street, a path that they know like their backs of their hands.

Despite the Dominican community’s extension from Harlem to the Bronx, it maintains its cohesiveness because it is engaged in constant interaction and communication. Through the 1 train, first, second, and even third generation Dominicans come together to honor their shared values and traditions: they attend the same churches and schools; frequent the same restaurants,

Dr. Ramona Hernandez

bodegas, beauty salons, and barber shops; dance to the same rhythms of merengue, bachata, and dembow; and vote together in both Dominican and U.S. elections, based on their shared interests.

Following this line of thinking, redistricting to bring together neighboring Dominican settlements in Upper New York City makes a lot of sense. It would allow local district lines to reflect the cohesiveness of the community. In turn, creating new districts or expanding existing ones to grant electorally disenfranchised Dominicans the opportunity to make their voices heard and their votes count, some, for the very first time.

Proposed new 9th Congressional District submitted by PDPA of Central Brooklyn

Sid Parker [REDACTED]

Wed 8/25/2021 9:15 PM

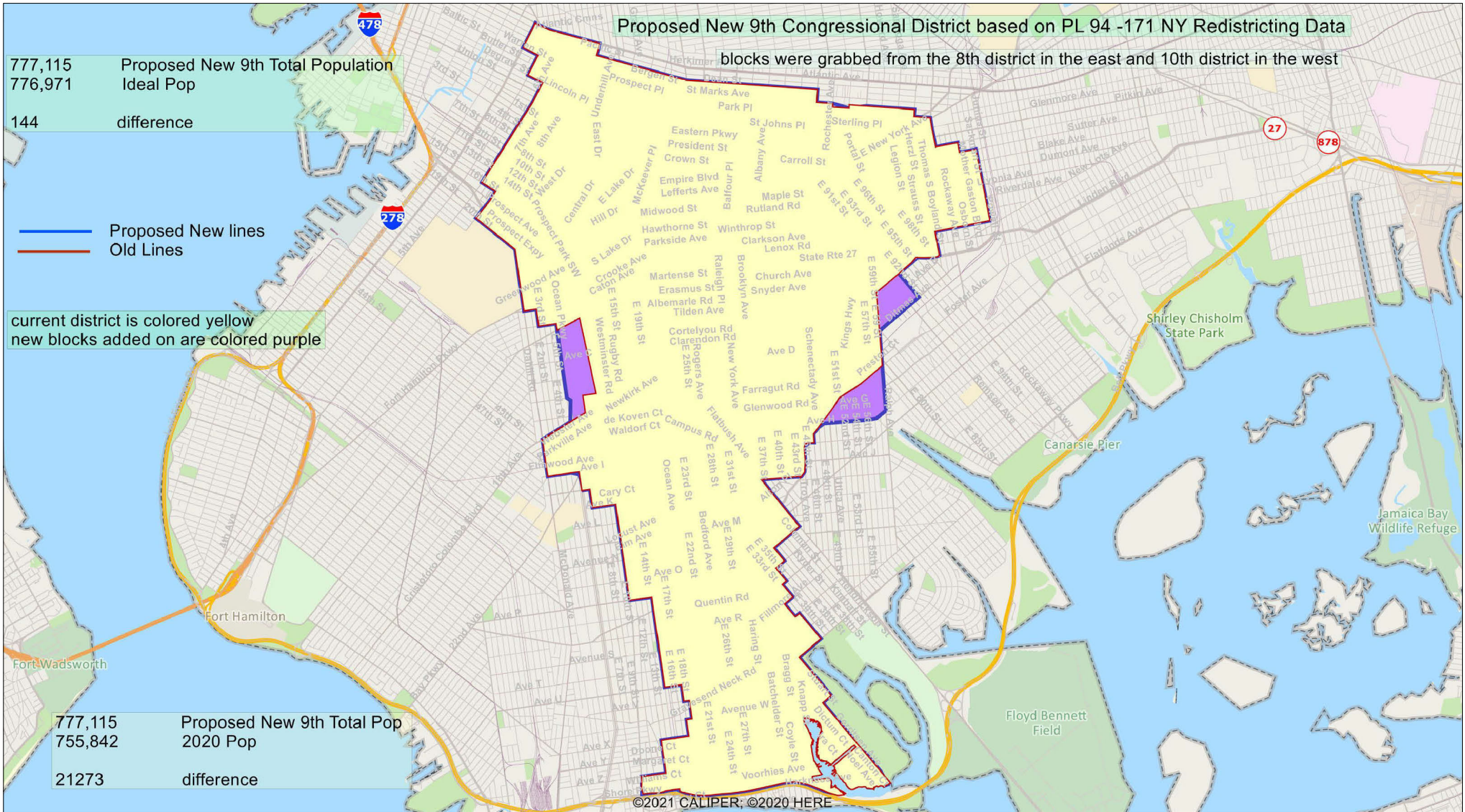
To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>
[REDACTED]

 2 attachments (1 MB)

Redistrict Data 8 15 2021.zip; Proposed new 9th Congressional District from Progressive Democratic Political Association (PDPA) of Central Brooklyn .pdf;

Dear New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

Attached please find a pdf map of the proposed new 9th Congressional District. This map is submitted by Dr. Una S. T. Clarke on behalf of the Progressive Democratic Political Association (PDPA) of Central Brooklyn. Also attached is an esri shapefile of the proposed new 9th Congressional District. Your kindly consideration of this map will be greatly appreciated.



P0020001	P0020002	P0020003	P0020004	P0020005	P0020006	P0020007	P0020008	P0020009	P0020010
Total:	Hispanic or Latino	Not Hispanic or Latino:	Population of one race:	White alone	Black or African American alone	American Indian and Alaska Native alone	Asian alone	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	Some Other Race alone
777115	91773	685342	644143	240691	329108	1096	63578	184	9486
	11.70%	88.10%	82.80%	30.90%	42.30%	1%	0.08%		0.01%

P2.
HISPANIC
OR
LATINO,
AND NOT
HISPANIC
OR
LATINO
BY RACE
[73]



WRITTEN STATEMENT OF OCA-NY

Before the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission (IRC)

By Dr. Wah Lee

July 29, 2021

My name is Dr. Wah Lee. I am testifying on behalf of OCA-NY. I joined OCA-NY as a Board Member in 2010 and now am an Advisory Board Member. Founded in 1976, OCA-NY, formerly known as Organization for Chinese Americans, is a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to protecting and advancing the rights of Asian Americans in New York City. OCA-NY is a member of the APA VOICE Redistricting Task Force.

I am 49 years old. I grew up in both Bensonhurst and Bath Beach where I graduated from Elementary School P.S. 247, and worked in my parents' dry cleaners. I completed one year of medical internship in Sunset Park's Lutheran Medical Center, now NYU Langone. I have a home in Bensonhurst and my medical practice is in Manhattan Chinatown. A few times a week, I am able to walk from Bensonhurst to visit my parents who still live in Bath Beach. I currently own residential property in both Bensonhurst and Bath Beach.

Position I: Regarding Senate Districts

The Asian community of Sunset Park should be kept in the same State Senate District with Bensonhurst, Homecrest, and Sheepshead Bay. According to the 2010 census, there were enough Asians to form an Asian majority district if the Asians living in Senate Districts 17, 20, and 22 were COMBINED. Instead, the 160,000 Asians were DIVIDED into these three districts. The Asian American communities in these districts have only grown since 2010. We request when the 2020 census numbers are released, at least one, if not two Asian majority Senate Districts be created to comply with the Voting Rights Act.



POSITION II: Regarding Congressional Districts

CD11 contains all of Staten Island and a small part of Brooklyn which includes Bath Beach, and divides Bensonhurst. Bensonhurst and Bath Beach should NOT be with Staten Island. Rather, Bath Beach and the whole of Bensonhurst should be kept together.

86th Street is *the* major commercial strip in Southwestern Brooklyn. The northern side of 86th Street is in Bensonhurst, while the southern side is in Bath Beach. There is constant foot traffic going both ways. On both sides of 86th Street, there are Asian businesses including more than a dozen supermarkets, pharmacies, doctor's offices, restaurants, bakeries, bubble tea houses, salons, and 99 cent stores. Furthermore, the Asian department store franchise TESO recently opened a whopping 5,349 square foot store on 86th Street. 86th Street is also a major, essential transportation corridor via the D train for commuters from Bath Beach/Bensonhurst, connecting this Brooklyn region to Manhattan.

Staten Island does not share a similar concentration of Asians, nor the culture of Asian businesses as Bath Beach/Bensonhurst, nor do residents in Bath Beach/Bensonhurst travel on a regular basis to Staten Island and vice versa.

POSITION III: Keeping Manhattan Chinatown and Sunset Park Together

There is an Asian American, largely Chinese community of interest between Manhattan's Chinatown and Sunset Park, Brooklyn. Over the past 10 years, many Manhattan Chinatown residents left and migrated to Sunset Park. Current Sunset Park residents commute daily to Manhattan Chinatown via the N train. In my Manhattan Chinatown medical practice, I see



many Chinese patients who live in Sunset Park. In addition to my expertise, they come to me because my staff and I are bilingual in English and Chinese.

Thank you in advance for your full consideration of my testimony.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dr. Wah Lee

Diplomate, American Board of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

Diplomate, American Osteopathic Board of Neuromusculoskeletal Medicine & Osteopathic Manipulation

Diplomate, American Osteopathic Board of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

Enid Braun



August 12, 2021

To the Independent Redistricting Commission:

Having lived in strange, gerrymandered tails of districts for the last 21 years in two different neighborhoods, I write to plead that you help create better representation through this once-in-a-generation opportunity.

My City Council District 35 includes greater Fort Greene, Clinton Hill, as well as Prospect Heights and a piece of Crown Heights. The larger State Senate District 25 encompasses those neighborhoods as well as a part of Bedford Stuyvesant. However, instead of my Assembly District being the 57th, the same as the rest of Fort Greene and Clinton Hill, I am in the 50th AD, part of a narrow one- and two-block wide residential strip along the Brooklyn Navy Yard to Navy Street to the west and Myrtle Avenue to the south. This strip of Clinton Hill and Fort Greene, often called Wallabout, is tacked on to the 50th AD, the bulk of which is Greenpoint and Williamsburg to the north and east.

Nearby Fort Greene Park is in the 57th AD, and the users of the public school and playground across the street from me all live in surrounding Fort Greene, also in the 57th AD. Both the current and former Assembly members are largely unfamiliar with my area because both reside in North Brooklyn. The meandering boundaries of the 50th AD typify the constituents' frustration with gerrymandering because it hurts the ability to organize around issues needing attention, their elected officials understandably loath to intrude on one another's jurisdictions.

Geographic cohesion should matter. My neighbors are Black, white, Middle Eastern and Spanish speaking, and include homeowners and apartment and public housing residents. And we share our streets, shopping and transit options, public parks and schools, our sewer infrastructure and so on with neighbors in Clinton Hill, the rest of Fort Greene, closer Bed-Stuy, DUMBO and Downtown Brooklyn. Wherever the new district lines get drawn, please allow me to vote for the same representation as my community members just across Myrtle Avenue, a half a block away.

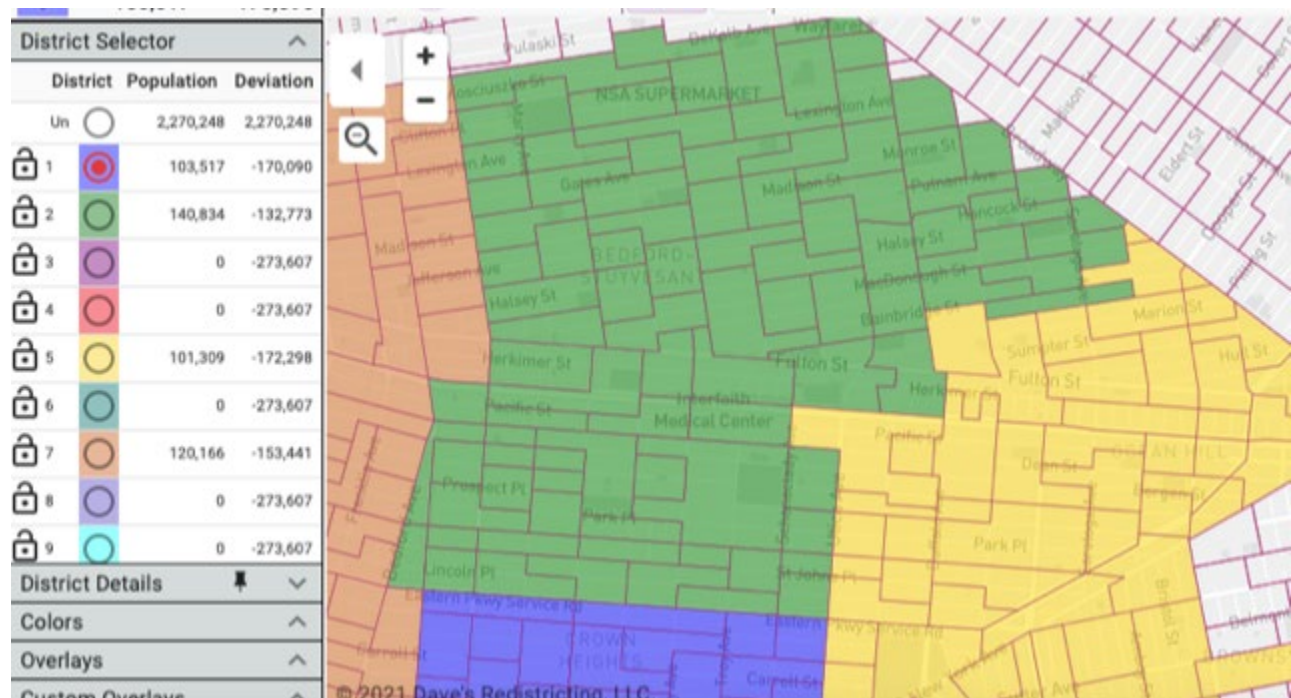
Thank you,
Enid Braun

Greetings Commissioners,

My name is Fior Ortiz-Joyner and I am a resident of Crown Heights North, Brooklyn. I am the President of my Block Association and an active member of the Crown Heights North community. Our community is divided between two Assembly Districts, two State Senate Districts and three City Council districts. This division puts our community at a disadvantage. As a community, Crown Heights North would like to remain intact and whole without the division it has been dealing with for many years. The first step to unifying Crown Heights North will be to redraw the Assembly District lines. The map below illustrates Crown Heights North as part of the 56 Assembly District. This map reflects a unified Crown Heights North with Atlantic Avenue to the north, Eastern Parkway to the south, Bedford Avenue to the west and Utica Avenue (from Eastern Parkway to Dean Street) to the east. Merging Crown Heights North into the 56 Assembly District (green area on the map) is suitable—Bedford Stuyvesant and Crown Heights North have many comparable characteristics, including cultural attributes, similar housing stock with valued historic districts. The history and legacy of both communities is profound and recognized. An intact Crown Heights North will fit and work well within the 56 Assembly District. Redrawing the lines indicated in the map will empower both Bedford Stuyvesant and Crown Heights North when it comes to fighting issues both communities have in common such as deed theft, the lack of low-income affordable housing just to name a few.

I hope the Commission agrees with this map proposal and can make a recommendation for approval. I thank you for your time.

Fior Ortiz-Joyner



Map Submitted

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

Mon 8/16/2021 5:13 PM

To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

Submitted Map

- **First Name:** Haris
- **Last Name:** Khan
- **Email:** [REDACTED]
- **Description:** This map demonstrates Assembly District 24 gerrymanders the community of interest of South Asians and Bangladeshis which are heavily concentrated in Jamaica around Hillside Ave, Jamaica Ave, and begins right under the Grand Central Parkway. The commission must remove the plurality White neighborhoods currently found in Assembly District 24 and instead ensure Assembly District 24 provides the large South Asian community with fair representation in State Assembly, and to build a Senate seat out of that outline and include other adjacent Asian majority neighborhoods such as Richmond Hill, Ozone Park.
- **Map File:** [Link to Map File](#)

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Map Submitted

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

Mon 8/16/2021 4:02 PM

To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

Submitted Map

- **First Name:** Haris
- **Last Name:** Khan
- **Email:** [REDACTED]
- **Description:** This map demonstrates the community of interest where Muslims in Central Brooklyn reside, between Dahill Road on the West Ocean Ave on the East and Avenue H on the South. Kensington and Little Pakistan has a high concentration as shown by over 15 mosques. This map does not include Islamic schools, ethnic grocery stores, restaurants, and South Asian serving non-profits in the area.
- **Map File:** [Link to Map File](#)

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Map Submitted

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

Mon 8/16/2021 4:00 PM

To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

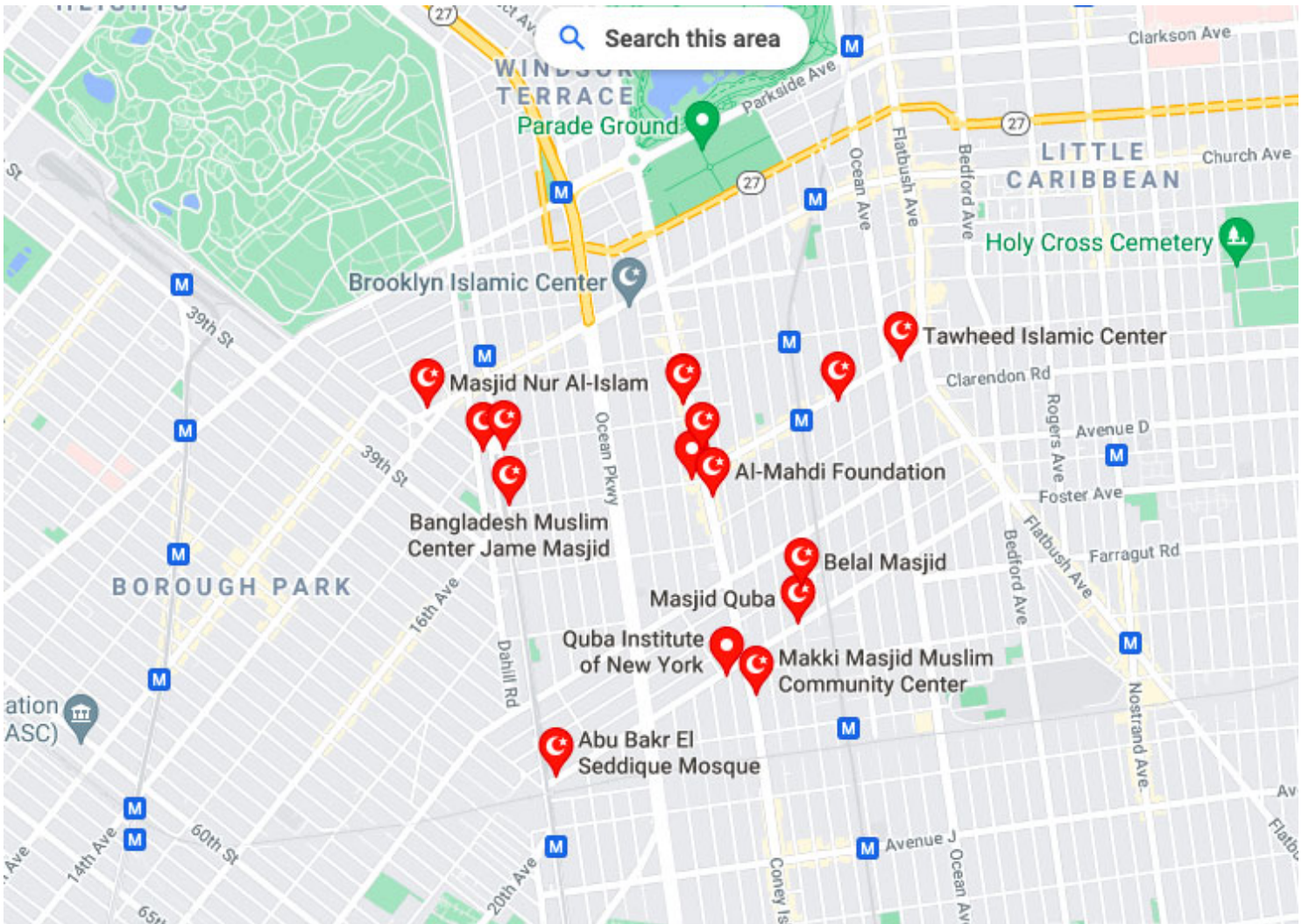
New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

Submitted Map

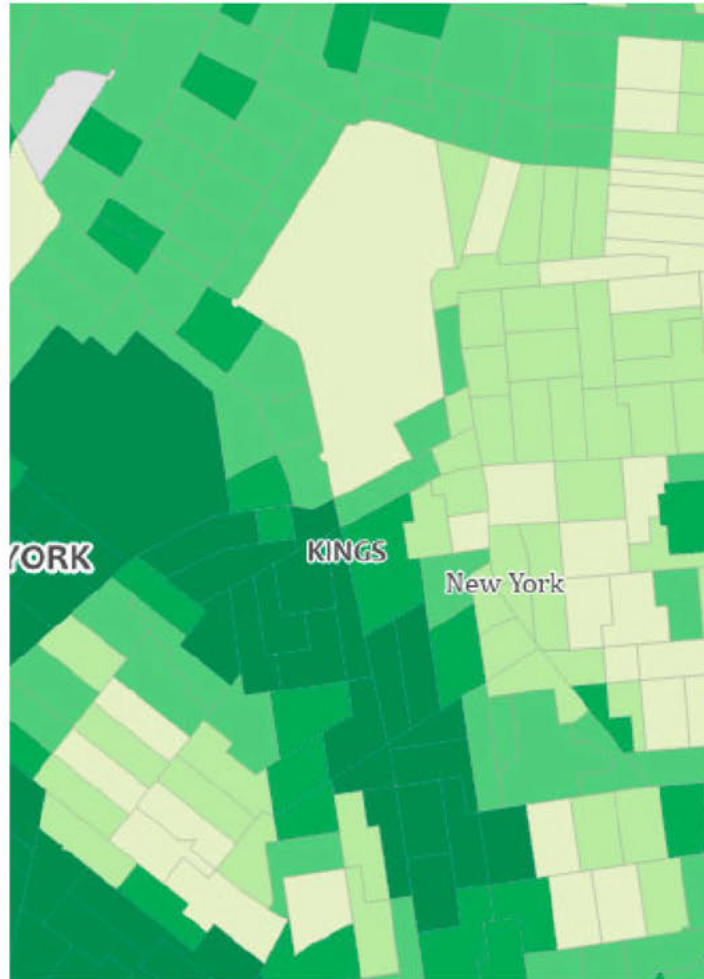
- **First Name:** Haris
- **Last Name:** Khan
- **Email:** [REDACTED]
- **Description:** The following shows how gerrymandered South and Central Asian residents of Central Brooklyn are in the current Senate District 17. This also shows how half of those communities are in another Senate District 21.
- **Map File:** [Link to Map File](#)

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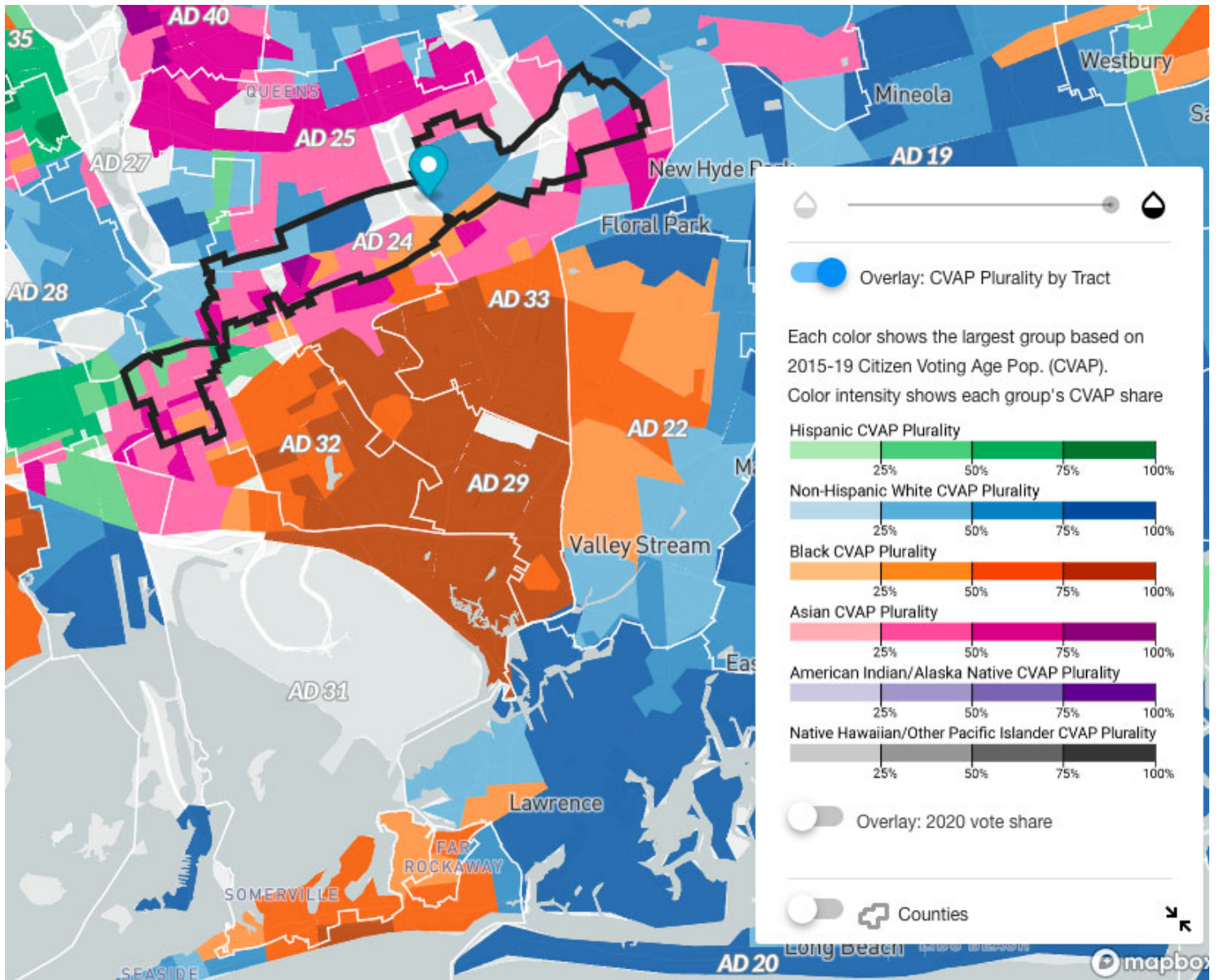
Haris Khan



Haris Khan Map



Haris Khan



Map Submitted

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

Mon 8/16/2021 4:06 PM

To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

Submitted Map

- **First Name:** Haris
- **Last Name:** Khan
- **Email:** [REDACTED]
- **Description:** This is a screenshot from the 2020 Census data visualization provided by the Census Bureau. Here the heatmap is based on Asian proportion of census tracts and as is shown, Central Brooklyn has a deep concentration of Asians (South Asian in particular, and the overwhelming majority of whom are Muslims)

Currently these Muslim neighborhoods are split by Senate District 17 and District 21. We ask the commission to consolidate the Muslim concentration here in the next Senate maps and end the gerrymandering of Muslim communities. We ask the commission follow the example of Assembly District 44 which keeps Muslim Brooklynites of these neighborhoods united when crafting a new Senate map.

- **Map File:** [Link to Map File](#)

This e-mail has been automatically generated

Fwd: Senate District 15

Karen Blatt <blattk@nyirc.gov>

Thu 9/9/2021 9:38 AM

To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

Cc: Ahsia Badi <badia@nyirc.gov>

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Jacqueline A. Jones" <[REDACTED]>
Date: September 9, 2021 at 9:29:47 AM EDT
To: Karen Blatt <blattk@nyirc.gov>, Douglas Breakell <breakelld@nyirc.gov>
Subject: Senate District 15

In the process of redistricting, I urge you to stop the gerrymandering that created Senate District 15. I have no problem with Senator Addabo, but those of us in Forest Hills, the northernmost part of the district, have little in common (except maybe color) with those in the southernmost part of the district, on the water. Please put Forest Hills in a district with other nearby central Queens neighborhoods and reshape this ridiculously designed district.

Jacqueline A. Jones

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

John Wagner

Redistricting testimony

It is important that the Independent redistricting process not be overruled by the legislature, but there is no way to guarantee this.

Map Submitted

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

Fri 9/10/2021 2:20 PM

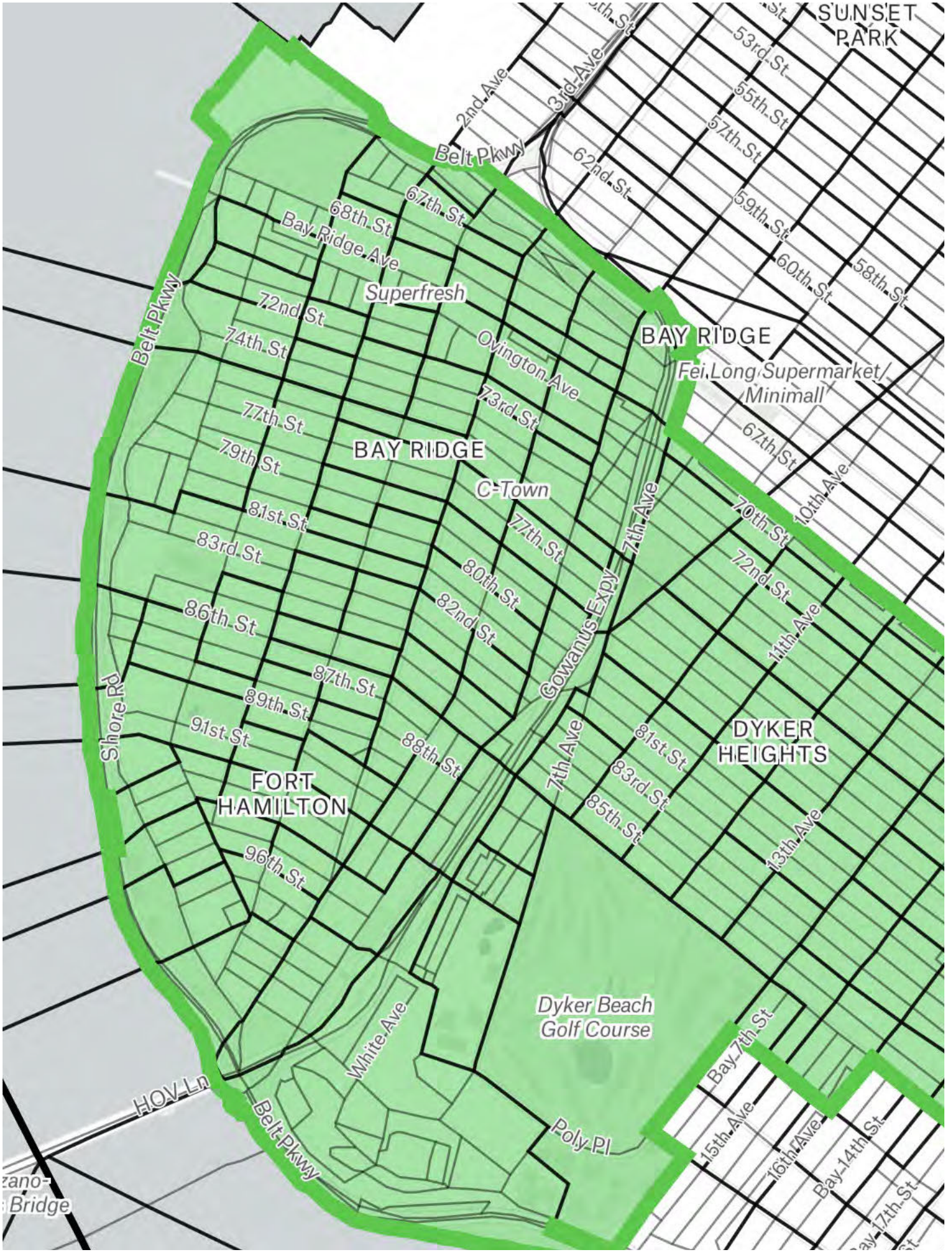
To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

Submitted Map

- **First Name:** Joseph
- **Last Name:** Loonam
- **Email:** [REDACTED]
- **Description:** As a life long representative of Bay Ridge it is imperative that we have our own district, it is the only way we will be able to be fairly represented in government.
- **Map File:** [Link to Map File](#)

This e-mail has been automatically generated



SUNSET PARK

Belt Pkwy

BAY RIDGE

BAY RIDGE

C-Town

DYKER HEIGHTS

FORT HAMILTON

Dyker Beach Golf Course

HOV-Ln

Belt Pkwy

Manhattan Bridge



**The Flatbush Jewish Community Coalition, FJCC
unites and represents the greater Flatbush Jewish community,
New York's largest, on communal, civic and political concerns.**

www.flatbushjewish.com
@FlatbushJCC

My name is Josh Mehlman, I am the Chairman of the Flatbush Jewish Community Coalition, FJCC. We are a broad coalition of community leaders, schools and institutions.

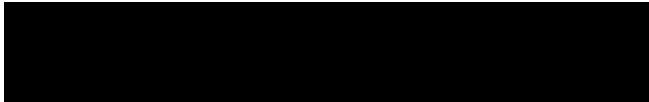
We are requesting that the commission keep our community together when considering City, State and Federal lines. It is crucial that our community remain intact as we have common values and interests, attend our own private schools, shop in kosher stores and have likeminded interests.

Our housing needs are unique as members need to live in walking distance of their synagogues for prayers on the Sabbath when travel is prohibited.

Currently, our political lines divide us in a way that is unfair and leaves us under represented. Some of our elected officials do not maintain offices in our area, nor do they visit our community. They do not understand our needs and do not advance legislation or advocate our needs.

Thank you.

Josh Mehlman



I, Judith Hertzberg, live at [REDACTED] in Prospect Heights, Brooklyn.

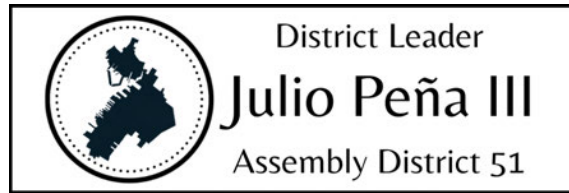
I'm testifying today on my own behalf as a resident of Prospect Heights, as well as on behalf of the NYC's Mapping Our Future coalition. Mapping Our Future is a statewide coalition of advocates dedicated to mobilizing the grassroots to get involved in redistricting and advocate for a fair process and fair maps.

Prospect Heights is my community. However, my block is consistently carved out of my community in political districts, and tacked onto another district, typically on the other side of Flatbush Avenue. This disadvantages my access to elected representation. Specifically, my block, my residence is in Assembly District 52, City Council District 39 and State Senate District 20. The vast majority of Prospect Heights is AD 57, CCD 35 and SD 25, respectively. These are the districts which include all of my Prospect Heights neighbors.

State Senate District 20 is one of the most egregiously gerrymandered districts in New York State. It violates all codified principles of drawing fair district maps. It is neither geographically compact nor regular. It is barely contiguous. It divides communities, and connects parts of communities that do not share common economic, historical, cultural characteristics and interests. The district includes parts of Brownsville, Crown Heights, East Flatbush, Gowanus, Park Slope, Prospect Heights, Prospect Lefferts Gardens, South Slope, and Sunset Park. I urge the Commission to correct these violations in the mapping exercise before you. Ensure that all districts adhere to the rules and principles of redistricting.

In 2022 districts must be contiguous, regular and compact. Most of all, it must keep communities and neighborhoods together.

Thank you for your attention to this concern.



**New York State
Independent Redistricting Commission**

Thursday, July 29, 2021

Public Testimony

Julio Pena III

Sunset Park, Brooklyn is and has always been a beautiful and diverse community. Having been born and raised here, I have had the wonderful opportunity of seeing this neighborhood thrive over the many years; from our working waterfront, to our bustling fifth avenue corridor.

What has made this community beautiful and unique is its diversity. But we haven't gotten our fair share of representation.

A decade ago, the state legislature redrew our legislative districts and our community went from being represented by three state senators to five. This has had a significant impact in our community. Often, as a constituent, advocating for safer streets, or community issues, I have called those who represent us and have been told "that's not in my district" when indeed, they are the elected representative. The district lines are so interwoven, it is hard to tell where one starts and one ends.

The commission posed the question, *how do we feel about the current lines outlining your district?* To be honest, it feels as if political leaders have played a jigsaw puzzle and landed in the middle of Sunset Park - if you were to look at the State Senate maps and center on Sunset Park, it is completely fractured and cracked. One person can literally walk five blocks and cross five different Senate Districts.

The Senate Districts that intersect and represent Sunset Park are not contiguous or compact. For example, Senate District 20 stretches as far east as Crown Heights and Brownsville, while Senate District 23 covers Coney Island and the north shore of Staten Island. This method of cracking our community is intended to dilute the political power of a majority immigrant neighborhood so as to make our voices a minority in each district, thereby ensuring we are not the majority in any one district.

As the Redistricting Commission embarks on their process of hearing from regions all over the state, it is crucial that district lines are drawn with equity at the forefront. Communities deserve fair representation; that includes district lines that take into account historical community boundaries and not dividing neighborhoods apart.

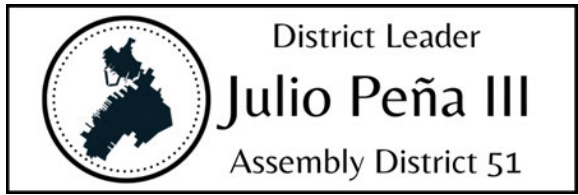


Image: District Maps of Sunset Park



Comment has been submitted

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

Sun 8/15/2021 4:54 PM

To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

Justin Wood

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

A private comment has been submitted

Hello, I am a Staten Island resident and long time New Yorker. I ask the commission to consider expanding the boundaries of New York's 11th Congressional District (currently Staten Island and a part of South Brooklyn). The current district is drawn to be unrepresentative of New York City and artificially divides communities with shared interests in transportation, infrastructure, waterfront resilience, linguistic representation, and culture.

NY11 lumps ethnically and linguistically diverse communities on Staten Island's North Shore and Bay Ridge, Brooklyn into a disproportionately White congressional district. (The US Census Bureau reports that 69% of NY11 residents identify as White – far higher than the percentage in New York City on the whole.)

These arbitrary boundaries also lump densely populated communities with working industrial waterfronts along New York Harbor and Arthur Kill into a district with largely suburban zoning. This has major negative consequences for tens of thousands of constituents with urgent concerns about accessible mass transit, working waterfront development, and access to good jobs.

One way to create a more balanced and representative Congressional district is to extend NY11 northward into Bay Ridge and Sunset Park to unify linguistic and ethnic communities with shared interests in transportation, access to jobs, and public education. (Note that these neighborhoods are included in New York's 23rd State Senate district – while Bay Ridge is excluded, which furthers the artificial division of communities in Southwest Brooklyn.)

I appreciate your attention to this issue as we seek to counter decades of artificial gerrymandering and create rational, fair districts in our representative democracy.

Sincerely, Justin Wood Staten Island, NY

User: Justin Wood

Delete Comment

Ban User from Future Comments

This e-mail has been automatically generated



#DrawDemocracy

**Testimony to the New York State Redistricting Commission Public Hearing
Thursday, July 29, 2021
Brooklyn, NY**

From:

**Karen Peterson Young
#DrawDemocracy Campaign**

Thank you for holding this public hearing and allowing me to testify.

My name is Karen Peterson Young, I have lived in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, for 10 years, and I'm with the **#DrawDemocracy Campaign**. #DrawDemocracy is a partnership of **RepresentUS NYC** and **True Democracy NY**. **RepresentUs NYC** is the New York City chapter of **RepresentUS**, the nation's largest grassroots, nonpartisan anti-corruption organization. **True Democracy NY**, a 501(c)4, is a non-partisan group of New Yorkers dedicated to changing the systemic dysfunction and corruption of New York politics. Find us on Twitter at [drawdemocracyny](https://twitter.com/drawdemocracyny) or at drawdemocracy.org.

We have created what we believe to be the first ever jigsaw puzzle based on electoral districts, of the New York State Senate. When you see them, you have one question: Why?

When you do the research, which is on our website, you find out why. In many cases, these districts were drawn to protect incumbents and the party who drew them, not to represent communities. We hope the Commission will put an end to this practice.

Karen Peterson Young

I live in State Senate District 25, which includes rich neighborhoods like Boerum Hill, and poor neighborhoods like Ocean Hill out east. An odd section hanging off to the southwest cuts out Carroll Gardens and Cobble Hill – except for one block - and skips down to Red Hook and a small slice of waterfront, including Industry City but little else in Sunset Park.

Most of **my** neighborhood, Bed-Stuy, is contained in this one district. But the other bits and pieces of wildly different and far-flung communities are all deprived of such representation. Red Hook and Sunset Park have tremendous issues around flooding and waterfront development. But they're just a small part of our mostly landlocked district. Sunset Park is Brooklyn's poster child for the horrors of gerrymandering. It is cut up into a million pieces and its population – about 2/3 Asian and Latino - simply doesn't have fair representation.

So I have drawn up a **better** version of District 25. It cuts off Red Hook and Sunset Park. It includes more of the northern part of Crown Heights, which shares the business districts of Atlantic Ave, Fulton St and Nostrand Ave with Bed-Stuy and our neighbors in Ft. Greene. If necessary, I would cut off Brooklyn Heights and/or downtown, as they have a different character from the less wealthy eastern area.

Thank you.

PROPOSED MAP S.D. 25



**Kings and Richmond County Public Meeting with the New York
Independent Redistricting Commission
July 29, 2021**

Good afternoon Commissioners. Thank you for this opportunity to testify. My name is Karen Zhou. I am a resident of Homecrest and the immediate past Executive Director of Homecrest Community Services, a non-profit in the community since 1997. I am also the past 2010 US Census Bureau's Partnership Specialist for Brooklyn.

In 2010, the US Census Bureau had positions for Partnership Specialists that could reach the underserved and growing Asian population in Brooklyn. Based on population growth, the Census Bureau knew that the Asian population was significant enough to justify hiring several Asian specialists to cover Brooklyn.

It was clear when I traveled via Sunset Park, Bensonhurst, Homecrest, Sheepshead Bay, Dyker Heights, Bath Beach and Gravesend neighborhoods that there was an interconnection bounded by common culture, language and socioeconomic factors. Everywhere I went in these neighborhoods, there was an existence of Asians that lived and worked in the community. Because of this growth, Asian businesses also began populating throughout the main corridors forming an extension of Manhattan's Chinatown in Brooklyn.

Asians living in Brooklyn no longer needed to go into Manhattan as frequently as before, unless they were working in Manhattan's Chinatown. One can find steam dumplings and a hot bowl of noodle soup in Sunset Park's 8th Avenue, Bensonhurst's 86th Street and Sheepshead Bay's Avenue U. One can also get Chinese groceries from bok choy to soy sauce in all three of these neighborhoods. Additionally, community hospitals, libraries, senior centers have had to adjust and provide bilingual services to better meet the needs of a fast-growing Asian community in Brooklyn. I hope you will have an opportunity to visit these neighborhoods to see why Brooklyn's Asian community is so vibrant.

According to the Asian American Federation study, it found that there was a 30% increase in the APA population between 2000 and 2010, making the Asian population in NYC, the fastest growing racial and ethnic group. Of this rapid growth, nowhere is the city's Chinese population more pronounced than in Brooklyn. From 2000 to 2013, the foreign-born Chinese population in New York City jumped 35% from 262,000 to 353,000. During the same period the foreign-born Chinese population in Brooklyn increased 49% from 86,000 to 128,000.

Based on the ACS 2019 survey, the Asian American population of Brooklyn is estimated at 325,107 of which the Chinese population is at least 200,000. Based on these numbers and the composition of the large APA neighborhoods in Sunset Park, Bensonhurst and Sheepshead Bay, it's possible to have for the first

Karen Zhou

time a majority Asian American state senate district in Brooklyn and additional assembly districts to be created.

In this crucial round of redistricting and redrawing of the lines, community of interests should be kept together as whole as possible. Sunset Park has more in common with neighborhoods like Bensonhurst, and Sheepshead Bay because of shared similarities, language, culture, common interest and history. Therefore, I'd like to recommend to the Commission to combine Sunset Park, Bensonhurst and Homecrest/Sheepshead Bay into one Senate district rather than splitting them into three districts.


I'd like to also recommend not splitting neighborhoods like Bensonhurst and Homecrest but rather to keep them together in one Congressional district if possible. Currently these neighborhoods are divided by two Congressional districts and they do not share a common interest with Staten Island.

In short, it is my hope that doing the above will make a difference in ensuring communities of interest are not ignored or neglected. While the Asian community in Brooklyn has grown leaps and bounds, it has felt disenfranchised and without a voice for so long because of how these districts were carved up. We look forward to seeing a fairer and more transparent redistribution of districts that take into account communities that belong together. Thank you again for your time and consideration!






Asian Population in New York City

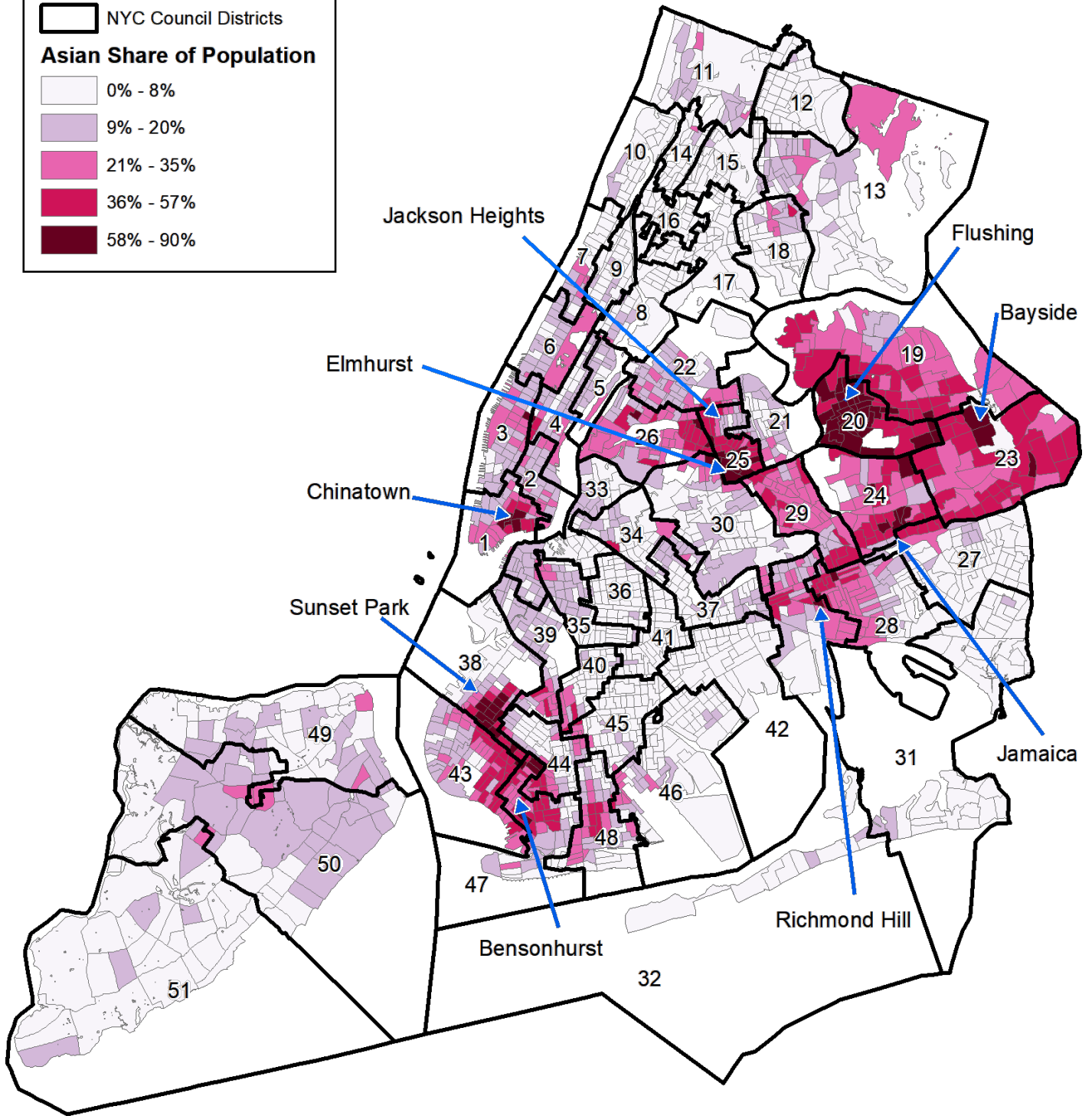


Legend

 NYC Council Districts

Asian Share of Population

-  0% - 8%
-  9% - 20%
-  21% - 35%
-  36% - 57%
-  58% - 90%



Produced by the Asian American Federation Census Information Center
Sources: 2015 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau

ORG LOGO

Testimony for the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

July 28, 2021

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

My name is Kawthar Abdullah. I am the lead organizer at the Women's Empowerment Coalition of New York City. WECNYC brings women together to share our successes and challenges as members of marginalized communities providing civic, financial, professional, and other training and resources as means to empower and build capacity. We build intergenerational solidarity among women from across immigrant communities to nurture formidable leaders in the fights for immigrant rights, women's rights, and racial, social and economic justice. WECNYC 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.

NYC is one of the only places in the world where you can feel so far away from your country of origin but yet feel so at home. Whether it's Little India in Jackson Heights, or Little Poland in Green Point Brooklyn, or Little Yemen in the Bronx, or ChinaTown in Manhattan, these communities are the foundation of their districts. Each respective community attracts people with similar interests, ethnic and or racial backgrounds to those

communities, and or politically aligned folks. Bayridge is no different. WECNY is located in the heart of a heavily concentrated Arab and immigrant population. We serve the needs of the most vulnerable in our communities. Although we are relatively new, we have served thousands of clients. Clients that are often not in our district. Arab and Muslims who are separated from this district by a block makes our job much harder because of the bureaucracies that we have to go through solely for the reason that they're not necessarily in our district. For example, one of our clients had problems with her immigration case. Naturally, in immigration cases we'd reach out to our local congress representatives, who we have an established relationship with, for assistance. This client, however, was not from congressional district 11. Only her congressional representative was the only one who could assist her in this matter even though she lived just a few blocks away from another client we had who lives in the congressional district 11. Her congressional rep was not responsive nor did they prioritize such issues. It took about 10 months for her case to finally be resolved when normally, such cases would take no more than a month or two after congressional intervention. Or another client who had a housing problem but because our assembly district redistricting separates us more than unites us, it makes it harder to work with our Arab, Muslim and immigrant communities in Southern Brooklyn. Because of our shared values and interests we need to stay together in order to hold weight in demanding representation whether it's congressional, council or assembly districts. It is very important to keep our communities together so that we can have representatives that care and understand our needs. Arabs, Muslim and or immigrants have been been marginalized for far too long and if the redistricting results separates our communities it will only further the marginalization and political suppression.

But a good redistricting process can remedy that. Well-drawn districts that keep communities like mine 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. It will finally allow for my

Kawthar Abdullah

community's needs to be prioritized by our elected leaders, leading to better policy and budget outcomes.

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:

- More community education events, transparency. We would like regular updates and open meetings.
- It cannot go unnoticed that this supposedly democratic process that will have an impact on all New Yorkers does not have translators to allow folks whose English is their second language to share their stories. To fix that, we need translators, materials to be translated into different languages

Thank you for your time and I hope you truly consider the interests of the different communities who will be impacted if their voice and communities are suppressed and separated in this very important process.



My name is Kay Wong, Outreach coordinator with Homecrest Community Services (HCS). We are part of the APA Voice Redistricting Task Force. HCS is a non-profit organization which provide(s) community-based, multi-social services for seniors and immigrant families living in Southern Brooklyn. Our mission is to improve the quality of life for Asian American immigrants and seniors, and to help them achieve greater self-sufficiency in society. Our membership base has grown from 300 to 4000 present day.

Homecrest Community Services operates two senior social services centers in Brooklyn, one in Sheepshead Bay and the other in Bensonhurst. HCS was established in 1997 and has served the community for over two decades. During the pandemic, seniors were at risk going out to get food. We collaborated with DFTA (The Department for the Aging) for a food delivery program, providing hundreds of meals every day. Our food delivery program covers areas in Bensonhurst, Homecrest, and Coney Island.

Asian Americans are the second fastest growing group from 2010 to 2020 in Brooklyn, with an overall increase of 15% according to the 2019 American Community Survey. As Sunset Park becomes increasingly overcrowded, many Asian immigrants are migrating down south to Bensonhurst and Homecrest. We see that the Chinese community is growing rapidly in Bensonhurst and Homecrest. Many articles and newspapers describe Bensonhurst as the satellite Chinatown. With Bensonhurst alone, 41% of the population is identified as Asian, 35% in Sunset Park, and 20% in Homecrest. Bensonhurst and Homecrest are currently part of the same State Senate District. Sunset Park should join these neighborhoods to be in the same Senate District because they constitute an Asian community of interest. As most of our members are Chinese and often face language barriers, limited English proficiency is the major issue these neighborhoods have in common. For instance, part of our job is to help them overcome the language, cultural and financial barriers they face. To help address this issue, there are also many other organizations and businesses in these neighborhoods that cater to these language needs, including health clinics, supermarkets, restaurants, and churches. Combining these areas could create the first majority Asian American majority State Senate District in Brooklyn.

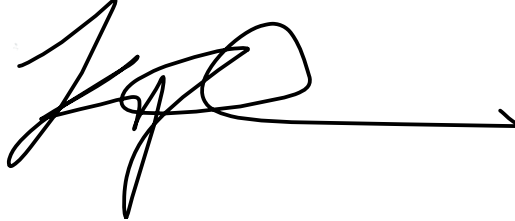
Also, part of Bensonhurst and part of Homecrest is placed in Congressional district 11 with the entire Staten Island, a district that is overwhelmingly white. Staten Island contains only 9% of Asians and it shows no common community of interest with Bensonhurst and Homecrest. Children in Bensonhurst and Homecrest do not go to school in Staten Island. People who live in Bensonhurst and Homecrest do not shop in Staten Island for food or go to Staten Island for

bilingual health and other social services. None of HCS' clients live in Staten Island. Dividing the community will make them feel even more isolated and unsupported. We have also experienced candidates and elected officials representing District 11 completely ignore the Chinese community or not support issues important to an immigrant base like comprehensive immigration reform. A candidate didn't even bother to come to candidate forums organized by APA VOICE because he knew he just needed the votes of Staten Island to win. (US Representative Daniel Donovan was running for the seat for Congressional District 11 after Michael Grimm pledged guilty to tax fraud.) Bensonhurst and Homecrest should each be kept whole and if possible together in the same congressional district.

Date: 7/28/2021

Print Name: Kay Wong

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Kay Wong', written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

My name is Leon Goldenberg. I am on the Executive Board of the Council of Jewish Organizations of Flatbush, the Flatbush Jewish Community Coalition and the Agudah of America Community Services etc.

I testify today as an Orthodox Jew living in Flatbush. Based on the 1965 Voting Rights Act, we are a community of interest and further, based on the New York State Constitution giving further protection for language and minority groups and other identities. This covers the Orthodox and Russian populations, and we should not have less opportunity to participate in the political process and to elect representatives of our choice.

Had our community been as large in 1965 as it is today, we would have been a protected minority. We fit every criteria.

Our Yeshivas in Brooklyn have 75,000 children. When I graduated in 1965 there were 3 Yeshivas in Boro Park. Today there are 75 Yeshivas.

I have spent my entire life involved in the community.

I am well known throughout the Orthodox community and there is not one City, State and Federal legislator who represents any part of the Orthodox community and who doesn't know who I am on a first name basis.

But at the end of the day, we are slivers in their District, possibly reaching 12% to 17% of multiple districts on all 3 levels of Government.

In the last redistricting, we were packed and really MOSTLY CRACKED. On the Congressional level, the Orthodox population is in 5 different districts.

In the City Council and State Legislature, we are in so many different Districts that you need a scorecard to see who is representing a sliver of the Orthodox community. I meet with them on a regular basis, but at the end of the day when you represent only 10% or 15% of a district, they listen politely but don't always

Leon Goldenberg

follow through and we don't have proper representation.

I don't wish to be packed but I certainly don't wish to be CRACKED. What I am looking for is a CRITICAL MASS. Unless Jewish communities have a much larger and significant population in a district, we become marginalized and serve as filler for other districts.

Lending a concerned ear is very nice but results are much more critical to our community. We in the Orthodox community do a tremendous job of taking care of our neighbors whether it is COJO, Tomche Shabbos, Hatzoloh, the Flatbush Communal Fund, etc. but we need Government help and the surest way to get that is through proper representation.

We have common interests in our Yeshivas, Shuls, housing which is critical in our community, and the small businesses which are the bedrock of our communities' economy.

You will find very few district offices for any legislators in our communities.

We have exploded as a community to a point that Brooklyn can no longer sustain and house us. Tens of thousands of our families have had to move out of New York City but it is still not enough. We desperately need more housing.

Everyone looks at us as a rich community – they think Jews are rich - but what they don't see is the poverty in our community as we will never allow anyone to be homeless, go hungry, or not get the proper health care in our community. But it is a strain, and we need government help and the surest way of getting that is by having proper representation.



Written Testimony

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission (IRC)

Submitted, Friday, August 13, 2021

By Linda Baran, President & CEO of the Staten Island Chamber of Commerce

On behalf of the Staten Island Chamber of Commerce and our 600 business members who employ over 20,000 people, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to address the IRC regarding the process of drawing the future district lines of New York State.

Staten Island is unique and very different from the other boroughs located in New York City. According to data released by the U.S. Census Bureau following the 2020 Census count, the Borough's population grew by 5.7% over the last decade. With a population nearing half a million residents, the Borough is big enough to be an independent jurisdiction, yet it is not a politically independent entity, but part of New York City.

While Staten Island has been one the fastest growing counties in the state for many years, infrastructure investments (in terms of highways and roads, water and sewer, schools, etc.) have not reflected its growth. There is also deep frustration and resentment vis-à-vis a perceived pattern of funding inequities that over the years has weakened the quality of infrastructure and services in the Borough, particularly in the transportation and health care areas. In our minds, Staten Island, as a Borough, gives a lot more money in tax revenue compared to what it gets back in public investments.

Staten Islanders see the need to address these fiscal and investment inequities as paramount. There is a strong desire for sustainable, fair, and equitable treatment.

For these reasons, it is important that the IRC treat Staten Island fairly during the redistricting process. The Island must remain whole, and not be split, we must have a voice that represents the interests of Staten Islanders so that our concerns can be met – and not be forgotten!

Staten Island Chamber of Commerce • PO Box 41277, Staten Island, NY 10304

(718) 727-1900 • sichamber.com

My name is Louis Jerome, and I am a Trustee of the Sephardic Community Alliance, which serves the Sephardic Jewish community in Brooklyn, a community that has been living in Brooklyn for 120 years.

I want to thank the Independent Redistricting Commission for providing this opportunity for residents of Brooklyn and Staten Island to share their experience and knowledge of their own communities with the commission.

I hope the commission uses this information to ensure that people and communities with common concerns and shared interests are connected to create districts whose representatives truly share the values of their residents. And set the framework for a thriving democracy here in Brooklyn with locals motivated to get to the polls knowing their vote is collectively represented.

South Brooklyn is home to a large and growing community of Sephardic Jews. Jews are all one people, but as with any large extended family, Sephardic Jews observe customs and observances a bit differently than the rest of Brooklyn's broad observant Jewish population, which share many common beliefs and traditions. And, of course, Jewish communities in Manhattan and in other counties may have different observances as well.

Brooklyn, alone, is now home to more 600,000 Jews, including thousands of Sephardic families, who are currently spread among several congressional, state senate and state assembly districts. Given the rapid growth of the region's modern Orthodox Jewish population, its shared interests and voting cohesion, it is important to prioritize consolidating these voters to enhance their ability to elect candidates that represent the community's interest.

Today, Brooklyn's Sephardic families are separated into three different congressional districts. We strongly believe that we should be consolidated entirely within two districts, perhaps in New York's 8th and 11th Congressional Districts where the largest number of Sephardic Jews now live, as well as in a single state senate and state assembly district.

Currently, Brooklyn's Sephardic Jewish community is located in the 22nd State Senate District and the 45th State Assembly District. These districts currently serve well to empower our community by both keeping it intact and combining it with other areas that share our principles and concerns within a broad community of interest.

At the congressional level, placing our community in New York's 8th and 11th districts will help ensure that entire community is best represented by member of Congress who are best familiar with Brooklyn shorefront communities and who would understand our unique family-based interests.

Louis Jerome

By consolidating the Sephardic Jewish community within the 8th and 11th Congressional Districts, in the 22nd State Senate District and in the 45th Assembly District, our voice will continue to be heard in Washington and Albany for the next decade.

With so many different Jewish communities living in Brooklyn and across the New York metropolitan region, there are different ways you can redraw districts to accommodate our needs and interests.

But I do want to make sure that you understand the unique background of Sephardic Jews who live in one central compact South Brooklyn community. Thank you for your time.

CENTER FOR LAW AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

at MEDGAR EVERS COLLEGE, CUNY • Brooklyn, New York



1150 Carroll Street
Brooklyn NY 11225

718 804 8893
www.clsj.org

TESTIMONY OF

THE CENTER FOR LAW AND SOCIAL JUSTICE at Medgar Evers College, CUNY

before

The New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

Center for Law and Social Justice

Medgar Evers College of the City University of
New York

1150 Carroll Street, Brooklyn, New York 11225

By:

Lurie Daniel Favors, Esq., General Counsel

Dr. Zulema Blair, Redistricting Research Director

July 29, 2021

Greetings. My name is Lurie Daniel Favors and I am the General Counsel for the Center for Law and Social Justice and currently serve as the Interim Executive Director. The Center for Law and Social Justice (CLSJ) is a unit in the School of Professional and Community Development at Medgar Evers College of the City University of New York. Founded in 1985 by means of a New York State legislative grant, the mission is to address racial justice issues by providing quality legal advocacy, conducting community education campaigns, facilitating research and building organizing capacity on behalf of New Yorkers of African descent and the disenfranchised. CLSJ seeks to accomplish its mission by conducting research, and initiating advocacy projects and litigation on behalf of community organizations and groups that promote human, national, and international understanding. Because of its unique combination of research, public policy advocacy and litigation from a community-based perspective, CLSJ is a focal point for progressive activity.

From its initial days, CLSJ has consistently worked to defend the voting rights New Yorkers of African descent and other racial “minority” New Yorkers. Throughout the course of CLSJ’s history, we led or co-led the following historic voting rights advocacy initiatives or litigation in New York City:

- **New Majority for Charter Change** 1987-1989 - CLSJ led this successful coalition of activists and organizations of color that successfully advocated for major votingrights provisions and other equitable initiatives to be included in the new NYC Charter.
- *Ashe v. Board of Elections (1988)*- successful VRA challenge to force the NYC Board of Elections to conduct functional and voter-friendly elections in Black and Latino communities.
- **New York City Districting Commission** (1990-91) Esmeralda Simmons served as the Vice Chair of this initial appointed public body.
- **Majority Coalition for Fair Redistricting** (1991-92) Voting rights

Lurie Daniel Favors

activists of color coalition to ensure fair redistricting for people of color in NYC.

- ***Chin v. Bd. of Elections (1992)*** -- Argued an appeal that sought to expand Asian language voting rights.
- **New York Voting Rights Consortium-** Founding institution of this coalition of leading local and national voting rights organizations advocating for the protection of voters of color in the New York metropolitan area
- **NYC Black Leadership Advisory Coalition (1998-2000)** New York Pan-African community education and advocacy campaign on the 2000 Census.
- ***Rodriguez v. Pataki (2001-02)*** VRA challenge to NYS Congressional and Senate redistricting that forced the state government to redistrict, as required by law. CLSJ also unsuccessfully sought to create another "minority" congressional seat in the Bronx and to create a fair NYS Senate plan.
- **NYC Council Redistricting (2001)** Successfully advocated for the creation of a redistricting plan that protected Black voters in NYC.
- ***Hayden v. Pataki (2006)*** VRA and constitutional challenge to NYS' voter disenfranchisement laws against people with felony convictions.
- ***Favors v. Cuomo (2014)*** After failing to adopt a plan to reapportion Congressional districts in time, a three judge panel created its own plan, incorporating significant maps and proposals recommended by CLSJ and the New York Voting Rights Consortium Unity Maps project.
- **NYC Black Leadership Advisory Coalition (2008-2010)** New York Pan-African community education and advocacy campaign on the 2010 Census.
- **NY Voting Rights Consortium Unity Maps Project (2010-2012)**
- **NYC Black Leadership Advisory Coalition (2017-2020)** New York Pan-African community education and advocacy campaign on the 2020 Census.

Through our current “Racial Justice Redistricting Project,” CLSJ has conducted a six week series of community trainings on the use of the census data during the New York State redistricting process. In addition, we are re-launching a coalition, New Yorkers of African Descent for Fair Redistricting which seeks to protect the voting rights of New Yorkers of African descent during the New York redistricting process. As discussed more substantively *infra*, CLSJ is, once again, a very active member of the Unity Map Group that produced the heralded UNITY

Maps during the previous state redistricting process. Those Unity Maps clearly demonstrated how the voting rights of all VRA protected groups in NYC can simultaneously be respected and protected.

The Center for Law and Social Justice strongly urges the Independent Redistricting Commission (IRC) to take all steps necessary to complete the redistricting process in a timely manner, including: making the adjusted VTD data downloadable and available to the public as soon as possible; charting out a comprehensive timetable for completing redistricting and releasing such to the public; providing *timely* notice of the subsequent rounds of public hearings.

As the Commission is well aware, the federal Voting Rights Act specifically protects the voting rights of Black New Yorkers, as well as Hispanic and Asian New Yorkers and some language minorities. Due to New York City's long history of voting discrimination, three counties in New York City: Kings, The Bronx, and Manhattan were considered “covered counties” under Section 5 of the Rights Act (VRA).

As it pertains the upcoming redistricting cycle, CLSJ has long advocated that new districts are drawn such that they comply with the Voting Rights Act’s “one person, one vote” rule. The Supreme Court adopted a more strict standard for congressional districts than the standard employed for state districts. Despite this distinction, equitable access to the ballot requires the state legislature to seek to achieve “population equality” among the state legislative districts.¹ Thanks to improvements in computer software, “population equality” among state

¹ The standard for congressional plans is found in Article 1, Section 2 of the United States Constitution which provides in relevant part that “Representatives...shall be apportioned among the several States...according to their respective numbers.” In Wesberry v. Sanders, 376 U.S. 1 (1964), the Supreme Court defined this to mean “as nearly equal in population as practicable.” See e.g. Karcher v. Doggett, 462 U.S. 725 (1983) which struck down a congressional plan drawn by the New Jersey legislature which had an overall range of less than one percent); Abrams v. Johnson, 521 U.S. 74 (1997) (up-held a court drawn congressional plan containing an overall range of 0.335.) The contrast the standard for state legislative districts, however, is based on the 14th Amendment’s Equal Protection Clause. In Reynolds v. Sims (1964), the Court noted that “mathematical nicety is not a constitutional requisite” when drawing legislative plans. The Court held that it is instead necessary to achieve “substantial equality

legislative districts is far more possible today than it was ten years ago. In particular, it is now possible to draw new senate districts with an overall range of less than ten percent. This is particularly notable in light of the nationwide calls for racial equity and justice following the killing of George Floyd. It would be untenable to face another decade of small senate districts upstate and larger senate districts downstate, particularly when these disparately drawn districts disenfranchise wholesale communities of color on a statewide basis.

The requirements of the Voting Rights Act must also be adhered to. Unfortunately, the Supreme Court's 2013 decision in Shelby v. Holder gutted the Section 5 Preclearance provision of the Voting Rights Act. Jurisdictions that were covered by Section 5, like Bronx County, Kings County and New York County, were prohibited from adopting voting rights changes or redistricting plans without securing the requisite pre-clearance from the Department of Justice. (This is just one of many reasons as to why New York must pass a State Voting Rights Act which contains a preclearance provision into law.)

According to Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, redistricting plans must not unfairly dilute minority voting strength; they should not be drawn such that they reduce the number of majority-minority districts. Additionally, districts should not be drawn such that the minority population percentage is reduced to such a level that it makes it more challenging for minority voters to continue electing candidates of their choice.

Additionally, it is imperative that new state district plans preserve existing, and emerging "communities of interest." District plans must not divide populations and communities that have common "needs and interests."² State district lines should be drawn

of population among the various districts." Id at 579. "Substantial equality of population" has evolved to mean that, unless there is proof of intentional discrimination, a legislative plan won't be thrown out if its overall range is less than ten percent. See e.g. Chapman Meier, 420 U.S. 1 (1975), Voinovich v. Quilter, 507 U.S. 146 (1993).

² See e.g. League of United Latin American Citizens v. Perry, 458 U. 399 (2006).

not only such that they consider census data but they should also be informed by demographic studies, surveys or political information in order to determine the shared social and economic characteristics of each community. As noted in our 2010 testimony, some of the social and economic characteristics that should be considered include but are in no way limited to: income level diversity, educational backgrounds, housing patterns and living conditions, language and cultural characteristics, employments and economic patterns, health and environmental conditions.³

Finally, the reformed state redistricting process must be transparent and open. Practically speaking, this means the NYS Redistricting Commission (the “Commission”) should make public all of its redistricting criteria and procedures. Most importantly, there should be public access to redistricting data within weeks of its receipt by the state from the Census Bureau; there should be as many *timely* announced public hearings across the state as possible, with several in densely populated areas of the state. This is particularly significant as the Commission must listen to the people especially during this heightened age of mass civic engagement. This is how we ensure that the process is informed by the concerns and values of community leaders, residents and activists. The voices and concerns of residents, community leaders and activists must not only be welcomed but they must be centered throughout the process.

CLSJ has firsthand knowledge of the value of centering the voices and concerns of community stakeholders. As noted *supra*, our community stakeholder-based collaboration with African descendent (Black) community organizations across the NYC metropolitan area, and with groups like Latino Justice and Asian American Legal Defense Fund in 2000 and 2010 empowered our organizations to successfully engage in a Unity Map Project. The

³ Testimony of the Center for Law and Social Justice at Medgar Evers College, CUNY, Before the New York City Districting Commission, August 13, 2012 at Brooklyn Borough Hall.

Lurie Daniel Favors

Unity Maps were able to create a set of NY State maps that respected and built upon the strength of the historically recognized racial “protected groups” under the VRA. These maps were able to: increase the number of districts controlled by protected groups; create the first Asian Congressional District; keep communities of interest intact; and avoid the typical “cracking” and “packing” of our voters.

To these ends, we urge that you make the data publicly available as quickly as possible, that you hold as many timely announced public hearings as possible and to work earnestly to incorporate a Unity Maps perspective to preserve longstanding Communities of Interest so that all New Yorkers have an equitable opportunity to elect candidates of their choosing.



EL PUENTE
LEADERS FOR PEACE & JUSTICE

My name is Marco A. Carrión, I'm the Executive Director of El Puente, a community based human rights institution that promotes leadership for peace and justice. Since 1982, El Puente has engaged youth and their families in the arts, education, scientific research, wellness and environmental action in North Brooklyn.

Primarily serving Latino families throughout Williamsburg, Bushwick and the adjoining neighborhood of Ridgewood, Queens, El Puente has been pivotal in transforming the lives of young people and their families who have participated in our programs and graduated from our schools.

In 1993, we opened the El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice as a model NYC public high school in partnership with the Department of Education and New Visions for Public Schools. We are also the community partner who helped transform Middle School 50 into one of the city's most successful community schools. We understand the neighborhoods we serve and, in turn, value the role the community plays in determining its future and success.

We operate six multifaceted Leadership Centers that engage youth members in community development projects as well as citywide and national social justice campaigns. As a resident of Clinton Hill, just one block south of what is considered the neighborhood of South Williamsburg or Los Sures, I walk to work daily. I see first hand the way our communities are intricately involved in one another's success and I welcome the opportunity to be engaged with this Commission to see districts redrawn and adjust for the growth and change of our communities.



EL PUENTE
LEADERS FOR PEACE & JUSTICE

El Puente has and continues to be a strong advocate for environmental justice. The communities of Williamsburg and the Lower East Side are not only connected by a bridge, transportation and the families/friends linking these diverse boroughs, but they are also partners in climate advocacy. After the devastating effects of Superstorm Sandy, we continue to work collectively to advocate for climate change. As waterfront communities, we must work together to better prepare our communities for rising sea levels, coastal erosion and more frequent strong storms.

Lastly, our programs physically have space across three different Council seats, two Assembly members, two state Senators and one Congressional representative Nydia Velasquez in Brooklyn. Yet it is clear we serve communities historically and culturally connected to Manhattan and Queens through transportation, language and culture. While we have learned to advocate for our programming needs across many districts, we will closely watch the release of the Census data to ensure our communities are kept together and their power not diminished. As we continue to engage, we look forward to participating in the statewide Coalition of Mapping Our Future to ensure the voices of our communities are heard, and engage with LatinoJustice PRLDEF, to ensure the voting rights and electoral strength of our neighborhoods are not diluted.

Marco A. Carrion
Executive Director
El Puente

FW: REMINDER: New York State Independent Redistricting Commission Accepting Map Submissions

Miranda Goodwin Raab <goodwinraabm@nyirc.gov>

Fri 9/10/2021 4:56 PM

To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

 5 attachments (2 MB)

districts.dbf; districts.shp; districts.shx; districts.prj; Bay Ridge Assembly District 9_21.png;

From: Mark Hanna 

Sent: Friday, Septem

To: Miranda Goodwin Raab <goodwinraabm@nyirc.gov>

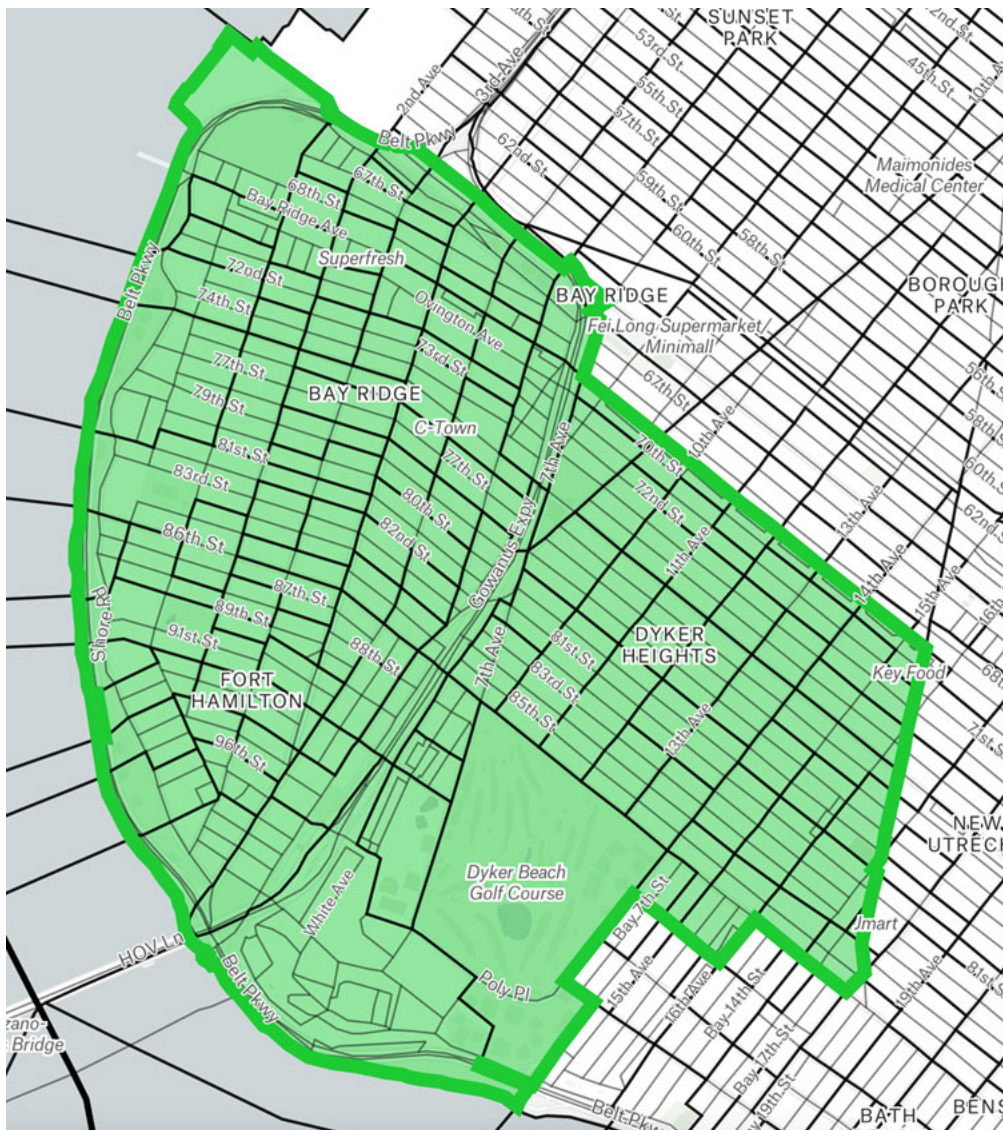
Subject: Re: REMINDER: New York State Independent Redistricting Commission Accepting Map Submissions

Hi Miranda,

I'm Mark Hanna, Board Member of Yalla Brooklyn, a Social Welfare Organization that was organized predominately by, and with particular focus on uplifting and supporting, the Arab American and Muslim communities in Brooklyn and also a member of the Mapping Our Future Coalition. I'd like to submit maps of a possible Bay Ridge Brooklyn Assembly District that we believe will satisfy the requirements of redistricting for the legislature. I've attached those maps here in a number of formats as well as an image format that you can see below. If there is a better way to upload this information, please let me know. Thank you very much!

Sincerely,

Mark Hanna



On Wed, Sep 1, 2021 at 8:02 PM Miranda Goodwin Raab <goodwinraabm@nyirc.gov> wrote:

To Whom It May Concern:

This is a reminder that the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission is still eagerly seeking input from all New Yorkers, **especially in the form of maps. The Commission will be releasing its first round of maps on September 15th**, so the sooner we hear from you, the better!

Please tell us about your community. Show us on a map where your community lives, goes to school, goes grocery shopping, and/or worships.

Preferred file types for maps/geographic data: *Geographic JavaScript Object Notation (.geojson, .json), Google Keyhole Markup language (.kml, .kmz), ESRI Shapefile (.shp, .dbf, .shx)*

Also accepting the following for maps/geographic data: *Microsoft Excel (.xls, .xlsx), Comma Separated Values (.csv) Adobe Portable Document Format (.pdf), Bitmap Graphics (.bmp), Graphics Interchange Format (.gif), JPEG images (.jpg, .jpeg), Portable Network Graphics (.png), Scalable Vector Graphics (.svg), Tagged Image File Format (.tif, .tiff)*

If you have already sent us your maps and comment, we have received them and our Commissioners are busy reviewing your input.

Map Submitted

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

Fri 9/10/2021 5:01 PM

To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

Submitted Map

- **First Name:** MARK
- **Last Name:** HANNA
- **Email:** [REDACTED]
- **Descri**

Brooklyn Assembly District that we believe will satisfy the requirements of redistricting for the legislature and eliminates the cracking of the Arab American Community into the existing 3 Assembly Districts.

- **Map File:** [Link to Map File](#)

This e-mail has been automatically generated

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Mark Hanna

Yalla Brooklyn
7504 5th Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11209

July 28, 2021

To whom it may concern,

The following is the testimony intended to be delivered to the Kings and Richmond County Public Meeting with the New York Independent Redistricting Commission on July 29, 2021.

Firstly, I want to extend my thanks to the Independent Redistricting Commission for organizing this series of public hearings on the upcoming redistricting cycle.

I am Mark Hanna, Board Member of Yalla Brooklyn, a Social Welfare Organization that was organized predominately by, and with particular focus on uplifting and supporting, the Arab American and Muslim communities in Brooklyn. I am speaking on behalf of the organization today, however, I also live in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn and operate my law practice here, so the issues facing the community are also personal for me.

Yalla is a member of Mapping Our Future - a statewide coalition of advocates and organizations dedicated to mobilizing the grassroots to get involved in redistricting and advocate for a fair process and fair maps.

We're all here today because we have an opportunity to recreate and re-draw the political districts of our state to create a fairer and more equitable foundation for democratic representation. This opportunity comes only once in a decade and so a tremendous amount of importance is attached to this process. We have to live with the consequences for at least the next ten years.

In the case of my own community, the Arab American and Muslim community of Bay Ridge, we have struggled with representation for significantly longer than a mere decade.

It has been nearly 40 years since Bay Ridge had its own Assembly district. It was divided up for political and partisan reasons decades ago and despite political and demographic shifts since that time, the community remains fractured into political divisions that only serve to disempower. In fact, it is a testament to how disempowering it can be to have a community

divided up that it has remained divided for so long despite the growth in the Arab and Muslim community over all this time.

Arabs and Muslims account for 11% of the neighborhood of Bay Ridge. Despite being a minority, we have an outsized presence immediately apparent walking up 5th Avenue and seeing the many stores, restaurants and community organizations operated by and catering to Arabs and Muslims of Brooklyn.

However, our presence in the political community is cracked and split three ways into the 46th, 64th and 51st Assembly districts. The community's demographic percentage drops to merely 2% of each of these districts. This renders the community, no matter how politically interested and active – entirely beholden to the rest of the district that they are split into.

We have a cohesive community here and we must have a distinct Assembly district that keeps our neighborhood and communities intact. We have worked diligently on voter registration and turnout for years, and while the success of these efforts is tangible and quantifiable – the actual political voice of the community has remained throttled by absurd district drawing.

So, now we are here today to bring light and attention to this – and remedy it with districts that are better drawn. We need districts that keep communities like mine together to protect New York's immigrants and communities of color, allow challengers to have a fair shot at winning elections, and energize civic engagement. It will allow for my community's needs to be heard and prioritized by our elected leaders, leading to better policy and budget outcomes.

In closing, I again want to thank the IRC for holding these hearings – they are a promising start to increasing transparency in the redistricting process. I'd like implore the commission to consider making the entire process public, as it can create political divisions that last a generation. For now, I appreciate your attention to the needs of the Arab and Muslim community in Bay Ridge and I expect that you will be able to find a way to ameliorate the current unrepresentative and cracked conditions we have been embedded in for so many years.

Mark Hanna

Mark E. Zink

[REDACTED]
Staten Island, NY 10314
[REDACTED]

July 29, 2021

Dear N.Y. State Independent Redistricting Commission (Kings and Richmond):

I am submitting testimony requesting that the district lines for the NYC 50th City Council District be redrawn in a more contiguous manner, which would be beneficial to everyone in the district. I currently reside in the 77th ED of the 63rd AD, and although most residents who reside in the 63rd AD are also in the 50th NYC council district, I reside in approximately 7 EDs in the 63rd AD that are in the 51st NYC Council District instead of the 50th. This makes absolutely no sense, for most of my surrounding community are in both the 63rd AD and the 50th City Council District. I reside in the Mid-Island section of Staten Island, which has more in common with the Mid-Island in 50th City Council District than it does with the 51st City Council District, which consists mostly of the South Shore, which is several miles away from my home. It just does not make sense for my community to be part of a South Shore City Council District.

Moreover, there are five EDs (56/63, 83/63, 68/63, 69/63, and 71/63) in the 49th City Council District that are the only districts in the 49th Council District that are above Victory Blvd, which makes absolutely no sense. The entire surrounding community of the aforementioned EDs are in the 50th NYC Council District and therefore those districts should be included in the 50th City Council District instead of the 49th.

If the NY State Independent Redistricting Commission needs to remove some EDs in the 50th City Council District in order to make room for the above EDs, the commission could consider removing the following EDs that are in Richmond Town, which is part of the South Shore: 66/62, 67/62, 85/62, 65/62, and 68/62. These districts have a lot more in common with the South Shore 51st City Council District in comparison to the 77, 14, 13, 15, 12, 20, and 84 EDs in the 63rd AD.

I want to thank the NY State Independent Redistricting Commission for your difficult and important work and for considering my point of view.

Thanks so much!

Sincerely,

Mark E. Zink
Resident in the 77-ED/63rd AD

My name is Martin Ascher, and I am an attorney living in Brooklyn and appearing in my personal capacity. I'd like to use my time today to discuss the pro-Republican bias in the current State Senate map in the hopes that this committee draws a fairer and more neutral map for the coming decade.

In 2018, the Supreme Court heard a challenge to the Wisconsin State Assembly's map in *Gill v. Whitford*. To challenge this map, plaintiffs relied on a statistical analysis by Nicholas Stephanopoulos of the University of Chicago known as the efficiency gap. The efficiency gap looks at "wasted votes" or votes not necessary for a specific candidate to have won, across a State in order to determine if there has been an impermissibly partisan gerrymander. This includes all of the votes for a party's losing candidates plus the total number of votes winning candidates got above the number needed to win¹. This figure is calculated "by taking one party's total wasted votes in an election, subtracting the other party's total wasted votes, and dividing by the total number of votes cast"². The experts who developed this formula have determined that an efficiency gap of greater than eight percent for a state legislative map indicates that impermissible partisan gerrymandering has taken place³.

¹ For a more detailed explanation of the precise calculations and a simple demonstration, see the appendix.

² Brief for Appellees at 13, *Gill v. Whitford*, 138 S. Ct. 1916 (2018) (No. 16-1161). (hereinafter *Brief for Appellees*)

³ Nicholas O. Stephanopoulos & Eric M. McGhee, Partisan Gerrymandering and the Efficiency Gap, 82 U. CHI. L. REV. 831, 837 (2015).

While a law student, I was curious how New York's Senate map fit in to this context and ran the calculations for use in a class paper on gerrymandering. In 2012, 2014, 2016, and 2018 the New York State Senate map's efficiency gaps were 19.3%, 7.7%, 21.1% and 25.2% respectively. This averages to an efficiency gap of about 18.3%, significantly higher than the 8% considered acceptable by Stephanopoulos. In fact, the only election cycle in which the efficiency gap was within Stephanopoulos' acceptable range was 2014, the only year of these four in which State Senate Republicans won both more votes and more seats in the State Senate than State Senate Democrats (and the lowest voter turnout). For reference, in *Gill* the efficiency gap for the Wisconsin State Assembly for the years 2012, 2014, and 2016 was 13.3%, 9.6%, and 10.7% respectively⁴, indicating that the New York State Senate map is much greater partisan gerrymander than the Wisconsin map which attracted national attention. It could be argued that the 2014 efficiency gap indicates that the gap is not always too large, but this should be considered an outlier as the two-party vote in 2014 was over 2 million votes lower than any other year in this period.

One key reason for this gap is that In the New York map, upstate Senate districts are "systematically underpopulated at a mean deviation of -4.5% from

⁴ *Brief for Appellees* at 14.

the average size, and downstate districts are overpopulated at a mean deviation of +3.3%”⁵. The largest disparity in district size at the time the map was passed was 8.8%, and the geographic nature of the disparity likely led to a larger efficiency gap given the natural packing of Democratic votes in New York City and its immediately surrounding areas⁶. This is not acceptable. All voters in New York State should count equally, and just because courts may allow for population deviation to a certain degree should not mean that certain portions of the State should be intentionally underrepresented.

Thank you.

⁵ BLAIR HORNER ET. AL., NYPIRG, “CAN THE PLAN”: HOW THE 2012 REDISTRICTING DEAL DENIES NEW YORKERS FAIR REPRESENTATION, (June 2014), <https://www.nypirg.org/pubs/goodgov/2014.06.23Redistricting-CanthePlan/cantheplan.pdf>

⁶ *Favors v. Cuomo: Eastern District of New York Rejects Equal Protection Challenge to New York State Senate Redistricting Plan*. 128 HARV. L. REV. 1834, 1837 (Apr. 2015).

Appendix: How New York's Data Was Calculated

To calculate the numbers used in the efficiency gap, partisan asymmetry, and S-curve portions of the paper, I used election results from the New York State Board of Elections. Official results were used for 2012-2016, and unofficial results were used for 2018⁷. I first added up the total number of votes each party received by adding up the total number of votes received by each Democratic and Republican candidate. Because of New York State's fusion voting laws, some candidates were nominated by multiple parties. In those cases, I counted all votes for Democratic candidates on minor party lines as votes for Democrats, and all votes for Republicans on minor party lines as votes for Republicans. There were several instances where the same candidate was nominated by both the Democratic and Republican parties. In those instances, I gave the votes for these candidates on the Democratic line to the Democrat and the votes for that same candidate on the Republican line to the Republicans. I was then able to find the percentage of the total vote, and the percentage of the two-party vote each party received. I then calculated the percentage of the seats each party had. Although they caucused with the Republicans, Senator Simcha Felder and members of the Independent Democratic Conference were considered Democrats for the purposes of counting the number of seats held by each party in a given year⁸. These percentages were used in the discussion on partisan asymmetry and the S-curve.

To calculate the efficiency gap, I followed instructions in the Brennan Center's explanation⁹. For each year, I added the total number of votes for each losing candidate for each party and added that number to the difference between the winning and losing party for each election minus one vote for each race (as that one vote was the required vote to win the election) that party won. This was done twice (once for each party). Depending on how one counts these third-party votes, one will arrive at different efficiency gap numbers.

⁷For 2012-2016 See *General Election Results*, N.Y. STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS, (Last visited Nov. 30, 2018) <https://www.elections.ny.gov/INDEX.html>. For 2018 See *New York State Unofficial Election Results*, N.Y. STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS, (Nov. 7, 2018) <https://nyenr.elections.ny.gov/>

⁸ The IDC dissolved by 2018, and though Felder continued caucusing with the Republicans, he never switched parties, so he was counted as a Democrat.

⁹The formula for the Efficiency Gap = (Total Democratic Wasted Votes – Total Republican Wasted Votes) ÷ Total Votes. For more information see Petry, *How the Efficiency Gap Works supra* note 16.

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.



Amariah

Teaching & Guiding in God's Promises





Amariah

Teaching & Guiding in God's Promises

Handwritten signature



Naftali Tessler Testimony

My name is Naftali Tessler and I am the Chief of Staff at Hamaspik of Kings County - The Center for Human Services, a non-profit human service agency which empowers and cares for individuals with developmental disabilities as well as people with Mental Health challenges, and their families. We are helping people with limitations reach their utmost potential, through providing services, support and hope.

My organization is deeply connected to the Jewish communities present in both Borough Park and the Upper West Side of Manhattan. The strong connections the 10th Congressional District's Jewish community possesses demonstrate an unwavering devotion to family and values. In this regard, I find it extremely important that New York's 10th Congressional District continues to reflect the contiguous nature of the communities by encompassing both Borough Park and the Upper West Side.

My organization serves the families of a community whose members reside in separate parts of the district. In my daily interactions I see that a relatively minor geographic separation is not the determining factor in deciding a community's boundaries. In order for my community to be properly and accurately represented, the current boundaries of New York's 10th Congressional District must be preserved. The potential separation of the district would create artificial divisions which will only serve to distance families and individuals from physical locations of great significance to them.

The unified nature of my community is visible in the daily functions of the Hamaspik Center as families and supporters from both the Upper West Side and Borough Park interact with the center. My community's distribution across the district is the result of the organic forces which shape neighborhoods and bring people together. A redistricting process which alters the current boundaries and impairs my community's ability to pursue its interests through representation in Congress would constitute a highly unnecessary injustice.

Dear Independent Redistricting Commission:

The primary goal of redistricting must be to draw maps that authentically reflect the communities that shape our state. Binding communities together allows each individual to maximize their voice in our democracy and elect leaders whose values are consistent with that voice. Today, I would like to talk about the communities of the New York 8th (NY-08) congressional district, where I live and raised my son as a single mom. Historically, the traditionally African-American neighborhoods of Fort Greene and Clinton Hill have been linked together as one “community of interest” within what is currently the NY-08 congressional district. They are served by the same community board, the same police precincts, the same school district, the same bus and subway lines, the same firehouses and the same central commercial corridors on Fulton Street and Myrtle Avenue.

This “community of interest” is closely connected to the predominantly African-American community of Bedford-Stuyvesant that is immediately adjacent to the east. These three neighborhoods are all linked by the same commercial corridor along Fulton Street and the same mass transportation along the A and C line. School District 13 also includes the neighborhoods of Fort Greene, Clinton Hill, Prospect Heights and parts of Bedford-Stuyvesant. From there, the district takes in Ocean-Hill Brownsville, East New York and Canarsie in south east Brooklyn. Once again, these are predominantly Black neighborhoods, protected by the Voting Rights Act. But equally important, these are working class, blue-collar communities that share modes of transportation, public services and issues with respect to affordable housing and public safety concerns such as rising gun violence. As “communities of interest,” these six neighborhoods have benefited from existing within the same congressional district for approximately five decades. They should remain together. Preserving this connectivity would fulfill the legal objective of preserving “communities of interest” and continuity of representation.

The 8th district also includes the southern coast of Brooklyn, including Mill Basin, Brighton Beach and Coney Island. These neighborhoods are very diverse, including a large number of Russian-speaking Jewish immigrants. These working-class New Yorkers face the same issues of housing, schools, transportation and public safety that the rest of the NY-08 communities are confronting on a daily basis. Additionally, this “community of interest” faces the unique reality of a coastal community confronting issues of climate change and public transportation challenges. This coastal section of the district should be kept intact to lift up these issues with the fierce urgency that the community deserves.

Finally, it is essential for the proposed map to take into consideration the expressed concerns presented by prominent clergy members, civic leaders, community activists and service providers from Fort Greene to Coney Island. These stakeholders, the shared needs of their members and constituents and their shared values will undoubtedly lend powerful credence to what should be readily apparent: the neighborhoods of the NY-08 must remain intact.

For the reasons set forth above, I strongly urge the commission to keep the communities of the NY-08 together in a similar configuration to the current lines.

Truly,

Nancy Pascal

FW: Redistributing: Edited version

Danielle Futia <futiad@nyirc.gov>

Tue 8/17/2021 9:07 AM

To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

Danielle Futia

Independent Redistricting Commission
Assistant Director of Public Engagement
www.nyirc.gov

From: [Patrick Gilbride](#)

Sent: Sunday, August 15, 2021 12:00 PM

To: [Danielle Futia](#)

Subject: Fwd: Redistributing: Edited version

TO: NYIRC

>> As a 20-year Bay Ridge homeowner; a businessman who established a new financial advisory practice serving primarily Bay Ridge & Dyker Heights 11 years ago; a founder (2009) and past president of the St Patrick's Men's Club; current Chief of the 96-year-old non-profit 1230 Club of Bay Ridge, Inc; and a 10-year member and current director of the Merchants of Third Avenue Civic Improvement Association, Inc., I offer here my opinion to the bi-partisan commission on redistricting (NYIRC).

>>

>> My understanding of this area of our city, with which I've been familiar since childhood as a lifelong Brooklynite (born in Red Hook, reared in Windsor Terrace), was deepened during the establishment of the aforementioned financial advisory practice, which I accomplished over a few years of making daily, first-time, face-to-face contacts at residences and businesses throughout Dyker Heights and Bay Ridge.

>>

>> There is no better way than this to gain an understanding of the character and interests of the small collection of neighborhoods that make up a district.

>>

>> In no uncertain terms: The current configuration of election districts that collectively make up the 11th Congressional District and those at the local levels that are encompassed with it are quite appropriate, though there may be one or two too many assembly districts.

>>

>> As a New Yorker who knows and cares deeply about Southwest Brooklyn and Staten Island, I respectfully implore you to keep this civically and economically healthy area in tact to the greatest extent possible, to ensure these inhabitants' political voice continues to be democratically, fairly, and justly heard.

>>

>> Sincerely,

>> Patrick T. Gilbride

Easy Testimony Fill-in

Thank you for allowing me to speak to you. My name is Peter Weisman. I vote in the 18th District in Kings County (Brooklyn) (city/municipality). I would like to draw your attention to the issue of lack of rezoning, lack of business development, and a structurally racist district.

In my neighborhood, (tell your story)

The Latino population rules my district on the national, state and local level. There is no representation of
From Jennifer Gutierrez, our new City Councilperson, to the departing Reynoso, we will never see Bushw
Julia Salazar will never have a pro-business agenda, unless you count legalizing prostitution and drugs (I
Nydia Velazquez does more for Puerto Rico than her own district, this fossil has been in congress for 28 y
We need change. They say change eve

This effectively means

The leaders are conservatives of the poor. They don't want to change their constituents lives, because pe
Not allowing anything to be built in order to stop gentrification, in order to remain in power, means there is
You can smell the fear of a changing constituency, some c.

Facts, etc.

1. Antonio Reynoso killed the Bushwick Rezoning, it hurts the Latino population and let
2. Julia Salazar's long standing policies are pushing landlords to give up and not maintain the
3. The district needs pro-business leadership, or at least someone aware that businesses hire people and

The consequence of not fixing this problem include

The free market will run circles around Salazar's policies, displacing people anyway.

A local population not equipped to the steady and ongoing changes that will eventually override them.

Divisive politics driving policies doesn't solve anything. Peop,

I ask you to

Allow all of Greenpoint, Williamsburg, and Bushwick to be one district. All of northwest Brooklyn. Cut out C
Geographically the people of NW Brooklyn deserve to be in the same district. Williamsburg is cut in half, s
It's WEIRD. We are a mixed area but these lines bizarrel

Thank you for your time and consideration of my request

Name Peter Weisman Email 

Ph 

City Brooklyn NY Zip 11206

Fwd: Hearing registration

Peter Weisman <[REDACTED]>

Wed 9/8/2021 9:09 PM

To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

Cc: Miranda Goodwin Raab <goodwinraabm@nyirc.gov>; Ahsia Badi <badia@nyirc.gov>

 1 attachments (92 KB)

Peter Weismann 7.25.pdf;

Hello,

I would like my comments heard loudly and clearly, and can make my time available should it be necessary. I am attaching my testimony, along with this synopsis:

This is a call to allow State Assembly District 26 (Brooklyn) to include the entirety of Northwest Brooklyn. The Cypress Hills enclave should be given to District 19.

Williamsburg, Greenpoint and Bushwick would be best served to be under one district. I have nothing to say about the national Congressional district, and how it is drawn, although Miss Nydia Velazquez has done very little with her 28 years in office, on a legislative level; depressingly she seems more interested in serving Puerto Rico than the people of New York.

Let me know how best I can be heard.

Thank you for allowing me to speak to you. My name is Peter Weisman I vote in the 18th District in Kings County Brooklyn. I would like to draw your attention to the issue of lack of rezoning, lack of business development, and a structurally racist district.

In my neighborhood, The Latino population rules my district on the national, state and local level. There is no representation of any other ethnic group. I do not have a problem with this per say, but I don't see any policies that help businesses or real change / improvements.

From Jennifer Gutierrez, our new City Councilperson, to the departing Reynoso, we will never see Bushwick rezoned to help the housing crisis.

Julia Salazar will never have a pro-business agenda, unless you count legalizing prostitution and drugs (I can't take my son the playground without the weed smoke blowing in our faces).

Nydia Velazquez does more for Puerto Rico than her own district, this fossil has been in congress for 28 years and has one of the poorest records of legislation around.

We need change. They say change every election cycle but they don't mean it.

The leaders are conservatives of the poor. They don't want to change their constituents lives, because perhaps they won't be likely to vote for them anymore if they are on an upward socio economic trajectory.

Not allowing anything to be built in order to stop gentrification, in order to remain in power, means there is no "progress" to the progressive agenda.

You can smell the fear of a changing constituency, some of them even write about it publicly (Boris Santos). The racism is on full display. Reynoso counts the Latinos leaving his district in his reports on housing. Can you get more racist?

Antonio Reynoso killed the Bushwick Rezoning, I think so the Latino population can keep their stranglehold over local politics. Jennifer Guterrez, his senior staff member, won the council seat and has sworn not to rezone Bushwick.

Julia Salazar's housing policies are pushing Landlords to give up and not maintain their properties. Her policies hurt real estate taxes, which will lead to massive shortfalls in the budget. Not one thing she does is pro-business or personal independence. Keeping people poor and depending on her is a strategy to keep herself in power. When she runs out of things to protect us from she will invent something.

The district needs pro-business leadership, or at least someone aware that businesses hire people and people need jobs.

The free market will run circles around Salazar's policies, displacing people anyway.

A local population not equipped to the steady and ongoing changes that will eventually override them. Divisive politics driving policies doesn't solve anything. People need jobs.

Allow all of Greenpoint, Williamsburg, and Bushwick to be one district. All of northwest Brooklyn. Cut out Cypress Hills, give it to District 19

Geographically the people of NW Brooklyn deserve to be in the same district. Williamsburg is cut in half, some of it linked to some sort of "Gold Coast" then inexplicably continues to Sunset Park... Then the entirety of lower Manhattan!

It's WEIRD. We are a mixed area but these lines bizarrely seem drawn on ethnic barriers.

Testimony of Rabbi Avi Greenstein
Chief Executive Officer
Boro Park Jewish Community Council
To the
New York State Independent Redistricting Commission
Kings and Richmond County- July 29, 2021

Dear Honored members of the Commission

My name is Rabbi Avi Greenstein and I have the honor of serving as Chief Executive Officer of the Boro Park Jewish Community Council (BPJCC). BPJCC is a community based organization serving the Orthodox Jewish community of Boro Park and the surrounding neighborhoods. This population is primarily a Hasidic Jewish population with other Orthodox Jews also living near by.

I am here today to talk about the Orthodox Jewish community in Boro Park specifically and Kings County generally, its representation, and requests in the current redistricting process.

A 2011 study of the Jewish Community in New York City, Long Island, and Westchester established that there were just shy of

Rabbi Avi Greenstein

500,000 Orthodox Jews in the eight county area. In the heavily Orthodox neighborhood of Boro Park, the Jewish population was 78% of the total population, while in neighboring Flatbush, Midwood, and Kensington. the Jewish Population was 50% of the total number of people in those communities. While the next Jewish Communal Study is not scheduled to take place until 2022, given the growth of the Orthodox Jewish community between 2002 and 2011, an increase of more than 30% and the high number of children under the age of 18, it is safe to assume that the number of Jewish people in total and in the specific areas where BPJCC provides services will surely continue to increase.

New York State law dictates that communities which share social and economic interest are to have effective and fair representation. There is perhaps no bigger community of shared interest than the Orthodox Jewish community of Brooklyn. This is a most unique community as almost all have similar religious practices, modes of worship, and keep the Sabbath on Saturday as an official day of rest during which no work or use of electronic and communication devices can be used. Community members consume exclusively kosher food, making use of a network of certified Kosher grocery stores and restaurants. The community is also well known for giving charity and developing institutions for virtually every need. Services are provided in the geographic area, with cultural sensitivity to strict societal norms in the community. The organizations are set to respond to all facets of human life,

Rabbi Avi Greenstein

including a volunteer ambulance group, volunteer safety patrols, organizations that provide food packages for the poor, groups that visit hospitals to meet the needs of hospitalized patients and their loved ones, and burial societies. Children and young adults attend a vast network of private schools that offer a dual curriculum of religious and secular studies. Practically zero community members make use of the local public elementary, middle, and high schools or colleges and universities. BPJCC assists thousands of community members in accessing services, seeking job training and placement, and more.

However, when it comes to electoral representation, we have been treated as anything but a community of interest. The Orthodox Jewish community in Brooklyn is divided into five congressional districts. Similarly, many of the neighborhoods are divided among several assembly districts. As a result of this dilution of Jewish population in each district, many legislators are not as familiar with the Jewish community and its unique needs as they should be. They do not have their district offices in our communities, rarely visit, and ultimately do not provide the type of representation that this community deserves. Furthermore, government funding for the community is often diminished.

Therefore, I request from that the members of the commission take this important community of interest into account when creating new districts. With anti-Semitism rearing its ugly head

Rabbi Avi Greenstein

and needs within the community growing, the Orthodox community cannot afford to be divided into multiple communities. Without larger and significant populations in individual districts, we become marginalized and only serve as filler for other districts and communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Rabbi Chesky Blau Testimony

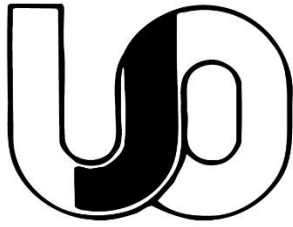
As the Intergovernmental Liaison for the Bobov-45 Hasidic Sect, I place tremendous value on my community's representation in government. It is especially important to me that this representation reflects my community's historic ties and strong connections across New York's 10th Congressional District.

The Bobov-45 Hasidic Sect is a vibrant community with deep links to the Upper West Side of Manhattan where Grand Rabbi Solomon Halberstam arrived in 1947 after surviving the Holocaust in Poland. The Bobov community was built upon the foundations and values established by Rabbi Solomon Halberstam and holds his life history as a source of inspiration and guidance. It is therefore vital for my community that the 10th Congressional District which includes both the historical roots of the Bobov Sect in the Upper West Side of Manhattan and the modern-day community center of Borough Park, is kept intact in the upcoming redistricting process. The potential separation of these areas through redistricting would threaten my community's connection to its very first historical roots in the United States. Rabbi Solomon Halberstam's old residence on the Upper West Side is an especially important historical site for my community and it serves as a physical symbol of its roots in the city for younger generations to connect with. The collective memory of any community is an essential component of its social fabric, and the significance of a community's roots cannot be underestimated.

The preservation of the 10th Congressional District in its current form is clearly in the best interest of my community as we believe it allows us to be appropriately represented by Congressman Jerry Nadler. If my community is to flourish in the future, it must have a representative in Congress who considers our perspectives and values when dealing with the pressing issues of our times. The alteration of district lines will not only be a blow to the social

Rabbi Chesky Blau

fabric of my community, but it will also impair our ability to make our voices heard on issues concerning the area of our historic roots; I therefore strongly advocate the preservation of New York's 10th Congressional District in its current form. It is both logical and reasonable that the district's lines would reflect the contiguous community which exists on both the Upper West Side and Borough Park.



UNITED JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS
OF WILLIAMSBURGH AND NORTH BROOKLYN
פאראייניגטע אידישע ארגאניזאציעס פון וויליאמסבורג

32 Penn Street • Brooklyn, N.Y. 11249 • Tel: (718) 643-9700 • Fax: (718) 819-1817

Testimony of Rabbi David Niederman, President of the United Jewish Organizations of Williamsburgh and North Brooklyn

Submitted to the Independent Redistricting Committee on:

July 29, 2021

Thank you, Commissioners, for allowing me the opportunity to testify today. My name is Rabbi David Niederman and I am the Executive Director and President of the United Jewish Organizations of Williamsburgh and North Brooklyn, a central social service agency for more than half a century representing more than 75,000 Yiddish Speaking North Brooklyn residents.

The Yiddish speaking population, many years ago, traditionally resided in South Williamsburg and has flourished exponentially. As the community has grown, it has expanded beyond the borders of Williamsburg, into Bedford-Stuyvesant and Clinton Hill.

Based on that during the previous redistricting processes, we advocated for and the commission accepted our request to be considered as a “Community of Interest” thus not being splintered. On behalf of our community I respectfully and submit to the commission that our Yiddish Speaking community in South Williamsburg, Bedford Stuyvesant and Clinton Hill continue to be a “community of interest”.

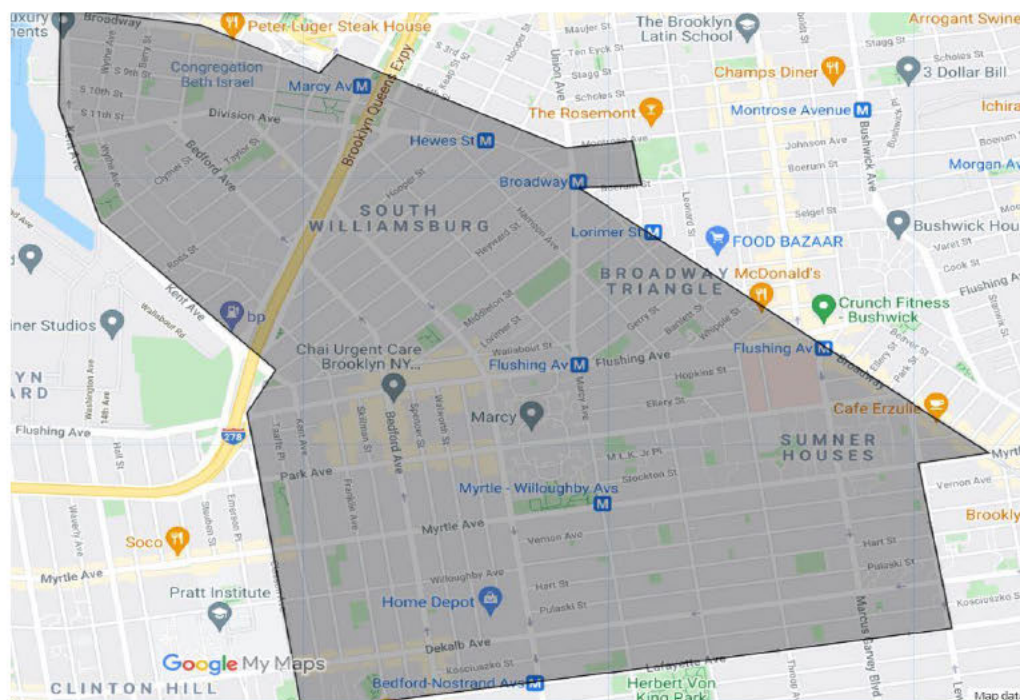
The Yiddish speaking community is not a majority of any district of which we are a part of but our community still has voice in the districts that we belong to. Splintering our community would dilute our voice and be devastating to the community’s unique need and concerns.

Our community of interest has unique language, religious background, common history and other shared ties and identifiable interests.

Some of the key unifiers of our community of interest is the large households with many children without voting power that make up our community, the need for security and protection from anti-Semitic hate crimes which is an ongoing crisis in our neighborhood, a unique Yiddish language social service delivery and advocacy system, as well cultural and language issues that have to be addressed by government and the public sector.

In sum, it is crucial for the community to continue to stay unified and centralized so our community residents' interests and needs are adequately represented. I look forward to presenting more detailed maps and figures once the numbers are out but we want to raise our important desire to remain a community of interest for the purposes of the Commission's redistricting proposal. Thank you.

Here is a map of the area in Brooklyn that we are referencing:



Rabbi Efraim Fink Testimony

As Executive Director of the Bnos Chaya School for Girls in Borough Park, I believe I have the responsibility to express the views of my community on a matter which may impact us profoundly. I feel very strongly that New York's 10th Congressional District should be maintained and reflect the strong social connections which exist between Borough Park and the Upper West Side.

I see evidence of the contiguous nature of the Jewish communities in Borough Park and the Upper West Side in the family connections many of my students still have to the area. Many of the school's students have grandparents and other relatives who reside in the Upper West Side and participate in the community's affairs. The family ties present in both Borough Park and the Upper West Side create the genuine sense that it is, in fact, one large neighborhood. We feel that the current district lines reflect the contiguous nature of communities in Borough Park and the Upper West Side and that this should stay unchanged.

The Bnos Chaya School places great importance on educating the younger generations about their heritage and ancestors who first established their community's roots in this country. The legacies of community leaders such as Rabbi Solomon Halberstam who first arrived on the Upper West Side of Manhattan in 1947 after surviving the Holocaust are still strongly felt in the Jewish communities in both in the Upper West Side and Borough Park areas. My school works to keep such legacies and values alive and ensure that my community's youth is able to flourish continue its growth in the future. In light of these concerns, I hope that my community's perspective will be taken into consideration during the redistricting process and that New York's

10th Congressional District will continue to reflect the contiguous nature of the communities within it.

Rabbi Efraim Fink

Executive Director

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Testimony of Rabbi Yeruchim Silber
Director of New York Government Relations
Agudath Israel of America

To the
New York State Independent Redistricting Commission
Kings and Richmond County- July 29, 2021

To the Honored members of the Commission:

My name is Rabbi Yeruchim Silber and I serve as Director of New York Government Relations for Agudath Israel of America. Agudath Israel is a national advocacy organization serving the Orthodox Jewish community with headquarters in New York, an office in Washington DC, and eight regional offices around the country.

Rabbi Yeruchim Silber

I am here today to talk about the orthodox Jewish community in Kings County, its representation, and requests in the current redistricting process.

According to the most recent population study, the 2011 Jewish Community Study of New York, (https://www.jewishdatabank.org/content/upload/bjdb/597/JC_SNY-2011-Geographic-Profile-Report-All%20SectionsCombined-Rev-10-13.pdf) there were 609,200 people in 200,000 Jewish households spread over eight neighborhoods. In heavily orthodox Boro Park, the Jewish population was 78% of the total population, while in Flatbush/Midwood/Kensington the Jewish Population was 50% of the total. The 609,000 total Jews represented an 18% gain over the 2002 study, so with current population growth it is probably safe to say that in the ten years since the 2011 study there has been a similar rate of growth as the previous decade. In short, we are a thriving and growing community.

The 2014 proposition as voted upon by the voters of New York State calls for communities of interest which share social and economic interest to have effective and fair representation. There is perhaps no bigger community of interest than the orthodox Jewish community of Brooklyn. This a most unique community as almost all have the same religious practices, have similar modes of worship, all keep Saturday as an official day of rest where no work at all is allowed included even things like talking on the phone. The community are almost all

Rabbi Yeruchim Silber

consumers of exclusively kosher food, and the neighborhoods offer an abundance of kosher groceries, supermarkets and restaurants. The community is also well known for its benevolence with charitable organizations (almost all primarily funded through donations) for virtually every human need. These include, among others, a volunteer ambulance group, volunteer safety patrols, organizations that provide food packages for the indigent, *Bikur Cholim* groups who visit hospitals to tend to the needs of hospitalized patients and their loved ones, and burial societies. My own organization, Agudath Israel has an extensive community service division which provides job training and placement, housing services, health care advocacy and more. But perhaps most important nearly 100,000 students attend a network of schools called yeshivas at which students are taught a dual curriculum of both Judaic and Secular studies. It is this education system, more than any other reason that is largely responsible for the phenomenal growth of the orthodox community in Brooklyn and elsewhere.

However, when it comes to electoral representation, we have been treated as anything but a community of interest. The orthodox Jewish community in Brooklyn is divided into five congressional districts. Similarly, many of the neighborhoods are divided among several assembly districts. For example, the Flatbush/ Midwood area is divided into six Assembly districts. As a result of this marginalization, we have legislators who are not as familiar with these areas as they should be. They do not have their district offices in our communities, rarely visit, and

Rabbi Yeruchim Silber

ultimately are not able to provide the type of representation that this community should have.

And so we ask you, members of the commission to take this important community of interest into account when creating new districts. With the community needs growing and with anti-Semitism unfortunately on the rise, the orthodox community cannot afford to be sliced into multiple communities. Unless our communities have a larger and significant population in individual districts, we become marginalized and only serve as filler for other districts.

Thank you for your consideration.

My suggestion for the Independent Redistricting Committee – wishing you and the NYState (NYS) legislature a collegial and successful vital project in 2021 – based on my three (3) main focal points below, is: Do NOT effect any “redistricting”, or perhaps only a few nominal changes, since the Constitution and federal court cases “require states to redistrict based on each Census” – albeit apparently there is no stipulation as to the extent of redistricting. My reasons for a viewpoint of NO redistricting for NYS are as follows: >>> Background – the NYS population growth of 19.38 million in 2010 to 20.20 million in 2020, or only 4%, is not a Census imperative for redistricting; then too, the redistricting criteria of “community of interest”, striving for an equal number of residents per district, and maintaining contiguous areas plus pre-existing political subdivisions including counties, cities, towns, is an indication that existing districts should be maintained & not disrupted. >>> Challenges – the daunting tasks of analyzing the 26 U.S. House seats within NYS (*albeit reduced from 27 seats*), coupled with 63 NYS Senate seats (*complicated in the context of 62 counties and multiple “regions”*), further coupled with 150 NYS Assembly seats – is a dynamic favoring No redistricting beyond the existent structure. >>> Problematics – Lastly, the current structure of the NYS legislature, along with the various “processes” and sequence of steps for approval of a NYS redistricting plan, is fraught with a potentially contentious structure and convoluted steps toward approval, that a plausible outcome of the efforts by the Committee and NYS Legislature, is No final redistrict plan is achieved, in contravention of the U.S. Constitution and NYS Law – to wit: ● the approval of the Plan by the Commission of a vote by at least **7** Commission members (*with alternative methods*), and/or an approving vote of at least **2/3rds** of the members of both the NYS Senate & Assembly, can realistically be viewed as stale-mate stymied, e.g. possible contention among the Senate composition of 43 DEM and 20 GOP, and the Assembly composition of 107 DEM and 43 GOP. ● then, too, the questionable and laborious process “If the Legislature fails to approve the Plan, or the Governor vetoes the Plan, and an override by the Legislature fails” – and a 2nd Commission Plan is submitted for approval (*plausibly doomed to fail*) - an innocuous, “pipe-dream” (non-caustic dictionery), step is the vague last effort of “the Legislature shall provide amendments deemed necessary and, if approved, submit such legislation to the Governor for action on the measure” – wha-a-a? – say what? In conclusion, as first stated, I suggest NO effecting of “redistricting” for NY State. Thank you. Richard D. Schrage – Staten Island – U.S. District #11. NYS Senate #24, NYS Assembly #63.

August 10, 2021

To the redistricting board

I'm a life long resident of Brooklyn and I presently live at 1166 77th Brooklyn NY 11228. I'm writing to provide my input and offer suggestions about how my election districts should or shouldn't be redrawn.

My congressional district 11, for the most part, makes geographic sense except for the area of Stillwell Ave, 86th, Benson Ave and Bath Ave where the presently drawn lines skip over this area and move onto the next geographic area.

My state senate district 22 makes less geographic sense. The areas of Bath Beach, Gravesend and sections of Bensonhurst and Mapleton are left out of the district.

My Assembly district 46 makes the least geographic sense of them all and demands immediate attention and redrawing! The present boundaries skip over Bensonhurst, Gravesend, Bath Beach area, which are all attached and jump to Coney Island. This drawing makes no geographic sense at all! The present drawing connects 2 geographically separated areas and eliminates neighboring and connected geographic areas.

It is vital that the districts are connected to neighboring areas so that the representative can effectively represent these areas. The most dramatic example is the 46AD where our representative has to divide their time between 2 distinct and geographically separated areas which each have their own unique challenges and needs.

I thank you for your time and in listening to us the people for our input into this very important district redrawing.

Sincerely

Rocco Coluccio

Good afternoon, my name is Ronald Tawil. I am the Co-Chair of the Sephardic Community Federation, an umbrella organization that represents the Sephardic Jewish community in Brooklyn.

You have already heard from Jewish communities during your recent Queens and Manhattan hearings. While we are all one people, we have many different families, customs, and mores. I represent Sephardic Jews.

We are Jews whose ancestors originally came from the Iberian Peninsula, mostly from what it now modern Spain and Portugal who ultimately migrated to the Middle East prior to migrating to these shores in the early 1900's and continuing through the 1980's. Our Jewish observances and customs differ from other Jewish communities in Brooklyn where all levels of Orthodox observances are practiced.

Our community is quite compact and centralized, with borders generally following Avenue I to the north, Avenue Z to the South and bounded by McDonald Avenue and Bedford Avenues to the west and east.

Today's hearing offers us the opportunity to let you know about our uniqueness and to share our thoughts on how the Sephardic community could be best represented in the new set of congressional and state legislative district lines you are tasked to recommend to the state legislature.

In Brooklyn, over 600,000 Jews, including numbers approaching 100,000 Sephardic Jews, are currently living in three to four congressional, state senate and state assembly districts. It is our goal that the new district lines should reflect the rapid and expanding growth of the Orthodox Jewish population. In fact, many families are moving outside New York City because our numbers are so large and adequate housing is becoming harder to find.

The Sephardic community has resided in Brooklyn for more than 100 years. Unlike many other immigrant communities, we have chosen to remain in Brooklyn and not to relocate to other cities and states. Instead, over the decades we have built our businesses, and community facilities such as Synagogues, Yeshivas, community centers and social service organizations to meet our community's ever-growing needs.

The Sephardic Jewish community is in the 22nd State Senate District and the 45th State Assembly District. We are quite pleased with the current district lines and ask that they not be changed to the extent that is possible.

Today, Brooklyn's Sephardic families are split into three different congressional districts. We suggest that you include our community in two districts, most logically in the 8th and 11th congressional districts, as well as keeping our community in a single state senate and state assembly district.

Ronald Tawil

We are offering these suggestions to help ensure that our community is best represented by legislators who are familiar with our needs, interests, and family-oriented community concerns.

Thank you for giving us the time to present these concerns. We look forward to your draft maps in September and to provide further comment during your next round of hearings.

SACHIN BALDEO
Youth & Student Leader
[REDACTED]
Richmond Hill, NY 11419

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Consensus, consolidated testimony for the Independent New York State Re-Districting Commission

Please unite our communities of interest into one State Assembly, State Senate and Congressional Districts: Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park

Honorable Commission Members:

My name is Sachin Baldeo. I am 17 years old and I live with parents in Richmond Hill, which is part of the compact, **indivisible and contiguous neighborhood of Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park, as the map attached shows. These are natural and realistic boundaries.**

You don't need to be a demographic expert to appreciate what has happened here. Our district was cut up into 4 different Assembly districts to dilute and oppress us, bypassing natural boundaries, geographic boundaries and common heritage and culture. (Pgs. 1-4). The community of interest is on pg. 5.

In the fall, I will start my last year at Brooklyn Technical High School. I am involved in several extra-curricular programs at my school and in my community.

In my testimony here, I will express the common and widely held views of young people of my age who reside in this area. These views are also shared by the adults and parents who reside here.

I have always hoped that my immediate neighborhood should include where I live, where I go to school, where I go grocery shopping with my family or where we go to pray together. However, this is not the case, as our districts have been gerrymandered, sliced up and diced into fragmented and neglected parts.

For example, I have to take 2 trains and when the train has problems, an expensive cab, to get to school. It takes me over an hour to get to school, which is in another County (Brooklyn). This is because we have no specialized, nor credible High Schools in our area. Most of our resources go to other neighborhoods.

There is poor sanitation and other government services. Grocery shopping has to be done in another district. Worship is also possible only in another district. If we have a problem, we have to run to several different officials, because they are all located in different areas.

Each of these is in a separate Assembly, State senate or Congressional District, resulting in the most complicated, poorest local governance and service delivery we see anywhere in New York City.

Consequently, people do not even bother to get their problems and issues addressed, whether it be educational, medical, government services, or otherwise. They have given up.

Sachin Baldeo

Older people in the neighborhood compare this deprivation and state of affairs to the social, economic, historical and political suppression and situations they faced in their homes countries, which forced them to seek a better life in the United States.

This was the main reason they left and came here in the first place, only to face the same deprivation, suppression and denial caused by gerrymandering and the separation of our communities of interest of Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park into different districts.

This partition and divisions have had debilitating and trying consequences on us. The graduation rates for students at our sole high Schools-Richmond Hill High School and John Adams High School, is 54% and 71% respectively, way below the 84% rates state wide. Minority enrollment is 96% of the student body in both schools, which is higher than the New York state average of 57%. It is easy for you to understand why our morale is so low.

The reason for this is based on lack of resources, improvement and attention being paid to our community. Parents resign to a second class standard of education, but this is due to gerrymandering and isolation of our minority community. Hope is a scarce commodity after it was revealed that we suffered the highest infection and death rates during the recent pandemic.

Most of the students here or their parents are from Central and South America, Guyana, Bangladesh, Trinidad, India, Suriname, Jamaica, and can trace their roots to South Asia and Latin/South America. They live in Richmond Hill, Ozone Park or South Ozone Park.

In this entire area of over 500,000 residents, there is no community center and/or senior center, after school programs, skills teaching center and/or sports center. The facilities that are supposed to save us, cannot accommodate us all. We cannot help but feel ostracized in our own community, even with our dealings with law enforcement.

Although we have many self-sustaining places to worship, ethnic food stores and many family members here, we have nowhere to go for assistance with homework, academic guidance, counseling, vocational, play sports, or afterschool programs. On weekends, we usually have to leave the neighborhood to find anything useful to do with our time. Our libraries are overcrowded and need expansion. Public transportation can be improved.

Please help us attain a better life. We should not have to go to 4 different Assembly representatives (ADs 23, 24, 31, 38), 2 different State Senators (SDs 10, 15), or 2 Congressional Representatives to deal with issues like when both of our major high schools were proposed for closure, when we were designated the area with the highest COVID infection rates, when we are unfairly treated by the cops, when we need solutions to our issues and problems.

We need a district where the elected officials will be familiar with our heritage and culture, who are from this neighborhood and who will work with the community on our needs, e.g., get better graduation rates and help with homework, spaces for students to go after school, cooling centers, better police relations, minimizing hate crimes, and so on.

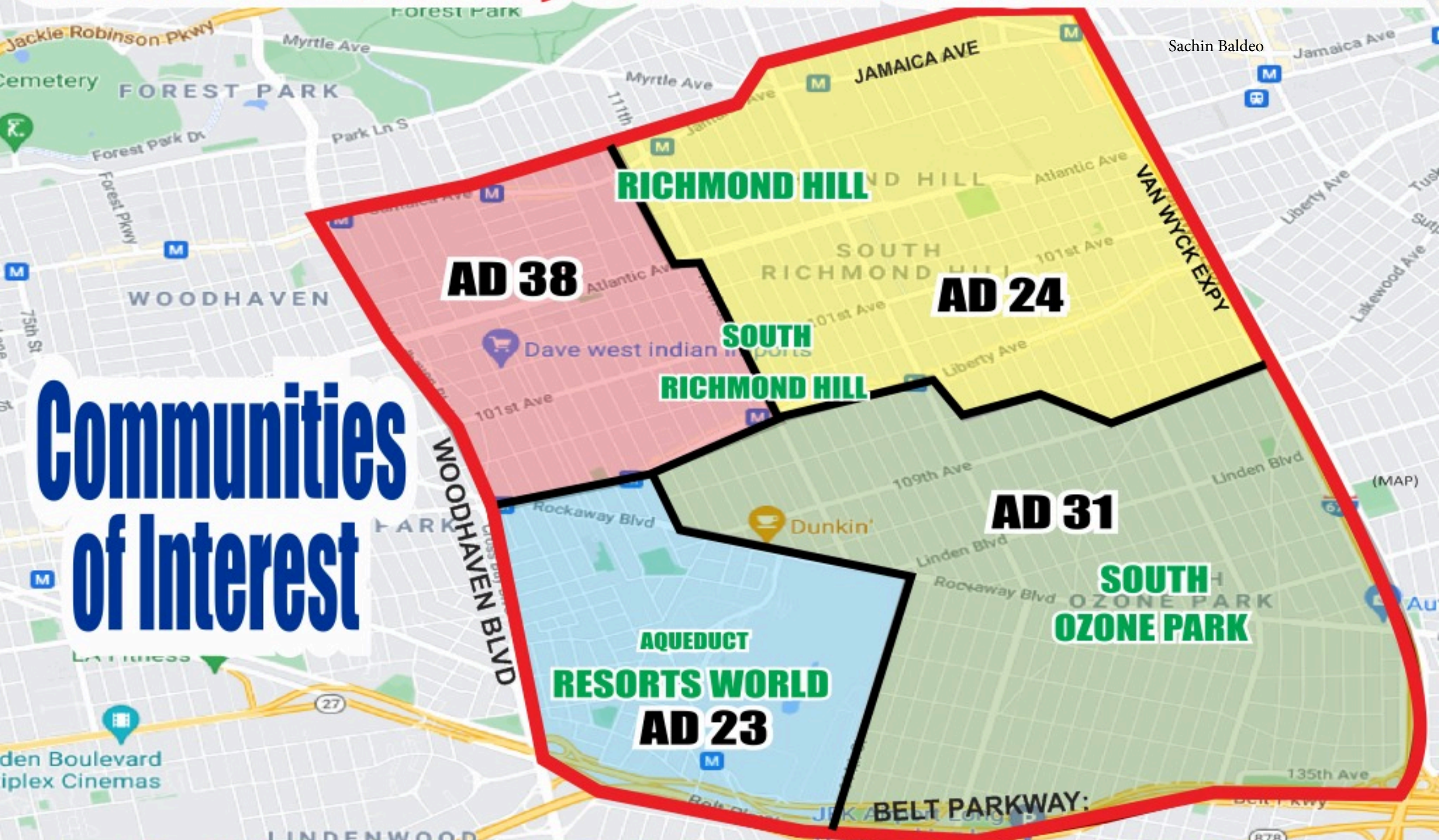
I strongly urge you to keep these neighborhoods together in a single district for the State Assembly, State Senate and Congressional Districts, in accordance with your mandate, conscience and duties.

Thank you for your courtesies and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Sachin Baldeo (Youth & Student Leader)

Unite RICHMOND HILL OZONE PARK, SOUTH OZONE PARK



**Communities
of Interest**

FAIR REDISTRICTING!

Testimony for the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

August 2, 2021

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

My name is Somia Elrowmeim . I'm the president of the Union of Arab Women of NYC. Union of Arab Women of NYC is a grassroots group that started in 2016 in south Brooklyn that aims to build a community of strong and empowered Arab women to resist oppression and fight discrimination in NYC.

Fair districts are the foundation for a fair political and social representation. We don't often draw fair mapping districts that reflect the community's common needs. We need to get this right because if we don't our communities will live with the consequences for the next decade.

Union of Arab women is collective group of Arab Women who lives in south Brooklyn in the heart of a heavily populated Arab and Muslim community. As a club who was birthed out of fighting oppression and discrimination, it is our duty to speak out against unfair redistricting. We've seen the impact of unfair redistricting on our communities. It has broken our communities into different districts that makes it very hard for our needs to be prioritized because our separation makes it harder to hold political weight. If we get broken up even further, then it will just continue to marginalize an already marginalized community. We have members from all over NYC and the potential for gerrymandering is a serious threat to our communities. Many of our members don't even know who they're representative is because that specific neighborhood was added to a district for no other reason but to please a certain political party. This must end. Communities with common interests and needs have to stay together in order for their needs to be met. I urge you to keep the Arab and Muslim community together in South Brooklyn. We are already divided in terms of assembly, state and

Somia Elrowmeim

congressional, we can't afford to be divided any further.

Well-drawn districts that keep communities like mine 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. It will allow for my community's needs to be prioritized by our elected leaders, resulting in better policy and budget outcomes.

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:

- More community education events and transparency.
- It cannot go unnoticed that this supposedly democratic process that will have an impact on all New Yorkers does not have translators to allow folks who speak English as a second language to share their stories. To fix that, we need translators and materials to be translated into different languages that all parties involved can understand and engage with.

Thank you for your time and I hope you truly consider the interests of the different communities who will be impacted by having their voices suppressed and separated in this crucial process

New York's 10th Congressional District is one of the most gerrymandered districts in the country. Parts of south Brooklyn, such as Bensonhurst and Bath Beach, have no business belonging to a district that also includes the lower and west sides of Manhattan. I respectfully ask that south Brooklyn, especially Bensonhurst and Bath Beach, be moved to another district that will better suit our needs.

-Stefano Ientile

Redistricting Testimony

From: Steven L. Gradman

Professor of Political Science at Touro College


Although I am currently live in the 9th Congressional district (Rep. Yvette Clarke), I used to live in the 7th Congressional district of Rep. Nydia Velazquez on the Lower East Side at 457 FDR Drive. I strongly believe that it makes sense to continue to have districts which cross the rivers that divide up our city. There's a lot of connections between the Orthodox/Hassidic community of the Lower Eastside and the Hassidic community of Williamsburg. There is also a strong connection between the Hispanic community on the LES and in Brooklyn.

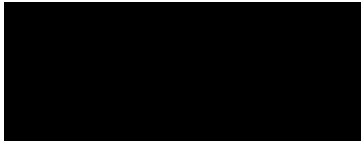
The Orthodox community on the LES has gotten a bit smaller. It no longer has any full-size kosher restaurants, supermarkets, or wedding halls. Many residents cross over the Williamsburg Bridge to avail themselves of these services. I've seen Rep. Velazquez speak at meetings of the Latino and Jewish communities on the LES. I've seen Rep. Carolyn Maloney, whose district includes parts of Brooklyn and Queens, as well as Manhattan, do the same. These veteran members of Congress work hard to represent all the different parts of their districts.

New York City was united into one large city composed of five counties by a referendum passed in 1898. By retaining these districts which run from one borough to another, the redistricting commission will help retain NYC as one united city.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Steven L. Gradman


Brooklyn, NY 11230



Map Submitted

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

Fri 7/30/2021 5:05 PM

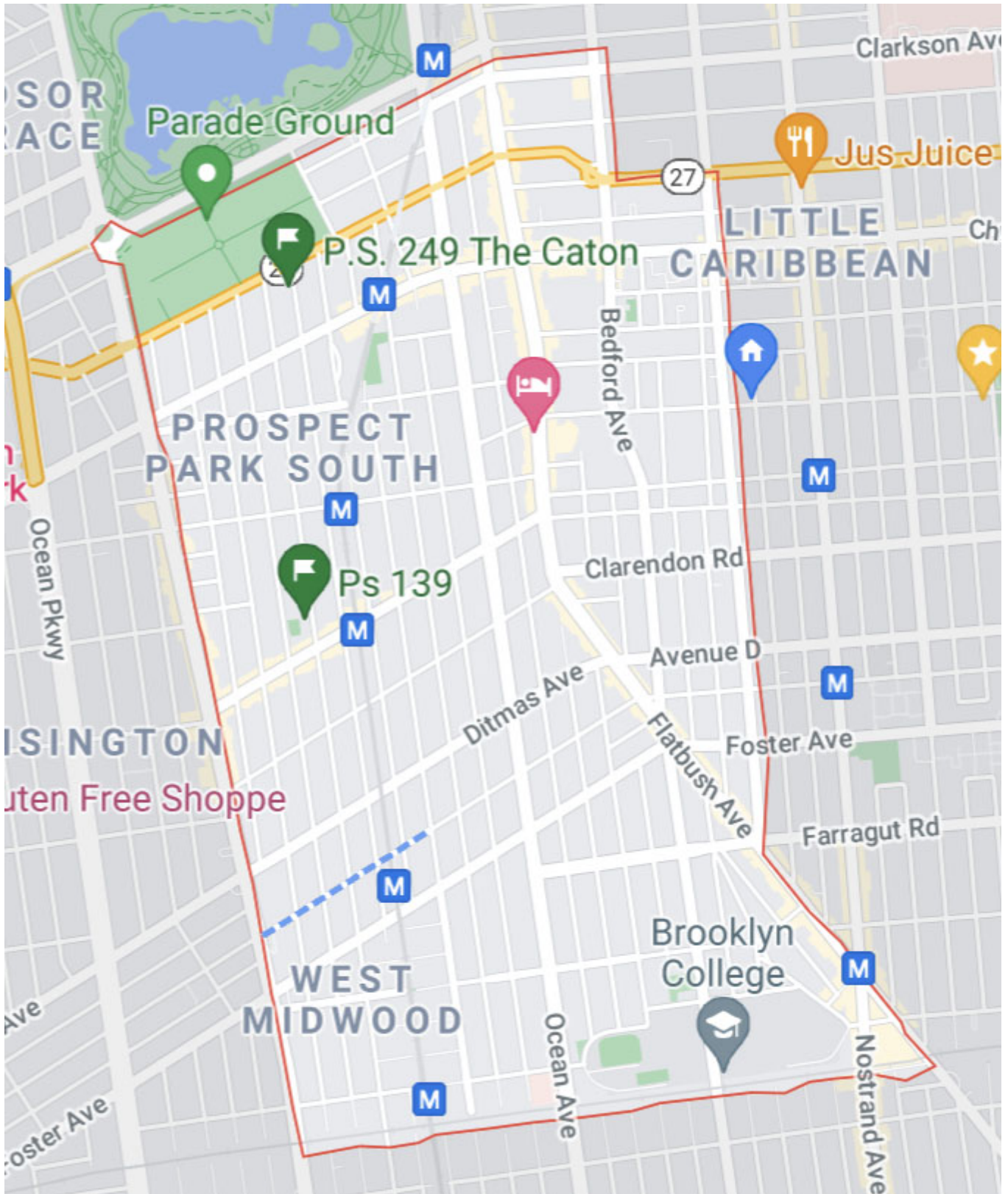
To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

Submitted Map

- **First Name:** Tamara
- **Last Name:** Thomas
- **Email:** [REDACTED]
- **Description:** Map of Flatbush clearly shows no greenspace infrastructure
- **Map File:** [Link to Map File](#)

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Public meeting

Theresa Bell <[REDACTED]>

Fri 7/30/2021 7:21 PM

To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

Good evening:

I am sorry I was unavailable due to time conflict I do want to say I am a city civilian employee in the NYCPD and I am also a long time resident in District 35 living in public housing Lafayette Gardens under the leadership of Laurie Cumbo the majority leader. As a tenant here over the years I do the census and pay my fair share of taxes I am an active member in my union DC 37 Local 1549 I am active in my community. For years Lafayette Gardens has been neglected and mismanaged I do not understand why this development is so ignored we are in need of repairs the elevators are always in need of repair landscaping needs to be done doors need to be locked. I grew up here from a child so I inherited my apartment when I lived with my mother and family so now I am the only left my brothers and sisters have moved on my mom passed in June of 2001. I decided to stay because this is home for me Lafayette Gardens used to be the coop of NYCHA the grass was cut and clean the maintenance staff worked smiled and was professional now the staff be on their cell phones are half skilled and lazy. I complain to NYCHA but nothing never gets done it hurts me to see the beautiful. Lafayette Gardens it once was is a wasteland we have a rat problem here due to the tenants throwing and putting garbage everywhere. The incinerator used to burn but since it stopped this has been a problem. The NYCHA problem is a city and community problem my favorite time here was Lafayette Garden day now we do not even have that we also have dirty scaffolds up that breed the rats and hide the garbage their is a work permit in the window of my building but I see no work being done the parks need to be replaced the benches are old and tattered but I see no work is being done we also have a closed health station it is sad that as a parent I have to find as well as the other parents have no utilized services here. We have a community center here which do offer programs and can be improved. As a resident here I want to see a dramatic overhaul I want the rumors to end is Lafayette Gardens for sale in rad or going to be a mixed income development the residents here deserve better and so much more the leaders in the district are a disgrace and do not deserve to hold office. Its time for change hope your business can help thank you for allowing me to respond. If you want to talk further about this matter my contact is [REDACTED]

Regards,
Theresa Bell



Testimony for the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

July 29, 2021

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

I am Theresa Thanjan, Senior Manager of Member Engagement, NYC at the New York Immigration Coalition. Our mission is **to unite immigrants, members and allies so all New Yorkers can thrive**. The NYIC is a part 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. Fair redistricting is critical to ensuring fair political representation and power for immigrant communities. The redistricting fight is Census 2.0— it's one of the major reasons why we fought so hard to get a complete Census count. The NYIC's work is guided by the following principles:

- Stop partisan gerrymandering: Communities must demand openness in the process so that districts are not drawn to protect incumbents & political interests.

- Protect minority voters & interests: Minority voters—including the 26% of New Yorkers who are immigrants—must demand that their voices are heard and their interests represented in this process.

I grew up and currently live on the North Shore of Staten Island and I would like to focus my testimony on the oddly shaped State Senate District 23. The way this district is currently drawn subverts the collective power of two communities of interest - Port Richmond and a large portion of West Brighton by cracking them. These areas are populated with growing numbers of Latinx, African American, and burgeoning immigrant communities. A well drawn district would keep these communities together so that they can advocate for equity and justice on issues such as affordable housing, healthcare and language access, education, and land use, as well as increased city services like sanitation and public transportation.

Senate District 23 also currently extends via a narrow corridor along the Belt Parkway to encompass sections of Brooklyn including Bath Beach, Gravesend, Brighton Beach and Coney Island. These communities don't share many common interests and needs with those on the North Shore of Staten Island and it doesn't make sense to combine them.

You have the power to provide a good redistricting process-- one that makes sense to community residents. Well-drawn districts that keep communities like mine 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. It will finally allow for my community's needs to be prioritized by our elected leaders, leading to better policy and budget outcomes.

These public hearings are a promising start, but I urge the IRC to help ensure that the entire redistricting process is a public and transparent one, as well as

Theresa Thanjin NYIC

one that includes community education and open meetings for which adequate notice and full accessibility for non-English speakers are provided.



**The Arab American
Association of
New York**

**Testimony of the Arab American Association of New York to the New York State
Independent Redistricting Commission**

Members of the Committee, Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My Name is Yafa Dias, and I am an Organizer with the Arab American Association of New York in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. AAANY is a member of the NYIC's Mapping Our Future coalition, a statewide coalition of advocates dedicated to mobilizing the grassroots to get involved in redistricting and advocate for a fair process and fair maps.

The work our organization does in our community to promote democracy and voter engagement is unique. We serve immigrants from all over the Arab world who, before coming to the United States, lived in places where the freedom to vote and to choose their own elected officials was something they simply had never experienced. It is an incredibly rewarding part of the work we do to introduce these people to democracy and to help them join in on participating in their government in a way they never have been able to before.

The redistricting process, and the districts are as they are now, are difficult for some of our clients to fully understand. This is unfortunate, especially given the fact that as they are now New York's Arab American community is largely disenfranchised--their ability to participate in democracy is diminished by the confusing boundaries within the neighborhoods we live in. According to the most recent American Community Survey data, Bay Ridge contains approximately 9,000 people of Arab ancestry. This represents 11% of the neighborhood's total population of approx



**The Arab American
Association of
New York**

80,000. According to tract-level data, the Arab population is concentrated in part of the neighborhood where the boundaries of three different Assembly Districts converge, resulting in the community being split between three different representatives. This results in our community being unable to elect candidates who share their experiences and who will prioritize their needs.

The district boundaries in Bay ridge are, at almost every level, textbook examples of gerrymandering gone awry. Our community is divided between assembly districts that reach as far north as Governors Island, and as far south as the southern half of Staten Island. Our state senate districts are worse, with our community gerrymandered into districts which weave their way across Staten Island and Brooklyn. I'll draw your particular attention to State Senate district 22 a district which is gerrymandered nearly block by block to wind its way across South Brooklyn with no discernible rhyme or reason with separate sections of it connected by long bridges of only one block wide. This is a district, much like many of the others our community is in, which could be put in a textbook next to the definition of gerrymandering.

We are not asking for anything crazy. We are not asking to have the Arab community carved into its own specific district to increase our representation: we are not asking for other groups in our neighborhood to be excluded from democracy. All we are asking is that the districts of Bay ridge be redrawn in ways to accurately reflect our community. We ask that our districts receive clear, easy to understand boundaries, and that partisan and political gerrymandering be eliminated from the electoral map.

TESTIMONY TO THE
NYS INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING COMMISSION
July 29th, 2021

My name is Yue Chen and I am a resident in Brooklyn for over 15 years and have been involved in Asian American community volunteer work for 5 years. I am residing at 8650 19th Avenue, Brooklyn NY 11214. I am submitting this testimony in support of the creation of a majority minority district with Asian Americans comprising the largest percentage of said district.

Currently there are over 675,000 Chinese Americans living in NYC and roughly 1 million Asian Americans. Although the population extends into every part of the city a majority live in just a several communities often described as a Chinatown. Two of those Chinatowns can be found in the historic lower Manhattan community centered around Mott street and growing. A second newer but fast growing community is centered around 60th Street and 8th Avenue in Brooklyn. This community continues to expand into Sunset Park and Bensonhurst sections of Brooklyn.

The Queens Asian American population extends from East to West and is well contained within the boundaries of the 6th Congressional District is over 40% Asian.

In Brooklyn and Manhattan the Asian population is very much split within adjoining communities by the 7th Congressional District and the 10th Congressional District. The 10th which is currently represented by Jerry Nadler is over 19% Asian American (mostly Chinese) with by far the greatest concentration within the Bensonhurst section of Brooklyn as well as the connector that runs through the 8th Avenue section of Brooklyn.

The 7th Congressional District which is represented currently by Nydia Velasquez is also over 19% Asian American (mostly Chinese) and contains the historic Manhattan Chinatown as well as the newer 8th Avenue Brooklyn Chinatown and the expanding Chinese community into Sunset Park, Brooklyn.

Using the 7th Congressional District as a base a 35% plus Asian American seat that respects community boundaries and in fact enhances the criteria of keeping communities intact can be created. This would be accomplished by taking sections of the 10th Congressional District contained in Bensonhurst, (mostly in the current 49th AD) and the 65th Street/8th Avenue connector and drawing them into the 7th Congressional District. It is important to note that not only would this improve keeping communities intact the referenced areas are contiguous to each other. And of course Asian Americans, a protected class, benefit significantly thus enhancing the possibility of fair and effective representation.

With minor adjustments of the current 49th Assembly District a majority voting population Asian American voting district can be created from the current 45% Asian American seat. This seat which will meet the compact criteria as well as being contiguous would come about by simply moving the new district line down to be consistently along 5th Avenue in the Sunset Park section of the 51st AD.

Best regard



Yue Chen
July 27, 2021

Brooklyn Asian Voice Organization (BRAVO)

My name is Yun Yun Li and I am one of the founding members of BRAVO. BRAVO stands for Brooklyn Asian Voice Organization and was founded in 2006. BRAVO is an organization dedicated to supporting and empowering the youth to be more active, more confident, and more invested within communities. Our office is in Sunset Park, where I also co-own multiple other local businesses.

I am a graduate of Seth Low Junior High School IS96 in Bensonhurst.

I lived under my parents roof as a teenager in Bensonhurst before I bought my home in Sheepshead Bay. My parents still live in that house. I continue to visit my parents weekly. I have witnessed Asian families continually move into homes on my parents' block over the past 10 years. That is, every time an old Italian neighbor puts their home up for sale, it is invariably an Asian family that buys the home.

I now live in Sheepshead Bay and commute daily to work in Sunset Park. When I first bought my home in Sheepshead Bay in 2000, I was only one of three Asian families on the block. Now, over half of the homes on my block are occupied by Asian families.

Driving to Sunset Park from Sheepshead Bay, I often pick up a colleague in Bath Beach as part of my car pool. Over the past 10 years, I have witnessed nearly all the two family homes on her block become occupied by Asian families.

I am here to testify that Sheepshead Bay, Homecrest, Bensonhurst, Bath Beach, and Sunset Park all share the common interests of language and food. These communities all offer various services in Chinese which is the primary language of elders in these neighborhoods. These elders also prefer eating Asian food which the restaurants in these neighborhoods serve, and the supermarkets in these neighborhoods provide.

As a property owner in Staten Island as well, I can also attest that Staten Island has little in common with Bath Beach or Bensonhurst. Staten Island does not have an abundance of shop owners who can speak the primary language of the large immigrant population in Brooklyn, nor are the types of businesses similar. Staten Island has very little in common with the Brooklyn neighborhoods of Bath Beach or Bensonhurst.

Thank you for your time.

Senate District 17

Kensington

Little Pakistan

KINGS

