

In Re City of New York 2022-2023 Districting Commission Bronx
Public Hearing
July 6, 2022

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CITY OF NEW YORK 2022-2023 DISTRICTING COMMISSION
BRONX PUBLIC HEARING

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149th Street, 2nd Floor
Bronx, New York

DATE: July 6, 2022
TIME: 4:05 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING in the above-referenced
matter, held at the above-mentioned time and
location, transcribed by Sabrina Brown Stewart, a
Notary Public of the State of New York.

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1 A P P E A R A N C E S:

2 COMMISSIONERS:

3 DENNIS M. WALCOTT, Chair

4 YOVAN SAMUEL COLLADO

5 HON. MARILYN D. GO

6 KEVIN JOHN HANRATTY

7 LISA SORIN

8 MONSIGNOR KEVIN SULLIVAN

9 MAF MISBAH UDDIN

10 MARC WURZEL

11

12 SENIOR STAFF:

13 ALI RASOULINEJAD, Chief of Staff

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1 CHAIR WALCOTT: Good afternoon to all
2 of you. It's a pleasure to welcome you to
3 the Bronx and Hostos Community College. I
4 want to thank our host today and also to
5 those in the room. I know that there was an
6 original posting of the other building and
7 now we are here and we have signage up, all
8 passing out flyer at the other building for
9 individuals who want to come and participate.

10 And also, I want to bid greetings to
11 our virtual audience as well. We will try to
12 maintain the same process that we've done
13 before in having in-person and virtual. And
14 if we don't have one, we'll go to the other
15 and stay with the other until we have all
16 people testify.

17 My name is Dennis Walcott and I'm one
18 of the Commissioners. And I'll ask Ali to
19 read the roll.

20 MR. RASOULINEJAD: Okay. New York City
21 Districting Commission Public Hearing of
22 July 6th.

23 Chair Walcott?

24 CHAIR WALCOTT: Here.

25 MR. RASOULINEJAD: Commissioner

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1 Collado?

2 COMMISSIONER COLLADO: Here.

3 MR. RASOULINEJAD: Commissioner Go?

4 COMMISSIONER GO: Here.

5 MR. RASOULINEJAD: Commissioner

6 Hanratty?

7 COMMISSIONER HANRATTY: Here.

8 MR. RASOULINEJAD: Commissioner Mateo?

9 (No response).

10 MR. RASOULINEJAD: Commissioner

11 Schneps?

12 (No response).

13 MR. RASOULINEJAD: Commissioner Wong?

14 (No response).

15 MR. RASOULINEJAD: Commissioner

16 Sullivan?

17 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Here.

18 MR. RASOULINEJAD: Commissioner Uddin?

19 COMMISSIONER UDDIN: Present.

20 MR. RASOULINEJAD: Commissioner

21 Schnall?

22 (No response).

23 MR. RASOULINEJAD: Commissioner

24 Johnson?

25 (No response).

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1 MR. RASOULINEJAD: Commissioner
2 Kirschenbaum?

3 (No response).

4 MR. RASOULINEJAD: Commissioner Wurzel?

5 COMMISSIONER WURZEL: Here.

6 MR. RASOULINEJAD: Commissioner
7 Porcher?

8 (No response).

9 CHAIR WALCOTT: And we know during the
10 hearing we'll have others joining us
11 virtually or possibly in person as well. And
12 so, as they join us, we'll make sure that
13 their attendance is counted as well.

14 With that being said, we want to jump
15 straight into it. And I'd like to call the
16 Councilman Shaun Abreu to the microphone.

17 Councilman, it's a pleasure to see you,
18 sir.

19 MR. ABREU: Good evening,
20 Commissioners. I am Councilman Shaun Abreu
21 from District 7 in Upper Manhattan.
22 District 7 is my home through -- I grew up on
23 161st and Fort Washington Avenue. I attended
24 Columbia University in Morningside Heights,
25 and today I live in Manhattan Valley. My

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1 family is spread from Washington Heights all
2 the way down to the Upper West Side, so I
3 feel at home everywhere and I don't want to
4 give up any part of my home.

5 Like so many District 7 residents who
6 have testified at these public hearings, I am
7 here today to voice for a districting outcome
8 that maintains the integrity of District 7.
9 This means there are two steps I'm urging the
10 Commission to take; keep the 150s and 160s
11 and Washington Heights as part of District 7
12 and assure them Washington Heights will
13 continue to have representation from two
14 members of the City Council as it's been for
15 decades.

16 Do not allow Broadway to split
17 District 7 with the southern end of the
18 district. Washington Heights has always been
19 represented by two councils districts. This
20 not only protects the voice of the slightly
21 marginalized community, but also resorts in
22 coordination and cooperation between the two
23 districts, ultimately increasing funding for
24 programs that serve constituents across the
25 district lines.

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1 If large portions of Washington Heights
2 were to be cut entirely from District 7, the
3 poverty and needs in District 7 would
4 increase dramatically, all while the voice
5 and influence of the people in the southern
6 part of the district decline.

7 District 7 is a beautiful mosaic, split
8 almost equally between black, Latino and
9 white people. Not for nothing, each of these
10 communities have had equal voice electing
11 their House members over the last decade,
12 finding unity in who they select to represent
13 them.

14 Removing large portions of the 150s and
15 160s, which fundamentally dismantles the
16 balance and deny representation to the
17 districts here. On the southern end of the
18 district, it does not make sense to divide
19 neighbors on either side of Broadway. Both
20 sides of the street are already united in
21 every way, except on the New York City
22 Council.

23 I, myself, live in Manhattan Valley. I
24 still go to Absolute Bagels on 108th and
25 Broadway and Metro Diner on 100th and

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1 Broadway, same as I did when I was a kid,
2 same as when I was a student at Columbia. I
3 still go to Riverside Park, all along with
4 the kids at the schools right along the
5 border of District 7 and District 6. These
6 institutions just west of Broadway feel very
7 much as part of District 7 as the area just
8 east of there.

9 Eventually, my family moved to the
10 Upper West Side. I went to Crossroads Middle
11 School on 109th. Every day after school, I'd
12 go with my friends to play and hang out at
13 Riverside Park, which is in District 6, not
14 District 7. I think it's time for that to
15 change.

16 While expansion of West Broadway is
17 likely inevitable for District 7, it is
18 crucial that the Harlem vote not be diluted
19 as well. For that reason, my hope is that
20 District 7 will at least -- (audio
21 malfunction) -- city college. Thank you. I
22 will also be submitting what I've said here
23 today.

24 Thank you so much.

25 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you,

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1 Councilperson. Thank you for coming out and
2 testifying.

3 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Chair, his
4 taste in bagel warrants a special note.

5 MR. ABREU: Absolute Bagels on both
6 sides of Broadway, go over there.

7 CHAIR WALCOTT: Both sides of Broadway
8 go for the same bagel. That's a great
9 comedy, I tell you.

10 Thank you, Monsignor and thank you,
11 Councilperson. Much appreciated.

12 Next, we'll have a virtual testimony.

13 MODERATOR: Althea Stevens.

14 CHAIR WALCOTT: Althea Stevens?

15 MS. STEVENS: I'm here. Could you guys
16 give me two minutes? Could the next person
17 go and I'll come right back? I'm sorry. Is
18 that possible?

19 CHAIR WALCOTT: Say that again. I'm
20 sorry. I couldn't hear you.

21 MS. STEVENS: I was asking could the
22 next person go and then you could call me
23 next?

24 CHAIR WALCOTT: Sure. Not a --

25 MS. STEVENS: Thank you --

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1 CHAIR WALCOTT: Not a problem at all.

2 MS. STEVENS: Thank you so much.

3 CHAIR WALCOTT: Next person.

4 MODERATOR: We have Valerie West.

5 CHAIR WALCOTT: Valerie West? I see --
6 are you there?

7 MS. WEST: I'm here.

8 CHAIR WALCOTT: There you go. Okay.
9 Valerie West, I think you're muted.

10 MS. WEST: Are you hearing me?

11 CHAIR WALCOTT: Now we can, yes.

12 MS. WEST: Okay. Good evening.

13 Greetings to the New York City Districting
14 Commission. My name is Valerie L. West, and
15 I'm the district leader in the 31st Assembly
16 District Part A.

17 The 31st Council District is part of my
18 representation. It is very important to keep
19 the council district as a whole. This
20 includes Arverne, Arverne By The Sea,
21 Brookville, Edgemere, Far Rockaway, Rosedale,
22 Laurelton and Springfield Gardens.

23 Last year, the State Legislature and
24 Congressional seats went through a
25 redistricting process, and we saw results in

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1 the last primary election, which was a
2 disaster that caused a lot of people not to
3 vote. They were displaced to other sites far
4 away from their homes and their regular
5 voting area.

6 We do not want that to happen with the
7 31st Council District. The 31st Council
8 District was drawn up in 1980 and has worked
9 well for all. I believe that our chosen
10 council members has the total amount of
11 voters in her district, and we do not want to
12 change that.

13 We have had many disasters, such as
14 Superstorm Sandy, Hurricane Ida and COVID.
15 And this incredible diverse neighborhood
16 worked closely together to overcome all
17 obstacles. We do not want to be separated.
18 It is important that the 31st Council
19 District stay as it is at present.

20 Much work has already been done, even
21 by our present council member, regarding the
22 JFK redevelopment project. JFK is a big
23 economic driver in the 31st Council District
24 and should remain in the district. We in the
25 Rockaways encounter all the health and

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1 hazardous problems from JFK, so it is
2 important that we reap some of the benefits
3 of having JFK Airport in the 31st Council
4 District.

5 I encourage the Commission to take heed
6 of my request as they continue their
7 districting process.

8 Thank you very much.

9 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you very much
10 for your testimony.

11 Glana Lina (phonetic), is it?

12 MR. LINER: Good afternoon. My name is
13 Sloan Liner (phonetic).

14 CHAIR WALCOTT: Sloan.

15 MR. LINER: I'm a resident of the Upper
16 West Side, and I'm here to testify regarding
17 the growth of District 7.

18 Because District 7 needs to grow, I
19 request that the Commission expands the
20 district west of Broadway and south of 109th
21 Street, to the extent necessary. I live on
22 109th Street between Riverside and Broadway,
23 right on the border between District 7 and
24 District 6.

25 The communities on each side of

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1 Broadway showed the same interest and needs.
2 We shop at the same stores, worship together
3 and volunteer together. The district line
4 currently separating us is entirely
5 artificial. Residents on both sides of
6 Broadway make equal use of Riverside Park.

7 My husband and I have been active
8 volunteers in Riverside Park for 27 years.
9 Our assigned site is actually just outside
10 the current southern boundary, but would be
11 included in the proposed expanded District 7.

12 Commercial corridor between 100th and
13 96th along Columbus Avenue runs through Park
14 West Village in District 7 and serves many of
15 the constituents in the adjacent parts of
16 District 6. Residents on both sides of
17 Broadway are invested in the success of this
18 commercial corridor. We shop there and we
19 work there.

20 Residents on either side of Broadway
21 take the 1 train and use the same exit off
22 the West Side Highway to get home. We face
23 the same sanitation issues, as evidenced by
24 our shared commitment to cleaning up Broadway
25 Mall and advocating for more composting.

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1 We're joined in our efforts to pursue
2 many shared projects, including the Park to
3 Park open streets that spans the entire
4 West Side down 103rd Street. We're all
5 threatened by overdevelopment in the rise of
6 super tall luxury buildings.

7 West 96th Street has historically been
8 a major west to east boundary. And as the
9 Upper West Side developed after World War II,
10 it served as a divider for real estate
11 activity. I remember how local realtors
12 defined the good part of the area as below
13 96th Street in the 1980s and 1990s. The
14 expanded districts proposed boundary would
15 more fully relate to the way the neighborhood
16 evolved when it was excluded from the more
17 valued real estate below 96th Street.

18 Finally, I'm also requesting that the
19 Commission ensure that the entirety of the
20 towers on River Park Complex on west 110th
21 Street be incorporated into District 7.
22 Currently, just one building is in
23 District 7, while the other is in District 9,
24 a split that does not serve the neighborhood
25 well.

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1 Thank you for the opportunity to
2 testify and support the proposed expansion of
3 District 7.

4 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for your
5 testimony as well. Much appreciated.

6 Next, virtual.

7 MODERATOR: We have Althea Stevens.

8 CHAIR WALCOTT: Althea Stevens?

9 MS. STEVENS: Hello?

10 CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes, we can hear you.

11 MS. STEVENS: Good afternoon. I'm
12 council member Althea Stevens of District 16
13 in the West Bronx. It is the honor of my
14 life to be the council member and represent
15 the people of this great district.

16 I'm here today to amplify the need to
17 keep communities together and make sure it's
18 more of a cohesive and complete district.
19 High Bridge is one of the neighborhoods that
20 was divided in the last redistricting. So,
21 when we're thinking about the expansion that
22 is needed in D16, I would love to see the
23 unification of that community.

24 I'm currently working very closely with
25 the current council member, but I do believe

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1 that unifying this district will greatly
2 benefit the district. However, with all the
3 uncertainty with the assembly district, the
4 State lines, I am requesting that we do try
5 to keep the rest of the district as much as
6 intact as possible.

7 So many people feel disenfranchised and
8 unable to really understand who their
9 representatives are because of all of the
10 changes with Congressional assembly and State
11 lines. It is important that we are working
12 to keep our communities together, so that we
13 are able to bring resources -- we are able to
14 bring resources and necessary funding that is
15 needed for the community.

16 So, when thinking about redistricting,
17 we must think about what is best to ensure
18 that our communities remain together and are
19 able to receive the proper support from their
20 prospective elected officials.

21 Lastly, when thinking about expansions
22 also looking at -- how do we make sure that
23 the Harlem River work with that? They're
24 doing so much work to make sure that they
25 have accessible waterfront access, that we're

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1 all working together to unify that work, and
2 so thinking about redistricting expansion and
3 bringing them all together, so we can do that
4 work together.

5 Thank you and a pleasure having me
6 speak today.

7 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you, Council
8 Member for joining us in your testimony.

9 Next in-person, William Stanford, Jr.,
10 the Five Borough Man, Mr. X.

11 MR. STANFORD: I just want inform the
12 executive director and the Chair who passed
13 as master P off address (inaudible) program,
14 also addressing this on the website. In case
15 you didn't know, that's not very slick.
16 That's a bad sign posting -- posted outside,
17 you post this on the website today, early
18 today. So, that's why any of us could have
19 come to that building first and this one
20 second; that's not very slick.

21 You changed the name of the website
22 before. In the future when you hold public
23 hearing, please start them after 6 p.m., not
24 before when people are still working because
25 if you do, this is what might happen. This

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1 is what happened in Brooklyn. Okay?

2 City Council Districts 7 and 10, this
3 (inaudible) 10th Avenue, Broadway Avenue to
4 18th Street, Brushton, from 10th Avenue to
5 Amsterdam Avenue, District 10, across
6 District 7, 218th Street, 196th Street,
7 West 19th Street, District 7, East Nassau
8 Avenue, District 6, if I could see through
9 the map.

10 At least the portion that start by
11 Brooklyn Avenue, (inaudible), above 218th
12 Street, going over the bridge, that folder
13 District 7. District 16, 149th Street to the
14 south, (inaudible) Street to the north,
15 Deegan Expressway to the west, past Third
16 Avenue to the east. Past East Third Avenue,
17 that's all District 17.

18 Washington starts at Third Avenue to
19 the west, Bruckner Expressway to the east,
20 132nd Street to the south, and possibly Hunts
21 Point Avenue to the north. I'd consider
22 doing that. It may be better off. 'Cause
23 I've stated before, you should do it by the
24 bus or -- that's the best way to draw the
25 maps. At lease with the maps, we'll know

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1 who's representing us. The choice is yours.

2 And please, in the future, you start
3 your programs after 6 p.m. and don't give us
4 two addresses because now you force us to
5 dance like a Rockette. I'm too big to dance
6 like a Rockette. I don't wear size four. I
7 got my sweet sizes 44 by 34, 48 by 30.
8 Anything under 44 won't cut it for me or my
9 body.

10 Thank you.

11 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you, sir.

12 Next, virtual.

13 MODERATOR: We have Bernadette Ferrara.

14 CHAIR WALCOTT: Sorry. I didn't hear
15 you.

16 MODERATOR: Bernadette Ferrara, but she
17 may have left.

18 CHAIR WALCOTT: Is Bernadette Ferrara
19 available?

20 MODERATOR: She's muted.

21 CHAIR WALCOTT: She's muted?

22 MS. FERRARA: There we go.

23 CHAIR WALCOTT: Okay. Welcome.

24 MS. FERRARA: I was trying to give you
25 the "hi" sign. I wasn't able to unmute.

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1 Good afternoon. Good afternoon --

2 CHAIR WALCOTT: Good afternoon.

3 MS. FERRARA: -- Commissioners. My
4 name is Bernadette Ferrara, born, raised,
5 educated and still living in Van Nest, a
6 diverse community in the East Bronx. Since
7 2008, I've served on Community Board 11
8 representing Van Nest, and am a founding
9 member and current president of the Van Nest
10 Neighborhood Alliance, formed in 2010.

11 Today, I speak as a lifelong resident
12 of Van Nest who has seen and experienced its
13 many changes. Van Nest's major community
14 goals include a community center, a middle
15 school, youth programs, senior programs and
16 more senior housing. Since 2010, Van Nest
17 has been divided with two City Council
18 members, two State Assembly members and two
19 State senators.

20 One would think having two pools of
21 fundings from each would benefit Van Nest,
22 but no matter how many discussions, meetings
23 and walk-throughs, these major goals have
24 never been initiated or funded by any of our
25 many elected officials. Van Nest sits on the

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1 fringe of both City Council District 15, City
2 Council District 13.

3 With half of Van Nest being only a
4 small portion of both, Van Nest has been the
5 low man on the totem pole, making it
6 difficult to grab for crumbs with our major
7 goals kept on the back burners. For example,
8 three other civic associations in the heart
9 of City Council District 13 have received
10 large donation checks over the years. Van
11 Nest Neighborhood Alliance is an active
12 501(c)(3) in its 12th years and has yet to
13 receive its first.

14 For the Van Nest community to move
15 forward and work towards receiving necessary
16 funding to achieve our goals, it must not be
17 split in half. We are asking the Commission
18 to consider these two items: Number one, the
19 area of Van Nest currently and City Council
20 District 15 needs to be united with the other
21 half of City of Van Nest currently in City
22 Council District 13.

23 The Van Nest community aligns with the
24 fabric of low density community issues
25 present in Community Board 11 and in the 49th

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1 Precinct, which are both located in City
2 Council District 13. Please see my attached
3 maps.

4 And number two, please unite the full
5 neighborhood of Van Nest, Morris Park, Pelham
6 Parkway, the majority of Bronx Park East and
7 the majority of Allerton in City Council
8 District 13. These communities currently all
9 work together in Community Board 11 and with
10 the 49th Precinct on common community
11 problems and events. Please also see those
12 maps attached.

13 I truly appreciate the Commission for
14 holding this final public hearing to receive
15 additional community input for the new New
16 York City Council District lines. Thank you
17 and please look at the maps that I have
18 attached. One is of Van Nest, our borders.
19 One is of Van Nest split in half and the
20 other is a map that was made with the proper
21 amount of voters for the new City Council
22 District 13 that fully includes Van Nest.

23 Thank you very much.

24 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for your
25 testimony.

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1 And just point of clarification: This
2 is not the last public hearing. We have one
3 tomorrow in Staten Island as well. So, just
4 for the audience, we are set for tomorrow in
5 Staten Island and Staten Island Borough Hall.

6 So, with that being said, next
7 in-person is Donald Dixon, is it? Did I say
8 it correctly?

9 MR. DIXON: You said it correctly. I'm
10 not ready yet.

11 CHAIR WALCOTT: Not ready yet. Okay.
12 Go to virtual. Not a problem. Take your
13 time, sir.

14 Next on virtual.

15 MODERATOR: We have Amanda Farías.

16 MS. FARÍAS: Hi, can everyone hear me?

17 CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes, we can. Welcome.

18 MS. FARÍAS: Hi, everyone. My name is
19 Council Member Amanda Farías. I represent
20 the 18th Councilmanic District in the New
21 York City Council. As of now, this district
22 consists of Castle Hill, Clason Point,
23 Harding Park, Parkchester, Unionport and
24 Soundview.

25 Redistricting is critical to democracy

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1 as it allows us to reevaluate how our
2 communities have grown and where our local
3 communities and economies are thriving.
4 Additionally, it enables us to determine if
5 communities need resources or reinvestments
6 as neighborhoods may be shifting.

7 A large amount of my district is
8 bordered by three bodies of water; the
9 East River, the Bronx River and Westchester
10 Creek/Hutchinson River. We are also bordered
11 by massive traffic thruways; the Cross Bronx,
12 Bruckner, Sheridan Expressways and the Bronx
13 River, Hutchinson River Parkway.

14 District 18 is a unique community
15 because of the consequences of Robert Moses
16 era, transit infrastructure, as well as the
17 incredible natural landscape we have on three
18 sides of the district. Clason Point, Harding
19 Park and Soundview are waterfront communities
20 that share the difficulties that come with
21 being adjacent to a shoreline.

22 In recent years, these neighborhoods
23 have seen increased resiliency efforts and
24 new transit infrastructure, including a new
25 ferry landing, the Soundview stop at Clason

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1 Point Park.

2 Harding Park is a community composed
3 largely of home and co-op owners, which
4 brings a uniqueness to the area. Harding
5 Park is also locally known as Little Puerto
6 Rico, kept by the local homeowners
7 association, shows off one-story homes in
8 bright island colors with generations living
9 within households.

10 Neighboring Harding Park is Shorehaven,
11 a private community with amenities, such as
12 full-time security, private playgrounds and
13 event spaces. The Shorehaven community is
14 home to home-owning families, seniors who are
15 lifelong residents and young renters.
16 Shorehaven and Harding Park have a very
17 familial relationship. And oftentimes those
18 in Clason Point, Castle Hill, Soundview and
19 Parkchester come to visit family and partake
20 in the community block parties and barbecues.

21 I know that as a little girl growing up
22 in Soundview, my cousins, friends and I were
23 always hanging out in Harding Park with
24 family. These communities have a long
25 history of interconnectivity that has

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1 afforded the larger Latinx and black
2 community members the opportunity to build
3 generational wealth. It is because of this
4 history that these communities deserve to be
5 kept together under the same district borders
6 and representation.

7 Castle Hill and Soundview share many of
8 the same attributes and struggles. The
9 population makeup is similar and housing,
10 health and transit conditions are all in need
11 of improvement. These neighborhoods have
12 both suffered from rapid divestment in the
13 1970s due to racism, growing poverty rates,
14 and citywide fiscal crisis. Much of the
15 white non-Hispanic population left, which
16 meant the majority of the neighborhood became
17 populated by working class, Latinx and
18 African-Americans.

19 Castle Hill and Soundview are home to
20 numerous different NYCHA complexes; Castle
21 Hill, Monroe, Sonia Sotomayor, Soundview,
22 Bronx River, Sack Wern and Clason Point
23 Garden Houses. Castle Hill and Soundview
24 have the same demographics, go to the same
25 grocery stores, play at the same parks, and

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1 even go to the same schools.

2 The way these communities have come
3 together to combat disparities and challenges
4 shows why it's necessary to keep both of
5 these communities in the confines of Council
6 District 18. District 18 is a black and
7 brown community with predominantly Puerto
8 Rican, Dominican, black African-American
9 families living here. But in recent years,
10 there has been a boom in Asian immigrants,
11 especially in Parkchester, which is reflected
12 in the 2020 census data.

13 The Bengali Bangladeshi community in
14 Parkchester, Unionport and the edge of Castle
15 Hill is one of the largest in the northeast.
16 This community has created a new cultural hub
17 on Starling Avenue that is centered around
18 serving their fellow immigrant neighbors by
19 creating a culturally relevant and
20 language-inclusive community center. This is
21 directly connected to the Parkchester borders
22 and needs to be considered while drafting new
23 lines.

24 The diversity of District 18 is what
25 makes it so unique and it's what binds all of

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1 us. Though we have different immigrant
2 communities coming from the Caribbean, Puerto
3 Rico and the Dominican Republic and now
4 Bangladesh, the entire community is able to
5 bond and be neighbors through shared
6 experience.

7 While many may have come to the Bronx
8 to be close to their families and friends,
9 they have made it their homes because of the
10 new community and chosen family they have
11 made here. I'm extremely proud to not only
12 represent such a unique part of
13 New York City, but also to be a product of
14 the culturally rich and family-centered
15 communities we have in Council District 18.

16 Thank you to the New York City
17 Redistricting Commission for convening all of
18 us here today and to everyone testifying
19 today for listening to one another and
20 advocating for your communities. I'm looking
21 forward to the next several weeks, hosting
22 some larger convening within my own community
23 to include their input as much as possible,
24 and ways to ensure that our communities
25 continue to thrive and grow together

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1 throughout this process.

2 Thank you so much.

3 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you, Council
4 Member as well. And thank you for your
5 testimony. Much appreciated.

6 Next, in-person is -- Mr. Dixon, you're
7 available? Thank you, Donald.

8 MR. DIXON: My name is Donald Dixon --

9 CHAIR WALCOTT: Can you just speak a
10 little louder into the -- yeah, that's fine.

11 MR. DIXON: My name is Don Dixon, MD.
12 District 9 and City Council 7, previously
13 with District Council 5, also school board --

14 CHAIR WALCOTT: If you could just angle
15 the mic a little -- there you go. Right
16 there, so that way we can hear you.

17 MR. DIXON: School Board District 5, 6,
18 7 and 8. I belong to a group called
19 (inaudible). Since 2015, we've been trying
20 to advocate to have more libraries throughout
21 the public schools in those districts that I
22 mentioned, the school districts. We don't
23 have any libraries in those schools, you
24 know, and when you (inaudible) -- now they're
25 called media sessions.

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1 When you have sessions you have to
2 suggest that they stay at home, having the
3 kids go home and play with their computers
4 but not have a media session to guide them is
5 one of the deficiencies.

6 So, we've been trying to advocate since
7 2015 to get more libraries in public schools
8 in the borough, just School Board District 5,
9 6, 7, and 8, they have a deficiency with
10 libraries in those schools. We've been
11 talking to our previous City Council person.
12 Now, its lines -- we have to start having
13 conversations with the new person in
14 District 7 that's within the district.

15 So, addressing problems with the
16 schools is important, you know. I'm a
17 graduate of a Boys High School in 1966, you
18 know. The year that I got out of high
19 school, we had seven kids go to Ivy League
20 schools, and I'm (inaudible) medicine
21 Columbia University. Many of my friends from
22 my '66 done similar things.

23 I know the school board in Public
24 School 125, 123rd Street at one point, which
25 used to serve Grant Houses. It was a sign of

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1 what we call (inaudible), Lauren Ritz, which
2 was the national middle school chess
3 champion, you know, because we've had changes
4 in City Council and (inaudible), you know, we
5 no longer had the advocacy of working with
6 City Council.

7 District School Board 7, they used to
8 have a program, a robotics in middle schools,
9 you know. That school has since lost that
10 robotics boost and also the School Board 5
11 have robotics program. That's not fair, you
12 know, and trying to get the New York City
13 Council person involved with that, involved
14 in all advocacies that will keep switching
15 districts and parents don't know who to talk
16 to.

17 Thank you for your time.

18 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for your
19 testimony as well.

20 And we've been joined in person by
21 Commission Member Lisa Sorin. Welcome.

22 COMMISSIONER SORIN: Thank you so much.
23 Love the idea of seeing all my Bronxites here
24 to testify today.

25 CHAIR WALCOTT: And I'm not sure if any

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1 Commission members have joined virtually yet,
2 but I know others confirmed as well, so when
3 they join, we will announce them.

4 Next virtual testimony, please.

5 MODERATOR: We have Andrea M.

6 CHAIR WALCOTT: Andrea Hem (phonetic),
7 did you say?

8 MODERATOR: Andrea M.

9 CHAIR WALCOTT: M. Okay.

10 MS. MCCLOUD: Good afternoon. Can you
11 hear me?

12 CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes, we can hear you.

13 MS. MCCLOUD: Hello?

14 CHAIR WALCOTT: We can hear you.

15 MS. MCCLOUD: Okay. Thank you.

16 Thank you for having this public
17 hearing. I want to say that my name is
18 Andrea M., Andrea McCloud, and I reside in
19 the Soundview section of the Bronx, which is
20 the 10473 zip code.

21 And what councilwoman, Ms. Fa -- I hope
22 I got her name correct -- Farías, had end up
23 speaking of. Yes, our area is extremely
24 diverse and I happen to love the area because
25 it is ever-changing. We have a mixture of

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1 NYCHA, private homes, condos, things of that
2 nature. And we also have an ever-changing
3 mall, the first Bronx ShopRite in the area
4 and a ferry. One of the things I do not like
5 because of the redistricting is now I'm not
6 able to vote directly across the street from
7 where I normally vote from.

8 Now, of course, I'm a younger person.
9 I'm thinking of the senior citizens who are
10 in my building who most certainly are not
11 pleased that now they have to walk all the
12 way over to Sotomayor, which is at
13 1000 Rosedale Avenue. But aside from that,
14 the former representation that we had was
15 Representative Torres. And now, I believe we
16 have Ms. Althea Stevens, who had an
17 opportunity to speak, as well as we've moved
18 from this -- excuse me, Senator Sepúlveda to
19 Ms. Biaggi.

20 Now, the problem that I have is, I'd
21 like to know why wasn't the redistricting
22 done in a proper form of including zip codes?
23 For example, Ms. Stevens covers the area of
24 Claremont, Claremont Village, Morrison
25 section. All of those areas are 104, 105,

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1 10 -- excuse me, 104, 5, 6. That's a huge
2 jump to move over all the way to 73. And
3 then -- so, that's the problem I happen to
4 have.

5 And also, there's another area --
6 there's someone else moving from the district
7 of 32 -- excuse me, Senatorial District 32,
8 which would be Sepúlveda, to Senatorial
9 District 34, which is covered by a
10 Ms. Alessandra Biaggi. Now, based on
11 Ms. Biaggi's background, at least she's
12 changing, someone is becoming a little
13 socialistic, and that has a lot to do with --
14 one, defunding the police and some other
15 platforms I don't necessarily agree with.

16 So, I think when it comes to the
17 redistricting, redistricting should be
18 involved in terms of a zip code. If -- as I
19 said before, if you're in 45, 46, you most
20 certainly could miss a jump to 66, 67, 68 so
21 on and so forth, as opposed to coming all the
22 way up to 73. Because those particular areas
23 are a little different, and I don't
24 necessarily see that this area would benefit
25 from the knowledge of previous

1 representation.

2 Our area is expanding, and it's a good
3 thing and a bad thing. For example, one of
4 the things that we happen to have is, we
5 happen to have too many shelters open to us,
6 as opposed, for example, Riverdale. I
7 believe now our area has between eight to ten
8 shelters.

9 Now, we're always told it's become
10 predominantly because majority of the people
11 formerly lived in this area, as opposed to
12 other areas. I find that kind of hard to
13 believe. And even if that is so, I think
14 there should be an even distribution of
15 shelters. And that may not necessarily be a
16 representation based off some of the
17 politicians who are at hand.

18 So, that's my highest concern right
19 now, is what I just mentioned, the area that
20 incorporates the diversity in terms of the
21 people, the diversity in terms of the
22 housing, but most certainly the problem that
23 we have in terms of sheltering; that's
24 something that I definitely am weighing heavy
25 on and I hope that in the future, in the

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1 extreme future, that this redistricting will
2 include zip codes closer to -- that is
3 relevant to the particular politician at
4 hand.

5 So, thank you again for listening, and
6 I look forward to a reply and continuing to
7 listen to others who are speaking as well.
8 Have a fantastic evening.

9 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you and the
10 same to you. And thank you for your
11 testimony.

12 But we are also joined virtually by
13 Commissioner Johnson, so welcome as well.

14 And next, we'll have another virtual
15 testimony and then --

16 MODERATOR: We have on Ronald Myers.

17 CHAIR WALCOTT: Ronald Myers?

18 (No response).

19 CHAIR WALCOTT: Ronald Myers?

20 MODERATOR: I think he may have left.
21 Jasmine Cordero.

22 CHAIR WALCOTT: Jasmine Cordero?

23 MS. CORDERO: Hello, yes. My name is
24 Jasmine Cordero and I will be speaking on
25 behalf of District 17.

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1 District 17 is an area that -- it's a
2 district, rather, that needs to be much
3 smaller. Currently, this district represents
4 Port Morris where the average rent for a
5 building is 2,100 a month. This district
6 cannot understand and fund the needs of Hunts
7 Point residents who are dealing with poverty,
8 when it's trying to sustain Port Morris,
9 which again, has apartment buildings for
10 2,100 a month.

11 This district needs to be smaller by
12 excluding Port Morris Avenue. This community
13 will be better understood and taken care of
14 financially if it is not in competition with
15 Port Morris, that has extremely high rents.

16 Thank you.

17 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for your
18 testimony.

19 Next, virtual.

20 MODERATOR: Next, we have Kevin
21 Livingston.

22 CHAIR WALCOTT: Kevin Livingston. Is
23 Kevin Livingston there?

24 (No response).

25 CHAIR WALCOTT: We'll come back to

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1 Kevin Livingston.

2 MODERATOR: Okay. Let's do Asha.

3 CHAIR WALCOTT: I'm sorry?

4 MODERATOR: Asha.

5 CHAIR WALCOTT: Asha?

6 (No response).

7 MODERATOR: Justin -- oh, I see Kevin
8 Livingston is here, he says.

9 MR. LIVINGSTON: All right. Good
10 afternoon, everybody.

11 CHAIR WALCOTT: And good afternoon to
12 you.

13 MR. LIVINGSTON: Good afternoon. Thank
14 you so much for having me. I'm Kevin
15 Livingston. I'll be talking about the
16 beautiful 31st District.

17 A little bit about me. I'm a lifelong
18 resident of Southeast Queens, in particular
19 Rosedale, Laurelton and family in Far
20 Rockaway. And when I think about the
21 31st District, one of the big things that
22 stands out to me is the family unit that we
23 have from Laurelton, Rosedale to our brothers
24 and sisters of Far Rockaway.

25 I speak about it from a personal level

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1 because when the pandemic hit, we was able to
2 sustain the senior citizens with healthy food
3 and items from our families in Far Rockaway,
4 to bring to the main land of Southeast Queens
5 to assist our senior citizens. So, that's
6 just one way that I feel like, you know, the
7 31st District is one, right, we look out for
8 each other.

9 Secondly is JFK. JFK should absolutely
10 stay in the 31st Council District. We should
11 receive all the benefits from the airport
12 because we're the ones who are dealing with
13 the asthma issues that are coming from the
14 fumes in these airlines.

15 And then, let me just talk about it
16 from, just from a resident standpoint living
17 in Rosedale and have my sleep broken every
18 other hour with the airplanes flying so low
19 over my house, that I have to shut my window
20 down, so which will prevent me from getting
21 fresh air because I want to get some sleep.

22 These are some of the things that we
23 should stay and keep in the 31st Council
24 District. And I feel that we have an amazing
25 council member. We have amazing legislators

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1 in this district that is moving this district
2 in the right direction. And I just hope that
3 you guys really consider keeping the 31st
4 together.

5 We are made of some beautiful black and
6 brown folks, and we also encompass our Jewish
7 brothers and sisters over in Far Rockaway and
8 in Laurelton. It is a beautiful district
9 that needs to stay together. And I work in
10 it. I raise a family in it. And I hope that
11 you guys keep this district together.

12 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you very much,
13 Mr. Livingston.

14 Next, virtual.

15 MODERATOR: Justin Castro.

16 MR. CASTRO: Hi, good afternoon,
17 Commissioners of the New York City
18 Districting Commission, and thank you for the
19 opportunity to speak. My name is Justin
20 Castro. I live in Marble Hill, which is in
21 City Council District 10, just one block
22 inward from the northernmost boundary of
23 District 10, and just shy two blocks from the
24 end of the Marble Hill neighborhood in the
25 Bronx.

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1 As a voter and resident in this area, I
2 appreciate the opportunity to share my
3 perspective on the new districts, on how the
4 new districts should be shaped for the next
5 ten years. I have lived in Marble Hill my
6 entire life. I was born at the Allen
7 Pavilion Hospital, right across the 225th
8 Street bridge. I'm civically engaged and
9 deeply committed to ensuring my community
10 gets the resources and representation it
11 needs.

12 The current council districts
13 representing our community are Districts 10,
14 11 and 14. Almost 90 percent of the district
15 is represented by District 10, which is a
16 district that has historically been a part of
17 Marble Hill's political identity, yet more
18 than a technical identity.

19 Many residents of Marble Hill have
20 strong ties in Manhattan, and I'm here to ask
21 that you unite Marble Hill into one council
22 district and that one council district is
23 District 10. While it can be argued that
24 having multiple council members can yield
25 more resources, just 10 percent of that

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1 population is split in two different ways,
2 including a housing development. There's no
3 rhyme or reason for this configuration, other
4 than viewing these communities as dispensable
5 scraps to make up the population in
6 neighboring districts.

7 I would like the Marble Hill
8 neighborhood to be kept whole within
9 District 10, which would require the moving
10 of its boundaries ever so slightly to allow
11 our entire community to be heard. This --
12 the Commission has this once in a decade
13 opportunity to fix this concern, and I hope
14 you do so when drafting your maps.

15 Thank you, once again, for taking the
16 time to listen to me and allowing me to be
17 part of this distinguished forum. Thank you.

18 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for your
19 testimony.

20 Next, virtual.

21 MODERATOR: We have Mazeda Uddin.

22 CHAIR WALCOTT: Mazeda Uddin? You're
23 on mute, I think. We see you, but --

24 MODERATOR: Mazeda, are you there?

25 CHAIR WALCOTT: She's there, but she's

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1 muted 'cause we can see her from here. I see
2 the mute next to her name.

3 MS. UDDIN: Hello?

4 CHAIR WALCOTT: Is that you -- yes.

5 MS. UDDIN: Hello?

6 CHAIR WALCOTT: No, that's someone
7 else, I think. That's her? Okay, I still
8 see the mute.

9 MS. UDDIN: Yes. Hello, are you -- I'm
10 okay?

11 CHAIR WALCOTT: Is that Ms. Uddin?

12 MS. UDDIN: Yes.

13 CHAIR WALCOTT: I'm sorry. Yes.

14 MS. UDDIN: Okay. Dear Honorable
15 Redistricting Commissioner, good evening and
16 I hope all is well. My name is Mazeda Uddin
17 and former commissioner under 3 Speakers of
18 the Board of elections. Now I am the newly
19 elected district leader in Part B of Assembly
20 District 24, and have been both an owner and
21 resident of Parkchester apartments for the
22 past two decades, which is 20 years.

23 There are 12,000 apartments in
24 Parkchester, which is largest apartment
25 complex, condominium in America. Since from

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1 1990 to 1999, there was a large influx of
2 Asian American population, specifically
3 South Asians in the Bronx, especially in the
4 Parkchester, Westchester Square and Castle
5 Hill areas by means of DV-1 and OP-1 lottery.

6 We are the highest English proficient
7 immigrants and we have made endless
8 contributions to make the Bronx and the
9 entire area as great as it is today.

10 As a mother of five beautiful children,
11 I started my activism journey many years ago
12 to introduce the Bengali language in New York
13 City and beyond. In addition, advocating
14 relentlessly for both Halal and Kosher foods
15 in New York City public school system.
16 Needless to say, my hard work, persistence
17 and advocacy have gotten both dreams of mine
18 accomplished today.

19 All five of my children graduated
20 P.S. 106 New York City public school, and
21 they always came back from school hungry
22 because there were never any halal options.
23 We can now say that change has come and this
24 is only the beginning.

25 Since 2006, I have been involved with

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1 AALDEF, A-A-L-D-E-F, and I strongly support
2 the Asian American boundary or redistricting
3 lines that AALDEF submitted for our community
4 of the interest. Asian Americans are a
5 protected group under the Voting Rights Act.
6 And thus, the City Charter requires that our
7 community have fair and effective
8 representation before preserving our
9 communities of interest.

10 Thus, the Parkchester, Westchester
11 Square, and Castle Hill communities of
12 interest should not be divided and kept whole
13 within one City Council district. In
14 addition, Asian Americans are the fastest
15 growing ethnic group in the country, let
16 alone the entire city. The City Council
17 lines should reflect this growth and thus the
18 needs of the fastest growing community in the
19 greatest city in the world.

20 As a longtime AALDEF volunteer and
21 founder of the South Asian Fund For Education
22 Scholarship and Training, I urge you to
23 please keep Parkchester, Westchester Square
24 and Castle Hill together as a whole within
25 one City Council district. Then, and only

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1 then, can my community truly rise.

2 Thank you. Be well and God bless. In
3 unity, Mazeda Uddin, in solidarity. My
4 daughter, who is a strict community member,
5 Jamilla Uddin. Thank you.

6 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for your
7 testimony.

8 In person, is it Edwin Torres?

9 MR. TORRES: Hi, good afternoon. I'm
10 Edwin Torres. I'm here from Washington --
11 from Hamilton heights. I grew up in Hamilton
12 Heights and I live there. I mean, I'm on the
13 community board, I'm also the president of
14 the Hamilton Heights Tenants Association and
15 a member of the Hamilton Heights Tenants
16 Association.

17 So, District 9, even though it is in
18 West Harlem, District 7's office is literally
19 across the street from my building. Yet,
20 many of my fellow neighbors, they get
21 confused 'cause they can see right across
22 from them, District 7, council member. They
23 think that's their council member but it's
24 not. It belongs to District 9.

25 To give you a geographic location, that

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1 is down on the hill on 141st where you
2 have -- it is a pretty big hill for our
3 community. Many of our folks, sometimes when
4 they go to vote, the elderlies, they can't
5 make it back onto the hill. I have to
6 transport them in my car, so they would
7 prefer to be on the other side of town.

8 So, the Commission's number one
9 priority it states that it is to keep
10 communities together. Currently,
11 West Harlem, 110 and 155th, roughly west of
12 Morningside, St. Nicholas Park and Jackie
13 Robinson, is split between two separate
14 districts, District 7 and District 9, as I
15 said.

16 Washington Heights, North 155th,
17 South Inwood is split between 7 and 10.
18 District 10 has a large population deficit.
19 In order to fix District 10, population
20 deficit to meet the number one priority is to
21 keep communities together. Washington
22 Heights between 155th and 165th currently
23 it's in District 7 and it should be moved to
24 District 10.

25 By doing this, this will allow

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1 West Harlem not to be split and tenants,
2 residents, would not be confused as to where
3 they vote. I think that keeping the, you
4 know, mantra of unifying communities, we
5 should be unifying these communities because
6 residents west of the hill, they just can't
7 vote. So, we are disenfranchising many, many
8 folks, especially the elderlies.

9 So, currently, we have two council
10 members that are split just by one block on
11 Amsterdam and we would like to see this
12 together. I'm here speaking for myself and
13 many of the other tenants that when we meet,
14 they get confused as to seeing the council
15 member across the street, yet they have to go
16 down that big hill -- that many of them do
17 not interact. Our lives, 99 percent of the
18 time, is north of the hill, and we would like
19 to see that change, so we can keep it
20 together.

21 Thank you.

22 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you for your
23 testimony.

24 Next, virtual.

25 MODERATOR: We have Corbina Bafford

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1 (phonetic).

2 CHAIR WALCOTT: Can you say that name
3 again, please.

4 MODERATOR: Yes, I think we may have
5 lost her, though.

6 Corbina Bafford?

7 CHAIR WALCOTT: I don't hear a
8 response.

9 MODERATOR: Let's try Fulvia
10 Vargas-De Leon.

11 CHAIR WALCOTT: Ms. De Leon?

12 MS. VARGAS-DE LEON: Hi, good
13 afternoon.

14 CHAIR WALCOTT: Good afternoon.

15 MS. VARGAS-DE LEON: Good afternoon,
16 Commissioners. Fulvia Vargas-De Leon on
17 behalf of Latino Justice PRLDEF, where I am
18 senior counsel.

19 For the Latino community, the Bronx
20 remains the center point of a thriving
21 demographic and is the only borough currently
22 with a Latino majority population. There are
23 currently eight wholly contained districts or
24 City Council Districts within the Bronx and
25 one additional district split between

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1 East Harlem and the South Bronx. Out of
2 these nine districts, Latinos are currently
3 the majority in six districts and the
4 plurality in two.

5 We would argue that Latino voters have
6 demonstrated their ability to elect
7 candidates of their choice in the Bronx and
8 any changes must not ignore the progress or
9 intentionally dilute Latino voters' ability
10 to elect preferred candidates in the coming
11 decade.

12 It is no surprise at this time that
13 given high rents in Manhattan have caused
14 boroughs like the Bronx to see an influx of
15 Latino residents from its surrounding areas.
16 Through its multiple crossings and blurred
17 boundaries, Upper Manhattan and the Bronx are
18 communities of common interests and these
19 artificial boundaries do not represent real
20 divisions.

21 Instead, residents of the Bronx and
22 Upper Manhattan are united and share means of
23 transportation from home to work, places of
24 worship, shopping hubs and family and
25 friends. In the last decade, they have also

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1 shared in voting for elected officials in
2 districts within both boroughs at both the
3 federal and state level.

4 We suggest District 11 no longer crack
5 the community of Wakefield and ask that they
6 unite the community of Bedford Park instead.
7 This district currently plurality Latino
8 should not avoid the growing Latino segments
9 of its surroundings by choosing to draw north
10 into Wakefield. Instead, we ask that the
11 district go south to 195th Street on its
12 easternmost border along Webster Avenue.

13 Further, we ask that your ranked
14 criteria of protecting communities of
15 interest be adhered to by uniting all of
16 Marble Hill in District 10. While Marble
17 Hill is politically part of the borough of
18 Manhattan, it's in every way a Bronx County
19 neighborhood. This community is currently
20 served by three different council members as
21 part of Bronx Community Board 8, has a Bronx
22 zip code of 10463 and is served by the 50th
23 police precinct in the Bronx.

24 This is, yet again, one of the wonders
25 of the political world in New York City,

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1 where Marble Hill residents voices are
2 divided and their electoral strength
3 diminished. With just four blocks moved into
4 District 10, you can unite Marble Hill. We
5 suggest going north to 230th Street, west to
6 Johnson Avenue and east to Exterior Street.

7 Lastly, we ask that the Commission
8 follow the current border crossing of
9 East Harlem into the South Bronx. These
10 communities have similarities and economic,
11 social and residential infrastructure, and
12 both are impacted by new developments and
13 gentrification.

14 These communities can harness
15 collective power on issues of asthma and
16 clean air, criminal justice, educational
17 equity, public and senior housing for the
18 majority of their residents. While wholly
19 contained districts in the borough are
20 preferrable to ensure community
21 sociopolitical ties aren't broken, this
22 crossing has political and social ties that
23 predate this Commission, and we ask that you
24 respect and maintain this majority Latino
25 district.

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1 As this Commission sets its dates for
2 local politics for the next decade, this
3 process shall fully account for and draw
4 districts that reflect the demographic growth
5 of the Latino community. We look forward to
6 the Commission's map release and further
7 engagement with the City's redistricting
8 process.

9 Thank you.

10 CHAIR WALCOTT: We lost a little bit of
11 what you said, but we got probably 98 to
12 99 percent of it. I know you'll be
13 submitting your testimony as well, so thank
14 you very much for your testimony.

15 Next, virtual.

16 MODERATOR: Next, we have Marisol
17 Duran.

18 CHAIR WALCOTT: Marisol Duran?

19 (No response).

20 CHAIR WALCOTT: Marisol Duran?

21 (No response).

22 CHAIR WALCOTT: Can we go to the next
23 one --

24 MS. DURAN: Okay. Sorry. Can you hear
25 me?

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1 CHAIR WALCOTT: That's okay. We can
2 hear you now.

3 MS. DURAN: Okay. Can you hear me?

4 CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes.

5 MS. DURAN: Hi, good evening,
6 Commissioners. I come before you tonight as
7 a constituent of District 16.

8 Earlier, we heard my council member,
9 Ms. Stevens, speak. And just so that the
10 Commissioners are aware, I am a part of the
11 Crotona Park East. Many of us in
12 District 16, we do not identify as the
13 West Bronx.

14 And mainly, what I wanted to talk
15 tonight with the Commissioners is a big loss
16 that we saw in our public park. Crotona Park
17 is the largest park in the South Bronx. It
18 borders districts with 15, 16 and 17, and --
19 15, District 15 and District 17, the council
20 members, they acknowledge that they share
21 responsibilities with Crotona Park.

22 However, many of us that live just
23 across the street from the park in
24 District 16, when we try to bring attention
25 and bring in improvements, we got ignored

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1 because, as Ms. Stevens has indicated on her,
2 you know, social media platform, Crotona Park
3 is not in her district, even though we live
4 across the street from the park.

5 So, I'm hoping that with these new
6 districting, it could be taken into
7 consideration those of us who rely on the
8 park. We've gotten ignored because the
9 council members, they don't either prioritize
10 or collaborate for improvements with Crotona
11 Park. And last month, we actually lost some
12 parkland for nonpublic use.

13 So, for the Commissioners, I want you
14 to pay attention to Crotona Park. You know,
15 please, we need a voice because the park, we
16 should be preserving our green space and we
17 should be having improvements that we haven't
18 seen in many decades.

19 That's all the comments I have for
20 tonight. Thank you.

21 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for your
22 testimony.

23 Next, virtual.

24 MODERATOR: Next, we have Barry
25 Weinberg.

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1 CHAIR WALCOTT: Barry Weinberg?

2 (No response).

3 CHAIR WALCOTT: Barry Weinberg?

4 (No response).

5 MODERATOR: Let's move on to Naida
6 Ryans.

7 CHAIR WALCOTT: Naida Ryans?

8 (No response).

9 CHAIR WALCOTT: Naida Ryans?

10 MS. RYANS: Yes, I'm here. Thank you
11 very much.

12 CHAIR WALCOTT: Welcome.

13 MS. RYANS: Thank you.

14 So, my name is Naida Ryans. I am the
15 parent coordinator at P.S. 151 in Woodside,
16 Queens from District 30 in Queens. I'm
17 testifying on behalf of our school community
18 whom we serve from the Woodside housing, and
19 I thank you New York City Redistricting
20 Commission for allowing me to speak.

21 Redistricting the community to the
22 district representative that serves our
23 schools would be of great benefit to our
24 school population. As a voter and resident
25 of the school community, I greatly appreciate

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1 the opportunity to testify and share my
2 thoughts on why I think it would be the best
3 to redistrict us to the district that our
4 councilwoman, like Tiffany Cabán, represents.

5 The current maps have affected our
6 school organization by not being able to
7 receive the necessary funding that could be
8 allotted to our school community for critical
9 resources that could be beneficial for our
10 families.

11 Their current representatives are that
12 lines -- that this line does not come into
13 our school community and see the work in
14 progress that we do for the students of our
15 population, also does not make attempts to
16 see what kinds of grants or resources that
17 their office can foresee to provide us, for
18 knowing that we served the community that
19 they represent, which is the same community
20 that we represent or serve.

21 I feel as well that since we serve
22 about almost 50 percent of Spanish-speaking
23 families that come to our school from this
24 community, it is important to have a
25 representative like the councilwoman of

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1 Tiffany Cabán who understands the language
2 and needs of our population.

3 So, I thank you again for the
4 Commissioners for taking the time to listen
5 to my testimony. I hope that you will take
6 these suggestions into consideration in
7 redistricting the line of the Woodside
8 housing community for a better representation
9 that will bring the benefits that are
10 necessary for our school population of P.S.
11 151, the Mary D. Carter school.

12 Thank you very much for your time.

13 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you for your
14 testimony and have a good evening.

15 MS. RYANS: Thank you so much.

16 CHAIR WALCOTT: Next, virtual.

17 MODERATOR: Olivia Witley.

18 CHAIR WALCOTT: Olivia Witman?

19 MODERATOR: Olivia Witley.

20 CHAIR WALCOTT: I'm sorry.

21 (No response).

22 CHAIR WALCOTT: If not, we'll go back.

23 MODERATOR: Magdamary Marciano.

24 CHAIR WALCOTT: Ms. Marciano?

25 MS. MARCANO: I am not here to testify.

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1 Thank you very much for the opportunity. Not
2 at this time. Maybe tomorrow while you're at
3 Staten Island. I'll formulate something
4 tonight.

5 CHAIR WALCOTT: Okay.

6 MS. MARCANO: So, thank you very much
7 for the opportunity.

8 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for being
9 a part of it, no matter testimony today or
10 tomorrow. Thank you very much.

11 Next.

12 MODERATOR: And Roxanne Delgado.

13 CHAIR WALCOTT: Roxanne Delgado?

14 (No response).

15 CHAIR WALCOTT: Roxanne Delgado?

16 MODERATOR: We can come back.

17 Anthony Del Orbe.

18 CHAIR WALCOTT: Anthony Del Orbe?

19 MR. DEL ORBE: Yes, good afternoon.

20 CHAIR WALCOTT: Good afternoon.

21 MR. DEL ORBE: Thank you for having me.

22 Thank you, everyone. I'm from Marble Hill,
23 zip code 10463, represented by three
24 different Council, District 10, 11, and 14.
25 I'm also a resident of the Marble Hill for

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1 about 20 years this years or so, also a
2 neighbor of Justin Castro.

3 I'm also a founder of a nonprofit based
4 in Marble Hill, Kingdom of Heaven Empire,
5 Refreshing Planet Earth. Within the
6 nonprofit, we deal with the food program,
7 green spaces and mental health. Most of the
8 programs are established in the community of
9 Marble Hill, so we serve the community as a
10 whole.

11 CHAIR WALCOTT: Could you hold on one
12 second, sir.

13 Is it Magdamary? Could you put
14 yourself on mute 'cause you keep popping up
15 and we can hear you in the background. Okay.
16 Thank you very much.

17 I'm sorry to interrupt you, sir.

18 MR. DEL ORBE: Yes. So, we serve the
19 community as a whole from Exterior, which is
20 where it splits with District 14 and 30th.
21 They're a split with District 10. Basically,
22 I would like to advocate for the district
23 lines to be united as one and represented by
24 District 10, which is the councilwoman who's
25 representing the majority of Marble Hill at

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1 the moment.

2 There is a lot of confusion, especially
3 at the Marble Hill Housing where one Council
4 represents three or four buildings and then
5 another one, one. And then the other Council
6 represents the rest of the development and
7 the rest of Marble Hill. So, it's just a
8 little portion which are represented by other
9 councilmen or women.

10 Basically, we would like for it to be
11 united. The community will benefit as well.
12 When it's time to also elect our elected
13 officials, the community is confused where
14 they got to go to vote, who is representing
15 them as well. Just to remove all the
16 confusion and to have people go to different
17 locations within Marble Hill to go and vote.
18 I think it would help a lot.

19 Thank you so much and enjoy. Thank
20 you.

21 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you, sir, for
22 your testimony.

23 Next, virtual.

24 MODERATOR: I'm going to try Barry
25 Weinberg again.

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1 CHAIR WALCOTT: Barry Weinberg?

2 MR. WEINBERG: Yes, hello. Can you
3 hear me?

4 CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes, we can.

5 MR. WEINBERG: Thank you. Apologies
6 for that.

7 I did want to start by thanking the
8 Commissioners, and the other members of the
9 public who've testified, for their time
10 today. My name is Barry Weinberg, and I've
11 lived in District 7 for the past 14 years. I
12 currently serve as chair of Manhattan
13 Community Board 9, which covers West Harlem.

14 I am here today to request that the
15 Commission meet its number one priority of
16 keeping neighborhoods and communities intact
17 by finally unifying West Harlem, defined as
18 the area between 110th and 155th Streets,
19 west of Jackie Robinson, St. Nicholas and
20 Morningside Park, intact.

21 This area is covered entirely in
22 Manhattan by Community Board 9, but currently
23 our district is split between District 7 and
24 a small portion east of Amsterdam Avenue is
25 in District 9. As a result, the areas east

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1 of Amsterdam in District 9 often have their
2 needs ignored. The current and previous
3 office, district office for the District 7
4 council member is, in fact, across the street
5 from buildings on Amsterdam Avenue and
6 West 141st Street that are in District 9,
7 which confuses many people. This makes no
8 sense.

9 The parks that I mentioned exists also
10 because of a series of natural cliffs and
11 bluffs that cut off West Harlem from the rest
12 of Central Harlem, so our neighborhood is
13 primarily oriented and transited vertically.
14 There are only five crosstown streets that
15 connect us to areas east.

16 I would also add that it does not make
17 sense to split the neighborhood of Washington
18 Heights into two districts. The number one
19 stated priority of redistricting requirements
20 for the Commission is to "keep neighborhoods
21 and communities intact." Nowhere in the
22 priorities is "give communities additional
23 council seats by splitting them between
24 districts" listed.

25 Because fragmenting our communities

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1 between districts undermines our
2 neighborhoods and communities. Fragmenting
3 does not empower our communities.
4 District 10 to the north of us has a serious
5 population deficit and it has been proposed
6 or discussed that Rangel Houses or Polo
7 Grounds be moved out of District 9 into
8 District 10.

9 This would not only keep Washington
10 Heights fragmented between 7 and 10, but it
11 would also fragment Central Harlem and
12 potentially undermine the maps confined to
13 the Voting Rights Act. The residents of
14 West Harlem District 9 are frequently
15 ignored, as I mentioned.

16 We have not had a council member from
17 District 9 attend the community board
18 meetings or even send a staff member, since
19 the departure of Inez Dickens. And
20 West Harlem is frequently left out of capital
21 projects for District 9.

22 So, I am requesting that the Commission
23 unify West Harlem, west of the parks into
24 District 7, one district. And if necessary,
25 to make the numbers balanced, move the

1 portion of Washington Heights that is
2 currently in District 7 to District 10,
3 thereby reunifying yet another neighborhood
4 and addressing District 10's population
5 deficit.

6 So, again, my request is that
7 West Harlem be unified under one council
8 district and that include all areas west
9 of -- you can think of it as St. Nicholas
10 Avenue or St. Nicholas and Jackie Robinson
11 and Morningside Park. But there should be a
12 fairly reasonable solid line that reflects
13 the natural bluffs that cut off West Harlem
14 from the rest of Central Harlem.

15 We attend, you know, the same schools.
16 We're covered by the same community boards.
17 We go to the same churches. It makes no
18 sense to split us between two different
19 council districts and leave some of us
20 without meaningful representation.

21 I thank the Commissioners for their
22 time today, and I appreciate the opportunity
23 to speak during this process.

24 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you for your
25 testimony.

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1 In person we have -- is it Alabudi MD
2 (phonetic)?

3 MR. MD: Yes.

4 CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes.

5 MR. MD: Good afternoon, everyone.

6 CHAIR WALCOTT: Good afternoon.

7 MR. MD: So, this is MD Alabi
8 (phonetic). I'm from District 18.
9 District 18 from Parkchester.

10 So, we already have all these
11 streets -- Soundview, Castle Hill, Clason
12 Point and Parkchester. This is part of
13 East Tremont, so my request is to refer to
14 the Westchester Square, those that belong --
15 especially if we're working on this side,
16 too, because it's South Asian, the population
17 are increasing in this area.

18 And this is the part -- if we can
19 include with this District 18, the
20 Westchester Square and Zerega, that will be
21 better for this community and we can work
22 together and improve our community.

23 Thank you.

24 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you for your
25 testimony.

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1 Next, virtual.

2 MODERATOR: Earnestine Temple.

3 CHAIR WALCOTT: Earnestine Temple?

4 (No response).

5 CHAIR WALCOTT: Earnestine Temple?

6 (No response).

7 CHAIR WALCOTT: We'll move on to
8 another virtual, and then we'll come back to
9 Ms. Temple.

10 MODERATOR: Let's do Ahnaf Alam.

11 CHAIR WALCOTT: Ahnaf Alam?

12 MR. ALAM: Hello, do you hear me?

13 CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes, we can. Welcome.

14 MR. ALAM: Hi. Good afternoon, all the
15 Commissioners. My name is Ahnaf Alam. I'm
16 the president of New American Youth Forum.
17 I'm living in Jamaica, zip code 11432, over
18 20 years. And this is the district heavily
19 with the South Asian population, including
20 Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani and other
21 countries.

22 We speak same language, we value, you
23 know, same culture. But over the years, we
24 have politicians, you know, divide us small
25 groups and there is no way we can have our

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1 representation over there. So, I'm asking
2 all of you, somehow you guys can create a
3 South Asian district while we can have our
4 voices to the underserved South Asian
5 community.

6 I appreciate your time and allowing me
7 to speak today.

8 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for your
9 testimony.

10 Next, virtual.

11 MODERATOR: We have Laurie Davis.

12 CHAIR WALCOTT: Laurie Davis?

13 (No response).

14 CHAIR WALCOTT: Laurie Davis?

15 (No response).

16 CHAIR WALCOTT: Go to another virtual.

17 MODERATOR: Linda Dada.

18 CHAIR WALCOTT: Linda Dada?

19 (No response).

20 MODERATOR: Let's move on to Andrea
21 Augustus.

22 CHAIR WALCOTT: Andrea Augustus?

23 MS. AUGUSTUS: Hi there. Can you hear
24 me and see me well?

25 CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes, we can both hear

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1 and see you. Welcome.

2 MS. AUGUSTUS: Awesome. Yeah, I don't
3 have anything specific to say about
4 districting today. I really just wanted to
5 be more involved in my local politics.

6 I'm in the Bronx, zip code 10458. I am
7 a teaching artist and recently -- I'm in
8 District 7, if that means anything to
9 anybody. Recently, my district had a
10 community resource fair, and it was okay, but
11 I feel like there should be more wellness
12 programming in my zip code in particular.

13 So, again, nothing specific in relation
14 to districting and zone lines, just any
15 access to resources and getting more local
16 leaders in our community resource fairs and
17 community centers and schools would be
18 awesome.

19 So, please feel free to connect with
20 me. I have a wellness company called Poetic
21 Black Gurl LLC. And I will put my
22 information in the Zoom.

23 Thank you so much for your time and
24 creating space for New Yorkers to talk about,
25 you know, what we want to see. Thank you.

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1 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for your
2 testimony. Much appreciated.

3 Next.

4 MODERATOR: Next, we have Mary
5 Sweeting.

6 CHAIR WALCOTT: Mary Sweeting?

7 MS. SWEETING: Yes, good afternoon. My
8 name is --

9 CHAIR WALCOTT: Good afternoon.

10 MS. SWEETING: -- Mary Sweeting. I
11 appreciate the opportunity to come before you
12 to talk about the concern that I have with
13 the redistricting lines being changed.

14 First and foremost, I'm a native New
15 Yorker, born and raised in Harlem. Lived in
16 the zip code of 10039, which encompass the
17 Polo Grounds on Eighth Avenue, which is now
18 named -- renamed to Frederick Douglass
19 Boulevard, going all the way down to 145th
20 Street and Frederick Douglass Boulevard.

21 I take exception to the fact that to do
22 the redistricting would take the line in such
23 a way that Central Harlem as I have known it
24 for all of my life -- and if I may add that I
25 am the mother of three children, also born

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1 and raised in Harlem, the grandmother of ten
2 children, and three great-grands. I resided
3 in an area on 146th Street and Eighth Avenue,
4 where my parents owned the Trelawny Bakery
5 for many, many years.

6 For those that venture to go over to
7 Bradhurst Avenue to go into the Colonial
8 Pool, which is now Jackie Robinson Pool,
9 these were stationed areas that were there
10 which would have automatically been labeled
11 as landmarks. After residing in what was
12 called 2735 Eighth Avenue, I left from there
13 and moved into the Polo Grounds, which was
14 formerly a baseball field. Most people
15 remember that.

16 I moved in there under the leadership
17 at that time of Male Mensi (phonetic), who
18 afford me to have my first apartment in that
19 development, so I moved in there like in
20 1968. And I do feel that to take the area
21 geographically of what the Polo Grounds
22 stands for, coming all the way down to
23 145th Street again is almost like servicing
24 the head of the body of the jurisdiction of
25 where the land falls.

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1 I am in opposition. The culture of the
2 community is already being damaged with so
3 many other things that are being changed.
4 Financially, we will not be looked at as an
5 area that's geographically flowing, so I take
6 exception to the lines that will cut into
7 removing the Polo Grounds from the district
8 as it currently exists, which is zip code of
9 10039 in what I call the village of Harlem,
10 which is Central Harlem.

11 Under the leadership of several of our
12 leaders right now, which happens to represent
13 us that look like us, there's a combination
14 of all types of people, especially within the
15 Assembly District and in the Councilmanic
16 District and in the Congressional District
17 and in the Senate District.

18 So, I object to anything that will
19 geographically change us in terms of our
20 culture. So, I stand on record saying,
21 please, do not do this. We have been
22 affected enough right now with all of the
23 other creations of things being moved in
24 terms of landmarks. I object.

25 So, please leave our district whole, so

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1 that we continue to strive with our families
2 and be able to pass down the heritage that
3 they have been accustomed to living with.
4 So, I stand firm on saying that I am more
5 than three scores and ten in age and then
6 some, and I have resided in the whole village
7 of Harlem, 10039, and have moved and
8 currently reside in the Esplanade Gardens,
9 and I've never changed my zip code and I've
10 been able to have a cultural continuation of
11 the people here, even with the gentrification
12 that looms over our heads.

13 So, from Eighth Avenue and 146th to
14 155th Street and Polo Grounds back to 148th
15 Street and Esplanade Gardens, I stand on
16 record saying I believe I speak for a lot of
17 people, that please do not cut us up and
18 dissect the head of our area in that manner.

19 Thank you for the time of listening to
20 me.

21 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for your
22 testimony.

23 Next, virtual. And we're waiting for a
24 council member as well. So, at this point,
25 we're going to take a ten-minute break. So,

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1 let us have a ten-minute break and then we'll
2 reconvene -- it's 5:25, so we'll reconvene at
3 5:35. Thank you.

4 (Whereupon, a short break was
5 taken.)

6 CHAIR WALCOTT: Hello, we're about to
7 reconvene. I'll give you all a moment to set
8 up. Take your time. Take your time.

9 (Brief pause in proceedings.)

10 CHAIR WALCOTT: Council Member Sanchez,
11 welcome.

12 MR. SANCHEZ: Thank you so much.

13 Good evening. My name is Pierina
14 Sanchez. I'm the City Council member
15 representing District 14 in northwest Bronx,
16 which encompasses the neighborhoods of
17 Kingsbridge, Fordham, University Heights,
18 Mount Hope and others, presently home to
19 about 170,000 people.

20 I want to thank the members of the
21 Commission and Chair Walcott for giving us
22 time to testify here today in the Bronx.

23 Since taking office this January and
24 opening a brick and mortar office in March,
25 we have welcomed in certain areas 2,000

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1 constituents. I'd wager this rivals many of
2 my colleagues, and to break that down a bit:
3 30 people, or 1 percent, have come by e-mail,
4 450 people have come in by phone, and 1,400
5 people, or 70 percent, have come in person.
6 That's right, 1,400 individuals have come to
7 our office this year in person, during the
8 ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

9 Allow me to place this in context.
10 First, the Bronx has the highest percentage
11 of residents without any broadband of any
12 borough. In our community, a digitally
13 divided community, it leaves those figures.
14 Next for 45 percent of Community Board 1,
15 language access is critical.

16 District 14 is over 70 percent Latinx,
17 including from the Dominican Republic,
18 largely Puerto Rico, Mexico and other
19 countries in central and South America.
20 20 percent are African and African-American
21 descent, 3 percent Asian and Pacific
22 Islanders.

23 In our district, 94 percent of
24 residents are renters. Our median worker
25 earns just \$21,000 a year, that's versus

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1 \$37,000, in one. And a full 33 percent of
2 our families live under the federal poverty
3 line. These realities, of course, as you all
4 know and as we all know, are reflective of
5 decades of racial disinvestment, block access
6 to wealth and opportunities for people of
7 color.

8 Yet, despite these disinvestments,
9 District 14 has been cohesive, we've move
10 together. Over the last ten years, there's
11 been a dramatic increase in the Latinx and
12 African and black populations. These
13 communities share languages, places of
14 worship, like Our Lady of Angels,
15 Kingsbridge, Islamic Cultural Center,
16 Burnside, schools, small businesses that
17 offer community service products and
18 healthcare providers that provide culturally
19 appropriate care.

20 Drawing new council lines means to
21 ensure that the power we see is not --
22 (disruptive noise) Latinx, African,
23 African-American communities. Communities
24 with common interests, protected common
25 interests.

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1 In my first six months representing
2 this district, coupled with my life living in
3 it and being born and raised in it, I know
4 that across these districts are aspiration
5 goals for betterment and advancement. Our
6 neighbors are enjoying the district and they
7 have been fighting for the Kingsbridge Armory
8 to complete the Aqueduct Walk.

9 This largely immigrant district coming
10 from the Caribbean and elsewhere, we study
11 together at Bronx Community College, at
12 Lehman College. And so, the struggles are
13 also struggles that happen together. We
14 learn languages together. We have so much in
15 common.

16 Thus, as the Commission commences their
17 initial drawing of the New York City Council
18 Districts, it is critical that the lines are
19 drawn to ensure that the powers of these
20 communities, communities of interests are
21 not -- (technical difficulties). As you
22 deliberate, please take into account turnout
23 rates differ by race, ethnicity, geography
24 and income.

25 We have neighborhoods right next to us

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1 in Riverdale, they're much, much bumpier and
2 we're very different. Lower turnout
3 demographics in communities of interest
4 cannot be paired with higher turnout rates
5 without diluting their power. Fairness must
6 be at the center of the redistricting
7 process.

8 Thank you so much for your service.

9 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you, Council
10 Member. Have a good evening.

11 Next, virtual.

12 MODERATOR: Roxanne Delgado.

13 CHAIR WALCOTT: Roxanne Delgado?

14 MS. DELGADO: Yes, Commission. Can you
15 hear me?

16 CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes, we can. Thank
17 you.

18 MS. DELGADO: Okay. Thank you so much.

19 Roxanne Delgado, founder of Friends of
20 Pelham Parkway, a social and environmental
21 justice group founded in 2017, one of the
22 only groups founded by a woman of color in
23 Community Board 11.

24 Pelham Parkway was the Congressional
25 District 14, but the north side was moved to

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1 the 15th. Pelham Parkway was moved into the
2 33rd Senatorial District from the 34th.
3 Pelham Parkway is in City Council 13 where
4 Latinos make up at least 40 percent of the
5 district and the black and brown community is
6 the majority, yet we are the silent majority.

7 As I stated, Friends of Pelham Parkway
8 is the only group in Community Board 11
9 founded by a woman of color, because of the
10 systematic discrimination that originates
11 from Bronx Community Board 11, run by certain
12 members of the Morris Park Community
13 Association.

14 This goes beyond race, but these
15 members are proud right-wingers, Trump
16 supporters and running the show, despite the
17 fact that the district is overwhelmingly
18 Democrats. This board intentionally did
19 not --

20 CHAIR WALCOTT: Can you hold on one
21 second for me.

22 MS. DELGADO: -- inform the community
23 of a planned homeless shelters in Bronx Park
24 East, yet are quite proactive when a facility
25 that they find undesirable is located in

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1 Morris Park or in pockets of segregated areas
2 in District 13.

3 The Bronx Times covered Community Board
4 11 targeting a black woman-owned business,
5 Kirvens, who was constantly targeted by board
6 members till she did a press rally with the
7 now current Mayor Eric Adams. Pelham Parkway
8 NYCHA is located in District 13 and in
9 Community Board 11, yet the board does not
10 discuss them in meetings. In fact, the board
11 has a history of standing against affordable
12 housing.

13 The previous and current borough
14 president's office refuses to address the
15 systematic discrimination within the staff
16 and the executive board of Bronx Community
17 Board 11, as well as most of the community
18 groups in District 13 have boards that are
19 not reflective of the demographics of this
20 district, which has disempowered people of
21 color.

22 They don't want us to lead but to
23 follow. In fact, the community board has
24 often shut down women of color in meetings,
25 including myself, which sometimes may be the

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1 reason why we have lower voter turnout here.
2 This is why I recommend Morris Park to be
3 moved into a neighboring City Council
4 District 15 or 18, so the silent majority can
5 finally speak and be heard.

6 I'm so sorry. I just wrote this at the
7 last minute. But we have a very serious
8 problem in the district, where the majority
9 is disempowered systematically and need a
10 changed. And hopefully you can redo the
11 lines where we can be empowered again.

12 Thank you so much.

13 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you very much.
14 And no need to apologize at all.

15 And also for those who are on the
16 virtual side of the testimony, can you please
17 stay muted until you're ready and consider
18 those who are testifying. So, if you just
19 stay muted until you're called and then we
20 can go from there. Thank you very much.

21 Next in person -- is it Michael Brady?

22 MR. BRADY: Good evening, Chair Walcott
23 and redistricting Commissioners --

24 CHAIR WALCOTT: Just lift the
25 microphone a little, so that way -- there you

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1 go.

2 MR. BRADY: How is that?

3 CHAIR WALCOTT: Perfect. Thank you.

4 MR. BRADY: All right. Good evening,
5 Chair Walcott and redistricting
6 Commissioners. Thank you for the opportunity
7 to speak today. I'm Michael Brady, Chief
8 Executive Officer of the Third Avenue
9 Business Improvement District in Bruckner
10 Boulevard Commercial Corridor, located in
11 South Bronx.

12 Collectively this organization provides
13 a voice for approximately 1,200 Bronx
14 businesses. Third Avenue BID is the Bronx's
15 oldest BID, maps one of the busiest
16 transportation centers, bringing over 350,000
17 individuals daily. In addition to leading
18 this BID, our organization has managed the
19 Bruckner Boulevard Commercial Corridor for
20 (inaudible) located to our south on the
21 Harlem River Waterfront for the past
22 six years.

23 In addition to those positions, I'm a
24 member of the Board of Corrections, Bronx
25 Chamber of Commerce and the New York City

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1 Hospitality Alliance, South Bronx small
2 business owner and 20-year South Bronx
3 resident.

4 Let me preface my testimony by stating
5 directly that the Bronx does care about
6 redistricting. We realize the impact and the
7 importance the process has on our
8 communities. It may not be evidenced from
9 the light feedback received by the Commission
10 via the web or twitter, but our people are
11 firmly committed to the process in ensuring
12 that the Bronx receives equitable
13 representation from City Council.

14 Equally, many Bronx residents work two,
15 three, four jobs. Notice I didn't say one
16 job. So, breaking away for a hearing or a
17 meeting, it's extraordinarily difficult.
18 This is not just the case for this
19 Commission, but with all of the governments
20 in the City of New York.

21 While the redistricting primer that was
22 released by this Commission is helpful, it
23 does not account for the information to be
24 easily received. There are broad assumptions
25 that regular day-to-day folks knows what a

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1 City Council is, knows the purpose of
2 government, and highlights the deep fractures
3 of our civic education system.

4 Additionally, the released primer does
5 not account for language accessibility, which
6 neglects a significant portion of our
7 population. Any document, primer or
8 otherwise, should be available in multiple
9 languages and disseminated not just over the
10 internet, but widely available via community
11 centers, senior centers and community-based
12 organizations, especially in areas where we
13 have limited to no -- that is correct, no
14 internet connectivity or accessible
15 technology.

16 As we continue to move forward in this
17 process, I would encourage the Commission to
18 explore and implement new ways to reach
19 communities. And we even encourage street
20 teams and door-knocking and -- (technical
21 difficulties) of our communities, onto the
22 process.

23 The Bronx has shared its southernmost
24 district with Manhattan for too long. It is
25 time for the Council to see this current

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1 split between East Harlem and South Bronx and
2 for a unified South Bronx Councils to be
3 established. When we present noncontiguous
4 lines based on population trends in a
5 5 percent deviation, it may look like it
6 works on paper, and the attorneys and the map
7 drawers who could sit at their base in
8 California, will tell us it works, but in
9 actuality, those services -- when you provide
10 services for one of those areas, whether it's
11 separated by borough lines, former or
12 otherwise, the other area is not adequately
13 serviced.

14 You see, you can't serve two gods, as
15 our Monsignor will tell you. You cannot
16 adequately and fairly serve two stated areas
17 with their regional ethnic and community
18 chair. The Bronx will no longer stand to
19 bear the brunt of redistricting for our
20 friends and colleagues in other boroughs,
21 like Staten Island. It is not fair and it is
22 not the spirit of our City Charter. I'll
23 wrap it up.

24 Over the course --

25 CHAIR WALCOTT: Finish your whole

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1 testimony. Give your whole testimony.

2 MR. BRADY: Over the course of the next
3 two weeks, you'll receive significant
4 feedback on the draft maps that you'll
5 present. I encourage you to consider that a
6 community such as ours that has long been
7 disenfranchised deserves a dedicated voice in
8 the City Council. A voice that can fairly
9 and adequately advocate for all our
10 residents.

11 During the next round of hearings, know
12 that we will have our own suggestions for the
13 Council maps, including whether to expand or
14 contract geographic areas based on population
15 trends and community context. In the
16 meantime, I would suggest that the Commission
17 and the speaker of the City Council implement
18 community training sessions, using Council
19 Member Sanchez's session that she just gave
20 two days ago as a model.

21 These sessions are vital and break down
22 very difficult information to digestible
23 bias, just as commissioners need to be
24 trained to understand this process, so too do
25 our communities, many of which do not even

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1 know that this process is taking place.

2 During a time when businesses,
3 neighborhoods and communities are under
4 constant threat as a result of inflation,
5 rising gas prices, failing consumer spending,
6 regulations, lack of public spaces, quality
7 of life -- the list goes on and on and on.
8 We cannot afford to gloss over outreach and
9 authentic engagement. We must use every
10 opportunity to realistically engage and
11 educate our communities to activate our civic
12 voice.

13 It's my hope that this freeze
14 conversation today continue a dialogue that
15 invests in our people as much as we invest in
16 our places. Thank you.

17 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you for your
18 testimony.

19 Next, virtual.

20 MODERATOR: Linda Dada.

21 CHAIR WALCOTT: Linda Dada?

22 MS. DADA: Good afternoon. I'm here.
23 I'm sorry. One moment.

24 CHAIR WALCOTT: No need to apologize.

25 MS. DADA: Hi, good afternoon. I'm

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1 currently a constituent of Queens Community
2 Board 12. And during the years of like 2003
3 and 2004, we -- I moved into a neighborhood
4 where about 20 homes were built.

5 Unfortunately, these homes were built on a
6 sewer line that essentially is on private
7 property. So, for the last 16 years, myself
8 and, like I said, the other 20 homes that are
9 affected by this issue, we're all on the same
10 sewer line and we're affected by flooding in
11 our basements.

12 We have contacted DEP. We've contacted
13 3-1-1. We've got no results, really, and the
14 only solution at the moment is for us to pay
15 thousands of dollars for a private sewage
16 company to help us assess the situation.

17 I'm sorry. One moment. I just want to
18 read something to you guys. Forgive me. I'm
19 so sorry.

20 The houses on 107th Avenue and 106th
21 Avenue are connected to a narrow pipe on
22 private land. The narrow pipe then connects
23 to the sewer, to the main city sewer line.
24 Due to this design, we have frequent backups
25 that basically flood basements.

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1 Since the houses were built, DEP has,
2 you know, collected sewer payments from us
3 through the water bill. And at the same
4 time, we're now responsible for cleaning and
5 maintaining those sewer lines on our own. If
6 we don't, then basically our homes would
7 always be flooded. Whenever we do contact
8 DEP, they refuse to assist with the cleaning.

9 Basically, we're just asking that the
10 City reevaluates the situation because,
11 basically, I found out today that the DDC is
12 actually going to be starting an initiative
13 where they're working on fixing the sewer
14 lines in Jamaica and in St. Albans. But in
15 our neighborhood, we were never told about
16 this. So, we don't really know how to go
17 about doing anything different from what
18 we've tried. We're just not getting any
19 results, and it is costing us thousands of
20 dollars.

21 We literally live like we're in a
22 third-world nation, but we live in the
23 greatest city the world. And, you know, many
24 of us are just at the point now where we
25 don't no longer know what to do, and we don't

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1 want to lose our homes to this flooding, you
2 know.

3 When these homes were built, the City
4 had to basically approve contracts to
5 basically say that they can build these
6 homes. And when we now are faced with the
7 problem because the main sewer line is on
8 private property, they don't want to help us.

9 Thank you.

10 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you for your
11 testimony. Now, what you were just saying,
12 is that for our written testimony?

13 MS. DADA: Can you say that again. I'm
14 so sorry.

15 CHAIR WALCOTT: Is that part of your
16 written testimony?

17 MS. DADA: Have I submitted a written
18 testimony?

19 CHAIR WALCOTT: What you just talked
20 about, is that part of a written testimony?

21 MS. DADA: No. No. No. I haven't
22 submitted a written testimony. I didn't --
23 this is my first time ever joining a public
24 hearing. So, I didn't know. I can submit a
25 public -- I mean a written testimony.

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1 Is that what I should do?

2 CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes, if you could do
3 that, that way in addition to what we've been
4 reporting, we would have your written
5 testimony as well.

6 MS. DADA: Okay.

7 CHAIR WALCOTT: We'll have something in
8 writing.

9 MS. DADA: Definitely. I will. And
10 should I also send it to the councilwoman or
11 is it just going to the public hearing
12 department?

13 CHAIR WALCOTT: This is just to us, and
14 so just send it to the districting committee
15 and Commission.

16 SPEAKER: Publictestimony@redistrict --

17 CHAIR WALCOTT: Publictestimony --

18 SPEAKER: @redistricting.nyc.gov.

19 CHAIR WALCOTT: @redistricting
20 committee.nyc.gov.

21 SPEAKER: Publictestimony@redistricting

22 --

23 CHAIR WALCOTT: @redistricting.

24 SPEAKER: .nyc.gov.

25 CHAIR WALCOTT: .nyc.gov.

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1 MS. DADA: Okay. Thank you. Thank you
2 very much.

3 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you.

4 Next in person is Dayano -- is it
5 Romano?

6 SPEAKER: Polado (phonetic).

7 CHAIR WALCOTT: Okay. I'm sorry.

8 SPEAKER: I don't have nothing
9 prepared.

10 CHAIR WALCOTT: No, that's okay.

11 SPEAKER: This is my first time here.

12 CHAIR WALCOTT: Welcome.

13 SPEAKER: Thank you. My name is Solato
14 Polado (phonetic). I own a house at 174th
15 (inaudible) Avenue. I don't know if you guys
16 are aware, but there's construction being
17 done by this guy where I live in this area,
18 in that street, and the one-way street that
19 belong to the 44th Precinct.

20 Months ago, I have been like trying to
21 call 3-1-1 and complain in regards to the
22 garbage from homes and a lot of stuff have
23 been going there. And, you know, they didn't
24 check them yet. So, this particular company
25 has been buying like people's houses around

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1 there and doing constructions, like five
2 times a week, seven times a week. And
3 supposedly he's posted outside, he takes
4 photo of the houses.

5 And the main issue that I have here is
6 on Thursday at like around two o'clock -- I'm
7 a police officers. I have been living there
8 since 2012. And I was sleeping because I was
9 tired, and I heard an explosion, kind of like
10 an explosion to me, and it was boom, like
11 really bad. The whole collapsed of part of
12 his property into the side of my house.

13 I can listen to the people like
14 screaming, you know. There's people that
15 work for him, he never like knocked on my
16 door. I have everything on video. I have
17 pictures. And he didn't have that -- how did
18 you say that? The small -- the part of the
19 safety job, you know. And then that's going
20 to make me very upset because further down,
21 like one person have the land, I believe it's
22 like 15, 16, number one of his construction,
23 he put that safety for that house.

24 And then further all the way down, like
25 before 172, he has another construction

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1 there. And he didn't do the safety. He
2 didn't do the safety of the house next to me.
3 He never sent me a letter saying that he's
4 going to start with construction and I know
5 that he doesn't have to ask permission, but,
6 you know, I pay taxes, too.

7 And my main thing is that I'm renting
8 the 1st floor. It was hit at that time when
9 this happened. My mom lives on the first
10 floor, and she's handicapped and has to stay
11 from the third floor. And then, you know, he
12 says to me that all of the permission that he
13 has, it's not like quite sure from the
14 Department of Buildings.

15 We get letter saying that he had
16 insurance, that he got around insurance. And
17 I called 9-1-1 and FDNY show up, the
18 Buildings Department shows, you know, and
19 start the construction. And then, we had
20 like a mandatory -- that he have to put in
21 the whole thing for my insurance company to
22 go in and then, you know, check if it's
23 safety for me to be there.

24 They put a partial back area on that
25 side, so we cannot go in. But, you know, the

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1 thing is like he doesn't care. He didn't
2 show up on Friday -- he show up on Friday.
3 On Saturday, he didn't show up. Sunday, he
4 didn't show up. The inspector from the
5 Buildings Department showed up. I'm going to
6 the store and I said, "What's going on?" And
7 then, he said that he's going to issue
8 another summon.

9 But at the end, I only see the
10 Buildings Department as the one with the
11 violation that they fix whatever they have to
12 fix. And to me, it's unfair. Because, you
13 know, the same way that he's trying to buy my
14 house at that test, I think it's him.
15 Because why you offer me this buying my house
16 and then two weeks after, this happened to
17 me?

18 It's like you pushing me. You trying
19 to pushing me, like to get me annoyed like to
20 sell it to you. I'm not selling my house
21 because no one can push me out of there. And
22 then, I'm upset because the neighbors say he
23 want officer to live in the City. I'm done
24 doing that. I've been doing that for
25 16 years. I've been a police officer for

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1 16 years living in the City.

2 So -- but I don't know what, you know,
3 what else to do. They're working now, but
4 they're taking their time. They're supposed
5 to fix the back because the back can collapse
6 in my backyard. And they just doing the
7 front. Why you're doing the front in the
8 meantime? Do the back. It's more dangerous
9 for me. I live there. And on top of that,
10 1480, it's a daycare and she have damage,
11 also.

12 Thank you so much.

13 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for your
14 testimony. And we have a couple of folks who
15 are part of the Commission who are from the
16 Bronx, so they may be able to give you some
17 guidance as far as different points to
18 contact.

19 Next is virtual.

20 MODERATOR: We have Earnestine.

21 CHAIR WALCOTT: Earnestine?

22 MS. TEMPLE: Yes, can you hear me?

23 CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes. Can you say your
24 full name, please.

25 MS. TEMPLE: I'm sorry?

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1 CHAIR WALCOTT: Can you say your full
2 name, Earnestine --

3 MS. TEMPLE: Oh, Earnestine Bell
4 Temple.

5 CHAIR WALCOTT: Okay. Thank you very
6 much. You're on.

7 MS. TEMPLE: Thank you, Commission.
8 Thank you, Elected Officials. I am an Harlem
9 resident, and I'm speaking on behalf of
10 remaining the district line, City Council
11 lines be unchanged. Washington Heights is a
12 wonderful cultural community with its
13 residents. Harlem is the same.

14 My community board is 9 and my district
15 is 7. We share so many ideas, but real
16 estate and who represents us with what has
17 just happened in the primary, June 23rd,
18 June 28th, you can see what happens when
19 things are changed without notification and
20 constant marketing. This would be an example
21 of what would happen in the City Council if
22 the proposal goes through and its
23 redistricting.

24 Barry Weinberg made it very clear.
25 Thank you. And also my neighbor who lives in

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1 Esplanade Gardens. We suffered and still
2 suffering COVID. So, people are getting back
3 on their feet, coming out, going to meetings
4 and communicating. We're not there yet.

5 We also have a primary coming up
6 August 23rd, Congressional and Senate, in our
7 communities. So, we've got a lot of learning
8 and understanding and identifying our local
9 elected officials and how they can best
10 service us.

11 Please consider what has happened
12 June 28th with people going to polling sites
13 that were wrong, through no fault of their
14 own, just bad marketing. And some feel it
15 was voters suppression. I want you to please
16 put all of the testimonies together, review
17 it, mark it so that we as constituents know
18 who represents us.

19 And in the case of Harlem, Washington
20 Heights, and further Manhattan, let things
21 remain the same. Thank you.

22 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for your
23 testimony.

24 Next, virtual.

25 MODERATOR: Joshua Clennon.

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1 CHAIR WALCOTT: Joshua Clennon?

2 MR. CLENNON: Hi, good evening. Thank
3 you for allowing me to testify today. My
4 name is Joshua Clennon. I'm born and raised
5 right here in Harlem, 140th Street and
6 St. Nicholas. I've been someone who've
7 worked in housing, affordable housing within
8 this community and served on Community
9 Board 10.

10 I'm here today to give testimony to
11 preserve the historical and cultural
12 integrity of the 9th City Council District,
13 which encompasses the historically rich and
14 world-renowned neighborhood that we
15 endearingly know as the Village of Harlem.

16 Harlem is bounded by the Hudson River
17 on the Harlem River and 155th Street on the
18 north, 5th Avenue on the east, Morningside
19 Park on the west, and Central Park North on
20 the south. The 9th Council District is the
21 only district in Manhattan with a plurality
22 of African-American voters.

23 From Polo Grounds to Central Park
24 North, the residents of Central Harlem share
25 unique interests, culture and history that

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1 cannot be divided. The Harlem community is
2 united in opposition to dividing any portion
3 of the existing district into a new district,
4 which would reduce or threaten the plurality
5 of African-American voters and further
6 marginalize a community that's still
7 grappling with the ramifications of
8 historically underinvestment and the
9 redlining of 1938.

10 So, I'm here today to continue to ask
11 this Commission to please preserve the
12 history and cultural integrity of the 9th
13 City Council District by preserving the
14 existing lines that are in place today.

15 Thank you.

16 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for your
17 testimony.

18 Next, virtual.

19 MODERATOR: Moire Davis.

20 CHAIR WALCOTT: Is it Mora Davis?

21 MS. DAVIS: Good afternoon. My name is
22 Moiré Davis, and I'm the board president at
23 Esplanade Gardens.

24 I'm here in opposition of the redrawing
25 of Central Harlem district lines by moving

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1 the Polo Grounds houses area into Washington
2 Heights district. I listened to testimony of
3 others and one person spoke about Port
4 Wash -- Washington Heights and Harlem having
5 its own unique cultural contribution style
6 communities. But we're one Harlem, but we're
7 still a different community.

8 I just would like to highlight that the
9 Polo Grounds is really a historical part of
10 Harlem. The Polo Grounds used to be a
11 baseball field, where they played baseball
12 and football. It was home to our beloved
13 Yankees, Mets, New York Giants. And it is
14 really a rich part of our Harlem culture.

15 Additionally, right across the street
16 is the Rucker Park, which is also a very
17 famous park where some of the best known
18 talents in baseball have come from. I'm not
19 sure why the City or electives are trying to
20 play politics with our community, but it
21 feels as if Harlem has become a chop shop and
22 just being broken off and totally
23 disregarded.

24 So, as a community, we're very much
25 opposed to that and we really would like our

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1 community to stay intact. There's a lot of
2 changes that everyone has had to endure and
3 embrace, but this is starting to get a little
4 ridiculous. And I hope I can be frank by
5 saying that it's ridiculous. Harlem is not a
6 chop shop. This is our home. The Polo
7 Grounds has been a part of Harlem forever.
8 Okay? 110th Street to 155th Street is known
9 as Harlem.

10 So, on that note, I would like to thank
11 you for the consideration. And I hope
12 everyone listens to the pleas of the
13 community because we live here and we do
14 matter. And thank you.

15 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for your
16 testimony.

17 Next, virtual.

18 MODERATOR: Alexis Saunders.

19 CHAIR WALCOTT: Alexis Saunders?

20 MS. SAUNDERS: Hi, can you hear me?

21 CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes, very clearly.

22 MS. SAUNDERS: Hi. I'm here with my
23 mom, Sandra Fisher, and she'll be the one
24 speaking.

25 MS. FISHER: Good afternoon, everyone.

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1 My name is Sandra Fisher, and I'm currently a
2 county committee member.

3 I was raised around the corner from
4 where I live now, and born, and that's in
5 Harlem. As they used to call it upon the
6 hills "Sugar Hill." And I have witnessed all
7 the changes, all of the dismantling in
8 Harlem, as well as -- especially in this part
9 of West Harlem.

10 I have worked very hard with my
11 district leader, Gricel Ortiz-Thompson, to
12 get our polling place moved from down the
13 cliff to a place that is easier for seniors
14 and disabled individuals in Hamilton Heights.
15 And it really doesn't make any sense the
16 parts of West Harlem -- to move any parts of
17 West Harlem into a district that is
18 90 percent Central Harlem.

19 The council members of District 9
20 didn't even visit the area or know the
21 problems. I, too, was born and raised, as I
22 said, in Harlem upon the hill, and I felt and
23 seen the changes that are disastrous to me.
24 My children were born in this area. I don't
25 see -- we are currently in District 9 and we

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1 should be in District 7, and it doesn't make
2 any sense. You keep -- they keep
3 redistricting lines, redistricting lines and
4 we find that we're in a place that we no
5 longer know, that we can no longer call home.

6 And if it was any other place, this
7 would not have been happening. We probably
8 wouldn't be having this meeting at this
9 certain time. But as we all know, this has
10 to cease. There was a time that -- when my
11 mother was good -- we could walk the street
12 and know who the assembly person was, or
13 their councilperson. They knew you by name.
14 Now, your councilperson might live up in the
15 Bronx. Who knows?

16 The way things is going, we have enough
17 things falling apart all over the world, all
18 over the country. And they just keep tearing
19 our little piece apart bit by bit and it has
20 to stop. And I'd like to give a shout-out
21 and say thank you to Barry Weinberg for his
22 piece that he's put in here, and he's been
23 here a while with us hanging in there and
24 helping a lot of us that did not know that
25 all of this was happening, the little piece

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1 of it. But now they have a larger piece of
2 it.

3 And it would also help our children
4 that's going to have to deal with this to
5 start listening a little more. And for you
6 as Commission and our council members, please
7 listen to the people that put you in the
8 office and stop worrying about the other
9 stuff that really doesn't matter because it's
10 too much happening now.

11 I thank you.

12 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you both for
13 your testimony and participation.

14 MS. SAUNDERS: Thank you.

15 CHAIR WALCOTT: Next, virtual.

16 MODERATOR: Joycilin Davis.

17 CHAIR WALCOTT: Joycilin Davis?

18 (No response).

19 CHAIR WALCOTT: Joycilin Davis?

20 MS. DAVIS: Okay. Now, you're hearing
21 me. Okay.

22 CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes, we could hear you
23 now. Ms. Davis, we heard you for a second.
24 Are you there?

25 MS. DAVIS: Yes. I am Joycilin Davis.

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1 CHAIR WALCOTT: So, Ms. Davis, if you
2 were talking before, we couldn't hear you.
3 Could you start from the beginning.

4 MS. DAVIS: Okay. I'm Joycilin Davis.
5 I'm calling on the behalf of the residents
6 and myself and the community at 106th and
7 107th Avenue in Queens, and the zip code is
8 11433.

9 We have had a problem been plaguing us
10 for years, and we are so frustrated with it,
11 with the sewer line. And it's a very small
12 pipe that they use to make -- to join over 22
13 houses. And because they put the sewer line
14 on a private property, we cannot get any help
15 from the City. So, we have to be paying
16 thousands and thousands of dollars for the
17 past years to be -- to be keeping our sewer
18 line clean.

19 And when it's full and overload, we
20 have a backup, the whole basement, everywhere
21 is pee and doo. And we cannot -- we are so
22 overwhelmed with this problem. So, we're
23 asking for help from the City, from the
24 government, Commissioner, we are pleaing to
25 you.

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1 So, that's my problem and our problem.
2 All of us are so overwhelmed with it, so
3 we're asking for help.

4 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you for your
5 testimony. While it doesn't fall directly in
6 our purview, we heard you and we will have it
7 officially in our recordings, and some of us
8 will follow-up with in different ways.

9 MS. DAVIS: Okay. Thank you so much.
10 Thanks.

11 CHAIR WALCOTT: Next, virtual.
12 Thank you very much.

13 MODERATOR: Melanie Dawkins
14 (phonetics).

15 CHAIR WALCOTT: I couldn't hear the
16 first name.

17 MODERATOR: I think she may have left.
18 LeClair Glover.

19 CHAIR WALCOTT: LeClair Glover?

20 MS. GLOVER: Yes, hello. Can you hear
21 me?

22 CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes, we can. Welcome.

23 MS. GLOVER: Okay. Thank you so much
24 for allowing me to testify today. I am a
25 resident of Esplanade Gardens, and I'm here

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1 today to register my opposition to the
2 proposed redrawing of Central Harlem district
3 lines by moving the Polo Grounds Houses area
4 into the Washington Heights district.

5 Harlem is a culturally rich area that
6 has had to fight to maintain cultural
7 identity. Ms. Davis just spoke about the
8 cultural significance of the Polo Grounds and
9 the Rucker Park area to our community. As a
10 child, I watched them take down that stadium
11 and constructing the current houses that are
12 there. My father used to go to the ball
13 games at that stadium, so it has a rich
14 history.

15 By changing these district lines, you
16 do a great disservice to the Harlem
17 community, robbing us of such a rich
18 historical essence. By moving these lines,
19 you will be changing the priorities of our
20 community by having non-Harlemites in
21 positions within our community's political
22 structure.

23 Moving those lines south will result in
24 further marginalization of the community with
25 people who would be more concerned with

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1 allowing developers like this, to projects
2 that may not be in the best interest of the
3 community at large. I'm by no means against
4 progress, nor am I against diversity. But I
5 am against the possibility of the priorities
6 of an already marginalized people being
7 minimalized. Our economic political
8 representation, social and civil rights are
9 being threatened with this proposed redrawn.

10 I sincerely ask that our community and
11 boundaries be respected and protected. It's
12 time for our elected officials to stop
13 playing politics using our own community as
14 pawns in a chess game. We're proud people
15 who deserve to have our boundaries respected
16 and protected. I implore you to leave
17 Central Harlem district lines as they are.

18 Thank you so much for the opportunity
19 to speak today.

20 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for your
21 testimony.

22 Next, virtual.

23 MODERATOR: Dr. Tawanna Gilford.

24 CHAIR WALCOTT: Dr. Tawanna Gilford?

25 DR. GILFORD: Hello?

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1 CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes, we can hear you
2 now.

3 DR. GILFORD: I'd like to thank the
4 Commission for organizing the forum. I'd
5 like to wish everyone a good evening. I will
6 not be long. I'd like to just state on the
7 record that I oppose the redrawing of the
8 lines.

9 I'd like to just express and restate
10 the sentiments that was expressed by Joshua
11 Clennon and Earnestine Bell Temple. I also
12 share those same sentiments, and you ask the
13 Commission -- why now? And I'd like for you
14 all to consider that, and ask that you all
15 reconsider redrawing the lines.

16 We are not yet out of the pandemic, a
17 pandemic that has ravished our community.
18 Harlem, we were one of the hardest hit
19 communities in the City, and we are still
20 struggling to maintain our footing as we
21 regain our momentum. And we are trying to
22 rebuild in the best way forward.

23 We are facing up to a 5 percent
24 increase in rent, and we are struggling with
25 how to keep our livelihoods balanced, with

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1 how to deal with the increase in pricing,
2 inflation, housing, food insecurities and so
3 forth and so on.

4 So, when you talk about redrawing our
5 lines, you are further adding to the
6 instability in this community, and we need to
7 ask -- why now? Can we wait? Is this
8 something that is of utmost urgency that we
9 need to further destabilize this community?

10 We have to think about the mental
11 health needs of this community and ask, will
12 redrawing this line help improve the mental
13 health stability of this community or will it
14 add on to the despair that people are
15 experiencing in this the community?

16 So, we have to think about what are
17 some of the things that we can table. What
18 are some things that we can maybe set aside
19 for the next two years as we stabilize our
20 people in this community, as we bring forth
21 more security, as we bring people to
22 wholeness and promote wellness in this
23 community, as we encourage and empower our
24 local elected officials and help them to gain
25 their footing and enrich them and fortify

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1 them, so that they can be stronger and better
2 leaders as we move through this pandemic.

3 Because our leaders need to be
4 empowered and if we reshuffle the deck from
5 right up under them right now in this moment,
6 that's going to add more and more chaos to
7 this environmental. So, I implore you,
8 Commission, I beg you from the bottom of my
9 heart, please do not add further instability
10 to this community.

11 This is one less thing that we need to
12 add. Let's think about how do we protect and
13 preserve the emotional wellness and the
14 emotional wealth of this community. Let's
15 not add one more thing to destabilize this
16 community and interrupt the progress that
17 we've made since March of 2020.

18 Let's help build back our community.
19 Let's build back New York City bigger, better
20 and stronger. Let's not further interrupt
21 and break up the whole puzzle that we have.
22 We don't need to break it into 1,000 pieces
23 when we're trying to create a bigger, more
24 beautiful picture.

25 And that's all that I have for now.

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1 Thank you.

2 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you very
3 much.

4 With the Commission's permission, just
5 for a point of information, I think, for the
6 public and those who are testifying, that it
7 is part of the Charter mandate that we go
8 through this process every ten-year, and not
9 necessarily with a goal of breaking anything
10 up. It's to take testimony and be fair and
11 factor that in, in our decision-making
12 process.

13 So, not just to you, but I also
14 remember someone who had testified earlier
15 about people may not be aware of what these
16 next steps are. And just for a point of
17 clarification, that it's part of a Charter
18 mandate based on the U.S. census and the
19 changing of the demographics and the
20 population in New York City.

21 So, those are the background reasons of
22 why we are going through this process and
23 then having the five-borough hearings to get
24 that input, and then we'll be going back out
25 again after the first map is shown, and then

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1 going back out into the community again, so I
2 just wanted to clarify.

3 Yes, Judge.

4 DR. GILFORD: Thank you. Thank you for
5 clarifying that, so then I'll change my
6 language as well.

7 COMMISSIONER GO: It's not just a
8 Charter mandate. It's a mandate over the
9 U.S. Constitution, that the whole principle
10 of "one man, one vote" is embodied in our
11 census that's taken every ten years. It's to
12 make sure that our votes matter in a
13 meaningful way, the same way for all
14 citizens.

15 And that in New York City, we've had a
16 tremendous growth in population over the last
17 ten years, and there's been a shifting of the
18 population. And in order to preserve
19 districts that makes sense to the people of
20 New York, we have to formulate districts that
21 not only preserve communities of interests,
22 but even out the districts so that some
23 districts are not many thousand people more
24 or less than other districts.

25 You know, there's a little leeway. We

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1 can't be depressed because we have to think
2 of the current, that there are interests that
3 are represented beyond sheer numbers. But we
4 do want to make sure that all of our votes
5 make a difference. And the only way we can
6 do that is to do redistricting in accordance
7 with the census, and the City Charter only
8 reflects our commitment to the one person,
9 one vote principle.

10 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you, Judge.

11 Next virtual testimony.

12 MODERATOR: We have Gale Brewer.

13 CHAIR WALCOTT: Council Member Brewer.

14 MS. BREWER: Thank you very much,
15 Chairman Walcott, and the entire Commission.
16 I am Gale Brewer. I represent the 6th
17 Council District and you probably know it
18 goes to 54th Street and 10th Avenue to above
19 Columbus Circle and then it goes all the way
20 up to 96th Street.

21 And the northern boundary on the 96th
22 Street side, it goes over from there up to
23 108th, 109th Street west of Broadway, that's
24 where it is now. And there's about 168,441
25 people; that was 2010. And now in 2020, as a

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1 result of the census, there are 181,437, so
2 obviously, it is over. And I believe we
3 could have a maximum of 177,000.

4 As a former borough president, I could
5 handle many people, but I understand that's
6 the max. So, as you know, I was in the
7 Council from 2002 to 2013, six council
8 districts. And at that time, it ran from
9 96th Street to 54th Street, very clean. 96th
10 to 54th; Hudson River to Central Park. I
11 can't remember if Central Park was in it, but
12 it is in the district now, and I think it
13 makes sense to continue to have one person in
14 charge of the park.

15 I want to tell you why 96th Street down
16 to the 50s makes sense as a district. Number
17 one, the Upper West Side is considered to
18 include that area, from West 96th Street to
19 West 59th Street, park to river.

20 Number two, just as an example, two
21 examples -- one is Lincoln Center. Right
22 now, part of Lincoln Center as Jazz at
23 Lincoln Center, the Columbus Circle area is
24 now in the 3rd Council District, where as the
25 entire campus is up in the 60s. It makes

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1 sense to keep them together.

2 Number two, there is a development in
3 the West 55th Street area called Harborview a
4 NYCHA development, and it is connected by
5 management to the development Amsterdam
6 Houses in West 64th Street. It makes sense
7 to keep them together.

8 We all know that the population in
9 Washington Heights has decreased, and so the
10 council districts in Northern Manhattan have
11 to be shifted southward, so I'm obviously
12 understanding of that. And I would hope that
13 the council district would go from 96th
14 Street all the way down to the 54th or 55th
15 Street, whichever works in terms of the
16 numbers.

17 I also want to just point out how --
18 something that points out the activism of the
19 West Side. I must admit until I looked at
20 the numbers, I didn't realize. I know that I
21 get called about everything under the sun --
22 birds flying out the window, somebody is
23 going to call me.

24 But in the 2021 primary election,
25 voters in the 6th Council District voted in

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1 numbers that were nearly twice the turnout of
2 the highest turnout district in the Bronx.
3 And in Manhattan, in the 6th Council
4 District, they had the highest turnout by
5 11,000 votes. Just to give an example. We
6 had in the 6th Council District, 39,399
7 votes. And the next highest was in
8 District 3 with 28. And in the Bronx, it was
9 like 9,000, 8,000, things like that. So, you
10 can see, it's the most active of the entire
11 city.

12 So, I think that the district they go
13 from West 96th Street to West 55th or 54th
14 Street, Central Park over to the Hudson,
15 obviously, below the Park might be Broadway,
16 makes sense. I, of course, am happy to
17 represent the current district, one that I
18 represented previously or a combination of
19 both. But I understand the maximum number of
20 people, 177,000.

21 I hope I've outlined an area that
22 people who live on the Upper West Side will
23 feel represents their geographic interest.
24 It is -- looks like just an area, but it's
25 very compact with a lot of busy people who

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1 like strong representation. I'm not sure
2 anybody else wants to represent them, but I
3 am delighted to.

4 Thank you very much, and I look forward
5 to seeing what we come out with in terms of
6 the maps. Thank you.

7 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you, Council
8 Member Brewer.

9 Next, virtual.

10 MODERATOR: I think that's all we have
11 for -- checking.

12 CHAIR WALCOTT: That is it for the
13 virtual as well as in person. Even though we
14 advertised to 7:00, so we should stay until
15 7:00. And we -- yes, Monsignor, please.

16 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Could we have a
17 clarification? Because Council Member Brewer
18 said something that we have not been
19 operating -- the population variation, she
20 said the highest you could have was 177, but
21 we have been operating, at least, is that you
22 can't have more than 5 percent of the lowest
23 system. She was using 5 percent from the
24 mead.

25 I would like opinion accounts as to

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1 what are the parameters.

2 SPEAKER: The deviations is from
3 5 percent from the lowest, it's 5 percent
4 from the mead, to 173 and change. It's not
5 always exact numbers.

6 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Okay. Did you
7 tell our mappers that?

8 SPEAKER: Who do you tell? There were
9 the deviation, deviations going from
10 5 percent below that to 5 percent above that,
11 so that our lowest is -- I'll get the figures
12 for you in just a sec.

13 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: That's not what
14 we talked about.

15 CHAIR WALCOTT: We'll clarify.

16 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: We were told if
17 one district was, let's say 4.2 percent
18 below, then no other district could be more
19 than 28 percent.

20 SPEAKER: Yeah, total variation has to
21 be within the 5 percent, correct. So, no
22 district could be 5 percent furthest from
23 where the lowest is. So, yes, you are
24 correct.

25 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Okay. Which is

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1 different.

2 SPEAKER: Yes. From what she said.

3 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Okay. Okay.
4 So, I think the public may not be aware of
5 that.

6 CHAIR WALCOTT: Okay. I mean --

7 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Somebody is
8 educating us on where the council line is
9 because that has tremendous impact in -- if
10 you accommodate some of the testimony, we
11 can't accommodate the other parts of the
12 testimony.

13 CHAIR WALCOTT: Okay. Duly noted.

14 COMMISSIONER GO: I'd like to add
15 something.

16 CHAIR WALCOTT: Sure, Judge.

17 COMMISSIONER GO: That's also due to
18 the recent State law that Governor Hochul --

19 SPEAKER: Right, the Charter for
20 which in the state --

21 CHAIR WALCOTT: 10 percent of
22 committee --

23 COMMISSIONER GO: It's narrow. And
24 with congressional districts, the U.S.
25 Constitution is power to the T, the variation

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1 is even smaller. We're talking about a
2 handful of people in congressional districts,
3 the difference is just a little -- which
4 makes it sometimes congressional districts
5 are very large with 70,000.

6 CHAIR WALCOTT: You know, the
7 10 percent and 5 percent discussion, I know
8 we had at our first meeting, and I believe
9 Marc raised that. And then we, as you know,
10 had consultation with the Law Department,
11 where it reinforce the 5 percent rule.

12 And I think, again, I hear Monsignor
13 getting the information out and having
14 consistency of information. And a dense city
15 like New York has always embarked on a
16 challenge, so we will find a variety of means
17 to reinforce exactly what it means.

18 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: So, basically
19 the 5 percent, you cannot have any one
20 district that is more than 5 percent
21 different than any other district. So, the
22 medium or the mead is not as low.

23 SPEAKER: It is the start. That is to
24 say that is the amount up or down, 173. But
25 correct, yes. If most of the districts --

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1 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Margin set
2 either went up a little or the --

3 SPEAKER: It affects all the districts.

4 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Okay.

5 SPEAKER: But also I'd like a point of
6 clarification, if the (inaudible) law came
7 in, our Charter system states 10 percent.
8 So, if she was referring to the Charter and
9 not looking at all of the laws from last
10 fall, that might be where her numbers came
11 from.

12 CHAIR WALCOTT: I think that also goes
13 to Monsignor's point about just informing
14 people as they move forward -- as we move
15 forward. Because you may have a new, based
16 on the facts of what was in place. And I
17 think our current debate that took place on
18 our first day at the City Planning Office,
19 and what we still have to then reinforce with
20 the public, as well as with us, as far as
21 having that consistency of information.

22 One more?

23 MODERATOR: Yes, we have Michael
24 Beltzer.

25 CHAIR WALCOTT: Michael Beltzer?

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1 MR. BELTZER: Good evening,
2 Commissioners. Thank you so much for taking
3 the time to really be thoughtful and
4 intentional with what you're doing here.

5 I am here to talk about Council
6 District 18. I believe it is one of the
7 better drawn district in the whole city. And
8 Council District 18 primarily falls within
9 the Southeast Bronx between the Bronx River,
10 the Long Island Sound, Westchester Creek and
11 East Tremont Avenue. This brings together a
12 district that is 98 percent black and brown
13 and that should stay.

14 I think it does a good job of bringing
15 together a lot of core constituencies,
16 especially in the Parkchester, Union Port and
17 Zerega area with the Bengali community, that
18 should not be broken up. And I think, you
19 know, basically, it's a very compact
20 district. It represents, you know, within
21 those borders, the census track is almost
22 exactly the amount of voters that -- people
23 that it takes to have a council district.

24 So, I don't think the boundaries should
25 move, if at all. But if they do, they should

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1 try to stay within the areas bounded by -- to
2 the west, Bronx River; to the south, Long
3 Island Sound; to the east, Westchester Creek;
4 and to the north, East Tremont Avenue.

5 Thank you.

6 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for your
7 testimony.

8 Judge?

9 COMMISSIONER GO: I'd like to clarify a
10 little bit because the numbers on the
11 specific district maps that are on the
12 website are for the current districts based
13 on 2010 census data. So, my research and
14 looking at -- it's a wonderful site, but most
15 people don't know. It's
16 redistrictingandyou.org. So, I would
17 recommend that if you want to get
18 information, type in nyc.redistricting.org.

19 But Council District 18 is very much
20 overpopulated because it has over 181,000
21 people, and that's way above the mead
22 district. So, one way or the other, that
23 district has to be peeled back. And that's
24 why we are having these hearings to find out
25 what's important to the people and where the

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1 communities have a concern.

2 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you, Judge.

3 MODERATOR: We have Hasna Happy.

4 CHAIR WALCOTT: Hasna Happy?

5 MS. HAPPY: Good evening, everyone. I
6 am calling in regards to the houses on the
7 107th Avenue and 106th Road. There are 21
8 houses that are connected into one sewers
9 line and in private property. Each houses
10 are connected into a narrow pipe on private
11 land, and the sewers lines in my backyard,
12 which is private property.

13 And I don't have any privacy in my
14 backyard. I'm not able to use my backyard
15 because every time there is a rain, all the
16 houses are having backed up. They get
17 flooded, so the owners have to call the
18 private sewers company to come over and
19 clean, and it's happening very, very,
20 frequently. And it's costing the house
21 owners to clean the sewers.

22 Since the houses were built, DEP has
23 been collecting sewer payments of more than
24 one and a half times the water bill since the
25 time. Same time frame, the responsibility of

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1 cleaning and maintaining sewer backups has
2 fallen on the owners by hiring high cost
3 private companies.

4 When DEP is contacted about the sewer
5 problem, they refuse to do any cleaning. The
6 owners are under the impression that the
7 sewer payments are in the part of maintenance
8 of the sewer system. And due to that, too
9 many owners they want -- they're really fed
10 up. They want to sell their houses and leave
11 their community, and we need help with that.

12 Thank you.

13 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you. Can you
14 tell the cross streets. I heard one of them
15 say it's 107th Avenue. What is --

16 MS. HAPPY: It's Ruscoe 107th Avenue
17 and 178th Street. I can give you my address.
18 It's 178 --

19 CHAIR WALCOTT: No, don't give your
20 address. There's a lot of people listening.
21 But, I have a sense. It's 178th 106th
22 Avenue, 107th Avenue.

23 MS. HAPPY: It's 107th Avenue and 178th
24 Street.

25 CHAIR WALCOTT: Okay. Thank you.

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1 MS. HAPPY: There is a -- I know there
2 is a plan to, you know -- about the sewer
3 issues, but our community is not in that map,
4 and we would like it to be in part of the
5 map.

6 CHAIR WALCOTT: Okay. Thank you very
7 much for your testimony.

8 MS. HAPPY: Thank you so much.

9 MODERATOR: Chantel Jackson.

10 CHAIR WALCOTT: Chantel Jackson?

11 MS. JACKSON: I didn't -- I didn't sign
12 up to speak. Hello?

13 CHAIR WALCOTT: I'm sorry.

14 MS. JACKSON: Yeah, I didn't sign up to
15 speak. I'm actually just tuning in, so I
16 don't know where we are in the process.

17 CHAIR WALCOTT: Where we are in the
18 process. I mean, this is part of the public
19 hearings that we've been conducting in the
20 boroughs. Tomorrow will be in Staten Island.
21 And this is around proposed district lines
22 for the City Council.

23 And as indicated by several of the
24 commissioners, it's part of not just our
25 Charter responsibility, but based on

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1 Constitution and based on the census and the
2 reflection of the data from the census on the
3 population shifts that are taking place in
4 New York City.

5 So, we're getting input from the public
6 as far as their feelings about that.

7 MS. JACKSON: Oh, I'm fully aware. I'm
8 the Assembly member for the 79th Assembly
9 District, so I'm --

10 CHAIR WALCOTT: I'm sorry. My apol --

11 MS. JACKSON: I, unfortunately, know
12 how redistricting works because --

13 CHAIR WALCOTT: I'm going to apologize
14 to you. I'm so sorry.

15 MS. JACKSON: -- of all that we've been
16 through. But I live in the 16th, which my
17 City Council member is Althea Stevens. And I
18 would love to see our district stay as close
19 to the same as possible, maintaining the
20 Concourse Village area.

21 And our Senate lines, one of the
22 Concourse Village complex was taken out and
23 split between two senators. I would hate to
24 see that happen with this development,
25 Concourse Village, when it comes to our City

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1 Council lines.

2 So, I think that will be my only
3 feedback as of right now.

4 CHAIR WALCOTT: Well, thank you very
5 much.

6 And as indicated, tomorrow will be in
7 Staten Island. So, again, the public will
8 have an opportunity again to testify. And
9 thank you very much Assemblywoman.

10 Is there another virtual?

11 (No response).

12 CHAIR WALCOTT: That's it. Okay. So,
13 we'll wait until 7:00.

14 And just as a reminder that testimony
15 can be submitted to:
16 publictestimony@redistricting.nyc.gov or you
17 can call the Commission at (212)676-3090.
18 And tomorrow we'll be at Staten Island,
19 Borough Hall, 10 Richmond Terrace and again
20 from 4:00 to 7:00.

21 Commissioners, anything?

22 Judge, I see you.

23 COMMISSIONER GO: Hi. I thank the
24 people for coming and testifying, online as
25 well as here. And we really do listen to

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1 your -- what you proposed. However, it would
2 really be helpful for those of you who don't
3 give specific dimensions or specific borders
4 for the districts you're talking about, to
5 try to put that into either a map or just a
6 written description, so that we can be very
7 sure of what you're talking about. It never
8 hurts to be more specific, so we understand
9 and also that we reach the same understanding
10 of what you're trying to say.

11 CHAIR WALCOTT: And also, what I would
12 like to do is to see if our Bronx members,
13 since we're here in the Bronx, would like to
14 say a couple words as well.

15 Commissioner Sorin.

16 COMMISSIONER SORIN: Thank you so much
17 for that.

18 And I agree totally. I think what I'm
19 hearing tonight, other than some of our
20 elected officials, is a need for a better
21 understanding as to what we're doing. A lot
22 of people are addressing the old lines, and I
23 don't -- I'm kind of like in the middle of
24 understanding how to get the message across
25 properly to the constituents in the Bronx,

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1 but we'll work through this.

2 I have one question. And as a
3 Commission, you would think I'd know this.

4 Once the draft lines are done, do we
5 get to come back out and have this
6 conversation --

7 CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes.

8 COMMISSIONER SORIN: -- with the
9 public?

10 CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes.

11 COMMISSIONER SORIN: So, that will give
12 us an opportunity to better explain, maybe
13 through the community boards. I just -- I
14 feel like some people understand it. But to
15 your point, Judge, they're also not being
16 specific. It's just a matter of wanting to
17 keep what's there, but also we need to look
18 at the bigger picture.

19 And I'm hoping that I could work
20 alongside everybody, so that the results are
21 exactly what the Bronx needs and that's
22 always my priority.

23 CHAIR WALCOTT: So, in response to your
24 question and your point, as our Executive
25 Director likes to call this, "1.0".

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1 COMMISSIONER SORIN: Yes.

2 CHAIR WALCOTT: So, I think this is the
3 first step in a multi-step process. And I
4 think after we come out of this step, people
5 will have something more concrete in front of
6 them to react to. And I think that we'll
7 definitely hear from individuals who go --
8 you didn't factor in this or factor in that.

9 I guess you could -- I think that will
10 be the next phase as part of our
11 responsibility to reconvene again and go into
12 all five boroughs. As you know, we decided
13 to stretch out the public hearing at the
14 front end, and that way we had, instead of
15 the one, we had, seems to be the thought, and
16 that way we got more input.

17 So, now they will have something more
18 concrete, and that concreteness will take
19 place based on the interpretation from the
20 Law Department on the 15th of July. And so,
21 we'll be coming back formerly with a report
22 to the City as far as the 1.0 recommendation
23 of --

24 COMMISSIONER SORIN: I think the best
25 thing we did was holding these meetings in

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1 all the boroughs. Because in listening, we
2 also have so many people who are joining the
3 conversation today that were from outer
4 boroughs. And I think that's a totally
5 positive message that is getting out there.

6 And I'd love to see more participation
7 within the borough moving forward to sharing
8 out the education and helping them guide
9 there.

10 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Could somebody
11 just read -- go through the process. And I
12 know this is the first, then it goes to the
13 City Council. Would you just go through what
14 the process is.

15 SPEAKER: Sure. After the first map
16 has been delivered, they're going to have --
17 so, we have the first round of public
18 hearings now. We're going to come out with
19 the first draft map. All of this being set
20 and we're going to be having another
21 five-borough hearings, so I --

22 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: I know I'm
23 being technical.

24 SPEAKER: Okay.

25 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: The drafts are

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1 not to anybody, they are to the public?

2 SPEAKER: Correct. They are published
3 for the public's inspection and feedback.

4 And then after those series of
5 hearings, then that plan, once it's been
6 adjusted again for the public hearings,
7 that's the second draft. That's the one
8 (inaudible).

9 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Is there a
10 requirement as to what that first draft is
11 called?

12 SPEAKER: Called? I'm not clear
13 about --

14 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Well, in terms
15 of communication --

16 SPEAKER: Yeah.

17 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: I think calling
18 it a draft would be very reassuring for the
19 public.

20 SPEAKER: It's called a draft, the
21 first draft.

22 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Okay. Either
23 preliminary draft or first draft, just to --

24 CHAIR WALCOTT: Let people know it's a
25 draft.

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1 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Yeah, exactly.

2 CHAIR WALCOTT: All right. Let me go
3 to Commissioner Collado.

4 COMMISSIONER COLLADO: Yeah, certainly
5 agree with me fellow Commissioner Sorin. And
6 on that note, about the information to the
7 public, I would just like to encourage the
8 public to follow us on social media and check
9 out our website and find more information
10 about future hearing dates as well.

11 I'm happy to be home. Thank you for --
12 the other Commissioners as well for making
13 their way out to the Bronx.

14 CHAIR WALCOTT: And just to follow up
15 and bring it to a closing. I think part of
16 what you and we hear right now is something
17 that's brand-new as far as this being
18 undertaken for this period of time. And so,
19 I think again, it's so important to get the
20 information out. To get the information out
21 in a consistent manner, because that's part
22 of the point that's being raised, as well as
23 making sure that the public has access to the
24 information in a variety of different ways.

25 So, that way whether it's through the

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1 primer as we did through the draft point and
2 having that out and then again we will have
3 the responsibility of going back into the
4 public, all five boroughs to hold hearings
5 again, get more input.

6 And again, just as a primer, anyone has
7 an opportunity to testify, including elected
8 officials. And so, elected officials have
9 the ability as -- and tonight and today to
10 testify directly, and then there will be a
11 conversation. And there are a number of
12 organizing group as well as legal entities
13 that are working with different communities
14 and training communities.

15 And we've heard a lot of them and
16 they're always working trying to develop a
17 unity map as well. So, there's a variety of
18 stakeholders that are involved in trying to
19 broaden their own net. As far as the sharing
20 of the information, I think that's all part
21 of what's been going on in a very compressed
22 timer on top of that.

23 And so, we don't have -- we, the
24 Commission, don't have the flexibility to
25 just go on and on and on. We have the

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1 ability to listen, get to the public and then
2 meet very specific time frames. Thus, the
3 July 15th date for the first draft.

4 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Can I say one
5 thing? I do think somehow in communication,
6 the Judge's point needs to be titled.
7 Because almost all of -- maybe I didn't pay
8 attention, but I didn't hear any -- I didn't
9 hear much testimony -- many of us talking
10 about one person, one vote.

11 I heard a lot about communities of
12 interest. I heard a lot about neighborhoods.
13 And as the Judge said, with certain
14 flexibility, but the first constraint is one
15 person, one vote. So, anybody who got to
16 say -- well, just keep it the same. Unless
17 they're right and the margin is not.

18 So, I do think the lead communication
19 has to be that primary constraint is trying
20 to get everybody to have people vote and then
21 all of the others. Because we didn't --
22 unless I didn't -- I didn't hear that.

23 COMMISSIONER SORIN: I didn't either,
24 but I want to believe or I believe that the
25 issues that happened at the state level --

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1 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Right.

2 COMMISSIONER SORIN: -- sort of put the
3 fear in everybody about this particular
4 thing. So, there are people just assume the
5 changes will happen and they're fearful,
6 right? So, fear of the unknown.

7 But I think, to your point, it's a
8 great way to address it. And to support my
9 colleague on the other end from the Bronx.
10 Thank you, Commissioners, for coming out to
11 our borough.

12 CHAIR WALCOTT: And we have one more
13 person for today. Yes, go ahead, virtual.

14 MODERATOR: We have Ruth McDaniels.

15 CHAIR WALCOTT: Say that again.

16 MODERATOR: Ruth McDaniels.

17 CHAIR WALCOTT: Ruth McDaniels?

18 (No response).

19 CHAIR WALCOTT: Ms. McDaniels?

20 MS. MCDANIELS: Yes, hello. How are
21 you. Thank you for this opportunity to give
22 testimony to District 9, the Village of
23 Harlem.

24 I am a long-term resident, and I am
25 really opposed to redistricting at this point

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1 and going forward as well. I don't see the
2 reason why we would have to even consider
3 redistricting and losing the Polo Grounds, a
4 staple of the Harlem community with Rucker
5 Park and it being an entity that definitely
6 advise the people of that community and put
7 them with Washington Heights. Why would that
8 even be a consideration?

9 Washington Heights, it's not even on
10 that line. The D train stops at 145th Street
11 and then veers off. And the A line goes up
12 to Washington Heights. Why would they even
13 consider redistricting that and taking that
14 intricate part of your community and putting
15 it with another section and then
16 incorporating all the way down to 72nd
17 Street?

18 With that in place, we would lose the
19 culture of the community. It seems as if at
20 every step, the system is hellbent on trying
21 to destroy the Village of Harlem and its
22 culture. Its culture that's been there. The
23 culture that people travel from Europe and
24 all over to come see. Why is this? Why are
25 we still having this discussion?

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1 I know it comes up every few years, but
2 at some point in time, they should know that
3 when you have a community with that rich a
4 history, it is imperative that it stays in
5 place.

6 CHAIR WALCOTT: So, let me first thank
7 you for your testimony. And two, I think
8 just going back to the conversation that was
9 held prior.

10 There are no decisions that have been
11 reached at all at this point. This is part
12 of the hearing process. And so, whatever
13 information out there like something is a
14 given, that is not the case at all. We are
15 just hearing their recommendations and
16 suggestions, and we've heard what you and
17 others had to say as well.

18 So, I just want to be very clear about
19 that part of it. This is just an input
20 process right now. And the output process,
21 the first step of the output will take place
22 on the 15th of August.

23 Commissioner.

24 COMMISSIONER UDDIN: Yes, good evening
25 to you all. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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1 As the Commissioners have mentioned,
2 the number one rule is the important part.
3 We are here because 700,000 people has
4 increased in the City of New York. We are
5 accommodating in all these 51 districts as it
6 is. Social media, when you talk, according
7 to my understanding and my knowledge, these
8 people do not have a Twitter account, they do
9 not have Facebook. They don't have the
10 WhatsApp.

11 What they have is the local
12 community-based newspapers. I represent, in
13 fact, the word Bangladesh was mentioned a few
14 times. I'm a Bangladeshi, one thing. There
15 are 24 local newspaper in our community in
16 five boroughs. Every Friday they come out
17 and they're distributed in the mosque free,
18 all of them are. By the time the day is
19 over, all issues are gone because people get
20 their information from those scripts.

21 We have seven electronic media, which
22 is called television now, but I think if we
23 can suggest -- or is it possible that we can
24 send some aid to those local newspaper? It's
25 very cheap because in one place dailies cost

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1 30,000, but it will cost you \$300 an issue.

2 I don't know if the Chair could
3 consider such an opportunity to bring more
4 community involvement. And these are the
5 people we want to serve.

6 Thank you.

7 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you for the
8 suggestion. While I can't comment on budget
9 right now, but I do reinforce your comment
10 about penetrating the community and
11 communities through their local papers, so
12 we're glad to explore that. I'm a big
13 believer in making sure we deal with the
14 maximum opportunity for community input and
15 also information (inaudible).

16 Thank you very much. And Staten Island
17 tomorrow. Staten Island, Borough Hall, Board
18 of 7, look forward to seeing you.

19 And thank you to the public for coming
20 out and for those who testified. And also to
21 the Commission members for attending. Very
22 engaging conversation and clarifying points
23 as well, so thank you.

24 (TIME NOTED: 7:01 p.m.)

25

C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF NEW YORK)

:SS

COUNTY OF QUEENS)

I, Sabrina Brown Stewart, a shorthand
reporter within and for the State of New York, do
hereby certify that the within is a true and
accurate transcript of the statement taken on
July 6, 2022.

I further certify that I am not related to
any of the parties to this action by blood or by
marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the
outcome of this matter.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my
hand this 22nd day of August 2022.

Sabrina Brown Stewart
Sabrina Brown Stewart