

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

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2 CITY OF NEW YORK 2022-2023 DISTRICTING COMMISSION

3 BRONX PUBLIC HEARING

4 -----X

5  
6 149th Street, 2nd Floor  
7 Bronx, New York

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

10

11 PUBLIC HEARING in the above-referenced

12 matter, held at the above-mentioned time and

13 location, transcribed by Sabrina Brown Stewart, a

14 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 preferable 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 Marcano.

24 CHAIR WALCOTT: Ms. Marcano?

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



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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](https://redistrictingandyou.org). So, I would  
17 recommend that if you want to get  
18 information, type in [nyc.redistricting.org](https://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



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