In Re City of New York 2022-2023 Districting Commission Staten Island Public Hearing July 7, 2022

1 2 ----X CITY OF NEW YORK 2022-2023 DISTRICTING COMMISSION 3 STATEN ISLAND BOROUGH HALL 4 5 PUBLIC HEARING ----X 6 10 Richmond Terrace 7 Staten Island, New York DATE: July 7, 2022 TIME: 4:05 p.m. 8 9 10 PUBLIC HEARING in the above-referenced 11 matter, held at the above-mentioned time and 12 13 location, transcribed by Sabrina Brown Stewart, a 14 Notary Public of the State of New York. 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 2.2 23 24 25 LH REPORTING SERVICES, INC. Computer-Aided Transcription (718)526 - 7100

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      APPEARANCES:
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      COMMISSIONERS:
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     DENNIS M. WALCOTT, Chair
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     HON. MARILYN D. GO
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     KEVIN JOHN HANRATTY
 8
     LISA SORIN
 9
     MONSIGNOR KEVIN SULLIVAN
10
     MAF MISBAH UDDIN
11
     MICHAEL SCHNALL
12
     KRISTEN A. JOHNSON
     MARC WURZEL
13
14
     MARIA MATEO
15
16
      SENIOR STAFF:
17
     DR. JOHN FLATEAU, Executive Director
18
     GRACE PYUN, General Counsel
      JOSEPH MALIGNO, Deputy Executive Director
19
20
     ALI RASOULINEJAD, Chief of Staff
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1 CHAIR WALCOTT: Good afternoon to all. 2 It's a pleasure to see all of you here, and 3 4 it's great -- I got to tell you, it's great to be out here. And for those who know, it's 5 been a lot of great things in working with 6 7 Staten Island over the years in my various parts of my life. 8 So thankful to see a lot of people that 9 10 I had relationships with before and it's a 11 pleasure to be here, and that the Urban 12 League we are -- well, two blocks away from 13 here exactly. So, it's a pleasure to be 14 here. 15 And if I could ask Joseph to take the roll and then we'll kick it off. And my 16 17 apologies for starting a couple minutes late. 18 There might be other people coming in and signing up as well. My name is Dennis 19 20 Walcott, and I have the honor of being the 21 Chair. 2.2 Joseph. 23 MR. MALIGNO: Dennis Walcott? I'm here. 24 CHAIR WALCOTT: 25 MR. MALIGNO: Honorable Marilyn D. Go.

1 2 COMMISSIONER GO: Here. 3 MR. MALIGNO: Maria Mateo? 4 (No response). 5 MR. MALIGNO: Joshua Schneps? 6 (No response). 7 MR. MALIGNO: Lisa Sorin? 8 (No response). 9 MR. MALIGNO: Monsignor Kevin Sullivan? 10 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Here. 11 MR. MALIGNO: Kai-Ki Wong? 12 (No response). MR. MALIGNO: Maf Misbah Uddin? 13 14 (No response). MR. MALIGNO: Michael Schnall? 15 16 COMMISSIONER SCHNALL: Here. MR. MALIGNO: Kristen Johnson? 17 18 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: I'm here 19 virtually. 20 MR. MALIGNO: Yovan Samuel Collado? 21 (No response). MR. MALIGNO: Gregory Kirschenbaum? 2.2 23 (No response). 24 MR. MALIGNO: Marc Wurzel? 25 CHAIR WALCOTT: Marc will join us later

1 (inaudible). 2 MR. MALIGNO: Kevin Hanratty? 3 MR. HANRATTY: Here. 4 MR. MALIGNO: Darrin Porcher? 5 6 (No response). 7 CHAIR WALCOTT: Okay. And several of our Commission members will be joining 8 9 virtually over a period of time. Commission 10 Wurzel, Sorin (inaudible) and our Executive 11 Director Dr. John Flateau is also virtual 12 today. 13 And before we start with our testimony, 14 one of (inaudible) to kick it off, but first, 15 I'd like to ask Commissioner Schnall, our Commissioner from Staten Island, to say a 16 17 couple words. 18 Michael. 19 COMMISSIONER SCHNALL: Thank you, Chair 20 Walcott. My name is Mike Schnall. I am the 21 lone Islander on this panel. Welcome to The Rock, for all of you folks who aren't from 2.2 23 Staten Island, and thank you to everyone 24 within this room and watching virtually 25 today. It's super important that Staten

1 Island's voice is heard. Not often are we 2 considered in a lot of citywide efforts and 3 4 sometimes we're actually forgotten. But I think today is a perfect example of how when 5 something is really important to us, we all 6 7 come out and speak up and we share our views and opinions and we're here to listen. 8 9 I know as a lone Islander, I carry the 10 burden of over 500,000 people who want to be 11 adequately represented in the New York City 12 Council. And so, again, thank you for coming 13 out. Please be honest with us, share your 14 opinion, continue to engage with us 15 throughout the summer and the fall, and hopefully we're going to get this right. 16 17 Thank you. 18 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you, Michael. 19 And we're going to ask the Judge to say a 20 couple of words before we kick it off with 21 the testimony. COMMISSIONER GO: This is the last of 2.2 23 the hearings that we're going to have before 24 the Commission (inaudible), but I just wanted 25 to thank you all for coming. It's important

1 2 to keep on and express your voice. And the reason it's important is that voting is so 3 4 critical to our organization of government. And as a Supreme Court recognized (inaudible) 5 many, many, many years ago, the concept of 6 7 one person, one vote (inaudible) so much applies that are (inaudible) and our legal 8 9 rights, that our right to vote is protected. 10 And that the concept of protecting the 11 Constitution is the protection of the law. 12 So, part of that is making sure that 13 your vote is incorporated (inaudible) and that's why we go through this exercise of 14 15 redistricting. And in New York City, that's really necessary. But the Constitution also 16 17 requires that a census be taken every 10 years. And the current census that was 18 19 taken in 2020 shows a tremendous growth in 20 New York City. So, we have to redistrict 21 many of the districts in this city. And I'm going to ask our counsel here 2.2 23 to just very briefly explain the legal 24 constraints that we operate under. But before I do that, I want to again thank you 25

1 2 for coming and participating in this proceeding. 3 4 MS. PYUN: Good afternoon, everyone. 5 My name is Grace Pyun, and I'm General Counsel to the Commission. And just for 6 7 everyone, as the Judge mentioned, you know, we passed out some information for you 8 9 regarding some of the criteria and the laws 10 that apply to the Commission in drawing for 11 the City Council district map. 12 So, I just wanted to just give you a 13 very brief summary, but again this information is also available on our website 14 15 and you can always request it as well. Ι only have the printed out version of it. 16 17 So, as the Judge mentioned, we are 18 redistricting. Our requirements are to 19 provide the decennial census taken every 20 ten years. This is based on the one-person, 21 one-vote doctrine of the U.S. Constitution. 2.2 So, we want to make sure that every 23 ten years, the district lines are being drawn 24 to take into account the changing population 25 sizes and the demographic of the population.

1 So, that's one, the U.S. Constitution that 2 kind of underpins all of that. 3 4 The second is the Federal Voting Rights 5 Act of 1965. We want to make sure that, you know, the districting plans, making the 6 7 protection of certain racial and language minorities that are protected under the 8 Federal Voting Rights Act, and that as these 9 10 maps are being drawn, we're not diluting any 11 of those votes. And, you know, there's 12 analysis that's undertaken to do this, that 13 the Commission is undertaking, as part of this process as well, and the City Charter 14 15 reflects this criteria in that it specifically request for an effective 16 17 representation of those groups. 18 But first and foremost, also, we also 19 have the -- as part of the one-person, 20 one-vote requirement, we also have the 21 population deviation rule under the newly passed State law, which basically limits the 2.2 23 differences in the population of each 24 district. So, we want to make sure they're 25 as equal as possible. But there is a State

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law that says the difference between the most populous and the least populous district in the map shall not exceed 5 percent of the average population of all districts. So, that 5 percent deviation can be done with several communications, but there is that fundamental 5 percent limation. So, I just wanted to make that point. And as well, we have the City Charter, of course, that lays out the criteria and the

of course, that lays out the criteria and the order in which that criteria must be applied. And in addition to the population deviations and the Voting Rights Act, considering the criteria that I just mentioned, we also have to make sure that we keep neighborhoods and communities of interests intact.

I know we've gotten a lot of testimony 18 19 so far from the public on this, so that's 20 really helpful for the Commission. We want 21 to make sure that the districts shapes are 2.2 compact shapes, not too narrow and wide, you 23 know, we want to maintain their shapes. We 24 want to limit crossover districts, meaning a 25 district having more than one boroughs, like

1 if there is, you know, a -- Staten Island, 2 Brooklyn, for example, could be a scenario, I 3 4 mean, just hypothetically, we want to limit that, the number of crossover districts. 5 And we also want to make sure that the 6 7 districts are contiguous, meaning, they are, you know -- they're not, you know, the 8 9 district is in one piece. There could be a 10 river running through it, for example, but we 11 want to make sure they keep to the natural 12 boundaries. So, that's the criteria and it is the 13 14 legal basis that the Commission must follow 15 under local law, state law, federal law, so there are a lot of considerations to take 16 17 away. COMMISSIONER GO: Thank you for 18 19 (inaudible). 20 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you, Judge. And 21 also one final piece. And then we've been 2.2 joined by Marc Wurzel as well. 23 So, welcome, Marc. Marc, do you want to say a couple words? 24 25 COMMISSIONER WURZEL: Good afternoon,

1 2 everybody. My name is Marc Wurzel. Sorry I'm late. As most Staten Islanders know, the 3 4 southbound Lexington Avenue line is a horror and kind of slowed me down. I missed that 5 3 o'clock boat, so I hustled up here on the 6 7 3:30 line and I (inaudible). I'm sure everyone has had that experience at some 8 9 point or another. 10 Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to 11 point out to the fellow Commissioners that 12 there was an (inaudible) and have copies, and 13 I think it's very relevant to the subject 14 matter that I think many of the people here 15 who are in attendance and people who are participating by Zoom are going to be 16 17 addressing today. So, I just wanted to make 18 sure that everyone got to see it. 19 Thank you. 20 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you, Marc. 21 And what we'll do, the format that 2.2 we're going to do today, is that we'll have 23 in-person testimony and then we also have 24 people testifying virtually as well. So, 25 we'll do in-person, virtual, in-person,

1 virtual. 2 Now, obviously, the elected officials 3 4 are here, we have our formal council members here as well. We'll have them -- (disruptive 5 noise). And so, with that being said, I 6 7 would like to start with our former council member and a former colleague as well. 8 9 And so, Council Member. 10 And also, can you speak directly in --11 because we'll be transcribing as well -- the 12 microphone, and for any individuals who's on 13 the phone or virtually, if you could mute until it's your time to speak. 14 15 MS. ROSE: Thank you. Good afternoon, Chairman Walcott and 16 the Districting Commission members. Welcome 17 to Staten Island. 18 19 I am Debi Rose, the most recent former 20 council member for the 49th City Council District and the first ever black-elected 21 official on Staten Island. And I had the 2.2 23 privilege of representing the North Shore, Staten Island for 12 years. I love the 24 25 North Shore.

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It is good to see you, Chair Walcott, as you are no stranger to Staten Island and the uniqueness herein. And I want to thank Commissioner Schnall for being our voice on the Commission.

The census tells a story that documents the historic applications of redlining, which created barriers to housing in other parts of Staten Island that have resulted in the North Shore, Staten Island being the most densely populated with the highest concentration of blacks and Hispanics.

While Staten Island has a relatively small black population, it is mostly concentrated in the northernmost neighborhoods of the borough. So, Mariners Harbor, Arlington and Granite, 49,000 people. To Rosebank, Shore Acres and Park Hill, there are 5,600, with the Asian and black populations being the fastest growing populations on Staten Island. There are also more than twice as many

There are also more than twice as many Hispanics living on the North Shore 49,928 in the Mid-Island, according to the 2020 census.

1 The 49th district is home to 32.8 percent 2 Hispanics, 23.5 percent blacks, 11.3 percent 3 4 Asians, for a total of 67.6 percent of the population in the 49th District, making it 5 the most racially and ethnically diverse 6 7 district. The Redistricting Commission is charged 8 9 by New York City Charter to ensure the fair 10 and effective representation of racial and 11 language minority groups protected by the 12 Voter Rights Act and to keep neighborhoods 13 and communities intact. I can't think of any other district in Staten Island that benefits 14 15 that criteria that was set by the City Charter. 16 The disillusioned of the 49th District 17 as it stands now today would only serve the 18 19 disenfranchised communities that have 20 struggled to overcome the economic, health, 21 educational, housing, transportation and 2.2 political disparities which exists. The facts are that families on the North Shore 23 24 are rent-burdened with 49 percent paying more 25 than 35 percent or more of their household

1 income for rent. They live in food and 2 transportation deserts and their children 3 4 attend subpar consistently underperforming schools. 5 For example, P.S. 78, Stapleton, 6 7 47 percent Hispanic, 40 percent African-American and 6 percent Asian, and 8 9 16 percent English language learners, 10 homeless and economic disadvantage makes up 11 98 percent of the school. The economic needs 12 of these schools are profound and is 13 exacerbated by the added need for additional 14 school determinants; such as access to 15 healthcare, green spaces, healthy food, social civic and neighborhood networks and 16 second language support. 17 18 Our communities on the North Shore need 19 to be able to raise their voices in concert 20 to elect representatives that know and 21 understand the district and the constituents' 2.2 needs. That can't be accomplished if the 23 North Shore district is expanded into 24 Brooklyn or Manhattan. And besides, I am

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sure that there will be other districts in

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other boroughs that are contiguous, that can be extended into their boroughs, that are not separated by a body of water -- not a river, an ocean.

And lastly, I understand that while the Commission's goal is to redraw maps with the average population of 172,631 members, under the 5 percent rule, districts can have a small of a population as 166,000 to 178,000. The current population in District 49 is 171,145, just 1,486 people or 0.9 percent shy of your projected goal. Frankly, I don't understand why this isn't being considered.

We are asking you to apply the 5 percent rule and keep the North Shore intact as it exists today. We appreciate your efforts and ask that you develop fair and equitable districts which recognize our diversity, address the historic inequities and will continue to empower all of our residents. Thank you for your attention.

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

1 2 (Applause). CHAIR WALCOTT: Next, we'll have 3 virtual. 4 Counsel Member? 5 MS. NARCISSE: Hello, can you hear me? 6 7 CHAIR WALCOTT: Looks like you might be --8 MS. NARCISSE: Hello? 9 10 CHAIR WALCOTT: Counsel Member? 11 MS. NARCISSE: Yes, can you hear me? CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes. 12 13 MS. NARCISSE: Hi. Thank you, Chair 14 Walcott. Can you hear me? 15 CHAIR WALCOTT: Hold on one second, Council Member. 16 17 (Brief pause in proceedings). 18 CHAIR WALCOTT: Council Member? 19 MS. NARCISSE: Can you hear me now? 20 CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes. 21 MS. NARCISSE: Hi. Thank you, Chair Walcott and the Districting -- distinguish 2.2 23 members of the Redirecting Commission for 24 holding this public hearing and for the 25 opportunity to present testimonies, and

1 2 you're giving opportunity to all of us to have a voice to speak on behalf -- not only 3 4 me as a representative of my district, but everyone that wish to talk about their 5 district. Thank you. 6 7 I am New York City Council Member Mercedes Narcisse, and I have the honor and 8 9 the privilege to represent the 46th Council 10 District in Brooklyn. Allow me to publicly 11 thank you. Thanks for the great service to 12 our city and for our crucial work in guiding the redistricting process to completion, as 13 14 required by legal requirements set by the 15 U.S. Constitution, federal law, state law and the Charter of New York. 16 17 To make the 46th District more compact, 18 that's why I'm here. I will not go on in all 19 the detail of how we like the district. Ι 20 had the opportunity to present a map because 21 the idea as the federal law, the goal is not 2.2 diluting any group's votes. And that's what 23 I'm here to talk on behalf of the 24 46th District. To make up for the population

loss, I will consider to join some part that

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1 2 can make our district more compact. The inclusion of different areas that 3 4 can make the district a whole, that we share culture -- I mean, we share the cultural --5 the different part cultural issue and as well 6 7 as the schooling our children goes, different things that make the district a whole can 8 9 make it more progressive for the time that we 10 live in. 11 This revision, the map that I have sent 12 will exhibit the map that I have submitted, 13 that will meet the population requirement as well. So, I have all sent down to -- online 14 15 that you can see it. We share the 16 similarities, the culture, and I'm looking 17 forward to represent a district that's compact and that we can advance and we can 18 19 address the inequities that we have been 20 talking about. 21 So, I thank you for your time. I will not take long. And thank you for the 2.2 23 opportunity to talk to you. And we released 24 the map as well as some extra testimony. Ι 25 don't want to take too long because I know so

1 many folks would like to testify as well, so 2 thank you for your time. 3 4 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you, Council 5 Member. Thank you for your submission as well. 6 7 We've also been joined by our Commission Member Lisa Sorin. 8 9 And next, we have the Five-Borough Man, 10 who literally have been a Five-Borough Man. 11 So, if you ever hear --MR. STANFORD: Excluding Manhattan. 12 Ι 13 didn't join you in Manhattan. 14 There's a miscommunication. I just 15 want to inform the Executive Director and the Chair like a recipe, you hold public hearings 16 17 here at Staten Island Borough Hall, you need to specify where exactly you're holding it. 18 19 'Cause I showed the PALS ID -- I showed the PALS ID this (indicating), because I forgot I 20 21 had this (indicating), but either one still 2.2 tell him the same story. He refused to tell 23 me where exactly this public hearing is 24 scheduled to be held. And it got to the 25 point where I wanted to either give him my

1 2 right hand, my right knee or which. So, in the future, if you have public 3 4 hearings here, specify where it's going to be held. And see if you could get a bigger 5 room. Also, don't start public hearings 6 7 before 6 p.m. at a time people are still working. I see the MTA which (inaudible) far 8 9 away do that. Don't imitate the MTA. That's 10 not very slick. 11 The City Council should have 50 12 members, not 51. This is what you can do: Take District 51 and collaborate with 13 District 49, within District 51 and District 14 15 50. Because we only have two shores here in Staten Island, which became Gilligan's Island 16 17 following Hurricane Sandy, north and south. And as you know, I don't live here in 18 19 Staten Island. I live in Bronx. I live in 20 Polo Grounds Yankee Stadium, which, like this 21 borough, you say -- you're the forgotten borough. The Bronx is small and this one's 2.2 small. So, therefore, we don't need three 23 24 City Council districts. We don't need three 25 State Assembly districts. We don't need

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2	three State Assembly we don't need three
3	commercial districts. We only need two. A
4	small (inaudible), cut the middle man out.
5	And also, I see you. Please, in the
6	future, don't start public hearings before
7	бр.m. Okay? That's not very slick.
8	Please, okay? So 'cause I just know that
9	when I check the website, I notice that the
10	public hearing next month are scheduled for
11	4 p.m. So, if the schedules are at 4 p.m.,
12	then that shows you weren't listening. And
13	as an old saying goes, "Your hard head will
14	give you a soft behind." Food for thought.
15	CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you for your
16	testimony.
17	And next we'll have virtual.
18	Council Member, are you on?
19	MS. DE LA ROSA: Yes. Hi, good
20	afternoon, Commissioners, and thank you for
21	the opportunity to testify today.
22	CHAIR WALCOTT: Good afternoon to you.
23	MS. DE LA ROSA: Yes. I am Carmen De
24	La Rosa, and I am the current council member
25	for District 10 in Upper Manhattan.

1 I was elected to serve on the council 2 in 2020. And prior to that, I served as a 3 4 State Assemblywoman for District 72 for 5 almost five years. Almost wholly -- the 72nd District is almost wholly contained 6 7 within the District 10. I grew up on the northern end of the district in Inwood, and I 8 9 am proudly raising my daughter here as well. 10 Both as resident and as an elected 11 representative, I value the richness of this 12 district and the opportunities it has 13 afforded so many who have come and gone throughout the decades, and those of us who 14 15 have been fortunate to stay. Nevertheless, I'm not shocked by the realty of the 16 17 population decline in District 10, nor of the reports of census undercounts and double 18 19 counting of certain demographics. 20 Our communities have been through a 21 And even so, their exhaustive efforts lot. to make themselves counted in the last census 2.2 23 is commendable. Inevitably, District 10 must 24 grow by at least 10,000 people. And in 25 determining in which direction to go, I ask

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the Commission to take into account the communities of interests to the north and east in the Bronx, as well as the a bit south in Manhattan. Our communities on all sides, both further down south in Manhattan and to the east, to the north and east in the Bronx are politically and socially connected.

I welcome all new residents in this pro -- as this process will take shape. I ask the Commission to take into account as well the impact that our recently passed rezoning will have on District 10 in the next decade. New zoning will bring with it more housing units and in turn new residents. A district on the lower deviation would address this reality and ensure that all residents in the next decade have an equal ability to elect a candidate of its choice for years to come.

I appreciate the opportunity. I will be submitting this testimony as well and listening to the voices of those people who live in Upper Manhattan and share this great district with me.

Thank you so much for the opportunity,

1 and I look forward to the second set of 2 hearings. Thank you. 3 4 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you for your 5 testimony. Our next in-person will be Kathleen 6 7 Rivera. Kathleen Rivera? 8 9 MS. RIVERA: Good afternoon. I'm not a 10 public speaker, so I am going to be reading 11 straight from my notes. 12 CHAIR WALCOTT: Not a problem. 13 MS. RIVERA: It's a script. Good 14 afternoon, Commission Members and my fellow 15 concerned citizens. I'm so happy to see so 16 many turned out. My name is Kathleen Rivera. I'm a 17 18 resident of West Brighton in City Council 19 District 49 on the North Shore of Staten 20 Island. The possibility that our district 21 could be merged with an area in Brooklyn or 2.2 Manhattan is unacceptable. North Shore has 23 nothing in common with those areas, neither 24 ethnically, socioeconomically or racially. 25 For example, the recent redistricting

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of our assembly district to include Lower Manhattan and Battery Park City, combine our existing district, one with the highest concentration of Staten Islander residents who are living at or below the poverty line reside within an area listed in city-data.com as having a medium annual income of \$158,000.

Battery Park City has a component of luxury housing, while North Shore, Staten Island has pretty much the highest concentration of NYCHA developments in any of New York City's Council Districts. This will have an elected official representing the wants and needs of almost diametrically opposed population. Crossing over into another borough to right size the district to make City Charter population for district requirements reduces the process to a numbers game.

However, we are dealing with real people's lives here. Almost two-thirds of my community's residents are considered to be part of a minority group, either Hispanic, blacks or Asian, with very specific concerns

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1 among the immigrant population. The voting 2 Rights Act states that district should not be 3 4 drawn in such a way that the voting power of racial minority groups would be diluted. 5 The current constituents of District 49 would be 6 negatively affected by merging with any 7 community, especially one in another borough 8 9 that doesn't have the same concerns, 10 problems, issues, and needs that we need our 11 City Council person to address. 12 I urge the Commission, please make sure 13 that the district reflects the reality of our community, rather than numbers and lines on a 14 15 map. 16 Thank you. 17 (Applause). 18 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you for your 19 testimony. 20 Next, virtual. Yamina Ramirez? 21 (No response). CHAIR WALCOTT: Yamina Ramirez? 2.2 23 (No response). 24 If not --CHAIR WALCOTT: 25 MS. RAMIREZ: Sorry. Hello?

1 2 CHAIR WALCOTT: Oh, hello. 3 MS. RAMIREZ: No, I'm sorry. That was 4 accidental. I didn't -- I don't have a 5 question. Sorry. 6 CHAIR WALCOTT: No, that's okay. 7 MS. RAMIREZ: I'm sorry? CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes, you could go 8 ahead. 9 10 MS. RAMIREZ: No, I said I don't have a 11 question. That was accidental. I was taking 12 notes and I pressed something. I'm sorry. 13 CHAIR WALCOTT: Okay. Not a problem. 14 Thank you. Continue listening. We'll have another virtual and then 15 we'll get back to in-person. 16 Adrienne Felton. 17 18 MS. FELTON: Hi, can you guys hear me? 19 CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes, we can. 20 MS. FELTON: Good afternoon, Chair 21 Walcott and members of the independent Redistricting Commission --2.2 23 CHAIR WALCOTT: Can you speak up, 24 please. 25 MS. FELTON: It is with great

1 disappointment that I, along with a great 2 deal of other Harlem residents, are faced 3 4 with the task of testifying and writing to you regarding the redistricting lines that 5 have been asked for consideration for the 9th 6 7 New York City Council District. It is also unfortunate that there has 8 9 not been a hearing held in Harlem with such 10 an impactful matter at stake. That said, it 11 is my understanding that there are now more 12 hearings being scheduled. I'm hoping that one will be held in Harlem. 13 We've been made aware that it is a desire to include, like 14 15 NYCHA, Polo Grounds residents from the Harlem district into Washington Heights district. 16 17 Should this happen, the 9th District will be -- would have to move further south 18 19 down -- like downtown, ensuring that the 20 Harlem council seat could be represented by 21 someone who doesn't even live in Harlem. 2.2 Currently, the southern line of the council 23 district is at approximately 106th Street 24 crossing over to Park Avenue. 25 If the southern lines are redrawn

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further south, perhaps maybe to 71st Street, that disproportionate proposal threatens the cultural integrity and will be severely marginalized. That would make the 9th City Council District the only district on the entire Manhattan delegation without ethnic representation.

That shared, we're opposed really to removing the Polo Grounds from the 9th Council District, which would deplete the integrity and the historic significance of a black historic district. If any of the Washington Heights Council District needs increase in population based on the census, perhaps it should be considered from the 7th Council District.

Thank you in advance for your anticipated cooperation in this regard, and I appreciate your time.

21 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for your
22 testimony.
23 Stephanie -- is it Chevu (phonetic)?
24 MS. CHEVEAU: Cheveau (phonetic).
25 CHAIR WALCOTT: Cheveau. My apologies.

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MS. CHEVEAU: Hi, everyone. Thank you, Commissioners, Chair Walcott for meeting in Staten Island this afternoon. My name is Stephanie Cheveau, and I live in Port Richmond and I've lived in Staten Island for approximately 25 years. Prior to that, I grew up in Brooklyn and I left there, so I'm in transplant.

In that time, I have truly come to love and appreciate the character that is in North Shore, Staten Island, the kind of diversity that makes for an interesting community. We have arts, we have culture, we have restaurants, we have some transportation, not enough, and we have populations that bring cultural differences that bring interests and opportunities to where it expands one's world.

This is the North Shore of Staten Island. The 49th District has been said in the past to be the most diverse district within the City Council. We have a growing Southeast Asian population that's very active here. And certainly, we have a Latino

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population that I live closest to in Port Richmond, and we have a wonderful kind of relationship.

These are the things that make a fabric for a community, and we need to maintain that fabric and not put an ocean between this part of here and there. But we have other districts in the North Shore, which currently do include Brooklyn and have included Brooklyn for sometime, and has made it somewhat difficult for that fabric to be developed and maintained in the various state districts. So, with that, I would propose to you

and agree with what Council Member Rose had said, we need to maintain the districts that we have.

Thank you.

20 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you for your 21 testimony. Next is virtual. Mark Anderson. 2.2 23 MR. ANDERSON: Yes, hi. My name is 24 Mark Anderson. Can you hear me? 25

CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes, we can.

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MR. ANDERSON: Hi. I am the president of the Westerleigh Improvement Society and I would like to talk about two issues; one of them is that we hate the possibility of our district moving into other boroughs. Staten Island is a unique borough in many ways. The area, especially in density, the area compromises 25 percent of the area of New York City, yet it only has 6 percent of the population of the City.

The average population on Staten Island is 8,000 people per square mile, whereas in Brooklyn, it's 37,000 people per square mile. And Manhattan, it's 70,000 people per square mile. So, that's nine times more dense than Manhattan and six -- five to six times more dense in Brooklyn than in Staten Island alone.

20 In Staten Island has other issues as 21 well that are different from the other 22 boroughs. Unlike those boroughs, a large 23 percentage of Staten Islanders need to 24 commute using cars to get to work, school and 25 many rely on buses, both locally as well as

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2	express to Manhattan, which is unique to
3	the other as opposed to the other
4	boroughs. And Staten Island and many of the
5	people in Staten Island also need to use a
6	car to get to work in New Jersey as well.
7	Primarily, Staten Island is known for
8	one and two-family house which brings out the
9	unique situations; such as large percentage
10	of home ownership, over taxation and other
11	issues related to property taxes and water
12	bills and whatnot. So, mixing Staten Island
13	districts with the other boroughs is
14	problematic, not only for us, but for them as
15	well.
16	So, related to the our district
17	itself. Our district has many different
18	dividing lines both city and state. And our
19	lines really marginalize us quite
20	significantly. If I could just bring up the
21	map of the existing zoning, we're split
22	have a small portion of our area that is
23	actually if you could see here, there's
24	the existing map of the area, and this let
25	me see if I can point with this. Yes, I can.

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So, this is the area that we represent in the City and you'll see the blue areas is the 50th district and the white area is the 49th District. So, we're sort of an appendage in this to the 49th. And we find it very difficult, even though we're very similar as far as the building stock and the social issues and crime and other major, you know, defining characteristics of the neighborhood, we find it very difficult to correspond between the two council districts and represent that area. So, you know, when we look to the north

of our community, the other civics have major issues with crime, with social services, housing issues that we just simply do not have in our area. And we would really like to ask -- and friends, you know, during COVID, one of our major issues was that our area was that -- I don't know if you can see this, but we -- this is a cookbook we're trying to put together. Whereas other areas are dealing with, you know, shooting and stabbings and other social issues.

1 2 So, we're quite different from the 49th and at large, and what we would really ask is 3 4 that we incorporate this area and the 49th in the 50th District because we're more like --5 our issues are more like the Middle Island 6 7 issues, which the 50th District represents. So, that --8 9 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you for your 10 testimony. We appreciate it. 11 MR. ANDERSON: Okay. Thank you. 12 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you. 13 Next person, we have Jasmine Robinson. 14 MS. ROBINSON: Good afternoon. Thank 15 you so much for allowing me to be here today. Thank you to the Commission, but I also want 16 17 to say thank you to everyone in this room. I was given an "ask" and the "ask" was to make 18 19 sure that Staten Island shows up. I think I 20 did a pretty good job. 21 (Applause). 2.2 MS. ROBINSON: We showed up. While 23 Staten Island is the -- often times the forgotten borough, we're not the forgotten 24 25 We're the underestimated borough borough.

1 because we show up time and time again. 2 I'm a proud member of the NCNW, which 3 4 is the National Council of Negro Women, and also a member of ASAAL, Alliance of 5 South Asian Labor, and I'm here today to show 6 7 my support for the 49th District. We should not be broken up. It is not fair. It is not 8 9 right. 10 And despite what was previously -- the 11 view that was given before about high crime. 12 There's crime everywhere in Staten Island, 13 but I took it personally because the fact is 14 that I am very proud of the diverse, the 15 uniqueness of the 49th District. We have a proud robust African community, Latino 16 17 community, and we work very hard. We are 18 engaged. We are a connected part of Staten 19 Island. 20 So, for it to be said that we are crime 21 ridden or, you know, we have -- everywhere 2.2 has hills and everywhere has problems. But 23 the fact to single out and not to merge with the 49th District because, you know, we have 24 25 There's hills everywhere. So, I just hills.

1 2 want to really emphasize the point that the 49th District should not be merged with 3 4 Brooklyn or with Manhattan. We have enough numbers. To reiterate what Councilwoman Rose 5 -- former, or like I like to say "forever our 6 7 councilwoman" -- Debi Rose had reiterated, that we have the numbers and we should not be 8 9 broken up. 10 We have seen a miscarriage of that 11 during the -- during the other redistricting process. The 61st District, which was 12 13 primarily in the North Shore is now merged 14 with Lower Manhattan. We have no 15 commonalities. There's no ties, except for environmental issues, which is the same. But 16 17 as far as anything else, it's different. 18 So, please, I implore that the 19 Commission do not break up the 49th District. 20 We are thriving. We are a beautiful, 21 eclectic community, and I just hope that, you 2.2 know, our testimonies are taken seriously and 23 we're not broken up. 24 And thank you for the time. Thank you. 25 (Applause.)

1 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for your 2 3 testimony. Next is virtual. 4 Council Member Farah Louis. 5 MS. LOUIS: Good afternoon, everyone. 6 7 Can you hear me? CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes, we can. And good 8 9 afternoon. 10 MS. LOUIS: Good afternoon. 11 First, I want to thank you for hosting 12 this public hearing. And just wanted to just 13 quickly come on and just share -- and I'll 14 submit public testimony as well, regarding 15 Council District 45. 16 I know you guys are in a whole other 17 borough today, but regarding Council District 45, we're looking forward to the 18 19 redistricting process because our district is 20 disproportionately impacted in many ways. We 21 don't have a hospital in our district. We 2.2 have the least amount of parks in our 23 district. So, what we're looking forward to 24 25 during this process is making sure that we

1 2 could expand the district out a little bit more south, to ensure that we could gain a 3 4 hospital district, some extra parks as well as schools 'cause we have a limited amount in 5 District 45. Our district hasn't expanded 6 7 much, according to the information that we received. 8 9 So, I look forward to submitting a 10 public testimony on this, so that we can give 11 you some recommendations on what our 12 community is thinking about. 13 Thank you so much. 14 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you, Council 15 Member. We look forward to reading your 16 testimony. And have a good afternoon. 17 MS. LOUIS: Thank you. 18 CHAIR WALCOTT: Next in-person we have 19 Aurelia Curtis. 20 MS. CURTIS: Good afternoon. 21 CHAIR WALCOTT: Good afternoon. 2.2 MS. CURTIS: It's a pleasure to be here 23 today. Thank you very much. You could have 24 been anywhere else but you're here. I'm 25 talking about my concerns (inaudible) and

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2	you're here.
3	Thank you for the opportunity to
4	testify on behalf of the people of City
5	Council District 49 of which I am a resident,
6	and specifically for the clients of Project
7	Hospitality, the staff of Project
8	Hospitality, the children and families of a
9	small nonprofit that I am the executive
10	director of. As you make decisions
11	CHAIR WALCOTT: Can you speak straight
12	into the mic. Thank you.
13	MS. CURTIS: Decisions that will affect
14	us, all of us, for the next ten years, and
15	possibly for a lifetime of the children and
16	families in this district.
17	My name is Aurelia Curtis, and I live
18	in this district. I'm the secretary of
19	Project Hospitality. It's a nonprofit that
20	serves the hungry and homeless here in Staten
21	Island, and has done so for now over
22	30 years. I'm also the president of a
23	nonprofit, which provides youth development
24	and early childhood education opportunities
25	for children in Staten Island and Brooklyn.

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Before retiring in 2015, I worked for the City of New York, Department of Education as a teacher in mathematics and computer science, as an assistant principal and as a principal. And in all of those capacities, I have witnessed firsthand the added value of having a City Council member who truly sees and understand the needs of her community. So, I want to talk to you a little bit

about the human side of all of this view. I want you to take a side the numbers for a minute, stop thinking about the rivers and the seas and think about the human part of all of this. And then we have Councilwoman Hanks. She's a product of this community. She knows our needs. She understands why funding cannot be diluted, where funding is most needed. She takes the time to listen and she balances all that she hears to ensure that the children in Stapleton and the families in Mariners Harbor are not left behind. Before her, Councilwoman Rose kept her

doors open to community-based organizations,

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academic institutions, and healthcare facilities. City Council funding for District 49 is a single reason why Curtis High School have an air-conditioned auditorium and school-based health center today. City Council funding for District 49 is partially responsible for why Project Hospitality is building new housing today in Port Richmond, much-needed housing.

And I'm certain that my colleagues in education would join me in this and all the myriads of ways that schools have benefited from being part of discretionary funding for City Council District 49. Small groups are not lost in allocation of funds. WESUP, a relatively small nonprofit in the Mariners Harbor of Staten Island continues to benefit from discretionary funding.

20 Our City councilwomen see us, know us 21 and we know them. So, today, I appear to the 22 redistricting Commission to consider the 23 demographics and socioeconomic of the 24 adjoining communities as you think about 25 redrawing City Council lines, combining

1 Staten Island's North Shore communities on 2 Mariners Harbor and Park Hill, with adjoining 3 4 areas simply because they're close by and, of course, there's the law that says you must do 5 something, may very well be the single most 6 7 decisive move that New York City Government will take to dilute resources that are 8 9 desperately needed here. 10 I may also signal that New York City 11 Government is not -- if New York City 12 Government is truly interested in evening the 13 playing field, that changing the boundaries 14 of this district in the manner proposed, 15 which is do just the opposite. So, I want to believe that this Commission, this City 16 Government understands the difference that it 17 18 can make in the lives of children and 19 families in City Council District 49. So, I appeal to you to hear us and 20 21 allow us to be seen. Allow us to be heard. 2.2 Allow us to be understood when you draw the 23 new city redistricting lines. 24 Thank you. 25 (Applause).

1 2 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you. And if I could take a moment -- my one time 3 4 editorializing an outstanding principle. 5 (Applause). CHAIR WALCOTT: I would be remiss if I 6 7 didn't say that. We've been joined by our Commission 8 Member Uddin. 9 10 Welcome, sir. 11 COMMISSIONER UDDIN: Thank you. 12 CHAIR WALCOTT: It's a pleasure. 13 Next is virtual. Roy Moskowitz. 14 Roy Moskowitz? 15 MR. MOSKOWITZ: Yes, thank you very much. 16 17 I live in Castleton Corners, which is 18 in the 50th Council District. The 50th is 19 allegedly the Mid-Island district. I say 20 "allegedly" because it does not contain where 21 I live from 94 to 06 -- New Springville, 2.2 Heartland Village and the mall area, which 23 are the neighborhoods most Islanders associate with Mid-Island. 24 25 These neighborhoods are in the

1 2 Mid-Island 63rd Assembly district, but inexplicably are part of the South Shore 3 4 Council. Also, inexplicably, the East Shore 5 is part of the Mid-Island district, while the mall is not. 6 7 Let's compare Staten Island geography to a U.S. map. Castleton Corners, where I 8 reside, would be Ohio and the mall, Missouri. 9 10 The East Shore would be Maryland. Maryland 11 is centrally located in the Eastern Seaboard. 12 Being centrally located on the East Coast does not make it one of the central states or 13 part of the Midwest. It is a Mid-Atlantic 14 15 state, stressing the word "Atlantic." The current 50th Council district sans the 16 17 East Shore, and the South Shore's Mid-Island neighborhoods share many things in common 18 19 that it doesn't have with its Eastern 20 neighborhoods. 21 True Mid-Island neighborhoods like the Midwest are landlocked. The true Mid-Island 2.2 23 neighborhoods, which include the South Shore 24 district's neighborhoods that belong in the 25 50th, are not near the water. More

1 2 impactfully, true Mid-Island precincts are unfortunately not served by SIRT trains, 3 4 while eastern areas like New Dorp and South Shore locations like Tottenville have 5 train stations. Mid-Island neighborhoods are 6 7 anywhere from a mile and a half to five miles from the closest local trains. 8 9 Unless you live in St. George, which 10 also is on the train line, the SIRT is the 11 quickest way to get to the ferry. SIRT 12 trains take much less time to get to the boat 13 than local buses or driving. Despite being 14 further away from Manhattan, some South Shore 15 denizens near trains have shorter commutes to the City than Mid-Islanders, who must endure 16 17 45-minute trips to the boat, plus the ferry 18 ride, or take long and expensive express bus 19 trips into the City. 20 When it comes to the commute, Heartland 21 Village has more in common with Bullshead than it does with Eltingville. And 2.2 23 Willowbrook has more in common with Graniteville than it does with New Dorp. 24

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50th District components Willowbrook and

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1 2 Manor Heights and the 51st's New Springville and Heartland Village have Richmond County's 3 4 largest Jewish populations. Despite Willowbrook and New Springville 5 having shared borders as well as 6 7 demographics, these neighborhoods instead share districts with less Jewish areas, like 8 Great Kills and Arrochar. When I lived in 9 10 the 51st, my council reps ignored our 11 neighborhood and only paid attention to the 12 South Shore. And when I resided in the 50th, my reps paid much more attention to the 13 East Shore than the landlocked trainless 14 15 enclaves. 16 Despite this, my request to switch the true Mid-Island neighborhoods in the 51st 17 18 with those of the 50th's East Shore would be 19 politically neutral in terms of Democrat 20 versus Republican voting. 21 Thank you very much. 2.2 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you for your 23 testimony. 24 (Applause). 25 Next. Is it Joe Lileon (phonetic)?

1 SPEAKER: First of all, I'd like to 2 thank all of you for coming out. 3 And 4 Mr. Walcott, the issues you deal with is wonderful. Mike, it's good to see you again. 5 Every time we walk the paths we think about 6 7 you and we're doing our best to keep them up. I'm here not to talk about population 8 deviation, which I find offensive. I find 9 10 that word -- those two words put together 11 offensive. We're a community. We're not a set of numbers. We're not a set of 12 13 ethnicities listed on a list. I taught at Curtis High School for 44 years. It was the 14 15 most amazing life. It was absolutely sensational. 16 17 And no matter what anybody says about DOE, they were the best employers ever. 18 They 19 sent me all over the country for training. I 20 went everywhere. Why? Because our school up 21 the street, 125 years old, students from all over Staten Island. We're a wonderful 2.2 23 community supported by DOE, supported by the 24 government here, supported by Debi Rose, an 25 elected official here. We are not numbers.

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2	We're people.
3	Now, what we share in common with
4	another borough is difficult to ascertain.
5	They're people, too. We hear a lot of
6	discussion about the dysfunction of the
7	North Shore, South Shore, East Shore,
8	West Shore. Go to the mall and watch the
9	kids walking all around together, dating one
10	another.
11	Come out and walk the streets and then
12	you see why this is such a unique district,
13	which I cannot quantify, but I will qualify
14	by saying I am happy that I live here. I am
15	happy that I work here, and I'm happy that
16	you will consider that when you make the
17	appropriate decision as to whether to join us
18	with another group of people.
19	Thank you for your time.
20	(Applause).
21	CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you, sir.
22	Next, virtual. Mary Bullock.
23	MS. BULLOCK: Hello?
24	CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes. We can hear you.
25	MS. BULLOCK: Okay. Fine.

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I wanted to go back to Staten Island's history. Geography is destiny with us, and yes there is an ocean between us and the rest of the City. And we had 23,000 British troops camped here in 1776, and people from the North Shore rescued George Washington's boat, so he could surprise the Hessian at Trenton, and it proved to be the turning point of the war.

And then after that, we grew up as the forgotten borough, and I'm asking that we be continued to be the forgotten borough in the sense that we'd be independent and that our districts be ourselves. We are a different state of mind. I've had people visit me from all over the world and they said, "I've never been to a place like this. I can't quite put my finger on it." And I said, "Well, neither can I, and I live here."

21 So, we have the right to our geographic 22 and historic uniqueness. Plus, we have -- we 23 need to have a dispensation from the 24 population number because of our density. 25 Thank you.

1 2 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for your 3 testimony. 4 (Applause). 5 CHAIR WALCOTT: Next is Reverend Terry Troia. 6 7 (Applause). REV. TROIA: My name is Terry Troia. 8 I 9 work for Project Hospitality, a 40-year-old 10 interfaith effort that provides food, 11 clothing and shelter for homeless and hungry 12 Staten Islanders. We serve approximately 35,000 youths and kids, Staten Islanders 13 14 annually. 98 percent of the people we serve are from the 49th Council District. 15 I am the fourth generation of my family 16 to live in the island North Shore in this 17 18 councilmanic district. North Shore is a 19 significantly diverse community. You've 20 already heard that. We are 21 percent black, 21 31 percent Latino, 11 percent Asian among the communities of color. We have a diverse new 2.2 23 immigrant population that has come to Staten Island and called us home -- from Africa, 24 25 Latin America, Eastern Europe, Middle East,

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2	Southeast Asian and East Asia.
3	Among those who have come to call the
4	North Shore their home are many new Muslim
5	communities, Sikh communities, a Buddhist
6	center here in the North Shore and Hindu
7	communities. The last two new yeshivas on
8	Staten Island, one ultra-Orthodox and one
9	Hasidic have opened in West Brighton and in
10	Port Richmond in the North Shore.
11	As well on the North Shore, we have new
12	immigrants who struggled to achieve full
13	civic status in the United States. 2,500
14	students here in Staten Island and young
15	people who work are doctor recipients mostly
16	who live in the North Shore. And 15,000
17	Latinos live between Mariners Harbor, Port
18	Richmond and West Brighton without
19	immigration full immigration status. This
20	gives you a sense of what the need of the
21	community is, as well as its strength.
22	If you look at the statistics of how
23	much City Council and city administration
24	dollars go to support the struggling
25	North Shore, you will find that dollars are

1 2 spent here in gun violence prevention, benefits access, the health and hospitals, 3 4 community healthcare, large grants to Richmond University Medical Center to support 5 the care of indigent and uninsured persons, 6 7 after-school program, out-of-school work programs, the number of families on public 8 9 assistance are highest here in this district. 10 We need one City Council member who 11 will be the strength of the voice of our 12 diverse communities who struggle to survive on this North Shore. We need one council 13 14 district that represents the needs of 15 underrepresented Staten Islanders who can fight for the dollars that translate into 16 17 school graduations, high school and college, 18 healthy families, a trained workforce, 19 seriously affordable housing that translate 20 into community survival into a community that 21 thrives. Dividing the voice of that council 2.2 23 member would diminish the strength of the 24 voice and reduce the power of a community 25 that seeks to repair its present and to

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determine its future. Taking marginalized communities of the North Shore -- and not all our communities are marginalized -- and placing it into a Downtown Manhattan District or Mid-Island Council District could further marginalize the people who ache for a voice, for relief from present-day suffering and for a voice in their future, which is our future.

By separating us out on the North Shore, we can effectively disempower the overwhelming communities along the Shore from Arlington to Park Hill, and even further separate the communities that suffer similar problems and seek similar solutions. We've come so far in these last 12 years to make our voice heard in this city.

18 Trim if you must, but look to the 19 neighborhoods that may be similar in demographics or in income or in density to 20 21 Mid-Island neighborhoods and other parts of 2.2 our borough. As you make that decision, we 23 do not want to lose the voice of an elected official dedicated to know and serve the 24 25 disenfranchised yet vibrant communities that

1 we call our North Shore home. 2 3 Thank you. 4 (Applause). 5 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you, Reverend. Next, virtual. Telee Brown. 6 Telee. 7 Telee Brown. MR. BROWN: Hello. Are you hearing me? 8 9 CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes, we can. 10 MR. BROWN: Okay. Thank you very much. 11 My name is Telee Brown, president of the 12 Little Liberia Advocacy and former president 13 of the Staten Island Liberian Community 14 Association. I currently sit on Community 15 Board 1. And I personally want to say that the 16 efforts to dissolve the 49th District amounts 17 to larger being divisive, but it amount to 18 19 bidding a war. A war that would deprive our 20 community, especially the Liberian community, 21 of facilities of support services that are 2.2 already very minimal or lacking. 23 So, I come to say tonight that you all 24 are objective of redistricting. We're 25 supposed to provide fair representation of

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residents and prevent arbitrary or discriminatory boundaries, is what is going to happen here if you succeed in deleting or removing the 49th District. That is going to

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4 to happen here if you succeed in deleting or removing the 49th District. That is going to 5 be very discriminatory and it's going to be 6 7 arbitrary. So, you will, in fact, be defeating the main criteria of redistricting, 8 9 which is to keep the community compact. 10 The contiguity of the community is also 11 going to be diminished very highly. So, in 12 this light, we are requesting, appealing that 13 you do your best to preserve the 14 49th District. Doing so would keep our 15 culture and our attributes and make our community distinguished. All of those are 16 17 going to be kept inside and we are indeed appealing that you do all you can do to keep 18 our community as the 49th District. 19 20 Thank you very much. 21 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you, sir, for 2.2 your testimony. 23 Next, we have Iola Washington. 24 MS. WASHINGTON: Hello to everybody. 25 I'm from Park Hill, and I have family living

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2	in Park Hill for the past 13 years. And just
3	at firsthand, if we district, it's already
4	going to have a serious impact on us.
5	First, I start with the June 28th
6	election. It was serious problem with the
7	vote. They didn't know where to go to vote.
8	We had to be transferring people from one
9	place or another. It got so confused. There
10	were people who needed to vote and could not
11	vote. So, I'm standing here today, we have
12	worked so hard for our voices to be heard,
13	and we are asking that you keep it together.
14	We don't want to be separated. We want
15	to stay together. We are one. We are
16	diverse and we want to remain diverse. So,
17	we are asking that you please keep the
18	49th District together.
19	Thank you.
20	(Applause).
21	CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for your
22	testimony.
23	Next is virtual. Karra Mannarino.
24	MS. MANNARINO: Hi. Can you hear me?
25	CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes, we can.

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2	MS. MANNARINO: Okay. My name is Karra
3	Mannarino. Thank you for allowing me to
4	speak today. I'm a constituent of
5	Councilwoman Joann Ariola and Senator Joe
6	Addabbo. I grew up in Howard Beach and have
7	lived here for 30 years. I watched my
8	parents rebuild my childhood home after
9	Hurricane Irene and again after Hurricane
10	Sandy.
11	Our elected representatives have always
12	understood the unique needs of our community,
13	especially the issues that affect flood zones
14	and homes along the shoreline. I believe
15	that thriving successful communities are
16	forged through bonds cultivated between
17	neighbors. And the relationships that we
18	have with our community-based elected
19	representatives are a necessary foundation
20	for a strong, happy and successful community.
21	Having to work with new reps who are
22	not community-based would inevitably result
23	in these bonds being weakened and the
24	efficacy of our district's projects being
25	diluted. Old and new Howard Beach function

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as one cohesive whole. We share the 106th Precinct, Community Board 10, and the Howard Beach Lindenwood Civic Association. We have monthly meetings where residents of Howard Beach and Lindenwood, Councilwoman Ariola and our NCOs come together to talk about community projects, both new and ongoing. Our elected representatives have been

part of our community for my entire life, for well over 20 years. Councilwoman Ariola has demonstrated the importance of having leaders who feel a sincere attachment to the people they represent. As our councilwoman, she treats our neighborhood with genuine care and works very closely with Senator Joe Addabbo.

17 They've given special attention to the wildlife in Jamaica Bay, removing abandoned 18 19 boats that were polluting our waterways 20 for years. Since they're community-based, 21 they understand the particular needs of 2.2 community members, from our small business 23 owners along Cross Bay Boulevard, to people like my parents, whose main concerns are the 24 25 catch basins and high tides. Any further

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economic development, environmental projects and public safety initiatives cannot be fully realized if our community is fractured and our representatives aren't familiar with our neighborhood.

I've listened to the previous hearings and it seems that despite the differences between our communities, we've finally found common ground in our reluctance to accept the proposed map. As for my own community, Howard Beach would essentially be divided into three separate neighborhoods, depriving its citizenry of effective representation. Howard Beach would ultimately dissolve into surrounding communities.

17 I love my neighborhood, and I appreciate and respect the communities that 18 19 surrounds Howard Beach. I hope the 20 Commission will consider keeping our Howard 21 Beach family intact and within the same district. 2.2 23 Thank you for your time. 24 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for your 25 testimony.

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2	We have Homero Flores (phonetic).
3	MR. HOMERO: Hello. Hello, everyone.
4	My name is Homero Flores.
5	As far as I remember, Staten Island is
6	my home. I live in the New Brighton area and
7	work in the North Shore. In the last
8	two years, I have worked with outreach
9	efforts to our community with COVID response
10	contact trace with helping hospitals and the
11	COVID disparity work with New York City
12	Department of Health.
13	From experience and observation
14	traveling, the North Shore has the largest
15	concentration of people of color in Staten
16	Island. The largest number of Sri Lankan
17	outside of the country of Sri Lanka, and most
18	likely the largest number of Liberians
19	outside of Liberia. The largest number of
20	Hispanics live in the North Shore as well.
21	One thing is for sure, the people in
22	Manhattan didn't go through the experience
23	like the residents of the black and brown
24	community in the island. We need to remain
25	one council district, so that the needs of

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2	our community of color, which are the most
3	impoverished communities, have a singular
4	voice that reflects the needs of these
5	communities, which are so different from the
6	rest of the borough.
7	I urge you not to separate our
8	communities of color on this North Shore and
9	diminish the power of the majority
10	representation of people of color in the
11	North Shore district.
12	Thank you.
13	CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you, sir. Thank
14	you for your testimony.
15	(Applause).
16	CHAIR WALCOTT: Next is virtual.
17	Stephanie Ward.
18	MS. WARD: Hi. Can you hear me?
19	CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes, we can. Welcome.
20	MS. WARD: Hi. Thank you so much.
21	Thank you for your time and consideration
22	today.
23	I'm here as a resident of the 49th City
24	Council District, a product of its public
25	schools from K through 12 and a

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representative of the grassroots group, Staten Island Woman Who March. Many of our members are also residents of the North Shore. After the New York State Assembly redistricting, it is clear that it is more important than ever to protect the community's -- this community's collective power for the North Shore, Staten Island.

Echoing what my former Councilwoman Rose said, and so many strong community members here, the 49th District is one of the most diverse districts in New York City and the most diverse on Staten Island. But it is worth repeating that this is where communities of color and immigrant communities are more concentrated on the island.

19To dilute the power of this community20any further would be a great disservice to21this district and in partic -- and in Staten22Island as a whole. The North Shore has23different needs than the rest of Staten24Island and other parts of the City as far as25housing, transportation, economic needs, and

1 2 needs of representative and a voice that can advocate for the North Shore's specific 3 4 needs. If this district is split up with 5 another borough or even bleeds into a bit 6 more Mid-Island, I fear community members 7 will not get the support and representation 8 that's deserved and needed. 9 10 Thank you for your time. 11 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for your 12 testimony. 13 (Applause). 14 CHAIR WALCOTT: Marci Bishop. 15 MS. BISHOP: Thank you, Chair and District Commission Members. My name is 16 17 Marci Bishop and today I'm here to share the 18 testimony on behalf of Council Member 19 Kamillah Hanks who represents District 49, 20 the North Shore of Staten Island, and is also like resident. 21 The council member is asking the 2.2 23 District Commission to support maps that keep 24 the district representing the North Shore of 25 Staten Island entirely within the borough.

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2	The New York City Charter instructs the
3	District Commission to keep communities of
4	interests together, and that could be of no
5	greater significance to District 49. It is
б	abundantly clear to North Shore residents and
7	to all Staten Islanders that the interest and
8	the needs of its constituents are distinct.
9	Even from those of neighboring
10	boroughs, like Brooklyn and Manhattan, the
11	North Shore has the largest minority
12	community on Staten Island. It took former
13	Council Member Debi Rose 25 years to become
14	the first African-American elected into
15	office here. As her successor and the
16	current council member with the privilege of
17	serving the North Shore, Council Member Hanks
18	is only the second African-American woman to
19	hold a seat in the borough's history.
20	Together they have a proven commitment
21	to this district and its interests, which are
22	further represented by the myriad of diverse
23	community leaders and organizations,
24	including from the African-American, Latin
25	American, Central American, Southeast Asian,

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and West African communities. Compared to the rest of Staten Island, the North Shore is particularly unique in terms of race and ethnicity.

If expanded into another borough, this uniqueness would be diluted due to potential cultural and socioeconomic implication. Adding this district to another borough would change its dynamic and silence the voices of this constituents, as well as jeopardize the residents needed for the district to -- the resources needed for the district to thrive.

14 Staten Island is a special place, 15 especially when compared to its four counterpart boroughs. The council member 16 17 wholeheartedly supports the efforts of the 18 other members of the Staten Island 19 delegation, Minority Leader Joe Borelli and Council Member David Carr, in ensuring that 20 21 the needs of the entire borough are met and that all its residents are considered 2.2 23 throughout the districting process. Splitting District 49 between other 24 25 boroughs would do an injustice to its

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2	residents and community organizations who
3	have historically been underrepresented and
4	unheard.
5	And as its City Representative, Council
б	Member Hanks urges you not to let that
7	happen.
8	Thank you so much for your time.
9	(Applause).
10	CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you. And
11	please give our regards and thanks to the
12	Council Member as well. Thank you very much.
13	Next is virtual. Regina Cassidy.
14	DR. CASSIDY: Hello, and thank you,
15	Chairman Walcott and friends.
16	My name is Dr. Regina Cassidy, and I'm
17	a lifelong Staten Islander. I grew up and
18	lived in the Mid-Island section of Staten
19	Island for 24 years, and now have lived on
20	the North Shore of Staten Island for over
21	40 years. I've worked on both shores as a
22	teacher, social worker and religious leader.
23	The North Shore, Staten Island is
24	unique, diverse, as you've heard before, and
25	very complex. We are a community rich in

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ethnicities, cultures, faiths, political viewpoints, parks, cultural centers -- even, and especially, delightful food. However, the needs of the North Shore are unique as well. Our population is dense and housing remains one of our highest challenges and priorities.

Adequate affordable rental units are hard to find, as well as houses that lower to middle income families can actually buy. The homeless population is definitely larger on the North Shore and supportive housing is essential for recovery and rehabilitation. Access to healthcare is also an ongoing challenge. I've worked on both shores as a social worker at Richmond University Medical Center and Bayley Seton Hospital and at Staten Island Hospital.

There are simply not enough medical and mental health resources on Staten Island on the North Shore for our large population in general. And, however, on the North Shore, access to clinics, especially those that can be reached by public transportation are few

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2	and far between.
3	I firmly believe that the North Shore
4	should have its own representative or
5	representatives to advocate for the needs of
6	our people and our community. I love the
7	North Shore. I acknowledge its beauty and I
8	acknowledge what it lacks.
9	And thank you for your attention and
10	thank you for this meeting.
11	(Applause).
12	CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for your
13	testimony.
14	Next is (inaudible).
15	SPEAKER: Hello. My name is Carlene
16	Suza (phonetic). I'm going to be reading
17	this statement on behalf of Staten Island
18	Borough President Vito Fossella. And this is
19	also in response to the testimony of Joseph
20	Borelli, who is the council member of the
21	51st District.
22	We support Council Member Joe Borelli's
23	testimony, which strongly recommends that the
24	New York City Districting Commission should
25	keep Staten Island's three City Council

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2	Districts within the borough. With
3	redistricting on the horizon, a split of the
4	council districts between Staten Island and
5	Brooklyn or Staten Island and Manhattan would
6	be a disadvantage to our constituents.
7	We are unique as a borough. As someone
8	who has represented both Staten Island and
9	Brooklyn, as a former Member of Congress, I
10	can tell you firsthand that there are
11	different needs and priorities based on the
12	constituencies in these two boroughs.
13	Additionally, maintaining two district
14	offices has its budgeting constraints. We
15	have different voices on issues compared to
16	the rest of the City. Let's not dilute
17	Staten Island's voting power by splitting the
18	district. It is important that we preserve
19	the geographical integrity of our borough
20	with the three existing council districts
21	already drawn.
22	Thank you for your time.
23	CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you. And
24	regards to the Borough President as well
25	(Applause).

1 CHAIR WALCOTT: -- thank you very much. 2 Next is virtual. Deborrah Smith. 3 4 MS. SMITH: Good afternoon, everyone. CHAIR WALCOTT: Good afternoon. 5 MS. SMITH: Good evening. 6 7 Thank you for your -- thank you for having this format to allow us to testify. 8 My name is Debbie Smith and I am the 9 10 president of Deerfield Civic Association in 11 the 31st Council District. I have lived in 12 this community for many years, and I am 13 actively involved and aware of changes in my 14 community. It is very important to keep 15 the -- to keep the 31st Council District as a whole. This includes Arverne By The Sea, 16 17 Arverne, Brookville, Edgemere, Far Rockaway, 18 Rosedale, Laurelton, and Springfield Gardens. 19 We in 31st worked very hard for the Arverne By The Sea project to be in the 20 21 Empire zone, which was a state project by 2.2 health to empower an underserved community as 23 31st Council District. Certain criteria had 24 to be met by the developer and Arverne By The Sea was the most successful. They employed 25

1 2 people from the district to work and a beauty community was built. This enabled a lot of 3 4 black and brown residents to acquire wealth and purchases homes and condos. 5 ABTC -- ABTS, sponsor many events and 6 7 give back added benefits to the community. This result in lasting friendships with the 8 residents of 31st and ABTS to this date. 9 10 Please do not separate Arverne By The Sea 11 from 31st Council District. 12 I work as a poll worker at all 13 elections. Last year, the state legislature 14 at congressional seat went through the 15 redistricting process, and we saw the results in the last primary election. Many voters 16 17 were displaced from their usual place of 18 voting, which was a disaster, and that caused 19 a lot of people not to vote. They were 20 displaced to other sites far away from their 21 homes. We do not want that to happen with 31st Council District. 2.2 Why did this happen? The 31st Council 23 24 District was drawn up in 1980 and has worked 25 well for all. I believe that our council

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member has the requirement -- requiring
number of votes in her district and we do not
want to change that. We have had many
disasters; such as Superstorm Sandy,
Hurricane Ida and COVID-19. And this
incredible diverse neighborhood worked
closely together to overcome all obstacle.

We do not want to separate. It is important that the 31st Council District stay as is at present. Our present council member played an integral role in the beginning of the JFK Redevelopment Project. JFK is a big economic driver in 31st Council District, and who is better to hold on to JFK Airport than the 31st Council District? We in this Rockaways and Rosedale encounter and endure all the health and hazard problem from JFK. So, it is important that we reap some of the benefits. I urge the Commissioner to take heed of my request as they continue their redistricting progress.

Thank you very much.

CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for your

1 2 testimony. 3 (Applause). 4 CHAIR WALCOTT: Next, we have Edward C. 5 Josey. MR. JOSEY: Thank you. My name is Ed 6 7 Josey. I'm the president of the Staten Island branch of NAACP. I thank you for 8 9 allowing us this time today to do a few 10 points. 11 First of all, specific before that, the 12 North Shore is a very diversified 13 community -- black, brown, immigrant 14 community, very diversified. And we are in 15 the process of trying to develop a strong 16 voice, a strong voting power, and I would 17 hate to see that broken up. I see absolutely 18 no power -- no reason why we should be part 19 of Manhattan or Brooklyn. It's two distinct 20 communities. 21 Being here in Staten Island, you heard 2.2 someone testified a while ago about 23 Westchester and about a certain section of 24 Westchester not being part of the Western 25 District. Well, someone also said they did

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an article in The Daily Advance about, Volinski (phonetic), what he was saying about -- I don't know what he said Biden did. But anyway, going back to two months ago, there was an issue in the Stapleton Projects about cooking gas, and Brian Laline, the editor of the Staten Island Advance said that nowhere else in Staten Island this situation occurred.

11 So, he gives me the impression that he 12 thinks there's something wrong with the way Staten Islanders use the North Shore; that's 13 14 my interpretation. So, I see no value why 15 the North Shore should be split up at all. 16 Keep it intact right now. Let's build a 17 strong voice and a strong voting power. 18 Because I'm not quite sure any of us in 19 Staten Island wants the North Shore. But my 20 concept is to keep North Shore intact. As of 21 right now, let's build a strong voice and a 2.2 strong voting power. 23 Thank you. 24 (Applause). 25 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thanks, Josey.

1 2 Next, virtual. Say that again, please. 3 Arlette Cepeda. 4 MS. CEPEDA: Good afternoon, every --5 can you hear me? CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes, we can, and good 6 7 afternoon. MS. CEPEDA: Great. My name is Arlette 8 9 Cepeda, and I am the Deputy Director of 10 La Colmena. I want to thank the Committee 11 Members for holding this important hearing. 12 La Colmena is a worker center on the North Shore of Staten Island, providing 13 14 dispatching -- job dispatching, site safety 15 training, referrals and additional opportunities for immigrant workers. 16 17 La Colmena supports advocacy efforts that 18 protect workers' rights. Both of our 19 locations are within the district 20 experiencing map line changes. 21 We believe the redistricting maps 2.2 proposed do not fairly represent the 23 communities that we serve. Fair districts are the foundation for a fair representation. 24 25 The proposed lines will diminish and dilute

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the voices of black, brown and Asian people. It will minimize the voices of those that need resources and support, reducing funding in programs our communities desperately need.

As former Council Member Debi Rose mentioned, with statistics from the 2020 census data, the North Shore is one of the most diverse areas in Staten Island, representing people from all walks of life, including class, religion, ethnicity and family structure. Representation matters and the proposed maps do not fairly represent the people of the North Shore on Staten Island.

We ask that the maps consider fair representation of minority groups, including Hispanics, such as myself.

Thank you for your time.

CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for your time.

Just one point to mention, there aren't any maps yet. I just want to be very clear with the public at large. And that's what this process is about, so I just wanted to make sure people understood that. This whole

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1 2 process is to develop the first round of maps, as they're calling them draft maps. 3 4 And then having further public testimony in August and then we'll have a new round of 5 So, I just wanted to be straight up 6 that. 7 with the public as far as where we are right 8 now. Next in-person is Andrés García. 9 10 MR. GARCÍA: Good afternoon. And thank 11 you for your time. My name is Andrés García. 12 I'm the co-executive director of the Staten 13 Island Immigrant Center. 14 I write to urge this Commission to not 15 take apart the 52 percent majority people of color in Staten Island's District 49, Staten 16 17 Island's North Shore. We're a predominantly Caucasian borough with less than two percent 18 19 of all the students, school students south of 20 Staten Island Expressway, representing 21 communities of color, a reflection of 2.2 segregated housing patterns on Staten Island. 23 Here on the North Shore, we pride ourselves on diversity. We have integrated 24 25 neighborhood, integrated schools and we

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2	struggle with issues of poverty, lack of
3	affordable homes and the need for more jobs,
4	entry level jobs and jobs training, and we
5	struggle with street violence, which deals
6	with youth.
7	The City Council devotes significant
8	dollars to be shared with support programs
9	for the out-of-school youth. There are some
10	youth programs, job training programs,
11	financial entitlement programs, and we host a
12	huge immigrant population on the North Shore,
13	the largest West African communities on
14	Staten Island, the largest Sri Lankan
15	communities outside of Sri Lanka.
16	Among our Latino population, more than
17	50 different languages and dialects are
18	spoken language and that's people from Peru,
19	Ecuador, Pensador, Guatemala, Mexico to
20	name a few of the indigenous people that live
21	on the North Shore. And there is one council
22	member seat that looks after us and speaks
23	for us, and that our needs may be made known
24	to the City Council and the City
25	Administration.

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2	Separating our majority people of our
3	neighborhoods would unfortunately run to
4	either Lower Manhattan or Mid-Island, would
5	reduce the voting power and the civic power
б	of this new people of color majority council
7	district. We urge you not to do that because
8	it would significantly damage our efforts to
9	secure funds for much-needed services that
10	will provide for our present-day poor and for
11	the future of our children.
12	A lot is at stake in this
13	redistricting, and we have worked hard to
14	achieve the first, second and third person to
15	represent us in City Council and the State
16	Assembly. Do not undo what we have done,
17	electing an official that represents the
18	majority of our North Shore.
19	Thank you.
20	CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you, sir, for
21	your testimony.
22	(Applause).
23	CHAIR WALCOTT: Our next is virtual.
24	Batu Babilin (phonetic).
25	SPEAKER: Batu Masfa (phonetic).

1 2 CHAIR WALCOTT: Batu Masfa. All right. 3 I'll get it eventually. My apologies. 4 (No response). 5 CHAIR WALCOTT: Gene Guerra. We'll come back. 6 7 Gene Guerra? 8 MR. GUERRA: Yes. Can you hear me? 9 CHAIR WALCOTT: Now we can, yes. 10 MR. GUERRA: Okay. Great. 11 My name is Gene Guerra, and I am the 12 Travis Civic Association president here on 13 Staten Island. I previously lived in the Bronx, New York, where I was born and raised, 14 15 but have been a Staten Island resident now 16 for 48 years. 17 I have no maps. I have no statistics. 18 I have just commonsense. Except for a 19 miniscule number of similarities, there can 20 be no comparison made between the needs of 21 Staten Islanders and any other borough in the 2.2 City of New York. Our public transportation 23 needs are far different. Our roadway needs are far different. Our commuter needs are 24 25 far different. Our rail system is far

1 different. Simply put, our overall way of 2 life here on Staten Island is far different 3 4 than any other borough in the City of New York. 5 I've lived in the Bronx. I've worked 6 7 in Manhattan. I've worked in Brooklyn. I've been to Queens, and I've lived on Staten 8 Island for almost 50 years. These are just a 9 10 few of the reasons that I ask that the Staten 11 Island district remain self-contained on the 12 island and not -- and not blended into 13 Brooklyn as is being proposed. Our needs 14 here on Staten Island are far too different 15 and far too important to us Staten Islanders than to get sucked up in a convoluted -- into 16 17 another borough's ways. 18 Thank you. 19 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for your 20 testimony. 21 Next, we'll call Robert Douglas. 2.2 (No response). CHAIR WALCOTT: Michelle Molina? 23 24 MS. MOLINA: Good afternoon, everyone. 25 Thank you so much for coming to this hearing.

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1 It's hard at this point not to be redundant 2 when so much stuff has been said. For the 3 4 most part, I have to say -- let me introduce 5 myself. My name is Michelle Molina Executive 6 7 Director of El Centro del Inmigrante, Staten Island Immigrant Center, as well as Andrés 8 9 García just spoke, also from our 10 organization. And we have been serving the 11 community for 25 years in this matter in the 12 immigrant community. We are imploring that 13 the redistricting is not done in the manner, 14 in the way that it's proposed so far. Um --15 I lost my train of thought. 16 CHAIR WALCOTT: That's all right. 17 MS. MOLINA: We are the first and only 18 center to open on Staten Island with a 19 majority of immigrant board of directors. 20 I'm a Latino woman living on Mariners Harbor 21 with my husband and my two children. So, I 2.2 am here to represent not only my 23 organization, but the community that I live in and the families of the district. 24 And the intention of redistricting in 25

1 this matter, we would not like for it to be 2 diluted and for the Hispanic voting power to 3 4 be diluted in a sense. And it was mentioned 5 before, also, we are extremely diverse. And for our North Shore in particular, we have --6 7 there are 50 dialects spoken by the people like Latin America, and nowhere else on 8 Staten Island can you find that kind of 9 10 minority within a minority. 11 Thank you for your time. 12 (Applause). 13 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for your 14 testimony. 15 Virtual. Agnes VanDina. MS. VANDINA: Yes, hello? 16 17 CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes, we can hear you. 18 MS. VANDINA: Okay. Thank you. 19 I'm a resident of Oakwood, Staten Island, and I've been reading about this 20 21 redistricting in the newspapers, but I haven't been able to find the exact 2.2 23 statistics that you're using for the 24 population data. I've looked through the 25 2020 United States census for the Richmond

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1 County data. I've looked at it per 2 neighborhood in the PUMA Microdata that comes 3 4 out of the United States census, and I don't know if that's -- to me, it looks like the 5 numbers are actually higher than what's been 6 7 put in the newspaper. So, I was wondering, could you direct 8 us to the actual data source that's being 9 10 used --11 CHAIR WALCOTT: Sure. 12 MS. VANDINA: -- for the population of 13 statistics for each Staten Island, 14 New York City Council District? 15 CHAIR WALCOTT: Let me direct -- she just wanted to know the sources that we're 16 17 using for our data. If you want to --18 MS. VANDINA: For the population data 19 for each New York City Council District. I 20 know it's from the 2020 United States census. 21 CHAIR WALCOTT: It's the census -- it's 2.2 based on the 2020 census, without question. 23 Right. 'Cause I've MS. VANDINA: looked at that, but I'm not able to 24 25 extrapolate myself the specific numbers for

1 each City Council district. I mean, you can 2 go to each neighborhood, pretty much, you 3 4 might get the 64,000 and one neighborhood zip code. That's where I got the statistics 5 from, PUMA, which is Public Use Microdata 6 7 Area; that's out of the census. But when I add up the numbers, I come 8 9 to far more than 166,000. So, that's why I 10 was wondering -- could you direct us to the 11 specific data that's being used by the 12 New York City Council? SPEAKER: Our primer, which is also 13 located on our website as a link to where the 14 15 (inaudible) comes from and (inaudible) and access the information through that -- I'm 16 17 finding it right now. The data --18 MS. VANDINA: I can hardly hear you. 19 You mean to go to your website? 20 CHAIR WALCOTT: Hold on one second. 21 What we'll do is, there's a primer and the 2.2 primer has the data. 23 And also, were you on our website at 24 all? 25 MS. VANDINA: Yes, I was.

1 2 CHAIR WALCOTT: Okay. Put it in the chat and we'll access it. Thank you. For my 3 4 more technologically advanced --MS. VANDINA: Okay. Will you be able 5 to distribute it publicly to us? 6 7 CHAIR WALCOTT: It's a public document. MS. VANDINA: Okay. Uh-huh. 8 9 CHAIR WALCOTT: But we'll put it in the 10 chat as well and you can access it that way. 11 MS. VANDINA: Okay. And your name? 12 CHAIR WALCOTT: I am Dennis Walcott. 13 MS. VANDINA: Oh, thank you, 14 Mr. Walcott. Okay. Thank you. 15 CHAIR WALCOTT: Of course, and thank you for asking the question. My pleasure. 16 17 MS. VANDINA: Okay. CHAIR WALCOTT: We have been joined by 18 19 another Commissioner Maria Mateo. Welcome. 20 COMMISSIONER MATEO: Thank you. Good 21 evening, everyone. 2.2 CHAIR WALCOTT: A pleasure to have you. 23 Next is Imam Zul -- if you could help 24 me 'cause --25 (Applause).

1 2 IMAM ZULQARNAIN: Zulqarnain. CHAIR WALCOTT: Zulgarnain. Thank you, 3 4 sir. I apologize. 5 IMAM ZULQARNAIN: Thank you. Thank you and welcome. 6 7 I've been on Staten Island for 14 years. I've lived in every borough in 8 9 New York City, some places other state. 10 However, Staten Island is unique. I've 11 observed so many people who eloquently 12 presented the facts of keeping Staten Island 13 as an independent entity a part of 14 New York State and New York City, but not 15 being a part of joining in Brooklyn, et 16 cetera, repetition. 17 However, I want to start by opening it up in the name of God, Most Gracious, Most 18 19 Merciful because I am an Imam, and there is a spiritually that we need to consider as well, 20 21 that there is an entity greater than 2.2 ourselves. So, then when we make a decision, 23 we base the decisions on the will of the people. And I've sat here and listened to 24 25 the will of the people. And as

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1 2 administrators and people who will decide the outcome or even the likes of the future of 3 4 Staten Island, specifically, I think that it would be thought consciousness to interfere 5 or intervene in your decision. 6 7 I see that clergy on the board of Commission, complementary. I don't know how 8 9 many board members are residents of Staten 10 Island --11 COMMISSIONER SCHNALL: (Hand gesture). 12 IMAM ZULQARNAIN: God bless you. All 13 right, Michael Stanan (sic), God bless you. 14 So, you know the heart of Staten Island. 15 It's that -- when you live at a place, then 16 you know the place. When you visit a place, 17 you have an idea of the place, but you don't 18 know it until you live there. 19 I've lived in every borough. Born in 20 Far Rockaway, New York. Lived in Brooklyn, 21 Manhattan, Queens and the Bronx. Staten 2.2 Island is the last borough that I will live 23 in. 24 (Laughter). 25 IMAM ZULQARNAIN: If I would live

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2	anyplace else, it will probably be in another
3	state. But I love Staten Island, as we all
4	do that are here. And I agree and concur
5	oh, I'm sorry. I agree and concur with our
6	councilwoman former Councilwoman Debi Rose
7	and, as well as Kamillah Hanks, Councilwoman
8	Kamillah Hanks and all the other well-spoken
9	people defending or at least representing our
10	heartfelt desire to continue to be a separate
11	entity on our own.
12	Staten Island is resourceful and it is
13	a borough that they say "forgotten
14	borough," but it is a "independent borough,"
15	a borough that depends on itself, its
16	residents, through Sandy Hurricane Sandy.
17	That now, I was going from Staten Island to
18	Far Rockaway, back and forth as the bridges
19	would allow. And each borough had its own
20	specific dynamics, as Staten Island had its
21	dynamics.
22	So, all I would implore, with the
23	clergy and the spirituality and the humanity
24	that you may have as human beings, please
25	keep Staten Island the way it is.

1 God bless. 2 3 (Applause). 4 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you, sir. Thank 5 you for your testimony. Next, virtual. Catherine Paradiso. 6 7 MS. PARADISO: Thank you for having me. I'd like to start off by saying that I 8 am a third-generation member of district --9 10 Council District 49, and I can say also that 11 one thing I've heard tonight is that 12 everybody, regardless of where they're from, 13 wants a representative who understands their needs, and we are really no different. 14 15 Staten Island has been very disenfranchised historically. Other boroughs 16 17 have subways and travel throughout the City at nominal or no cost, pay less real estate 18 19 taxes, have government provided healthcare 20 and overall more city services. We continue 21 to endure an opioid epidemic. We have a 2.2 waterfront that was just beginning to be 23 developed when COVID and other issues stole 24 its progress. 25 We haven't been spared by issues of

1 2 significant impact to quality of life. I think that it's very important that we have 3 4 representatives who understand all of these issues, the history of potential solutions 5 that have occurred over time, successes and 6 7 failures, and that can only be done by keeping the districts exclusively on Staten 8 Island, not sharing. Sharing will just -- I 9 10 believe that sharing will create a 11 councilperson whose priorities will be split 12 and competing with each other. And that I think would be bad for both communities. 13 14 I've submitted a written testimony, and 15 I thank you very much for the opportunity. 16 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for your 17 testimony. Much appreciated. 18 Next is Jason Torres. Phil Torres. 19 I'm so sorry. 20 MR. TORRES: Mr. Chairman, thank you 21 for this opportunity to testify. I'd like to do this really as a show of 2.2 23 support for my neighbors. I'm a lifelong Staten Islander, born and raised in 24 25 West Brighton. And, you know, I have to kind

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of play into the belief that as a community, and especially as North Shore, Staten Island is, we're a united people. I've had the privilege of remaining on Staten Island, where many have moved beyond the borough, become an employer and I've also committed myself to service to my community.

Now, one thing that we should realize is that we do have a growing concentration of need on the North Shore. I have the honor of serving as director at Project Hospitality in Richmond University Medical Center, and what we're facing here is a partnership between our elected representatives, the private sector and our citizens who -- within our district. And without that collective of support, it's going to be extraordinarily difficult for us to address that need.

20 Now, obviously, that's the sentiment 21 that we've heard all along, but my fear is 22 that through redistricting, you know, it's 23 clear that redistricting cannot abridge or 24 deny voting rights for racial and language 25 minorities, but we do have to think about

1 2 that law of unintended consequences, in that if we redistrict, we could be inadvertently 3 4 dividing a community that is intensely divided. 5 So, I would like to speak on behalf of 6 7 my neighbors that we need to remain together and keep District 49 intact. 8 9 Thank you. 10 (Applause). 11 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Torres. 12 Brian Fox. MR. FOX: Hello, everybody. Can you 13 14 guys hear me? 15 CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes, we can. Welcome. 16 MR. FOX: Thank you so much for having 17 me, and I really appreciate the opportunity 18 to speak. 19 I've had a very fortunate opportunity, 20 not just as a Bay Ridge resident, but 21 formerly running as a City Councilperson in District 43 to understand the fibers, the 2.2 23 inner workings of my community in Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights. We share a lot of these 24 25 same services when it comes to, you know,

1 emergency services, with the Police 2 Department and a lot of the needs are unified 3 4 between Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights. And we're in a position and point in time, in my 5 opinion, where we are beginning to address 6 7 these needs, and my fear is that if there is a redistricting that happens, you know, there 8 9 will be a lot of division to happen. 10 I think the needs outside of Bay Ridge 11 and Dyker Heights can get and will get 12 drastically different. And again, I've grown 13 to learn the inner fibers, inner workings, 14 not just of Bay Ridge, but also Dyker 15 Heights. And there's a certain unity 16 throughout the community. And for 17 redistricting to happen, I fear that we are 18 going to digress our progress and not move 19 forward as a community. 20 So, I just wanted to voice on behalf of 21 my neighbors and obviously as a concerned 2.2 resident in Bay Ridge, that we are in a very 23 interesting time just, you know, not just within the neighborhood, but on a national 24

level where we honestly have to make sure

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1 that we unify as one. And I know that as a 2 whole in the community, I know business 3 4 owners all throughout the district, and I know a lot would agree with the fact that if 5 it does get redistricted, it would be 6 7 detrimental to the community and the progress that we have made. 8 9 And I want to thank everybody for 10 listening to me. Thank you so much. 11 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you, sir, for 12 your testimony. 13 (Applause). 14 CHAIR WALCOTT: Next is Peter Stanza 15 (phonetic). 16 SPEAKER: Thank you. How are you 17 doing? I'm going to read this on behalf of 18 the current three council members. It's a 19 letter that we've submitted. I'm just going 20 to read it out loud as well. 21 "As elected officials representing 2.2 Staten Island, we are asking that you do 23 everything in your power to keep Staten 24 Island's three City Council Districts --25 District 49, 50, and 51 -- entirely within

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the borough as you draw new City Council maps. Chapter 2A and Section 52 of the New York City Charter, which sets forth criteria for the district plan that the decennial Districting Commission must follow, provides explicit instructions for the Commission to keep communities of interest together.

10 'District lines shall keep intact 11 neighborhoods and communities with 12 established ties of common interest and association, whether historical, racial, 13 economic, ethnic, religious or other.' 14 15 Furthermore, the Charter states that a 'district shall not cross borough or county 16 boundaries, nor shall it be drawn for the 17 18 purpose of separating geographic 19 concentrations of voters enrolled in the same 20 political party into two or more districts in order to diminish the effective 21 representation of such voters.' 2.2 23 Now, I think this language makes it 24 abundantly clear that splitting one of the 25 aforementioned City Council Districts between

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2	Staten Island and Brooklyn or Staten Island
3	and Manhattan would violate both the spirit
4	and intent of the City Charter by breaking up
5	a community of interest.
6	A 102-square-mile island three times
7	the size of Manhattan, but with less than
8	one-third its population, Staten Island is
9	very distinct from other boroughs in
10	New York City. This starts with the fact
11	that the only way to get to Staten Island is
12	by bridge or boat, because we are the only
13	borough without a subway system connecting us
14	to the rest of the City. I think this
15	disconnectedness has created a unique culture
16	and imbued its residents with a strong sense
17	of social, geographic and political
18	independence.
19	Staten Island is by far the most
20	suburban borough, with more acres of parks
21	and open spaces than any other in the City.
22	A majority of our residents, 69 percent, own
23	their homes, while more than three quarters
24	of residents in Brooklyn and Manhattan, our
25	closest neighbors, are renters. More than

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2	83 percent of Staten Island households have
3	cars, most of them more than one. In
4	Brooklyn and Manhattan, where there are an
5	abundance of public transportation options,
6	only 40 percent and 22 percent of households
7	own cars, respectively.
8	In Brooklyn and Manhattan, more than
9	70 percent of registered voters are Democrats
10	and less than 9 percent are Republicans.
11	Staten Island is much more politically and
12	ideologically diverse, with 41 percent of
13	voters registered as Democrats, 31 percent as
14	Republicans, and the remaining split between
15	third parties and independents.
16	It's because of these conditions
17	residents across the three City Council
18	Districts of Staten Island have much more in
19	common with each other than they do with
20	residents from other boroughs, especially
21	when it comes to concerns about City policy.
22	These concerns transcend ideology, racial and
23	ethnic identity and political boundaries. We
24	care much more about property taxes and water
25	bills, about the cost of tolls and the state

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2	of our roads than others who do not directly
3	pay property taxes, nor drive cars.
4	Due to our varied geography and built
5	environment, ranging from dense high-rises to
6	sprawling suburban homes and beachfront
7	bungalows, we have very different
8	infrastructure and public safety needs.
9	Because of our diverse political ideologies,
10	we often disagree strongly with our fellow
11	New Yorkers on legislative and budgetary
12	issues.
13	And this is why political
14	representation that is entirely from Staten
15	Island matters so much. Splitting one of the
16	Council Districts with another borough will
17	not only dilute Staten Islanders' votes, it
18	will stifle Staten Island's distinctive voice
19	in the City Council. We ask that you
20	preserve that voice.
21	Thank you for your time and
22	consideration in this matter.
23	Very truly yours, Joseph C. Borelli,
24	Kamillah Hanks and David Carr."
25	(Applause).

1 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you to each 2 of the three Council Members. Thank you very 3 4 much. Next is virtual. Ben Weinberg. 5 MR. WEINBERG: Hello, Commissioners. 6 7 Good afternoon and thank you for giving me the time to testify today. 8 9 My name is Ben Weinberg, and I am the 10 Policy Director at Citizens Union, an 11 independent and nonpartisan good government 12 group. We have been involved in redistricting for decades, including in this 13 14 process, aiming to ensure that it is 15 conducted in a fair, transparent and independent manner. And we have trained 16 17 hundreds of New Yorkers to engage with the 18 Commission. Many of them have testified 19 before you. 20 As this round of hearing concludes 21 today, we just want to offer a few 2.2 suggestions on how to maximize participation 23 before the August hearings. First, we 24 appreciate the Commission's work to improve 25 public input by conducting these five

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preliminary hearings, by scheduling them before and after work hours, providing language interpreters and planning to release an online mapping tool. I want to encourage the Commission to make the testimonies and proposed maps public as soon as possible.

Before August, we suggest the Commission increases the -- increase outreach and advertising, including multi-language advertising. Preparing a testimony takes time and effort, and that August hearing advertising should give people sufficient time to prepare, and it should also use community and ethnic media outlets and ensure that outreach is conducted in the City's ten designated languages. So far, the invites to hearings have only been in English.

We also recommend the Commission to proactively seek input from the affected areas that have not engaged in the process yet. So, we've seen hundreds of people testify, which is incredible, but some Council Districts do remain without a voice. Actively reaching out to community-based

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2	groups and trusted messengers, especially in
3	the neighborhoods that will see their
4	districts changed, would really help. We
5	suggest holding hearings in different
6	marginalized communities protected under the
7	VRA, and we offer other practical suggestions
8	in our written testimony.
9	One final note: This hearing after
10	this hearing, you will move to the complex
11	and politically delicate part of the process,
12	which is actually map-drawing. Considering
13	the recent experience with redistricting, we
14	urge the Commission to take explicit steps to
15	ensure they remain impartial when discussing
16	and negotiating and voting on future maps.
17	So, this includes adopting a code of
18	ethics, as many redistricting commissions do,
19	addressing political conflicts for the
20	members who are affiliated with incumbents or
21	candidates or campaign activities. And also,
22	disclosing any conversations you might have
23	related to map-making with individuals
24	outside the Commission.
25	We also suggest that the Commission

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2	accompany the draft plan map that you will
3	issue in July with a written explanation that
4	allows the public to understand the reasons
5	behind the map-making decisions, the
6	underlying data that you used for each
7	district and other major factors. This is
8	also an opportunity to invite more input on
9	specific areas, which the Commissioners want
10	more information on.
11	Thank you for giving me the time to
12	speak today, and good luck with drawing the
13	maps.
14	CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for your
15	testimony. And just as a point of
16	information, the Manhattan and Queens are up
17	already and they are posted, and Brooklyn
18	will be up shortly.
19	MR. WEINBERG: Thank you.
20	CHAIR WALCOTT: Okay. Benedict Snyder.
21	SPEAKER: (Inaudible).
22	CHAIR WALCOTT: Say again.
23	Okay. The hearing from Queens and
24	Manhattan I'm sorry are up. Brooklyn
25	will be up shortly, the testimonies.

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MR. SNYDER: Good evening to all. My name is Benedict Snyder. I'm the president of the Staten Island Liberian Community. I represent a community of over 10,000 Liberians outside of West Africa within the New York City area. And all of the previous speakers have presented the same sentiments. Today, by virtue of the Constitution, you're here to live up to that Constitutional requirement, notwithstanding, you also have the opportunity and the responsibility to listen to the voice of reasoning. All of these speakers have given you reasons to hold District 49 intact. The recent election says, as a

17 18 testimony in our area because of the 19 uniqueness of our admixing many of our senior citizens and our citizenry, we're at the 20 21 verge of being disenfranchised during the electoral process, only because it did not 2.2 23 have the requisite information regarding the 24 redistricting. That's one area that needs to 25 be looked at, also.

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2	Before you go further, like I'm going
3	to echo again, District 49 has a unique
4	culture. From our standpoint, we run a food
5	pantry. A food pantry that caters to people
б	from all walks of life Liberians, Asians
7	Hispanics, you name it; that's the
8	uniqueness. And if this is taken away from
9	us, we will not be able to stand together as
10	a community. This is our plea. Again, we
11	ask that you please listen to the voice of
12	reasoning and allow District 49 to remain as
13	it is.
14	Thank you.
15	(Applause).
16	CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you for your
17	testimony.
18	Next is virtual. Antoinnette Donegan.
19	(Applause).
20	CHAIR WALCOTT: Reverend. I'm sorry.
21	Reverend.
22	REV. DONEGAN: Yes, Hi. Good
23	afternoon. My apologies. I have a garbage
24	truck in the background, so I do apologize
25	for the extra noise.

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2	I want to first thank you for allowing
3	me to speak virtually today. I reside
4	currently in the Mariners Harbor area. I
5	work and I worship in the Stapleton area. I
6	have been a resident for over 40 years. I
7	speak as clergy, community advocate and
8	concerned citizen.
9	Separating the North Shore, having it
10	be a part of another part of either Brooklyn
11	or wherever, would be a tremendous disaster.
12	The current composition of this very racially
13	diverse community in the North Shore is
14	different than other parts of Staten Island,
15	and our needs are very different, and many.
16	By suggesting, suggest that separating
17	the North Shore, it would not be the best
18	interest of the community members that live
19	here. We are unique in our composure.
20	Meaning, as you've heard, we have large
21	numbers of West African descent, Asians,
22	Hispanics and African-Americans. By
23	splitting the North Shore, the
24	representation, the needed resources, which
25	includes housing, medical facilities and

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transportation, would be a huge challenge. The North Shore depends on public transportation greatly, more than other parts of Staten Island. The majority of the North Shore do not have two cars. They do not -- some don't have one car. They depend on public transportation. And unlike other boroughs, they -- the only thing we have are buses.

We on the North Shore are facing a gun violence crisis. It is fueled by high poverty pockets in our community, which no one can address or understand. But to our elected officials that are already in office at present or like some previous, like our former councilwoman who are native Staten Islanders, our voice is unique and is powerful.

20 We need to stay as a whole in the 21 49th District. Our needs on the North Shore 22 are very different. Not -- they are unlike 23 any other borough in the whole New York City. 24 And I don't wish to continue to be redundant, 25 but I want to reiterate that the North Shore

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2 3	should not be separated, as it will result in being swallowed up by other parts of Brooklyn.
3	
	Brooklyn.
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5	Thank you again for allowing me to
6	speak.
7	CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you, Reverend.
8	(Applause).
9	CHAIR WALCOTT: Samuel (inaudible).
10	Samuel?
11	MR SAMUEL: Yes.
12	CHAIR WALCOTT: I'm sorry. If you
13	could just say your full name for me.
14	MR SAMUEL: Samuel (inaudible).
15	CHAIR WALCOTT: And for the record, can
16	you just say it again, so that way
17	MR SAMUEL: My full name is Samuel
18	(inaudible). Call me SOS.
19	I'm echoing the same thoughts that most
20	of the speakers are echoing, that there's a
21	uniqueness about Staten Island that I come
22	from, originally, from Ghana, and we have a
23	tradition and a culture that is very
24	synonomous of most of the West African
25	residents on Staten Island.

1 2 If I just go back a few years, we had the cultural diversity program that was being 3 4 held at Wagner College, that was all a showcase of about 13 different cultures that 5 were residents of Staten Island. And you 6 7 could see the diversity, the top history of the various cultures that existed on Staten 8 9 Island during those days. For some reason, 10 that program was defunded and it was done. 11 But it admitted so many students who 12 lived in and around New York City to come and 13 experience the various cultures that existed 14 in Staten Island. And most of these projects 15 were funded through our council representatives and through the legislative 16 17 that was existing at that time. 18 And since that program was defunded, I 19 believe most of you have kids or graduates in your homes who, when they go to graduation 20 21 ceremonies, put on this fancicated things 2.2 around their neck, and it's become a symbol 23 of so many things to racial programs nationwide. But that is what Staten 24 25 Island -- this is the only place where you

1 can find and look out traditional room made 2 from Ghana, but it was constructed here by an 3 4 Italian contractor. An Italian worker from 5 Wagner. And just from the pictures that we gave 6 7 him with the dimensions and everything, this quy was able to construct a direct replica of 8 9 a painted room. And we have four of them. I 10 haven't seen it in any other states or any 11 other borough. And this is what Staten 12 Island stands for. Please keep 49 together. 13 Thank you. 14 (Applause). 15 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you, sir. 16 Diamond Demoss (phonetic). (No response). 17 18 CHAIR WALCOTT: Diamond Demoss? 19 (No response). 20 CHAIR WALCOTT: Anthony Reinhart? MR. REINHART: Hello. Am I good? 21 2.2 CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes, we can hear you. 23 Welcome. 24 MR. REINHART: Okay. Good evening, 25 Chair Walcott and Members of the Districting

1 2 Commission. My name is Anthony Reinhart, and I am the chairman of the Staten Island 3 4 Republican Party. As this Commission continues forward 5 with its important work, I respectfully urge 6 7 that the forthcoming map proposal take into account the uniqueness of our Staten Island 8 9 community. Our community of interest onto 10 its own, the people of Staten Island can be 11 best represented at the municipal level of 12 government by elected officials whose 13 district lines are wholly contained within Richmond County. 14 15 The 49th, 50th and 51st Council Districts as they stand today are wholly 16 17 contained within our county, as has been highlighted by the Commission, the Charter 18 19 and State Law, there's a need to keep 20 communities of interest together, and there 21 is a desire to limit crossover districts. 2.2 The Staten Island community is unique to our 23 city in numerous ways. 24 For instance, we are the only borough 25 to have just one school district, District

1 You'll also find that local nonprofit 2 31. organizations, some whom you've heard from 3 4 already today, are indeed headquartered right here in the community that they serve --5 local schools, local nonprofits, local 6 7 residents, would all be dealt a disservice if any of our three council districts are 8 9 extended into another borough. 10 It should be noted that as the lines 11 currently exist, all residents can reach 12 their council member's office without incurring a bridge toll. If any of these 13 14 Staten Island districts are extended into 15 another borough, residents from one side or the other will find themselves paying a hefty 16 17 toll just to be able to engage in the events 18 and services of their council member. This 19 would be a great disservice to the people of 20 that given district. 21 As we've heard from many of the 2.2 speakers before me, Staten Islanders, 23 Republicans, Democrats and Independents alike 24 understand that our borough is best served by 25 elected officials who are based solely within

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2	our borough. And in some, the 51st, 50th and
3	49th Districts are unique and are best suited
4	to remain completely within the borders of
5	Richmond County. To do otherwise would
6	dilute Staten Island's representative power.
7	Our Staten Island community of interest will
8	be best represented by doing so.
9	Thank you so much.
10	CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for your
11	testimony.
12	Next is Helen Settles.
13	MS. SETTLES: Good afternoon. Okay.
14	Welcome to this kaleidoscope mosaic of a
15	borough, particularly the North Shore. And I
16	say that my name is Helen Settles. I was
17	an educator for 36 years on Staten Island,
18	and many of the schools, even where our
19	present City Councilwoman went, I.S. 61, and
20	I have seen and I've continued to live
21	here since 1973. I came here 1968 when the
22	bridge was 50 cents and the ferry was a
23	nickel, so I go back.
24	But I've continued to live here since
25	1973, and I've taught school here 36 years.

1 2 I even taught at Willowbrook State School before Geraldo Rivera did his exposé. 3 Ι 4 taught in the public schools, and I have seen Staten Island's uniqueness -- South Shore, 5 Mid-Island, North Shore. But North Shore is 6 7 my home. This is where I have worked and worked with just hundreds and hundreds of 8 9 youth in this community. 10 I am presently the civic engagement 11 chairperson for the Staten Island branch of 12 the NAACP, and I've worked very closely with 13 many organizations that worked with you. I am a proud member of Project Hospitality 14 15 Board of Directors for 35 years, and I have seen what we have done in this North Shore 16 17 community. The people we have fed, the people we have helped and for the 18 19 Commission -- well, hopefully the Commission 20 won't consider splitting the Council District 21 on Staten Island, particularly the North Shore. 2.2 23 The North Shore is unique and diverse, 24 and the people here work and live as a

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family. And we know we don't want to split

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2	families up because for years I've worked to
3	keep families together. So, let's keep the
4	North Shore together, all the different
5	non-for-profits who work in the North Shore
6	and work with all the people on Staten
7	Island, let's keep them together because we
8	are one diverse, mosaic, kaleidoscope of a
9	borough.
10	Thank you.
11	(Applause).
12	CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for your
13	testimony.
14	Next, virtual. Hector Fernandez.
15	MR. FERNANDEZ: Hi. Can you hear me?
16	CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes, we can.
17	MR. FERNANDEZ: All right. Thank you
18	very much.
19	Thank you for hearing our community
20	comments and concerns. I concur with the
21	overwhelming majority of speakers. One thing
22	that should always be taken into account is
23	that there are always winners and losers to
24	any change of this nature. And this is just
25	a fact of life. What we need to do is to

1 ensure that Staten Island does not lose from 2 this redistricting. 3 4 I grew up in Corona, Queens. I was 5 born and raised in Queens. My family purchased a house here on Staten Island in 6 7 2006. I've raised my kids here and we made a life here. But when one thinks about Staten 8 9 Island, it's really its own animal. It's 10 really very different than the other 11 boroughs. 12 For example, when I first moved here, 13 after the first big rain, my basement 14 flooded. I went to Home Depot and I said, 15 "What's happening?" They said, "That's 16 Staten Island. Everyone here needs a sump 17 pump if you got a house because your basement might flood." 18 19 When I was thinking of leaving my job 20 Downtown to work in Midtown, I had to factor 21 the time that it would take to get here. 2.2 Because again, you know, our -- we have very 23 unique commute experiences. I have a 24 colleague who lives in Philadelphia, and the 25 Amtrak that she takes gets her to her job in

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2	a hour and a half, about 50 minutes more than
3	my express bus, so imagine.
4	Any other borough in the City, kids
5	don't need to drive or families might not
6	even have a car. Kids definitely don't need
7	to drive at 17 because there are subways
8	everywhere. I remember taking subways to
9	anyplace in the City as a kid in Queens. Not
10	my kids. There are no subways here. They
11	either have to take the bus or I have to
12	drive them to places.
13	The reason I say all of this is that
14	Staten Island, again, is a different animal.
15	A person from Brooklyn does not know that
16	Hylan Boulevard can flood during a storm or a
17	rainstorm because of whatever the plumbing
18	issues are over there. Or that if one visits
19	Clove Lakes Park, they can be accosted by 47
20	turkeys that may or may not be friendly. Or
21	that a deer may run into your car while
22	driving on Staten Island Expressway and give
23	you a dirty look.
24	I never knew any of that when I lived
25	in Queens. I do now as I live in Staten

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2	Island. Staten Island has such unique
3	issues, so distinct from the other boroughs
4	in the City. It should remain separate.
5	Merging it with Brooklyn or Lower Manhattan
6	would inevitably lead to the risk of our
7	neighbors losing; losing services, losing
8	representation that understands them. For
9	that reason, we should strive to keep Staten
10	Island District separate and distinct from
11	the other boroughs.
12	Thank you.
13	CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you for your
14	testimony.
15	Next is Abou.
16	MR. DIAKHATE: Hello. Thank you,
17	Chairman, for the opportunity. And we really
18	commend this Commission coming to Staten
19	Island to actually include us in the process.
20	This is for past loyalty and accountability
21	and I stand for that.
22	Today, I'm going to read. Usually, I
23	don't, but I want to be quick because I'm
24	pledging for the cause of the Staten Island
25	community. Because Staten Island is one

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community and it is invincible, and we will not let Staten Island to be divided.

My name is Abou Sy Diakhate, I'm an advocate and community organizer. I am the culture of Staten Island Immigrant Council. I heard Reverend Troia and so many of my fellow leaders who have been working hard to maintain and to promote inclusion and that is in our community. We all echo the same song. And again, I'm going to read the (inaudible) because we have come a long way, and we don't want to go from square one.

Because all this hard work that we have done over years and years should not be in vain. Therefore, Chairman and all the Commission sitting here today, I would like to really urge that we keep the existing Staten Island Council District. We don't want to go back from square one, as I said earlier. Because as a community, we have so many differences. I'm originally from Senegal,

24West Africa. And after I crossed the25Atlantic, Staten Island is the borough that

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2	welcomed me. This is my second house,
3	although it's seven-hour flight to Senegal.
4	And why I'm saying that because the
5	uniqueness of the borough, again, we don't
6	want to jeopardize that. Because having this
7	redistricting, the first question I asked
8	myself is why? Why?
9	Of course, statistic can be silent.
10	I'm not going to go back to statistic, but if
11	you look at the cut from 2000 and 2010, it's
12	not that big. Yes, it's a difference, a
13	slight difference. That should not be a
14	reason to come up with this redistricting by
15	really dividing our district.
16	And I do not read much, but I strongly
17	recommend that the New York City Districting
18	Commission should keep Staten Island within
19	its own borough because the reality and the
20	difference are so huge. Manhattan, Brooklyn,
21	Bronx of course, we're all New Yorkers,
22	but they have their own realty. We have been
23	fighting for fair chance. Fair share in our
24	district where access should be the key word.
25	Access to resource. Access to resource

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2	because nobody should be left behind.
3	The process only recognize one word,
4	which is inclusiveness. In 2020, I think we
5	all have equity plan. We're all fighting for
6	inequality, but inequality should not be with
7	census. Because the Constitution that we
8	wanted to present and the Constitution that
9	we wanted to promote has one main component
10	which is human right. And human right is
11	everywhere everywhere, including Staten
12	Island.
13	Thank you again for this opportunity.
14	CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for your
15	testimony.
16	Virtual. Katherine Khatari. Okay.
17	Katherine Khatari?
18	MS. KHATARI: How are you?
19	CHAIR WALCOTT: Hello.
20	MS. KHATARI: Can you guys hear me?
21	CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes, we can. Welcome.
22	MS. KHATARI: Okay. Thank you.
23	I'd like to introduce myself. My name
24	is Katherine Khatari. I'm a lifelong
25	Brooklynite, and I grew up in Flatbush. And

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I moved to Bay Ridge later in life because I was a business owner. And I don't know whose idea it is about redistricting, City Councils and dividing the communities. We've come a long way in uniting our communities and addressing the needs of everyone in our communities.

And Staten Island, I have family members there. I know about their flooding, their turkeys, their deers, their skunks -the whole thing, and them being like a stepchild in the City of New York. But if you start redistricting everything, you're going to make us all stepchildren. And we all fought to be a united New York, not to be divided.

18 And you keep getting these companies 19 that have nothing to do with New York as 20 consulting firms and experts, but the only 21 experts in the room are us New Yorkers. We don't want to be divided. We don't want City 2.2 23 Council to preach anymore to us. You did 24 enough damage under the coronavirus and we're 25 still suffering with that, and now you want

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2	to break us up. We're not going to stand for
3	it. We're going to fight to the bitter end,
4	and we want to keep our districts the way it
5	remain.
6	Stop dividing us 'cause it's not going
7	to work. Remember your oath. And we the
8	people rule at the end of the day and we're
9	going to stand firm and we're going to fight
10	together. I'll fight with Staten Island and
11	I'm sure Staten Island will fight with us.
12	But keep Brooklyn in Brooklyn, Staten Island
13	in Staten Island, Bay Ridge in Bay Ridge,
14	Flatbush in Flatbush, you know the name.
15	Please don't disregard our voices
16	because we're here. We're going to stay and
17	we're going to fight for our communities. No
18	more relying on the City to tell us what's
19	right for us and our families. We're done
20	with that. Remember your oath. Remember the
21	Constitution. And we're proud Americans and
22	we're going to fight as one unit.
23	Thank you for hearing me and please
24	hear our words and take them to
25	consideration. We're done talking. We're

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ready to fight forward. Thank you guys. Have a good night. Thank you. (Applause). CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for your testimony. Is it Mohammed Chowdhury? MR. CHOWDHURY: Good evening. First of all, welcome to this forgotten borough. I hope with your help we'll not be forgotten in the future and our elected officials here and, you know, distinguished leaders from our community. We are together here in Staten Island. I'll give you one story before I introduce myself. You know, a new immigrant called me from South Asian country, Bangladesh, he's newly (inaudible) with his family and asked me about the, you know -- in the East Coast, what would be the best city to raise his three daughters. And when I say to him, I live in Staten Island. It's a borough within New York City. I believe it is one of the best boroughs, and I brought all my family

members since 1996 here. I have more than 40

1 families here now. They are my relatives, my 2 friends. 3 4 And why I say this, you can ask me 5 question. Is it poor public transportation. Our communication is different. I would not 6 7 say bad. We are fighting to improve our communication system. Our leaders are 8 9 working hard to improve this communication. 10 But my point is Staten Island is, you know, 11 many people say (inaudible), ferry but I 12 (inaudible). This is not all. 13 The people of Staten Island, very close 14 ties community. I'm not saying only District 15 49 where I live. I'm talking about Staten Island is such a unit because we are together 16 17 during Sandy, during our sadness, during our 18 happiness. We are a community that we want 19 to be together. Please do not try to 20 consider us as the census number. 21 You all know these things. During the 2.2 census, that COVID prevented many population, 23 many groups to put their name and list it on 24 the census. So, few thousand less people 25 does not mean that you can use that threshold

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to divide us and add us with other communities across the boroughs. That will not help our community. It will not help our politicians. It will not help the City of New York. Please consider us as a community, not the census number.

Let's talk about myself. I am Mohammed Karim Chowdhury, National Secretary of the Alliance of South Asian American Labor. I also sit in various statewide positions in New York State Public Employees Federation, including a E-board member, Ochiad Park (phonetic), a statewide department election company. I also sit over there as a -- what it's called? A judicial delegate and New York -- Richmond County Democratic Party (inaudible).

Will say this: What I do, I represent my community here. My organization, ASAAL, Alliance of South Asian American Labor, would like to submit a written statement to this distinguished committee -- Commission, to consider about the South Asian issue. But ASAAL does not only represent South Asians.

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ASAAL also build relation with other community groups, and we are together in this journey.

My humble request, please do not consider us as numbers. Consider our unique concept, unique needs, unique social life. You know, every day I work in Manhattan, 125th Street. I use every day, one hour and 45 minutes, one-hour travel and come back. And many of my statewide colleagues ask me, "Why you are not getting, you know, a house in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Bronx or even Queens? Many of your South Asian people live there."

I said, "When I moved here -- moved to Staten Island in 1996, my family moved here." We are in love with this borough. We love this borough's structure, needs and the people of this borough. So, every time when you come --

21 CHAIR WALCOTT: If you could stop 22 there. 23 MR. CHOWDHURY: Yes, thank you. 24 When we come every day to the ferry, we 25 see 70,000 people use that ferry, and we

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1 2 build our relationship one-way going, one-way coming. 3 4 Thank you for your time. I wish you 5 all will vote to keep us together, not divide 6 us. Thank you. 7 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you for your 8 testimony. 9 (Applause). 10 CHAIR WALCOTT: Next, virtual. Fonray 11 Griffith (phonetic). Pharein Griffith? 12 Okay. I've got two different pronunciations. That's Pharein Griffith. Ms. Griffith. 13 14 MS. GRIFFITH: Good evening. 15 CHAIR WALCOTT: Good evening. MS. GRIFFITH: Can you hear me? Good 16 17 evening, Chair Walcott and members of the 18 Commission. Thank you for this opportunity 19 to speak today. 20 My name is Pharein Griffith, and I am 21 the chair of the Manhattan 10 Neighborhood 2.2 Advisory Board, otherwise known as NAB, at 23 the Department of Youth and Community 24 Development, DYCD, which covers Central 25 Harlem from 110th Street from between Fifth

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Avenue to Morningside Park, St. Nicholas Park 2 up to Jackie Robinson Park, all the way west 3 to 160th Street in the Harlem River Drive. 4 I am testifying today regarding the 5 possible changes to Council District 9 and 6 7 the effect that it may have to the Neighborhood Advisory Board. 8 The 9 Neighborhood Advisory Board assist the City 10 with allocating funding, federal funding for 11 program services and activities for Title 1 12 funded communities under the Community 13 Services Block Grant based on the community 14 needs.

15 Although, the funding is federal and based on census data, it's allocated to 16 communities below the national poverty line 17 18 within the boundaries of both the Community 19 Board and City Council. I am concerned if 20 the northern part of Council District 9, 21 which includes the Polo Grounds, Rangel NYCHA Houses, and the world famous Rucker Park is 2.2 23 redistrict into the Washington Heights 24 district, may have an impact on the program 25 services and activities in Central Harlem.

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The Polo Grounds has the Police Athletic League that receives Title 1 funding, that services the youth from Harlem River -- Harlem River, Polo Grounds, Rangel, Drew Hamilton NYCHA complexes and the residents in between. Council District 9 has a very large senior population, and many live in the Polo Grounds and Rangel Houses that participate with many of the program services and activities -- and activities funded by the Neighborhood Advisory Board and DYCD, such as senior centers and food pantries, to name a few. CD 9 has a rich culture, a rich and

15 historic culture. It is the heartbeat of 16 17 Harlem. When you think of Harlem, you think of Central Harlem. Council District 9 is the 18 19 only district in the City Council that has a 20 black African-American representation for the 21 borough of Manhattan. Every three years, 2.2 DYCD conducts a community needs assessment, 23 and the Neighborhood Advisory Board ensures 24 those needs are met with funding the 25 adequate -- excuse me, adequate program

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2	services and activities.
3	The Neighborhood Advisory Board has
4	done extensive community outreach and work
5	for the residents of CD 9 to ensure they have
6	a thriving community thriving community
7	and quality of life. We wouldn't want to see
8	that work or the funding be taken away due to
9	redistricting. Because the AMI is getting
10	higher, and it is it will eventually push
11	out the residents who qualify for said
12	Title 1 funding.
13	I thank you for this opportunity to
14	speak before you this evening, and have a
15	great night.
16	CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you, and the
17	same to you.
18	Robert Perkins. And as you walk up,
19	let me say thank you for all your help.
20	MR. PERKINS: Okay. Thank you. I
21	appreciate you, and I appreciate your
22	(inaudible) through the years, too. I
23	remember you. Thank you.
24	Mr. Michael Schnall, Roadrunner, right?
25	(inaudible) we communicated a couple of times

1 and we never met. All right. 2 Well, first and foremost, I definitely 3 4 thank you all for allowing me to come up here 5 and speak. I got a couple of things to say. First and foremost, you heard so much 6 7 about -- a lot of same language, right? You heard diluted. You heard injustice. You 8 heard family. And one thing about Staten 9 10 Island, we are family. Dysfunctional a whole 11 lot of times, right? A whole lot of times, but we're family. A community. Community 12 big time. The same people you see in the 13 14 room, you see on the ground all the time. Ι 15 see these people everywhere, except my backyard barbecue. I'm looking forward to 16 17 y'all coming to the backyard. Rich in culture, unique. I'm an Air 18 19 Force veteran. I've been around the world 20 several times. I never been no place like 21 Staten Island. I promise you that. You 2.2 heard third-generation, fourth-generation. It's real. People, this is home. I'm a 23 24 transplant from Harlem. I came out here

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about 33 years ago and got stuck.

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1 adopted me. I adopted them. And I regret 2 3 not one move. I'm actually the first African-American 4 district leader in Staten Island's history. 5 Along with my counterpart Jasi Robinson, also 6 7 the first African Latino district leader in Staten Island's history. Along with the 8 first-first Debi Rose, who is the first 9 10 African-American councilwoman in Staten 11 Island's history. 12 And it's not to say that, you know, "go 13 African-American." What I'm saying is how 14 things changed. How things changed but yet 15 remains the same. In the sense that regardless of the title -- because it's never 16 17 about that. It's about the work. I sit 18 back, I look at Terry Troia. I fed 19 personally about 250,000 families on Staten Island. And if I did, she fed 25 million. I 20 21 promise you that. I look at Abou -- Abou, he's here. I 2.2 23 look at the Golden Girls, the Mayor of Staten 24 Island, Mrs. Marjorie Garden (phonetic). Ι 25 look at Mrs. Dickson. I look at my man Imam

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2	from Bait-ul Jamaat. I look at my man from
3	Park Hill. This is these are people you
4	see on the ground all the time. All the
5	time. There's a saying, "If it ain't broke,
6	don't try to fix it." It ain't broke. A
7	little dysfunctional.
8	People take into consideration, Staten
9	Island just the way New York is. New York
10	is spice of people, so nothing's going to
11	change. COVID done messed people up, not
12	just physically, but mentally. We're going
13	to be shifting and changing, but we you
14	know what? We are working together. The
15	same people you see in this room here, you
16	see together. You're talking about ASAAL,
17	NAACP, La Colmena, Project Hospitality,
18	Immigrant Service, Bait-ul Jamaat.
19	The young lady made a statement
20	earlier, the only expert in this room is the
21	experts in the room. And they're experts
22	because they're here each and every day.
23	This is the only borough I know that you
24	could walk down the block, talk to the
25	borough president, talk to the councilwoman,

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2	talk to anybody you want in office and have a
3	genuine conversation and actually get stuff
4	done.
5	(Applause).
6	MR. PERKINS: So, it's not about
7	listen, it's not broke, guys. We're just a
8	work in progress. Please take that in
9	consideration. I get caught up, that's all.
10	This battle is real and this is with all due
11	respect to Brooklyn. Listen, if y'all want
12	to come out and pay that \$20 to come across,
13	come across. Ask for Perk and we'll have a
14	picnic. I promise you, right, and it's no
15	disrespect to them. But leave Staten Island
16	alone let us do what we do. We're winning;
17	understand that. We're winning. Please
18	allow us to win.
19	Thank you.
20	(Applause).
21	CHAIR WALCOTT: Next is is it Ahmed?
22	MR. AHMED: Good afternoon, Commission.
23	Thank you very much, Community Members, for
24	being here this evening. And thank you to
25	all the speakers who have spoken ahead of me,

1 2 especially our elected officials. Just so we echo what has been stated 3 here this afternoon, I love the smell of 4 5 Staten Island. And you cannot imagine how Staten Island is glued together, and those of 6 7 you outside of Staten Island don't imagine that. But my name is Ahmed Cago (phonetic), 8 and I'm speaking on behalf of the African and 9 10 Muslim community of Staten Island. 11 As you all know, we have heard from 12 most of the speakers this evening. It takes 13 a lot to get to where we are today. 14 Immigrant communities love to group and group 15 together. A reason why you heard the Sri Lankan community here, the Latin American 16 communities and the African communities here 17 18 on the North Shore because we love to group 19 together. We love to work together as 20 families in communities. 21 As the course and then recovery is 2.2 going on, please help provide support for 23 Staten Islanders, so we can continue to grow, 24 instead of shattering the progress we've gained across language barriers, ethnicities, 25

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2	traditional and religious barriers in trying
3	to become neutral citizens. Please recognize
4	these struggles and do not let us stop on the
5	(inaudible). Please save the progress we've
6	cultivated collectively over the years.
7	We are comfortable with those we
8	already know, including our elected officials
9	who are able to identify most, if not all, of
10	us by our names. I see as the gentleman just
11	spoke here and he actually mentioned most of
12	us by names. And this is a community
13	where as I said, and he just mentioned it.
14	You can come to Borough Hall and get your
15	stuff done. And in light of what the Mayor
16	is saying, "get stuff done," this is the
17	borough where stuff is done.
18	Yes, sir, Mr. Chair.
19	(Laughter).
20	MR. AHMED: And by saying that just
21	like my colleague just now, the speaker
22	before me just stated, we can manually walk
23	to our different destinations. If MTA
24	doesn't provide me the bus on time, I cycle
25	and I can drive. This is the only borough

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you have that privilege to do that. Yes, we're getting tickets as well, but guess what? We have the support that we need to continue building our communities. And we're here as a very tight community, dysfunctional, but it's working. (Laughter). MR. AHMED: It is working. And sometimes it's nice to be dysfunctional because you see what you didn't perceive. And what you take for granted, you actually cherish it. So, by standing here today, again, on behalf of all the communities that are here, including the African community and the Muslim communities, let me say this again: We've come a very long way to see that we feel comfortable where we have our Majlis, we have our synagogues and actually come sit down and talk. We have our own spaces where we bring our family issues and main concerns.

23Please keep Staten Island as you see24Staten Island. I would be happy to come to25you one more time and say, "Thank you for

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saving Staten Island, for saving us." Thank you, sir. (Applause). CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for your testimony. MODERATOR: Angela Sisco. CHAIR WALCOTT: Angela Sisco? Oh, there she is. Take your time. MS. SISCO: Hello. I see there's a timer there. CHAIR WALCOTT: Go ahead. It's a start. MS. SISCO: I went to Catholic school. So, we have to pay attention to those things. So, I'm from Bay Ridge Brooklyn and I've never been to a public hearing before. I worked all day and I felt this was important enough to come to and address. And I have been sitting here listening to everybody. I think I'm the only one from Brooklyn here. People from Staten -- thank you. People from Staten Island are talking about 24 their uniqueness. They are, in fact, unique,

1 but in Bay Ridge, we share that uniqueness. 2 I, too, know about the turkeys, the ones that 3 4 are damaging the cars. I know about the flood issues. I know about the 5 transportation issues. We share many of the 6 7 same issues, except for the turkeys. We get stuck on the Belt Parkway 8 9 together. We're connected geographically, 10 socioeconomically, that includes Dyker and 11 Gravesend that are currently in the district. 12 It is a tremendous mistake to separate the 13 district. There's no reason for it. And any 14 reason to do it is gerrymandering, plain and 15 simple. 16 We are one. I paid the toll to come I'm 17 here today. I was happy to do it. 18 expecting a barbecue invitation, by the way. 19 (Laughter). 20 MS. SISCO: And Bay Ridge, Dyker, 21 Gravesend, Staten Island -- we are all 2.2 connected by that wonderful bridge. There's 23 no reason to add Sunset Park and Park Slope. 24 They're great places. My daughter went to 25 school in Park Slope, but they don't have

1 2 cars there. There's no place to park. Nobody parks over at the park. I'm kidding. 3 4 But they're completely different areas than Staten Island, Bay Ridge, Dyker, Gravesend. 5 It doesn't make any sense to separate them, 6 7 except for gerrymandering. Thank you for your time. 8 9 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for 10 coming out. 11 Next -- you missed it. He said he'll have you at his house for the barbecue. 12 Reverend Valerie Grant-Martin. 13 14 Reverend? MR. PERKINS: Let's go. 15 16 REV. GRANT-MARTIN: Good evening, everybody. 17 CHAIR WALCOTT: Good evening. 18 19 REV. GRANT-MARTIN: It's a pleasure to be here. And thank you all for this 20 21 wonderful opportunity. I sit back here and I listened to 2.2 23 everybody speaking. But I'm going to tell 24 you something, if you want to get a little 25 glimpse of the uniqueness and the culture and

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everything that I've heard about here, take a walk down Victory Boulevard and you'll see the Sri Lankan restaurants, you'll see the Jamaican restaurants. I thought my curry was good, but guess what? (Laughter). REV. GRANT-MARTIN: And I love my food, but when I tried the Sri Lankan curry, tell me about it. So, that's some of the examples of the uniqueness. I am Reverend Valerie Grant-Martin from West Brighton, District 49. And I've been there for 25 years. So, I've seen the good, the bad and the ugly, you know, even the dysfunctional, right? And I'm with Project Hospitality as well. I was at Board of Election as well, so I know all of the little itty-bitty around the area, right? forget one major thing, the historical

But let me tell you something here: We forget one major thing, the historical plantation of Staten Island. We talk about Sandy Ground, if anybody knows about Sandy Ground. And did you know about Tompkins Avenue? It was a historical Black community,

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1 2 dating back to the American Revolutionary time. And while there was enslavement on 3 4 Staten Island, the Stapleton community became a hub of welcoming people, free black 5 persons, right? And a strong hold of black 6 7 cultured community. In Park Hill, more than 8,000 Liberians 8 live and majority of Park Hill is comprised 9 10 of West African communities. And we talk 11 about Nigerian, Benanian (phonetic), to name 12 a few, and we heard everyone from those 13 communities. All right? But let me just say 14 something here. The North Shore is 15 reflective of a deeply historical background, to have a voice in their future and the 16 17 future of our children, especially the 18 children who don't have a home of their own. 19 Children in foster care. And I know what I'm 20 saying because I have been a foster parent 21 for years. 2.2 So, we need to keep this district 23 together -- amen? And preaching again. Let 24 me go on preaching. We need to keep this

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district together. I can't leave the amen

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2	out. Separating our historic black
3	neighborhoods from District 49 will severely,
4	severely, significantly impair the voice of
5	our black people, of our culture, of our own
6	Staten Island.
7	In Jamaica, they have a saying, "Wi
8	likkle but wi tallawah." That means, it's a
9	small island, but we are strong. Look around
10	you. Look here. We have Councilwoman Debi
11	Rose, Robert Perkins, we have Reverend Troia
12	and all these strong people here in this
13	community.
14	Earlier, we had Ms. Curtis who we know
15	many years. She went by Curtis High School.
16	This is a black community no, not just
17	black, a cultural community that's very
18	strong. Let's keep it together. And I'm not
19	even going to look at the notes anymore.
20	Let's just keep it together as one. Forget
21	about the redistricting. Let us just keep it
22	together and try the cultural day, a cultural
23	day. Like thank you, Ms. Cameron, for
24	mentioning about Staten Island College with
25	the cultural day. And you can taste all the

1 essence of Staten Island. 2 3 Thank you very much. 4 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you, Reverend. And in closing, would any of our 5 Commissioners like to have several seconds 6 7 for closing remarks? If not, I will then say to our Staten Islander for pitching in to 8 9 have closing remarks. 10 COMMISSIONER SCHNALL: Thank you. It's 11 really great that so many folks showed up. 12 This might be a record for sure. We are 13 small but we are mighty. 14 (Applause). 15 COMMISSIONER SCHNALL: So, keep engaged with the Commission. You can continue to 16 17 watch what we're doing online, social media. 18 We'll be out here again. I'm out here all 19 the time. So, let us know what you're 20 hearing. Talk to your neighbors. We'll be 21 back once the maps are released. And keep 2.2 engaged and let's keep fighting for what our 23 districts need mostly. 24 (Applause). 25 CHAIR WALCOTT: And I'm sorry. We have

1 2 one person who just jumped on, on virtual, and it's still within our time limit. 3 4 So, Leah McCabe. Liam. I'm sorry. Liam. 5 MR. MCCABE: Hello. Can you hear me? 6 7 CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes, we can. MR. MCCABE: Hello. Can you hear me? 8 9 CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes, we can hear you. 10 MR. MCCABE: Sure. Sure. Thank you 11 very much. I appreciate it. I have to 12 I'm on lunch right now, so I'm apologize. 13 calling you from my car. 14 I just want to testify about the 15 redistricting in Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights. I would just be saying obviously I think that 16 17 the neighborhoods should be kept together. I think that, you know, we share the same 18 19 police precincts. We share the same 20 community boards. We have similar housing 21 stock. I don't know what else has been said, 2.2 but I just wanted to put that on the record. 23 You know, the other thing I wanted to 24 say is, you know, I'm a lifelong resident. I 25 have deep roots into the community and, you

1	
2	know, this we've been dealing with sort of
3	redistricting in that neighborhood for many,
4	many years. I'm not sure if the Committee is
5	aware, but many, many years ago, the
6	neighborhood was divided and I'm sure this
7	may have been said already into maybe
8	about six different assembly districts, and
9	so it really waters down, you know, the
10	ability for us to have a real political voice
11	in the community.
12	You know, one thing we do have is an
13	intact City Council seat and an ability to
14	represent ourselves in that way. You know,
15	just recently as again, I'm sure you're
16	aware, that was going back many years ago in
17	terms of the way the assembly seats were cut
18	to represent our area. You know that the New
19	York State Supreme Court and other lawsuits
20	were filed in other jurisdictions regarding
21	the Congressional Seats and the Senate Seats,
22	and then there was a Special Master.
23	And I think a lot of it had to do
24	and I think some of the major lawsuits
25	stemmed from the representation particularly

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in our area of New York. I know a lot of the leading people on that lawsuit were arguing that the neighborhoods were just cut up too much, and I think that may have played into the fact why the Special Master had to redraw.

So, again, I just implore the Committee, you know, do not divide this community. Do not put it into three different neighborhoods. By the way, just on a political note, I would say -- and this is factual -- I think it was the closest City Council election, District 43 was the closest election and it was all over the papers.

This was something that went into a recount. You had an election that was within a couple of hundred votes. You don't really see close elections in this city, for the most part. It's very few districts that have that. If you tear up that district, you'd be tearing up, you know, one of the most competitive, closest City Council elections. That's not the right thing you should do. You should keep elections competitive, and

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1 you should embrace competition, especially 2 the one that's the most competitive in the 3 4 City. So, that's about it for me. CHAIR WALCOTT: Well, let me say thank 5 you for taking your lunch hour and hopping in 6 7 your car. Much appreciated. 8 (Applause). 9 MR. MCCABE: Thank you. 10 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you. And my 11 thanks to the entire audience. 12 Judge, did you want to say something? 13 COMMISSIONER GO: Let me just say one 14 thing. It was 250 years ago a bunch of 15 people rebelled against the Redcoats and embarked this country on this amazing journey 16 17 that we're still struggling to achieve. And 18 that's nothing better than democracy. And 19 that's why we're doing this redistributing. 20 We'll just try to be fair. 21 Thank you all for coming, and I enjoyed 2.2 your comments. I hope I'll get invited to a 23 barbecue. 24 (Laughter/Applause). 25 MR. PERKINS: Come on over.

COMMISSIONER GO: But I can't do that. I can't do that. I would have to pull some strings. (Inaudible banter). COMMISSIONER GO: I want to say that the Commissioners and I have a very tough road ahead. We're going to try to be fair and to follow the law, and we'll remember your comments. Thank you very much for coming. (Applause). CHAIR WALCOTT: Get home safely. (TIME NOTED: 7:00 p.m.)

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2	CERTIFICATE
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4	STATE OF NEW YORK)
5	SS
6	COUNTY OF QUEENS)
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8	I, Sabrina Brown Stewart, a shorthand
9	reporter within and for the State of New York, do
10	hereby certify that the within is a true and
11	accurate transcript of the statement taken on
12	July 7, 2022.
13	I further certify that I am not related to
14	any of the parties to this action by blood or by
15	marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the
16	outcome of this matter.
17	IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my
18	hand this 3rd day of September 2022.
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21	Sabrina Brown-Stewart
	Sabrina Brown Stewart
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